

# Creativity from RE for the whole school

Deeply Christian, Serving the common good

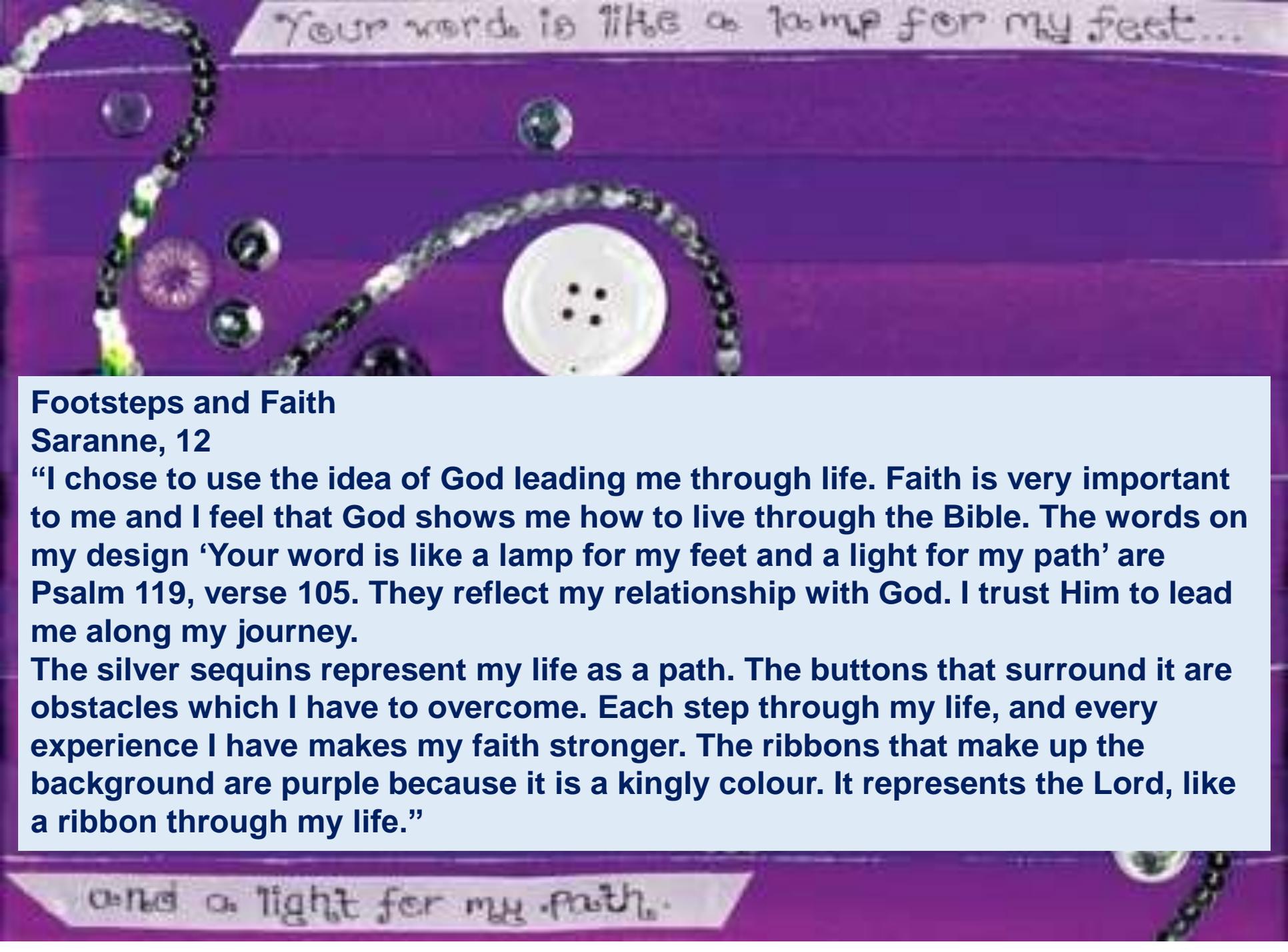
Diocese of York  
York Racecourse  
Education Leaders conference  
June 2018

Lat Blaylock / [lat@retoday.org.uk](mailto:lat@retoday.org.uk)

# Artistic expression of ancient wisdom

How can our curriculum choices prioritise what really matters?

- **Think about sources of wisdom: where do you get wise advice to live by? Everybody needs a bit of wisdom sometimes!**
- **You're going to see and weigh up the work of four pupils who have found wisdom in the Christian Bible and expressed it artistically.**
- **When you have seen the four artworks, discuss in pairs and then list reasons why you like each of the four works.**
- **Give 'gold, silver and bronze' awards to the three you think are best.**
- **Your teachers of RE and art may give you the chance to make some similar art works yourselves.**
- **[www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts](http://www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts) prize money this year: £1000+, closing date 31<sup>st</sup> July**



Your words is like a lamp for my feet...

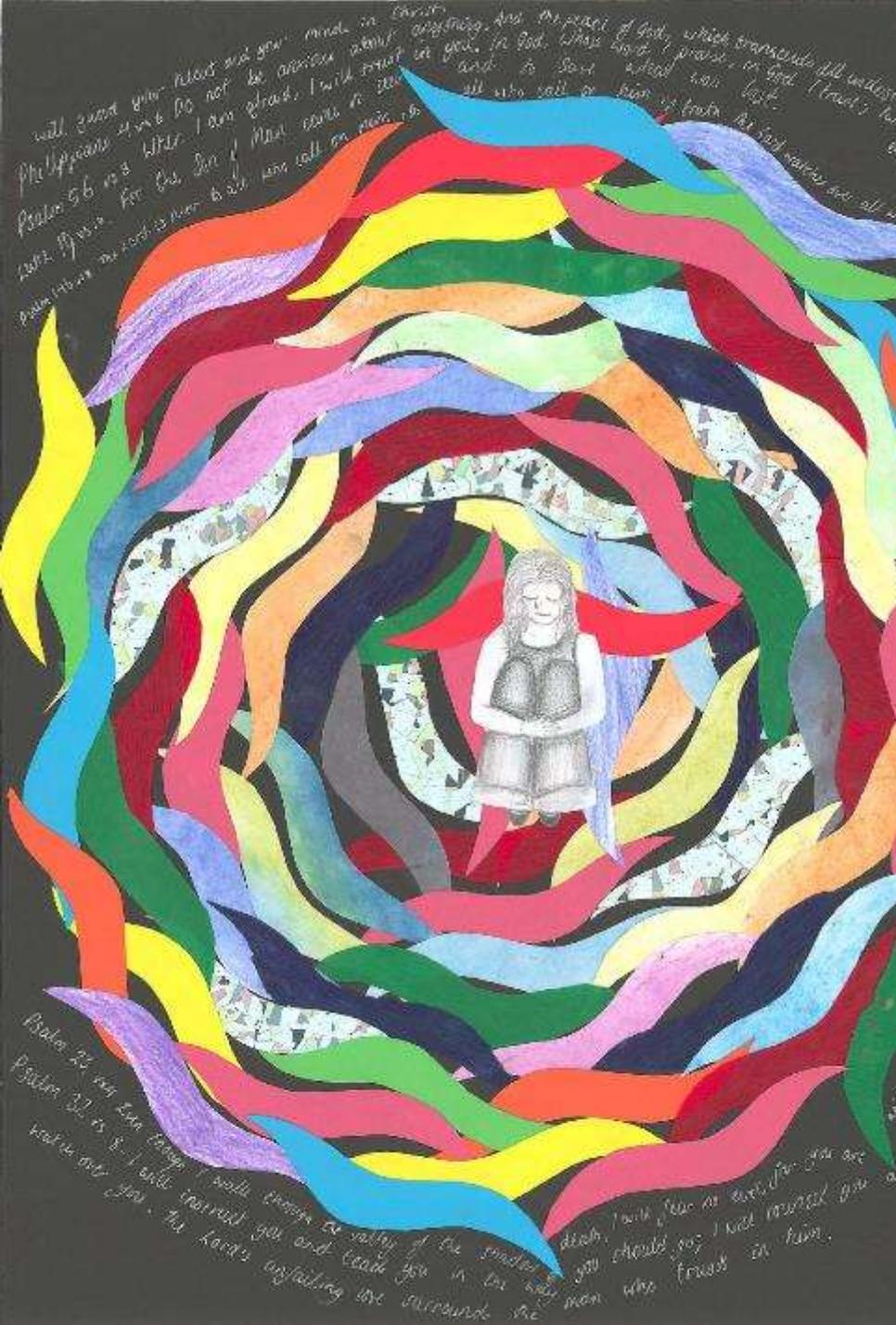
## Footsteps and Faith

Saranne, 12

“I chose to use the idea of God leading me through life. Faith is very important to me and I feel that God shows me how to live through the Bible. The words on my design ‘Your word is like a lamp for my feet and a light for my path’ are Psalm 119, verse 105. They reflect my relationship with God. I trust Him to lead me along my journey.

The silver sequins represent my life as a path. The buttons that surround it are obstacles which I have to overcome. Each step through my life, and every experience I have makes my faith stronger. The ribbons that make up the background are purple because it is a kingly colour. It represents the Lord, like a ribbon through my life.”

and a light for my path.



