

6. Choices

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. The panel for this week is based on the choices that Jesus made at the very start of his ministry, which will lead pupils into thinking about the choices that they make every day – in school, and in their own personal lives.**



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 **Choices**: what this means to the Christian community, and how your school might support pupils in the choices that they make for themselves, alongside your school's vision and values, as these are primary ways in which this happens in your school.

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.
- You will need to....review the opening game and make choices (!) about any additional 'Would you rather....' Statements that might be more relevant for your school setting. There is also a story to use this week – with a few simple props. You can find these listed on p4.**
- 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.**
- 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: Fork in the road choices cards – write / draw about a challenging choice. Print out cards on p.5 You might want to keep these until week 11, when we refer to them again.**

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

Shortly, we will be looking at more of Jacqui's panels. But first, something to think and talk about together.

• Slides 3-8: 'Would you rather?' game

We're going to play a game about choices now, called '**Would you rather?**' It's very simple; I show you two options on the screen, and you decide which one you'd rather....I'll give you a few moments to think and then you will show me by putting up your hand *[It's probably better not to allow children much time to discuss, otherwise you will run out of time! You could also change the actions to keep the pace up e.g. put your finger on your nose, hand on your head etc. Do involve the adults in this game as well!]*

It's a great game to play with your friends as well – you can very easily make up your own ideas!

[You could make this a more physical activity if you like at playtime, using two sides of the playground]

• Slide 4: Would you rather.....eat **pizza** or **ice cream**?

• Slide 5: Would you rather.....go to the **beach** or go to the **moon**?

• Slide 6: Would you rather.....read a **book** or play a **game**?

• Slide 7: Would you rather..... have **winter snow** or **summer sun**?

• Slide 8: Would you rather.....meet a **mouse** the size of a horse, or a **horse** the size of a mouse?!

• Slide 9: Choices

Now some of these were a bit silly, and not at all possible, but in real life, we make choices every day – what to have for breakfast, who to play with at playtime, what to do to have fun at the weekend, and hundreds more! Some choices are ordinary, some are difficult – and we'll continue talking about these during the week. I wonder if you might be facing some difficult choices at the moment?

Today's panels feature 2 stories from the life of Jesus showing some choices that he had to make – and if you look really carefully, you might recognise some parts of the panel.....because there are ideas that we have seen before!

• Slide 10: This is my Son

Spend a while just gazing at the panels. Relax, and focus on calm breathing.

Let your eyes take in (look at) every detail..... *[leave silence for a short while]*

Now I'm going to use some questions to help us...for now, we're not going to tell each other the answers. *[select from the questions below, or use all, depending on the time / pupils you have]*

....Where do you think Jesus is in each panel?

....I wonder what's similar between the two panels? *[pick out the two trees; the fruit – you've seen these before in the Garden of Eden; Jesus' posture; the bright sun]*

....and what's different? *[Jesus is in water / in the desert / wearing clothes in one; water / desert background; dove / snake]*

....Which story/ies do you think these are from? *[they are actually part of the same story – after Jesus was baptised, he went into the desert]*

....Which parts have you seen before? *[trees with fruit; dove=Holy Spirit; snake from Garden of Eden]*

Now spend a few minutes talking about the things you were thinking about....and pick out the words '**You are my Son, whom I love.**' and '**If you are the Son of God.....**' to confirm what children might already have said.

....Whose words are these? *[God the Father / Satan, the tempter – who also spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, where they made choices too]*

....Can you find the birds? *[for time purposes, we don't talk about the birds in this script, but if children ask:*



The kingfisher is usually found by water and for some people, symbolises new beginnings. In folklore, the blackbird is a traditional sign of temptation, which links with the temptations in the desert.]

- **Slide 11: Reflective story – using story on p.5 and props if desired.**

We're going to use the story of these panels to help us to think some more about choices....

Slide 12: Responding and words for worship

Today, we've thought about the choices that Jesus made, choices that were difficult and would take him to the Cross. He chose God's way over the short-cuts that Satan the tempter offered him.

We heard in an earlier story about how Mary also chose God's way and said: **Let this happen to me as you say!**

We've also thought about what choices look like for us – some easier, some more difficult. We have many ways in school to help us to choose well.... *[you may want to contextualise here, using values/tools that are familiar for your school community]* and anyone who is a part of this community will always help you if you ask for it.....

