# RE Thinking Skills

Contents

VISUAL TOOLS

- Visual tools allow pupils to see below the surface.
- Structural visual tools help to start the thinking about a topic and organise in simple terms relevant and irrelevant information.
- They illustrate the relationship between the whole and the parts.
- Structural visual tools include:
  o Single bubble map
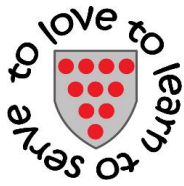 o Affinity diagram
  o Fortune line

Single Bubble Map

A simple way to collate all information about a story or theme. Good for generating ideas at the start of a topic. There is no distinction made between relevant and irrelevant material but more of a way to understand what is already known. It is a good starting point and allows for building up information.

This can lead to mind mapping or clustering of ideas by then adding information to each bubble about what may be known about the characters etc. This could be revisited at the end of a topic to see if understanding has changed.

E.g. The Nativity
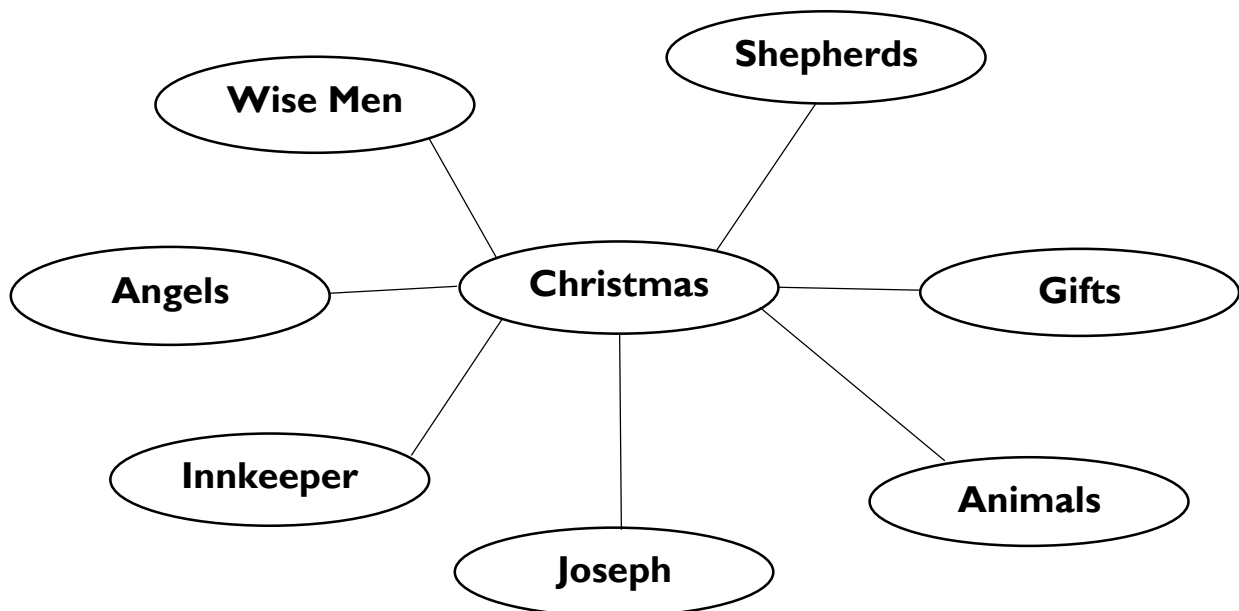
Affinity diagram

Affinity diagrams help to support a deeper curiosity with a topic or story. Children would first read the story and then begin to analyse the detail held within it. It helps to connect different aspects of a story together. The heading can be changed to work with whatever you want the children to focus on.

E.g.