## Jenny, 14 Trust in God

“I have shown a young person in the centre of my design, surrounded by flames of every colour. The flames stand for the Holy Spirit of God. To me, the teaching of the Bible shows me how to live.

I’ve put some of the teachings that mean most to me at the moment around the edge: the words are verses from the Bible – God’s word – that people might read to reassure them that God is always present to protect and guide them if they should ask for it.”



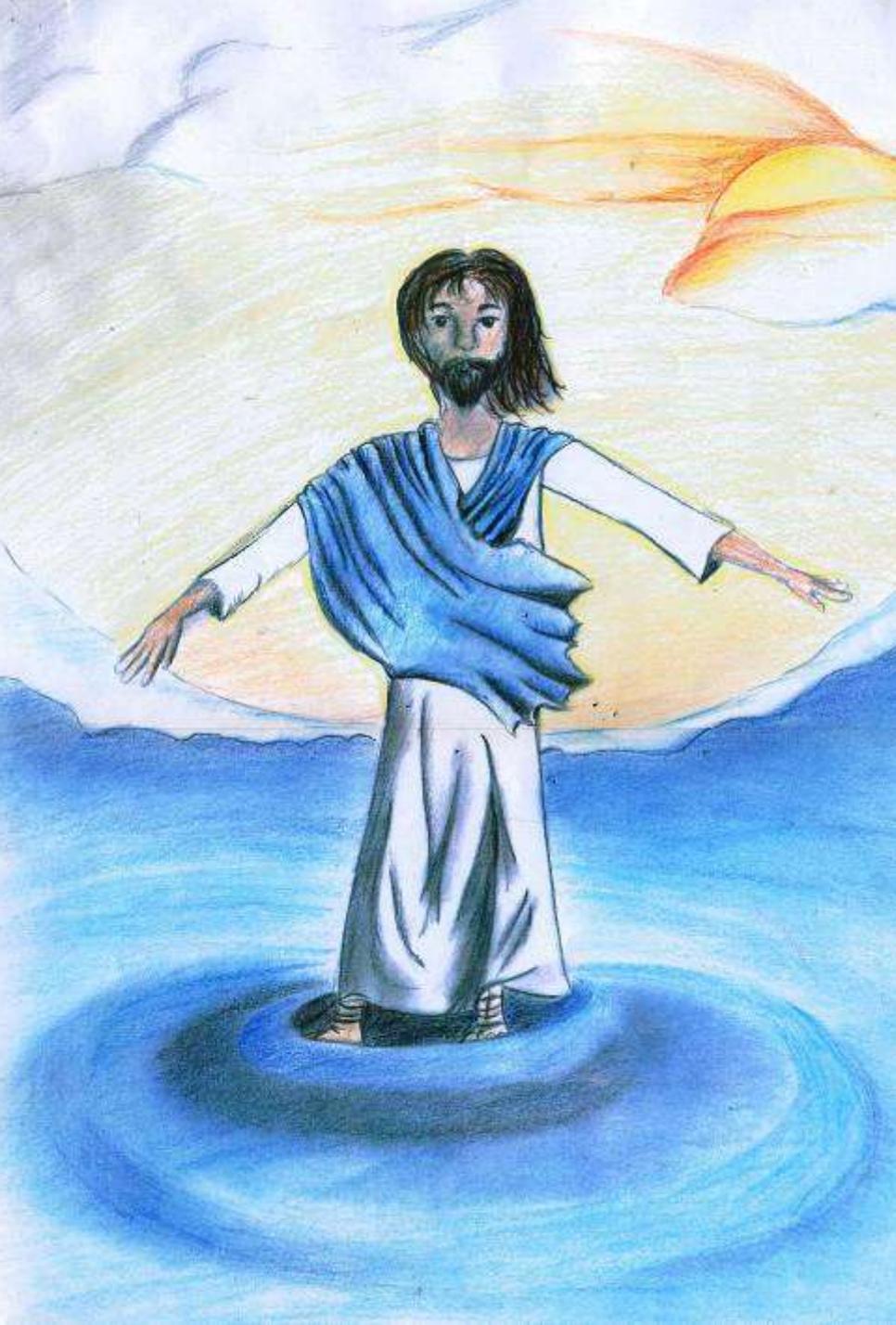
**Isabel (12)**

**“Do to others as you would like them to do to you. The Golden Rule. My artwork shows two people, one ‘angel’ and one broken puzzle of a human.**

**The angel appears to be hugging the human to maybe make them feel better. The angel, covered in a fiery pattern, suggests the angel has a warm heart. It also suggests the angel follows the Golden Rule. The angel’s wings are rainbow coloured to symbolise the love that God has for us in many different forms.**

**The human is made of jigsaw pieces: it only takes a little knock for us to fall apart.**

**Now for a little twist; the reason why I stated that the angel was a metaphor is because it’s not there. It is (quite literally) the Golden Rule, and supports us when we need it, just like the ‘angel’ in my picture.”**



Jesus calms the storm.

Tamsin, 13

“This is a story from the Gospels, about Jesus calming a storm at sea. He walks on water.

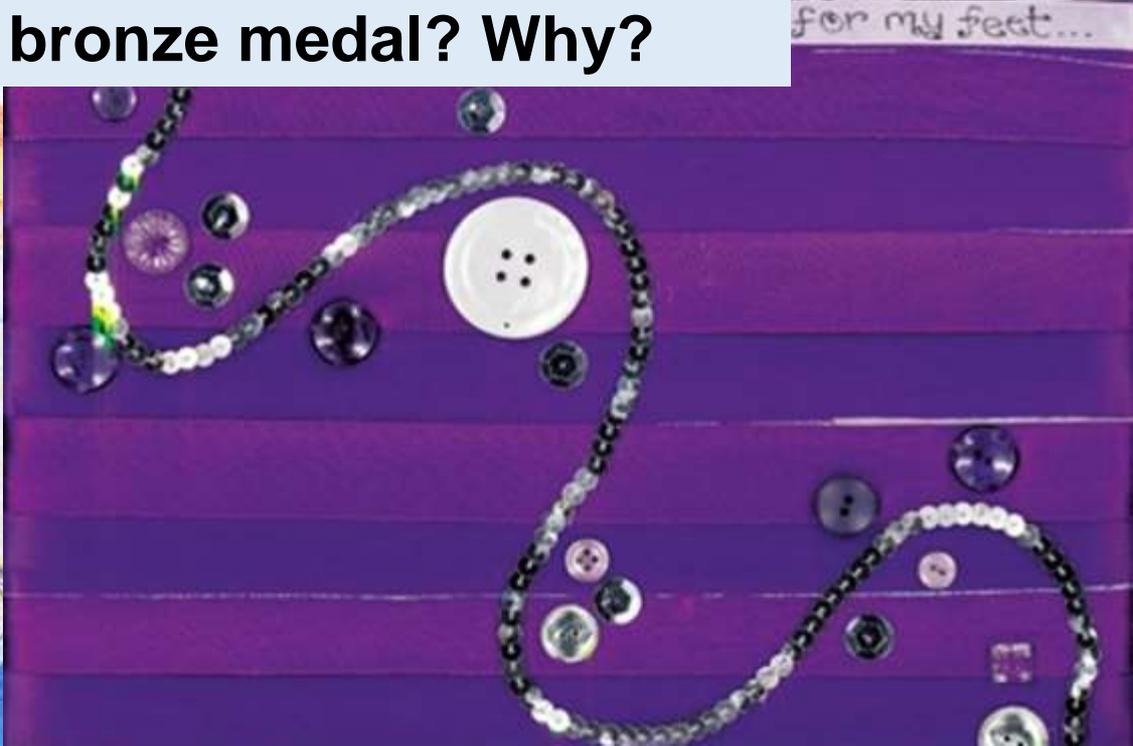
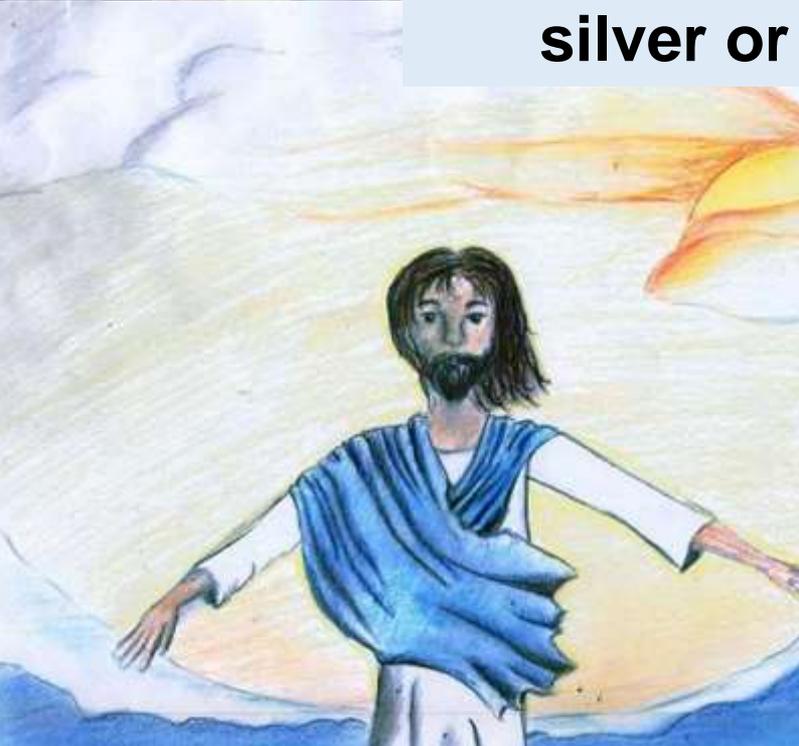
I think it can be a good metaphor for calming other things, for example calming people.