Slide 13: The choices we make are like a fork in the road – do we go this way, or that way? As we think about the choices that lie ahead of us today, let's wonder together.....You might want to bring a choice into your mind now....

Slide 14:

....I wonder what choices we might face today?....

....I wonder what might help us to choose well?....

....I wonder what we might learn from the example set by Jesus?....

Opportunity for reflection / prayer

I'm going to pray now. If this is something that you feel comfortable doing, then there will be some words for us to share together. If you don't want to pray, then use the quiet to be still with your own thoughts. Here are the words....

Slide 15: Help us to choose well.

Slide 16: In the choices we make at home and at school

Slide 17: Help us to choose well.

Slide 18: In the friends that we make

Slide 19: Help us to choose well.

Slide 20: In the way that we treat one another....

Slide 21: Help us to choose well.

Slide 22: Amen.

Sending: Slide 23 (NB note different word from last week!)

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

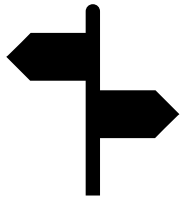
All: Together, we create a responsible community!

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

To listen to / sing:

To sing: [Resilience in me](#) (NBD) or [Kindness Song](#)





Slide 24: Reflective areas – ‘Fork in the road’ choices

Think: Think about some choices that you have made today or this week. Which ones were harder than others?

Talk: How can we help each other to make good choices in school?

Do: Take a ‘fork in the road’ card. Choose one of your more difficult choices and draw / write about it on the card. You might want to talk to another person or to God about what you have written.

Slide 25: Showing the baptism of Jesus from different cultural perspectives

Link to original artwork: <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56385>, which includes some key information.

Looking at these two 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 culture / tradition does the 2nd piece come from?*
- *Why do we think this?*
- *What questions might we want to / need to ask?*
- *If you were to create some art to express this story, what might it look like?*



Jesus in the desert – a reflective story adapted from one written by Chris Hudson ©Barnabas in Schools

You will need:

a sand-coloured cloth (a fabric table mat is ideal!)

a small round stone

a tall tower

a toy sword

[Place cloth] After Jesus was baptised, he went off alone into the desert. He spent a long time there praying and preparing for the work God had for him to do. He went without food for 40 days. At the end of this time God's enemy, Satan, the tempter, tempted Jesus with different ways that he could bring in God's Kingdom. He was offered three other ways to bring God's Kingdom into this world but each one of them avoided the cross.

Place the stone on the cloth:

'Why not change stones to bread and feed everyone who is hungry?' the tempter said. 'This will surely solve all the world's problems and bring in God's Kingdom!'

Place the tower on the cloth:

'Why not jump down from a high tower in Jerusalem and defy gravity by landing safely?' he said. 'This will surely guarantee that people will believe you can do miraculous things and bring in God's Kingdom!'

Place the toy sword:

'Why not crush all the bad in the world with my help, so that everything is then ruled by you?' he said. 'This will surely bring in God's Kingdom!'

