



11. Surrender (making difficult decisions)....

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. This term, we are focussing on creativity, and the content of an exhibition being hosted in Surrey this term: **Threads Through the Cross**, the work of textile artist Jacqui Parkinson. We are mindful that relatively few schools will be visiting the exhibition, so are bringing it right into your collective worship in a variety of different ways. Whilst it might seem strange to be focussing on the salvation story at this point in the school year, we hope that the endpoint of Advent and Christmas will be more meaningful having understood the journey to the Cross. We will also be linking to many 'Autumn term' themes that are a natural part of school life as children settle in to a new term, getting familiar with routines, school values and key events. **This week, we continue looking at the Threads Through the Cross exhibition panels, and each week, we will have a similar section, a short time of 'gazing': no discussion initially, just looking and thinking. Then there will be some questions to think/talk about, and then an opportunity to talk and discuss before picking up on the key word linked with the panel – which is what will link into the life of your school. This week, we pick up the Passion story where we left it last week and bring it almost to its conclusion, with the events in Gethsemane and at the Cross. What's significant for most Christians is the fact that Jesus gave up his life – freely – in submission to the plan of salvation, which perhaps gives a different dimension to the debate about whether it was the Romans or the Jewish authorities that killed Jesus.**



How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

Each week, there will be a single word that will draw our focus to one particular aspect of either the textile panel or the story linked with it. You should easily be able to link the word to your school's values, but there will also be some suggestions included in the reflective questions as part of each week's materials. This week, we will think about the word **Surrender**, which is not an easy word to explain – or to do! We look at it from the point of view of experiencing difficult choices in life, what in school and in life might help to support us as we wrestle with difficult choices – especially in relation to making a sacrifice for the greater good of others, as Jesus did.

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. There are slides to go with today's script, but you could quite easily use some of this collective worship without the PowerPoint if you preferred.
- As always, you can find out more about Jacqui's work here: <https://www.jacqui-textile.com/> There is also a video of her being interviewed by BBC NW News at Liverpool Cathedral, when all three of her exhibitions visited in January 2025: <https://www.jacqui-textile.com/bible/>
- **In this resource, we include a final slide showing a similar piece of art from a different global tradition, giving pupils opportunities to both appreciate diversity within Christianity, and to see how Christians across the world reimagine this story showing Jesus 'like them' (which of course may mean like some pupils within our school communities). You may wish to use this slide outside of collective worship, enriching your RE provision. NB There are two slides to choose from this week, as we focus on 2 different panels.**
- You will need the fork in the road cards that you have kept from week 6, if you still have them. We will refer to the ideas in this week's PPT, but some children may remember better if they have kept them! You will also need to find a large, heavy stone as a prop for the collective worship.
- There are also some ideas for reflective activities to ponder for use in your reflective areas for this term, listed at the end of the script along with a handy wall chart to print each week for your reflective area. You can find all these as a separate file in our resources area, which may make it easier for teachers to print and use in their classrooms.
- **Reflective prayer activity:** put some really large pebbles into your reflective area this week, symbolising the heaviness of difficult choices.

Gathering:

Slide 1: Use the new greeting for this term.



Leader: We are a creative community. As we gather together today....

ALL: May our thinking, talking and wondering help us to grow.

Here are BSL actions for some of the words:

Leader's words:

Creative: <https://www.signdictionary.co.uk/view/creative?q=creative#title>

Community: (we use the word 'gathering' as it's a simpler sign!) <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/gathering>



Gather: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/gather> (1st video), or use the same sign we use for community as they approximate to the same thing!

Response:

Think: <https://www.brightbsl.co.uk/signs/think>

Talk: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/talk> (1st video)

Wonder: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/wonder> (1st video)

Grow: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/grow> (2nd video)

Engaging:

- **Slide 2: Threads Through the Cross**

- **Slide 3: Fork in the road cards**

Do you remember these?