I also like it because it shows that if you trust in God, any situation can turn out better. I felt Jesus should stand out from the waves and sky, so I tried to make him look powerful.

I also drew the clouds parting and the water rippling around him to show the sheer power and strength from God, which (I believe) Jesus possessed.”



**Discussion: To which of the four works of art would you give a gold, silver or bronze medal? Why?**



# Jewish prayer: Selichot

**“For the sins we have committed  
In leaving our groping children  
To wander young and alone  
In the wilderness,  
Without guidance,  
Without faith, to seek their own God,  
For all these,  
O God of forgiveness,  
Forgive us,  
Pardon us,  
Grant us remission.”**

## Creativity as a springboard into the community Schools that serve the common good...

- **‘A good school community is squarely focused on the young & their learning, but a really good school community has a bigger vision of itself embracing all those who are involved with it, all of them in their own way learners.’**
- Tony Little, *An Intelligent Person’s Guide to Education* (2015)

# Creative curriculum development in RE and through RE

- ***“Understanding Christianity... is designed for use in any school. It is an understanding within which our Christian inspiration with regard to wisdom, hope, life together, and dignity both makes sense and can also be connected with other sources of inspiration. Such an approach is offered with a commitment to generous hospitality, being open to the underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other traditions and beliefs, and for the freedom of each person.”***
- (DC, Serving The Common Good, page 16)



Wisdom, hope,  
community, dignity



**Ask pupils to begin by looking silently at the picture for two minutes.**

**After one minute, tell them that this is the meditation room at the United Nations HQ in New York, and it is not a chapel or church for any one religion.**

**The slab in the centre is 4 tons of iron ore. Light shines from outside onto the rock. The abstract painting is untitled.**

**Tell them this space is for people with big decisions to make, for them to sit silently and enquire into their own hearts.**





- **“It has been the aim to create in this small room a place where the doors may be open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer. People of many faiths will meet here, and for that reason none of the symbols to which we are accustomed in our meditation could be used.**
- **This is a room devoted to peace and those who are giving their lives for peace. It is a room of quiet, where only thoughts should speak. We all have within us a center of stillness surrounded by silence.**
- **There is an ancient saying that the sense of a vessel is not in its shell but in the void. So it is with this room. It is for those who come here to fill the void with what they find in their center of stillness.”**
- After the second minute of silence, ask pupils what they would like to ask about the picture and about the UN Meditation Room. These quotations may help some pupils to answer some of their questions: the center of the room he placed a six-and-half-ton rectangular block of iron ore, polished on the top and illuminated from above by a single spotlight. This block, which was a gift of the King of Sweden and a Swedish mining company, was the only symbol in the Room. Mr. Hammarskjöld described it as *“...a meeting of the light, of the sky, and the earth... it is the altar to the God of all.... we want this massive altar to give the impression of something more than temporary...”*.



**What space for reflection, for concentration on the inner dynamics of spiritual or spirited living, can your school make – for pupils and staff? Can pupils design rooms, gardens, chapels or time-spaces where this can happen?**

# What does it mean to say a building is ‘for the glory of God?’

Lat Blaylock

[lat@retoday.org.uk](mailto:lat@retoday.org.uk)

Teach Easter and the resurrection from 4 ‘Cathedrals’







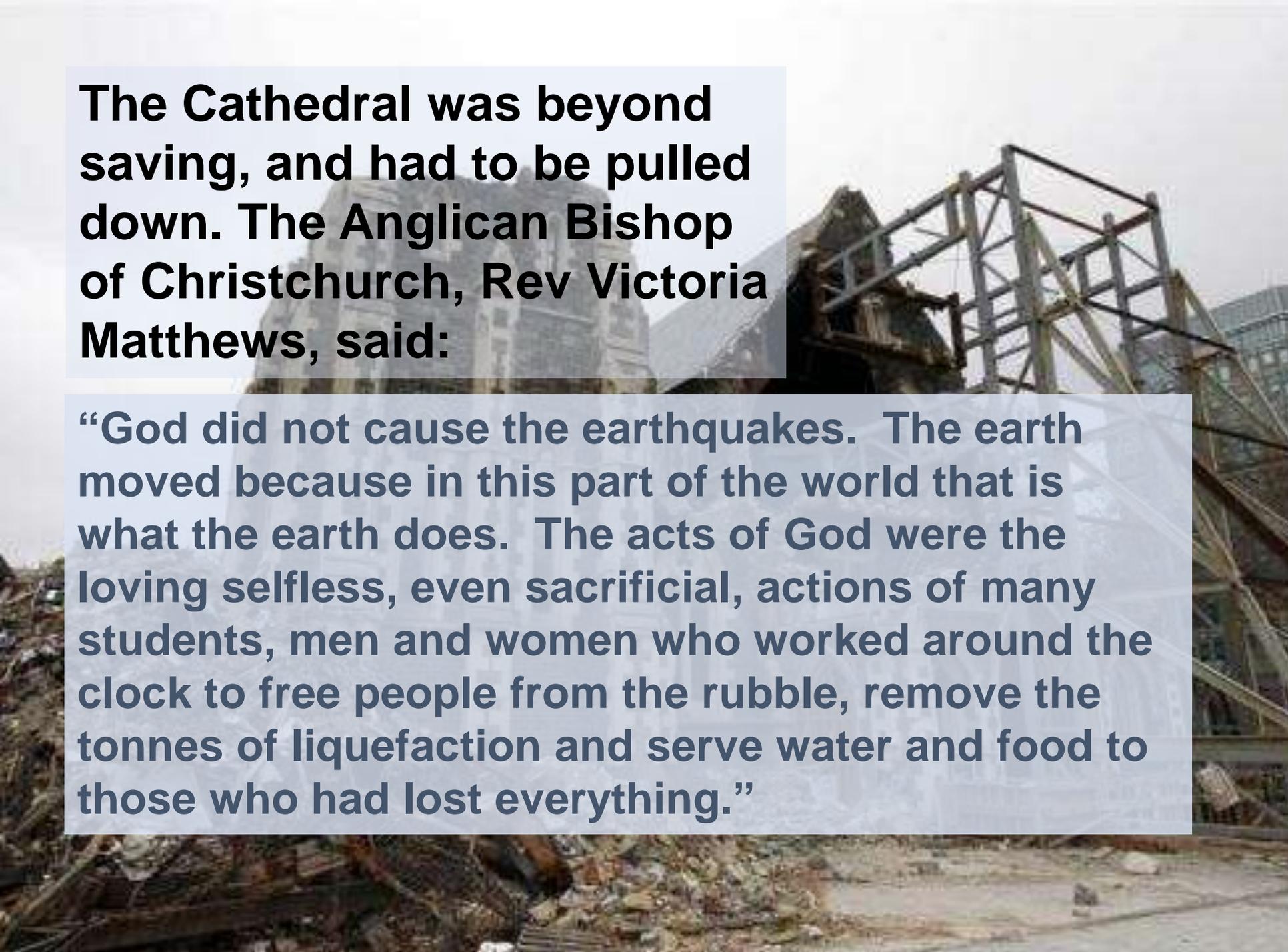
**Earthquakes in Christchurch, NZ  
in September 2010 and February  
2011 killed 185 people.**

**The iconic Cathedral was  
destroyed.**

**This is probably the last photo of  
the tower before it fell.**

**The young people pictured were  
safe.**

**BREAKING NEWS**



**The Cathedral was beyond saving, and had to be pulled down. The Anglican Bishop of Christchurch, Rev Victoria Matthews, said:**