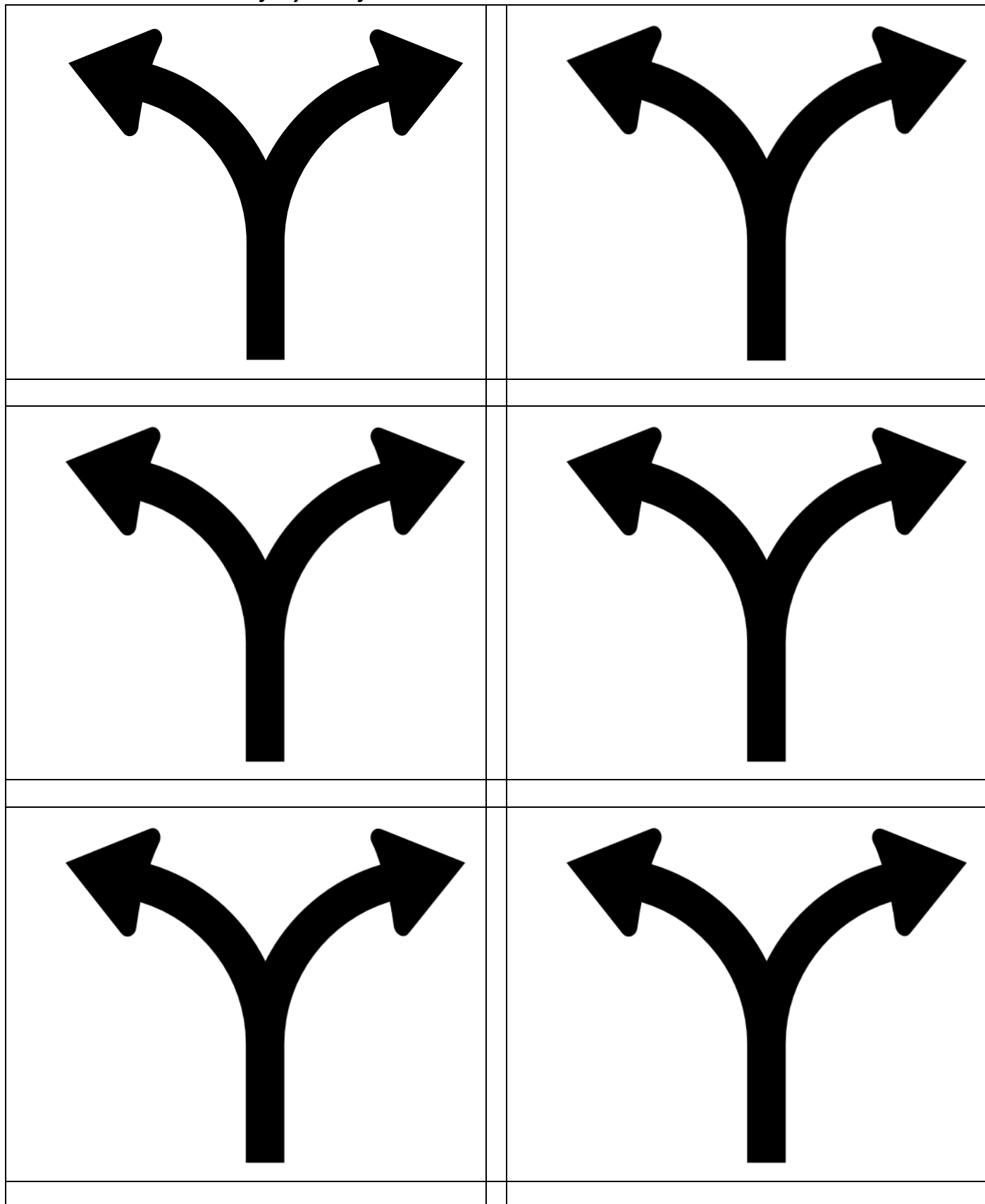
Allow the children time to think about the symbols of the story in front of them and wonder about these different ways of changing the world and making it more like heaven, with these questions:

- **I wonder if full stomachs are really the way to change people's hearts?**
- **I wonder if a miracle jump would really persuade people?**
- **I wonder if crushing the opposition in battle will really bring peace to the world?**

But that's not what Jesus chose. He knew that God's way – the way that would take him to the Cross, *[take the imitation sword and now turn it upside down (a sign of choosing not to fight); the shape that it makes is that of a cross]* was the right way.



Print onto card and cut out for your reflective area



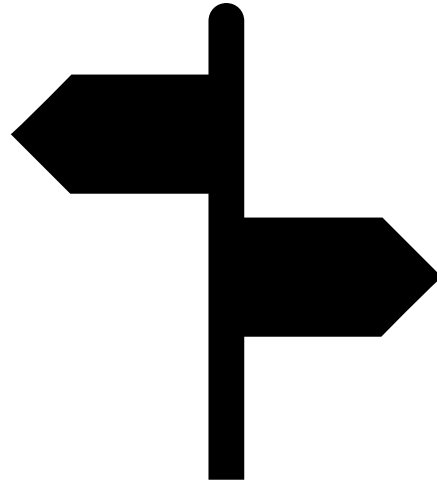
Created by Musmellow
from the Noun Project



Creativity: Threads Through the Cross

6. Choices

Autumn 2025 © Diocese of **Guildford** 
TRANSFORMING CHURCH
TRANSFORMING LIVES



Choices



Think about some choices that you have made today or this week. Which ones were harder than others?



How can we help each other to make good choices in school?



Take a 'fork in the road' card. Choose one of your more difficult choices and draw / write about it on the card. You might want to talk to another person or to God about what you have written.