We used them 5 weeks ago to help us to think about the choices that we make – all the time – but also to recognise that some choices are harder than others.

We will need this idea to help us when we look at Jacqui's panels today.

I wonder if you can remember what you wrote on your card?

Was your choice easy or difficult?

What was the last important decision that you made?

Who do you listen to when you make decisions?

Today's panel is all about making big decisions.....good and bad.

- **Slide 4: Your will be done**

Today's story takes place the night before Jesus died, in a garden where Jesus was praying. He had asked his close friends Peter, James and John to pray with him, but they all fell asleep, leaving Jesus alone. So, Jesus had prayed alone, knowing the big choice that lay ahead of him....

As you gaze at the panel, what do you notice?....

...maybe you notice the three friends, fast asleep?

...maybe you notice Judas, who has come to find Jesus in the garden? He is the one who has made a bad decision and will betray Jesus with a kiss, the sign of friendship.

...maybe you notice the bare trees, with no leaves?...or the moon that is no longer bright, but covered with cloud?

...maybe you notice the spears of the soldiers who have come with Judas?

...maybe you spotted the thorns, giving us a glimpse into what is yet to happen?

...or maybe you spotted the bird?! Jacqui says that this is an American red-winged blackbird, its flash of red signalling danger.....

The hardest thing to spot are the words! These are the words of Jesus, spoken to God his Father in prayer: **'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me; yet not as I will, but as you will.'**

If you've ever had a hard decision to make, you can maybe appreciate what a difficult decision this was for Jesus. Like the choices that Jesus made at his baptism and in the desert, he knew that they were all leading to this moment of surrender, when he would choose the path to the cross. Jesus knew that although this choice was not easy (look at the first half of the sentence!), he knew that he was making this choice for the greater good – it was part of God's Great Rescue plan. Although it might've looked to the disciples that he was giving in, and not fighting the soldiers, he was surrendering to the better plan that God had for the whole of humankind,

- **Slide 5: Today you will be with me in paradise**

Jesus knew all along that he would need to do this difficult thing, because it was what God had planned as the only thing that would put right all that had gone wrong in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve chose their own way. If you look very carefully, you can see the two trees again in the background. Jacqui placed these two trees deliberately here as a reminder. It's as if Jesus is stretching out his arms in love and forgiveness across history – and he declared from the Cross **'It is finished!'**



....I wonder what you think Jesus meant? What was finished?.... *[you might like to leave some room for discussion here, or take it back into class discussions, maybe in RE]*

As you gaze at the section* of this panel, what do you notice?....

....why do you think Jacqui chose grey and black as the main colours for this panel?

....which other colours do you notice?

....I wonder why this moment in history has been the focus of so much art? *[you can see one of the earliest examples in the comparison slide, from the recent 'Siena' exhibition at the National Gallery'.]*

**For obvious reasons, we have excluded some of the more distressing detail that Jacqui includes in this panel. You can view a full version of the panel at the very end of this presentation.*

- **Slide 6: Heavy stone**

Having a difficult decision to make can sometimes feel like a heavy stone, weighing us down. It's sometimes hard to make the right choice, especially if it means giving up something that we want for the good of others. *Use this time to talk about / share experiences of this in our own lives [e.g. thinking about others instead of ourselves], and strategies that you might have in school that help children to know how to navigate decision making, including how talking about challenges can make all the difference.*

Jesus knew that talking to his Father, God, in prayer was the way to help him to make the right choice in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Slide 7: Responding and words for worship

We've thought today about the difficult choice that Jesus made to follow the plan that would lead to the Cross, because he knew it was the only way. We've also thought about difficult choices or decisions that we might have made. Let's draw our thoughts together now and have some time to be quiet and still.

....I wonder why making the right decision sometimes feels so hard?....

....I wonder how Jesus' example might help us if we are facing difficult decisions or choices?....

....I wonder how you make difficult decisions or who might help you?....