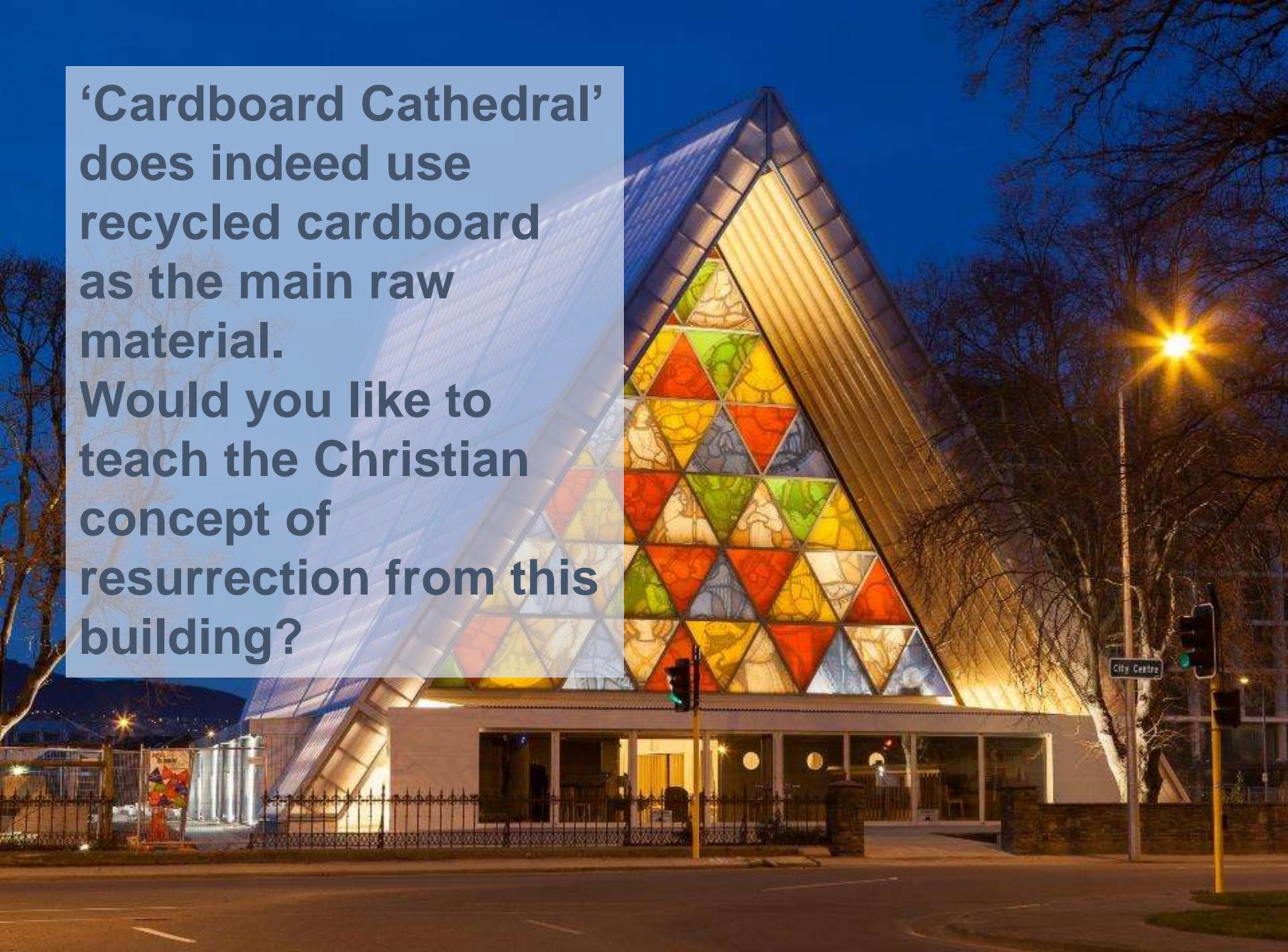
**“God did not cause the earthquakes. The earth moved because in this part of the world that is what the earth does. The acts of God were the loving selfless, even sacrificial, actions of many students, men and women who worked around the clock to free people from the rubble, remove the tonnes of liquefaction and serve water and food to those who had lost everything.”**

**The new  
'Cardboard  
Cathedral'  
opened in  
Christchurch last  
year. It is the  
most  
ecologically  
careful cathedral  
in the world and  
is – as near as  
can be –  
earthquake  
proof.**



**‘Cardboard Cathedral’  
does indeed use  
recycled cardboard  
as the main raw  
material.**

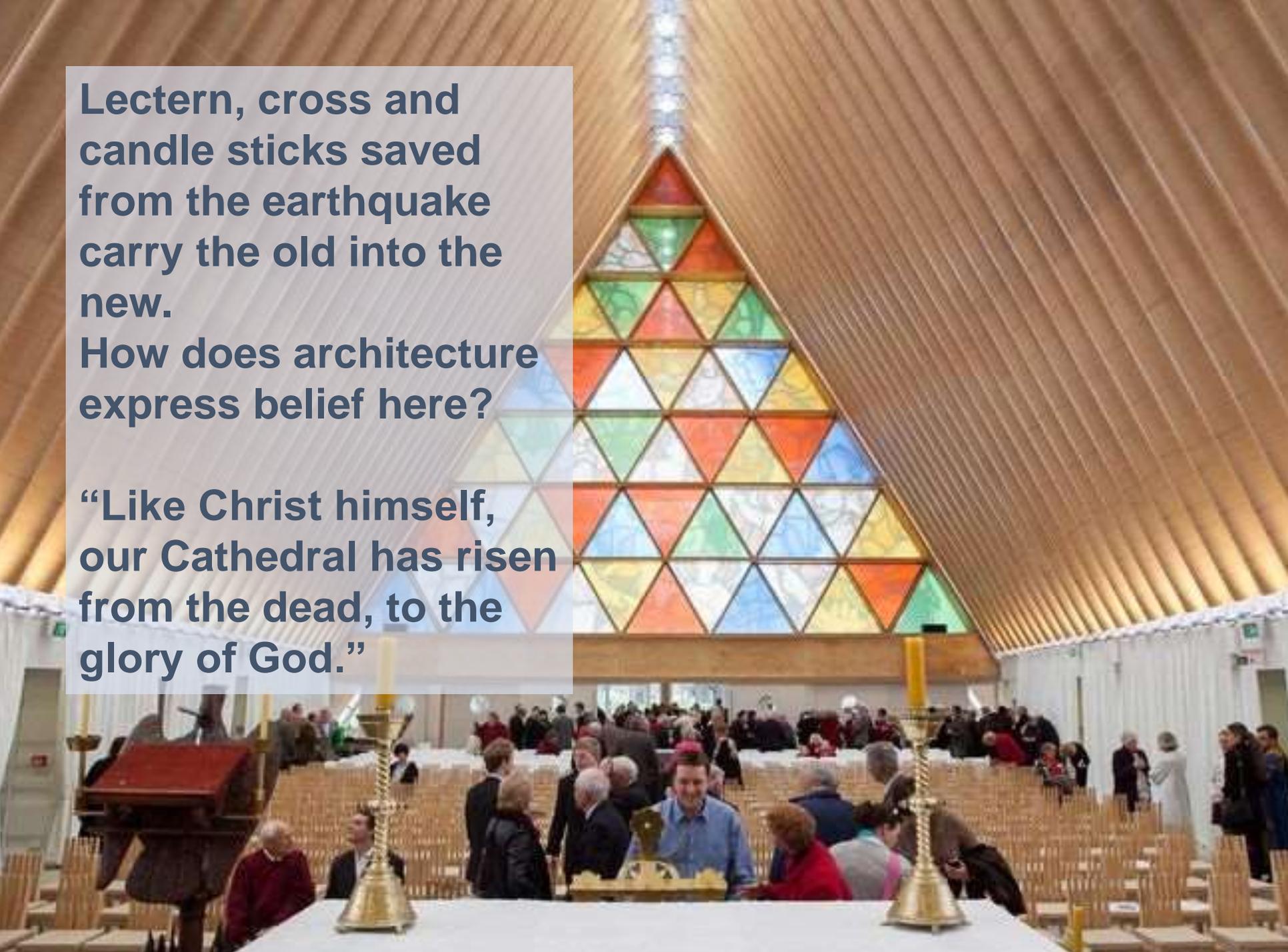
**Would you like to  
teach the Christian  
concept of  
resurrection from this  
building?**



**Lectern, cross and  
candle sticks saved  
from the earthquake  
carry the old into the  
new.**

**How does architecture  
express belief here?**

**“Like Christ himself,  
our Cathedral has risen  
from the dead, to the  
glory of God.”**



**Saint Paul says, in the Bible:**

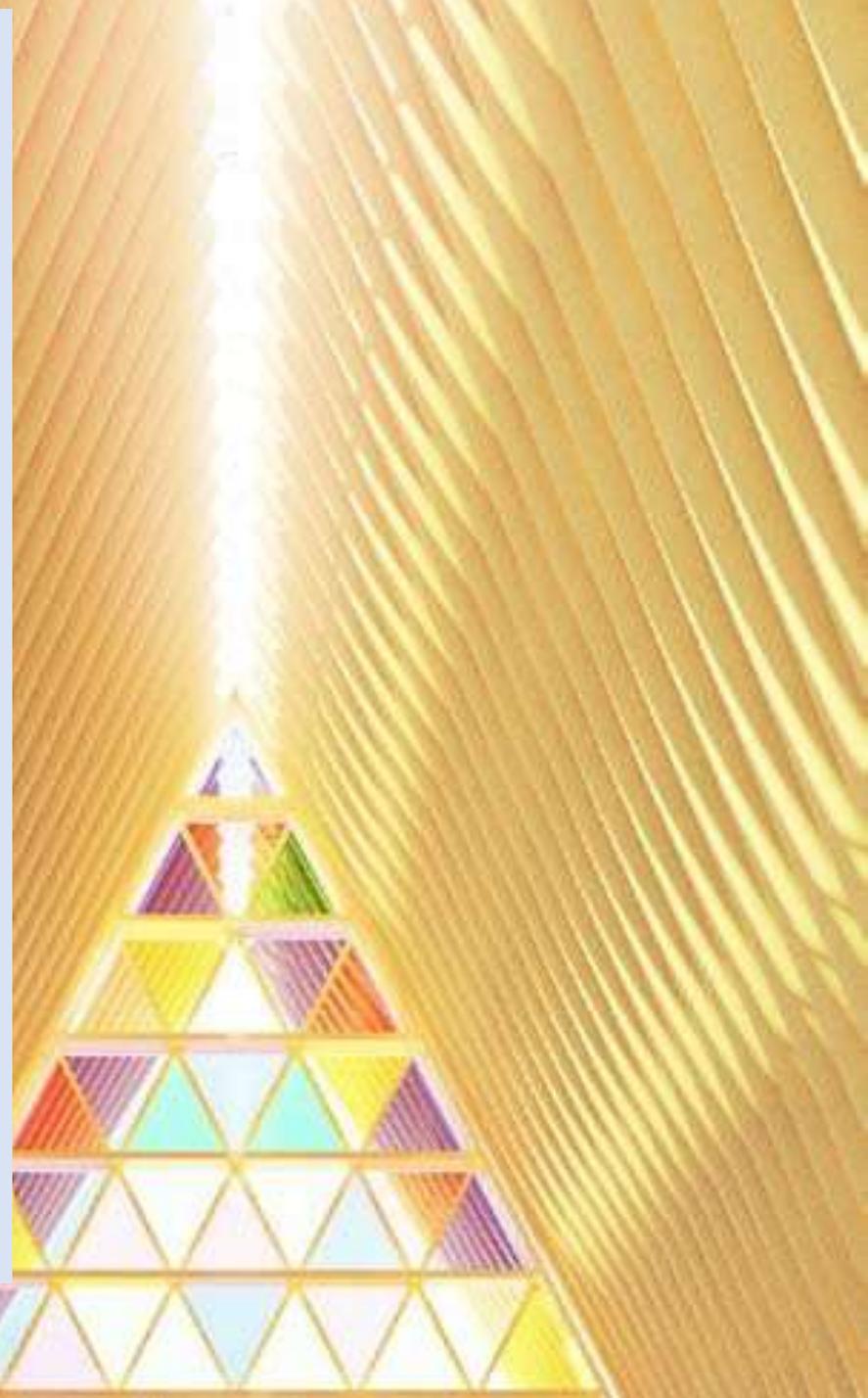
**“I told you the most important part of the message exactly as it was told to me. That part is: Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say. He was buried, and three days later he was raised to life...**

**The bodies we now have are weak and can die. But they will be changed into bodies that are eternal. Then the Scriptures will come true:**

**“Death has lost the battle!  
Where is its victory?  
Where is its sting?”**

**Thank God for letting our Lord Jesus Christ give us the victory!”**

**How do these words from the Bible connect to the story of Christchurch Cathedral?**





Kieran Rogers  
7A

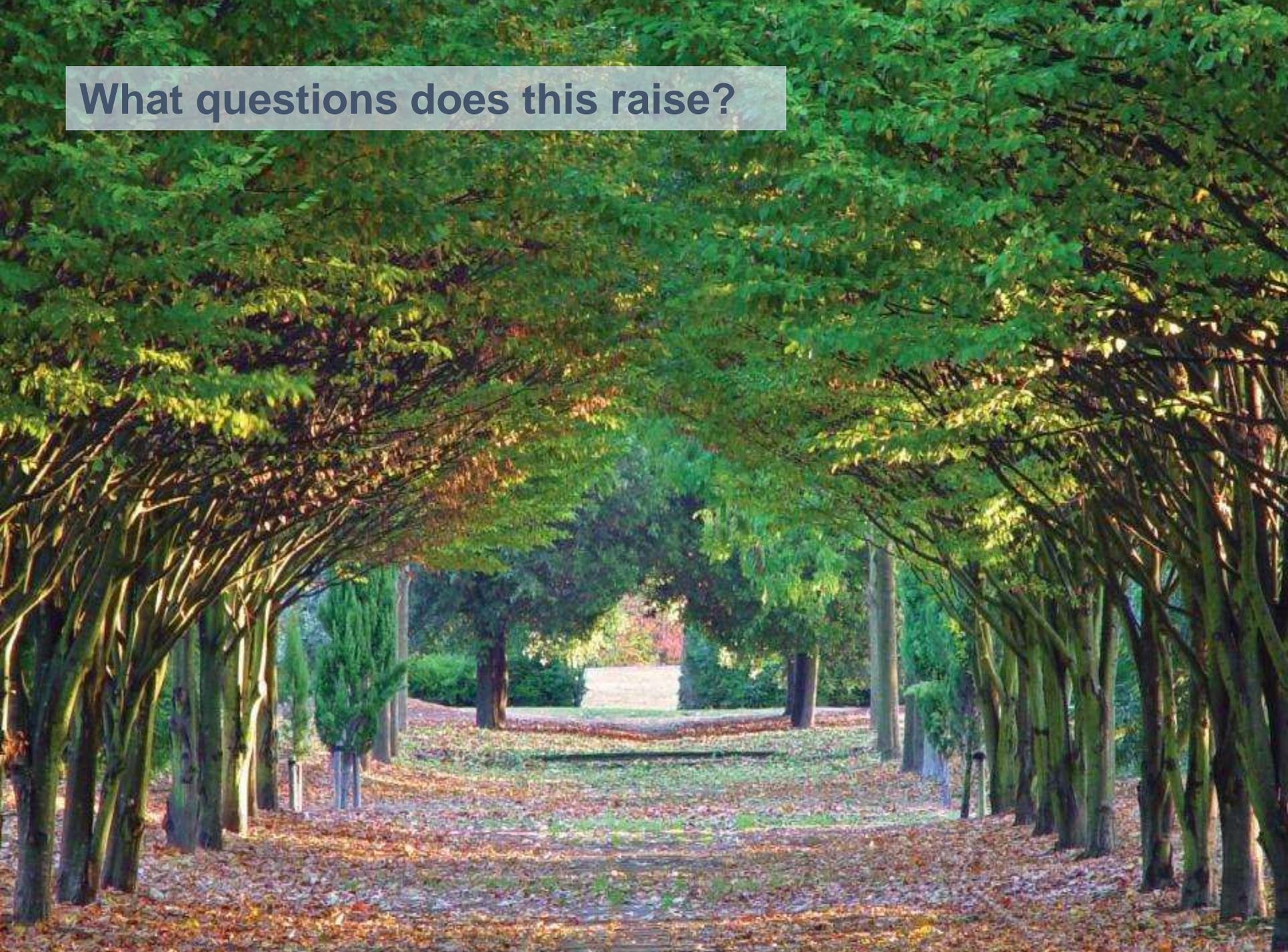
**King's College Cambridge Chapel**  
**3pm 24<sup>th</sup> December**  
**9 lessons and carols**  
**Broadcast annually since 1928**  
**The most popular service of**  
**Anglican worship ever?**



**Next to the motorway, the Milton Keynes Tree Cathedral was planted 30 years ago to the groundplan of Norwich Cathedral.**

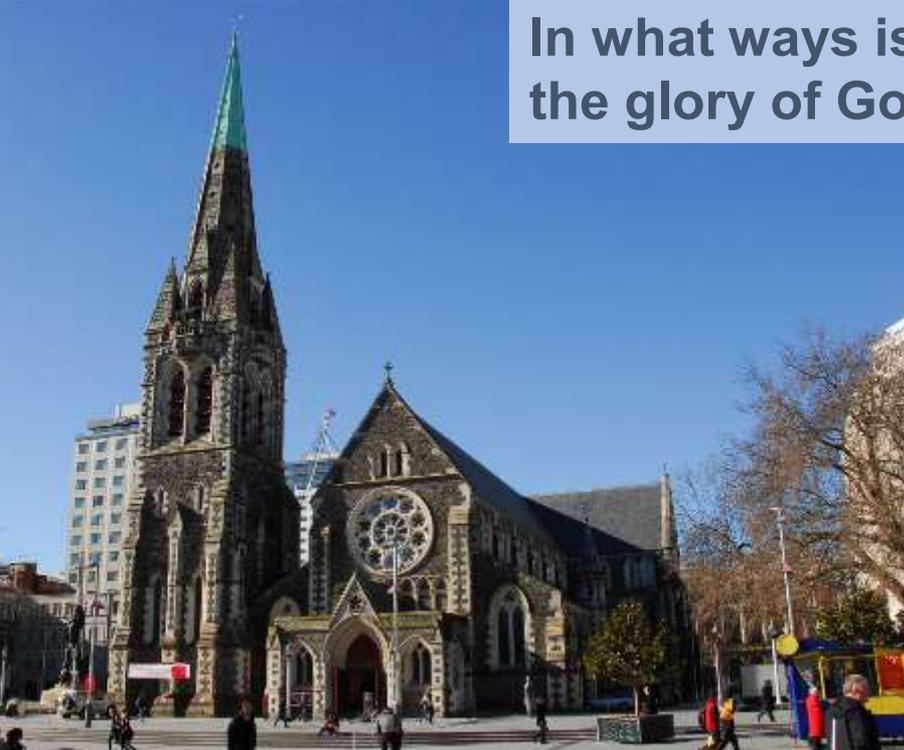


**What questions does this raise?**





**Four Christian buildings:  
In what ways is each one 'to  
the glory of God?'**



## Some shallow learning

- Christian worship: many forms, global;
- Cathedral: a seat for a Bishop;
- One for each diocese – 44 Anglican and 21 Catholic in the UK;
- Earthquakes in Christchurch, NZ, 2010;
- BBC: '9 lessons and carols', King's Cambridge;
- The tree Cathedral ~ what is it?
- Concept of resurrection – what does the word mean?