We've also heard how Jesus turned to God in prayer when he needed help to make the right choice.

Slide 8: Opportunity for reflection / prayer

I'm going to leave a short time of silence *[or play some reflective music]* when you can bring your own difficult decisions to God in prayer if you would like to, before I use some words of a prayer, asking God for his help when we have difficult choices to make, based on some words from the Bible.* Make this prayer your own if this is something you feel comfortable with.....

Dear God,

When we're faced with the most difficult choices, when we most need your wisdom, may we remember to ask for your help.

Slide 9: Amen

*[*If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it.' James 1:5].*

Sending: Slide 10 (NB note different word from last week!)

Leader: As we leave this place & time and go into the day ahead...

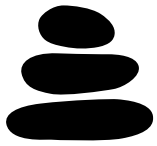
All: Together, we create a helpful community!

BSL Together: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/together> (1st video); Helpful: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/helpful>
You already have signs for 'community'

To listen to / sing:

To listen to: [Sign your cross](#) (NBD)





Slide 11: Reflective areas

Talk: What helps you to make difficult decisions? How can we help each other?

Do: Pick up the heavy stone and hold it in your hands as you think.

Think: What difficult decisions might you have to make? You might want to make your thoughts into a prayer asking God for his help. Lay the heavy stone down as a way of letting go.



Slide 12: Showing the Garden of Gethsemane from different cultural perspectives

Link to original artwork: <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=58532>, which includes some key information.

Looking at these three creative interpretations of this part of the story may be something that links with your RE curriculum, reflecting the fact that Christianity is a global religion, encouraging pupils to appreciate the diversity that exists across cultures, traditions and geographical areas. It's important for pupils' wider understanding that they are given opportunities to think about how Christians show Jesus as being 'like them', and that this important story for Christians is imagined in different ways across the world. It also creates an inclusive classroom environment, giving all pupils opportunity to see themselves in the art that they view.

You may wish to consider these questions:

- *What is the same? What is different?*
- *Which cultures / traditions do the other pieces come from?*
- *Why do we think this?*
- *What questions might we want to / need to ask?*

Slide 13: Showing the Crucifixion from different cultural perspectives

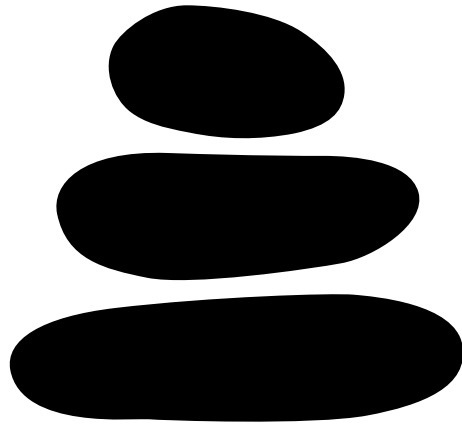
Link to original artwork: <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56778>, which includes some key information.

Looking at these three creative interpretations of this part of the story may be something that links with your RE curriculum, reflecting the fact that Christianity is a global religion, encouraging pupils to appreciate the diversity that exists across cultures, traditions and geographical areas. It's important for pupils' wider understanding that they are given opportunities to think about how Christians show Jesus as being 'like them', and that this important story for Christians is imagined in different ways across the world. It also creates an inclusive classroom environment, giving all pupils opportunity to see themselves in the art that they view.

You may wish to consider these questions:

- *What is the same? What is different? Notice the difference in colours especially.*
- *Which cultures / traditions do the other pieces come from?*
- *Why do we think this?*
- *What questions might we want to / need to ask?*





Difficult decisions



What helps you to make difficult decisions? How can we help each other?



Pick up a heavy stone and hold it in your hands as you think.



What difficult decisions might you have to make? You might want to make your thoughts into a prayer asking God for his help. Lay the heavy stone down as a way of letting go.