Some deeper learning: add loads more information, perspective and concepts to explore debates and dilemmas: do these cathedrals 'glorify God', as Christians seek? What does that mean? What would be a good trend in 21<sup>st</sup> century cathedral design? How do these ideas connect to scripture? Should these cathedrals be sold to help the poor? What critiques are available?

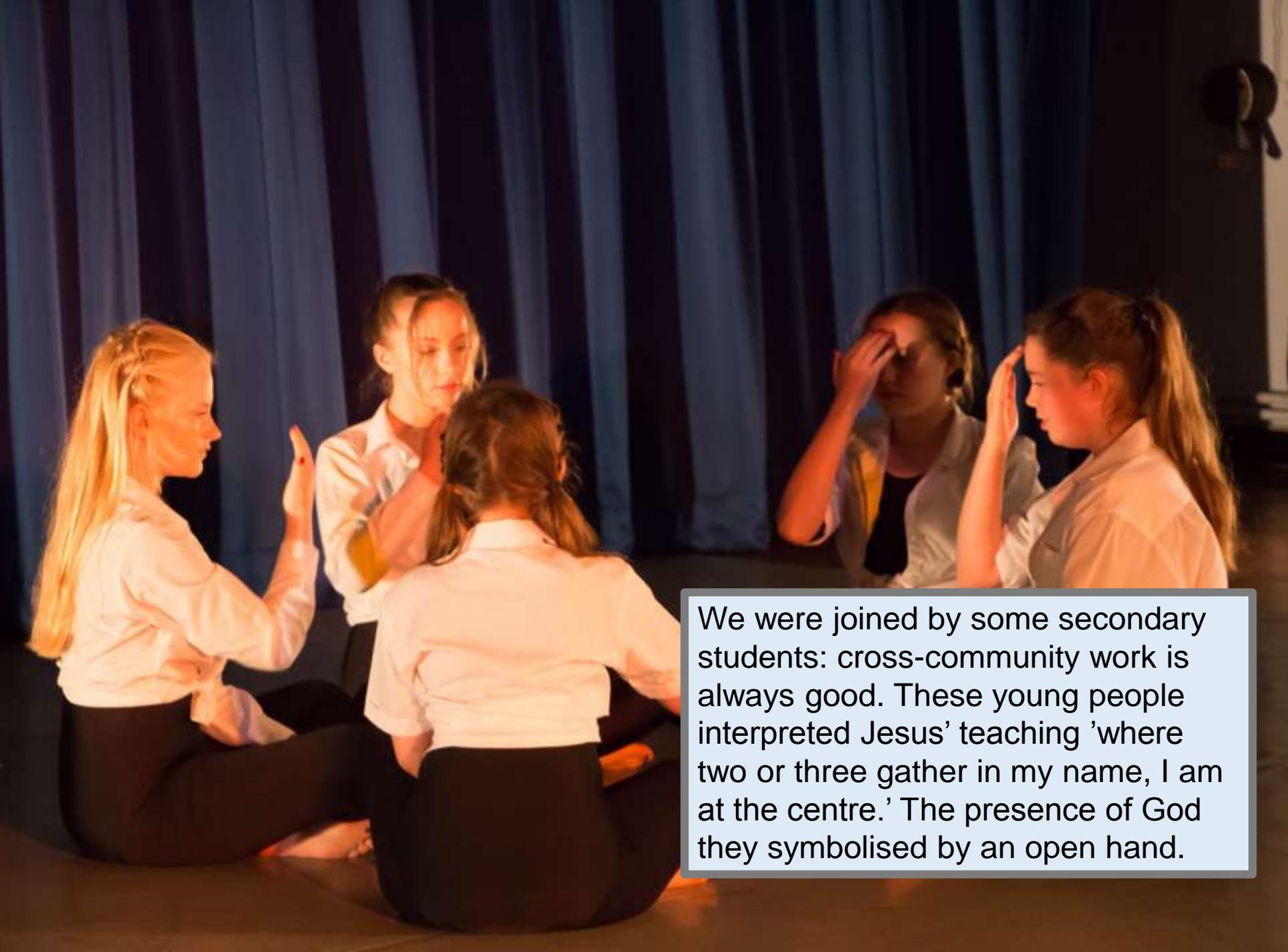
- **“God is glorified where human hearts are filled with love. Sell the buildings! Give to the starving!”**
- **“In Christianity’s green future, cathedrals will have to be cheaper and so more natural”**
- **“Ancient buildings which have been the space for God’s glory for centuries are treasures held in trust for the future. Love these buildings.”**
- **“It is never the building that glorifies God, but the heart of a worshipper – but the buildings create spiritual space for the heart to respond.”**

dance

drama



The idea of a 'Prayer Dance' was developed by each group of children from themselves. Here, 7-8 year olds use movement to express their ideas about 'Coming near to God'



We were joined by some secondary students: cross-community work is always good. These young people interpreted Jesus' teaching 'where two or three gather in my name, I am at the centre.' The presence of God they symbolised by an open hand.

# Julie Thornton-Hayes, St Fidelis Catholic Primary School

**“Liturgical dance has been part of St Fidelis for 6 years. This approach has inspired creative learning, in and through dance, and welcoming others to share gave rise to the idea of an evening of children’s performances, this produced an extraordinary hour showcasing incredible talent and collaborative learning that the children have achieved.**

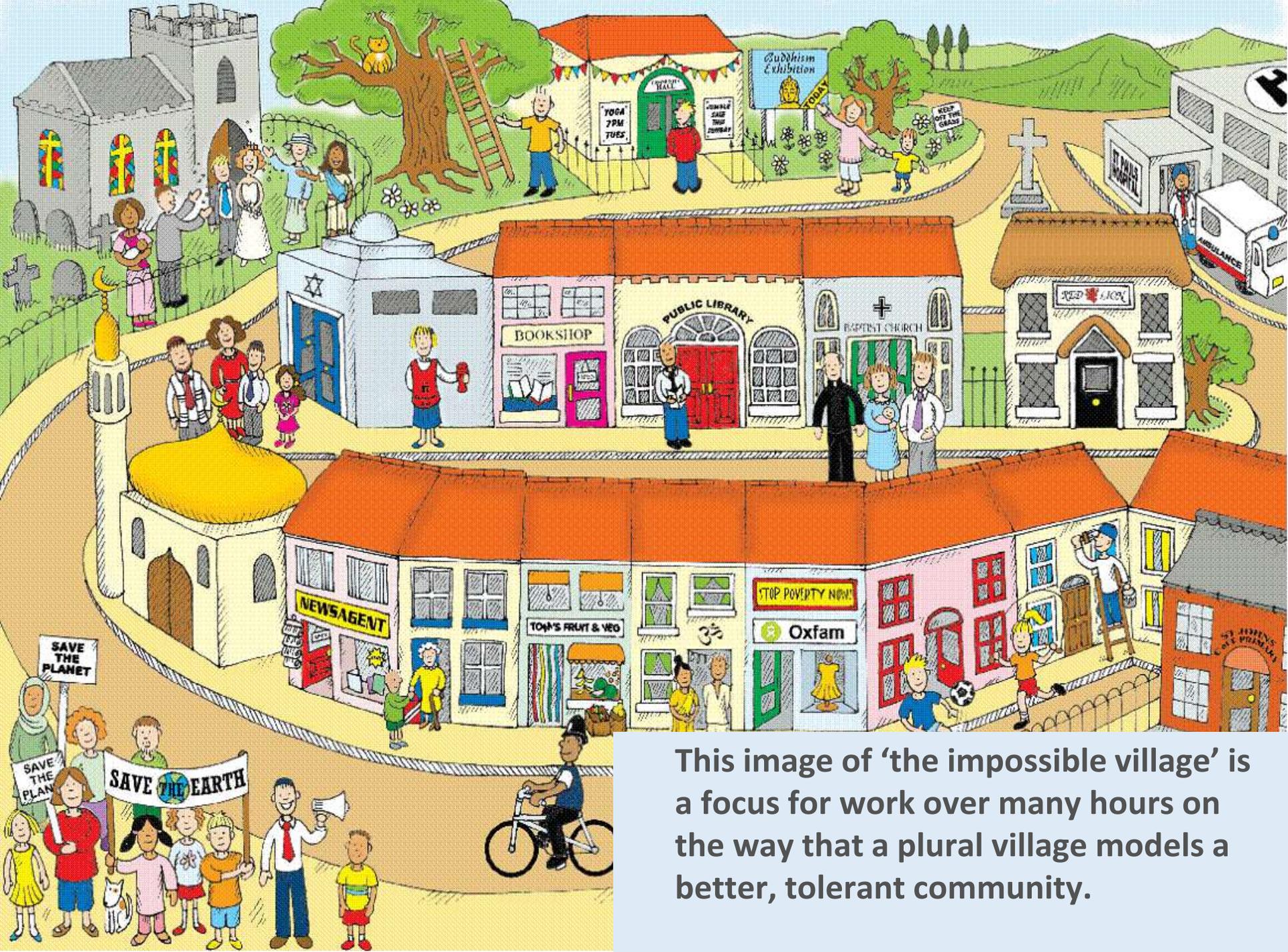
**Seven pieces were performed by Years 2 to 8, a few past pupils from St Fidelis returned to show how they had progressed their Prayer Dance having recently danced during their Confirmation programme.”**



**Year 5 and 6 pupils worked on the concept of reconciliation, both as a sacrament and between people who have been enemies.**

# Creativity for every pupil in any school

- In the stories that we tell
- In the curriculum, in any lesson, where values and spirituality find expression and are explored through creative learning
- In the community life of the school, where children's gifts are celebrated by parents and the wider community
- In the prayer + worship life of a school – inclusively, of course
- In dance, drama, poetry, art, music, sculpture, fabric and above all in creative thinking
- Creativity offered to all to enjoy
- In the wider community of parents and of faith
- For the wellbeing of all



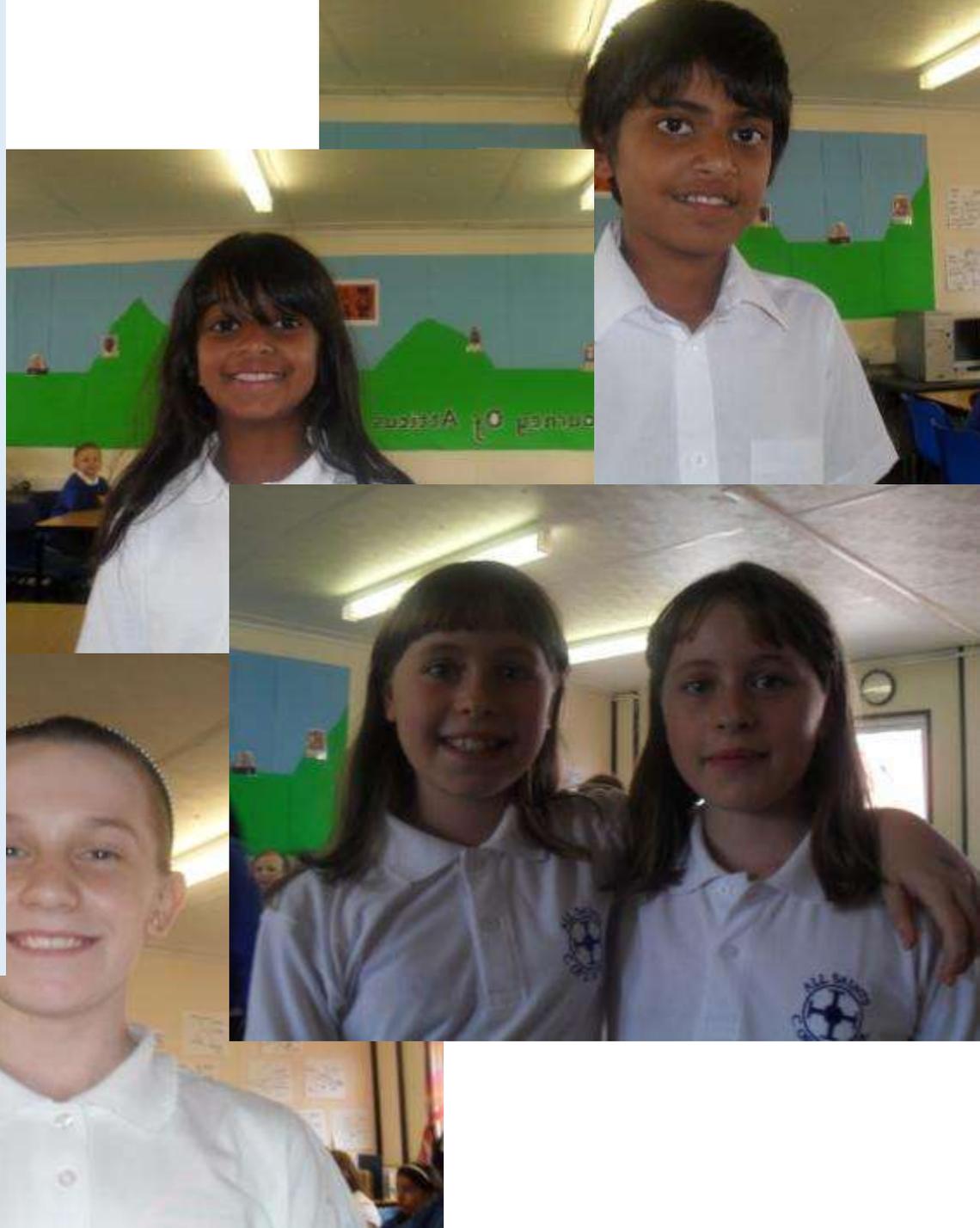
This image of 'the impossible village' is a focus for work over many hours on the way that a plural village models a better, tolerant community.

# All Saints Primary School, Sandwell: a special RE week on respect for everyone

All Saints decided to have a special week of work on RE, with a focus on respect for everyone. All age work and learning outside the classroom linked with design and thinking skills activities in a creative and dynamic mix.

Pupils were involved in collaborative work for a 'Respect through RE' week. Different ages worked together.

Maya: "So we could understand the concepts we then went on a walk around the local area to see what we could find that represented them. Here are some of our ideas."



# Peace



Pupils went out into the local community to take photos inspired by 5 different concepts.

Elisha: "Peace - on our walk we saw a cemetery. As this is a place of rest for people, it represented the peace that comes at the end of life. The cemetery is quiet and a place for reflection and time to think about the past."





**‘Harmony’ is symbolised by the co-operative activity of these pupils – they are not all the same, but they work together**

**Sharntay: “Harmony - Our school is a place of harmony where all different people of different walks of life can all come together to achieve to the best of their potential.**

# Kindness



This group chose the Hospital as a place that signals kindness  
Mia: “Kindness - Not far from school is Sandwell Hospital, this is an important place of kindness as doctors and nurses help those in need and friends and relations come to visit and bring presents – and hopes and prayers”

# Conflict

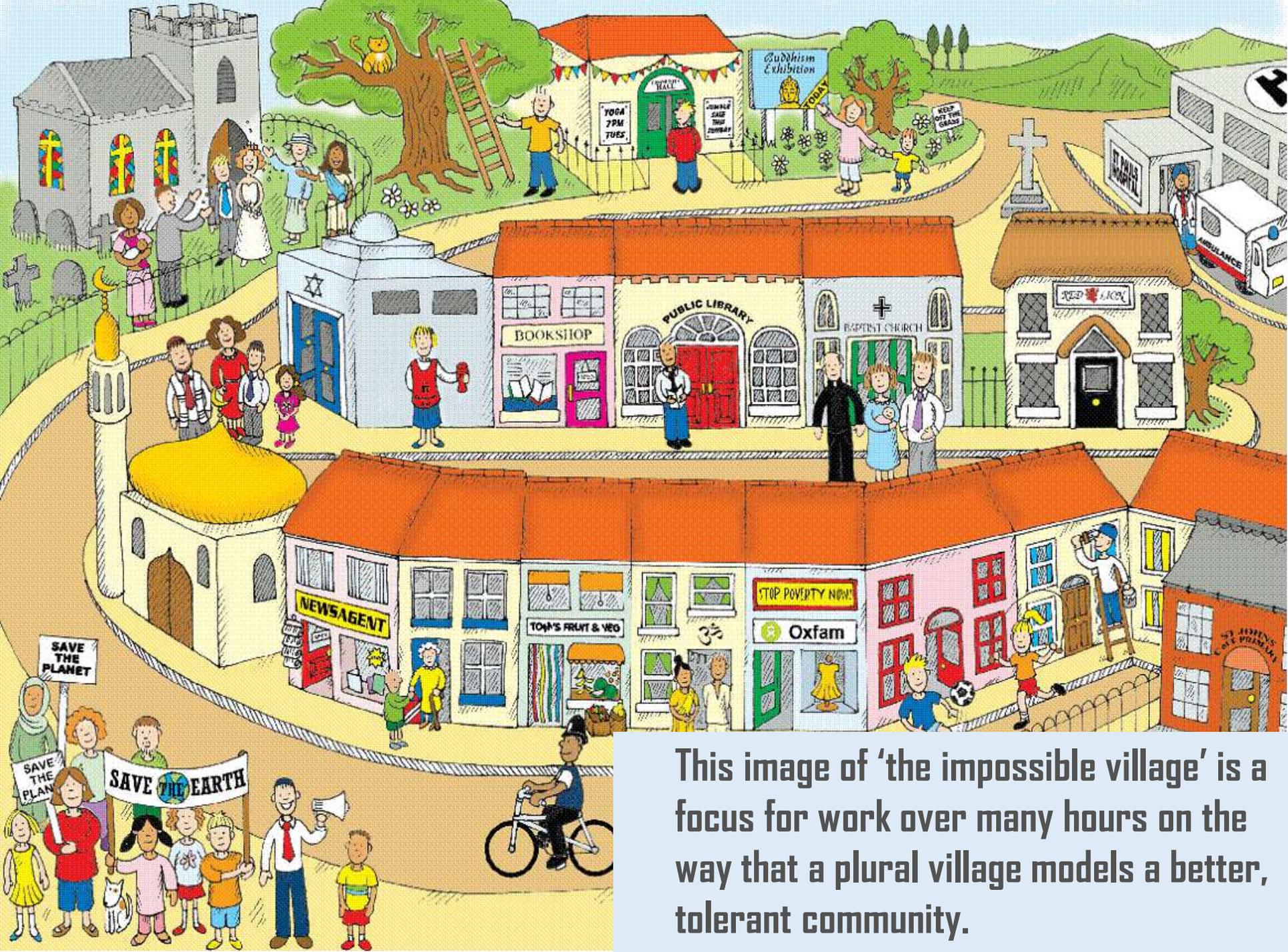


Elodie: “We decided that the traffic represents conflict. There are lots of people rushing about their daily routine and we could hear lots of horns beeping because people got in their way. A bit of peace is needed! We saw this ‘toy car crash.’ We are glad it was not real.”

# Faith



This group chose church and gurdwara to show the place of faith in Sandwell: "In our local area we have lots of religious buildings, such as the Church and the Gurdwara where people put their faith in religion."



This image of 'the impossible village' is a focus for work over many hours on the way that a plural village models a better, tolerant community.



**Younger pupils were involved in thinking about what makes them special and then about how we are all different**



**Lots of activities for the 4-5 year olds explored what makes them special as well as what makes us all different. Mati: “Year 1 and 2 have been looking at the Rainbow Fish Story. As they have been looking at the story they have been thinking hard about how we respect other and respect the environment. They have also been thinking about prayers that they could write to pray for respect.”**



**Tyrese:** "Reception and nursery have been doing lots of work around the idea of respecting each other. They have been playing circle time games and sharing their new teddy with each other. They decided that he should be called "Freddie the Teddy"  
**Bryn:** "Nursery have also been sharing the snack trolley with their new friends and chatting together. They have also been playing lots of games and having fun whilst sharing with their new friends."



**These two wanted to have a Barnardo's charity in the local community to help children with problems.**

These three felt that a better way of recycling would improve the community.



Collaborative and co-operative learning, team planning and group work were an important part of the experience – “the Perfect Sandwell will be known for teamwork.”





Taking pride in the work



The streets of the 'perfect Sandwell' came together slowly. Jessica: "Our model village which shows how everyone can live and work together in a respectful environment. A lot of the children this week have been doing activities to explore the ideas of respect."

Religious buildings for all the different communities were designed and created



# Our Respectful Village





**This example from a Newham school has every religious building you can imagine in Perfect Town**  
(Thanks to Claire Clinton)





# Imagining a perfect future for the place where you live.

Saint John wrote this in the Bible.

“I saw a vision

I saw a vision of the future

I saw the new Jerusalem coming down to Earth from Heaven,

Pure like a diamond, clear like a crystal

Gates of gold, open to all

God is the light of that city, never dark

I saw the River of Life flowing out of the city

And in the centre of the city I saw the Tree of Life

And every leaf on the tree was for the healing of the nations.

There was no crying there. Every tear was wiped away.”

(Simplified from Revelation 20-22)

Try reading this aloud in some different styles: dreamy and peaceful? Loud and passionate? Precise and sharp?

Which seems to fit the words best?

Look at the image in the drawing of Saint John's vision. He imagines the city he lived in – Jerusalem – turned into something perfect. Like most cities, in reality it was a stinky, dirty overcrowded and dangerous place.

Imagine your city, town or village, turned perfect. What would it be like?

Write your own vision of the 'Perfect Town' for where you live.

What would it look like?

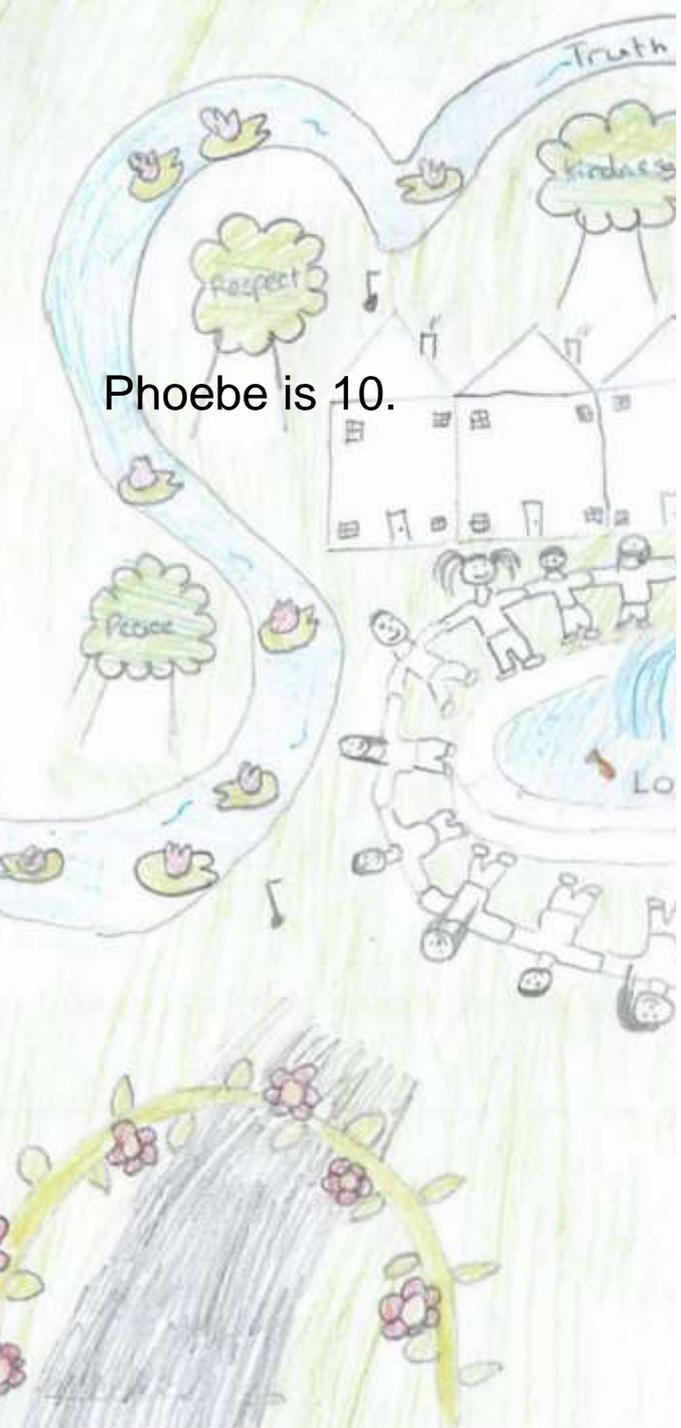
What would it be made of?

What would it be similar to?

Would it be like the New Jerusalem?







Phoebe is 10.

It was like a dream

It was as peaceful as heaven.

As beautiful as a butterfly

The entrance was an archway made of flowers and vines.

In the middle was the fountain of love

And around the town stood five trees of hope, peace, respect, kindness and faith.

In the river of truth floated dozens of lily pads

And every lily filled the town with honesty

And all the people were happy, making friends and helping others

There was no more ill people

There was no more suffering

And all the people's lives were filled with good.

My town turned perfect

I saw a vision

I saw the new Liverpool

It was like a whole new world

It was as pure as a crystal

It was a perfect town

The entrance was a silver gate with green ivy.

And flowing from it was the merseyside river  
as clear as the water we drink.

It is full of exotic fish and dolphins that  
would welcome you.

In the middle was a fountain that the  
injured could drink from and be healed. It  
was protected by a phoenix that wiped away  
tears from the sad.

On the grass grew the tree of life. the apples  
are so sweet they make you smile.

And every leaf is filled with laughter and with  
one touch of the hand your anger turns to  
joy.

There is no poverty

There is no pollution

There is no dent, cracks or damage on  
anything man-made or not

And all the people are thankful

By Elizabeth Craig-Tyler

**11 year old  
Elizabeth wrote  
this last term.  
Inspired?**

# From this presentation:

- **Invitation to join NATRE – do it today (we'll give you a free book).**
- **Invitation to book a training day**
- **Considering all modes of creativity, especially creative thinking, applied in your school: can begin and grow through small initiatives. Take one...**
- **From curriculum to community**
- **Creation / Image of God / Gospel / New Jerusalem**
- **Wisdom / Community / Dignity / Hope**