The Annunciation to Mary	
Actions (what was done) • Angel came • Holy Spirit came – 'Yes' • Mary was chosen • Angel left • Mary recognised her God	**Words** (what was said) • Yes • Highly favoured
Questions (To ask of Annunciation) • Why Mary? • What happened? • Why me? • Do you believe? • What happens now?	**Personal Qualities** (of both characters) • Trusting • Posh (Gabriel) • Poor (Mary) • Splendour

When to use it:
- As a discussion point
- Early categorisation in a topic
- To broaden discussion
- As an early framework for writing

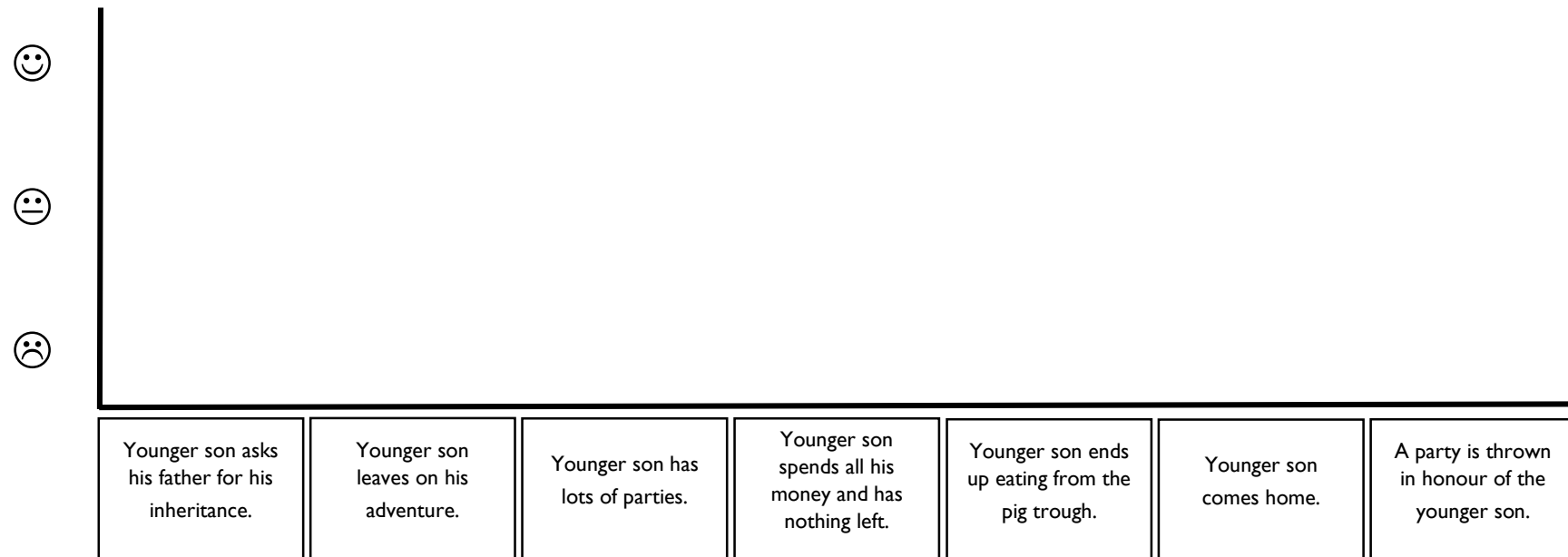| Title	
Category A	Category B
Category C	Category D
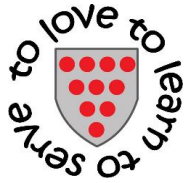
Fortune line

The use of fortune lines is a strategy which engages pupils with a text at a deep level. Look at series of different points with a story to begin to plot the emotions of characters within the story. Use different colours on the graph to represent different characters within the text in order to compare and contrast and look at things from different people's point of view.

The fortune line allows children to:
- Connect beliefs and teaching
- Identify possible experiences and emotions a person may have had
- Raise awareness of the impact of experience
- Explore and justify opinion

E.g. The Prodigal Son

| ☺ |
| ☺ |
| ☹ |

| Younger son asks his father for his inheritance. | Younger son leaves on his adventure. | Younger son has lots of parties. | Younger son spends all his money and has nothing left. | Younger son ends up eating from the pig trough. | Younger son comes home. | A party is thrown in honour of the younger son. |

This idea can be applied to any story in the Bible and is particularly useful where more than one character is affected in different ways.
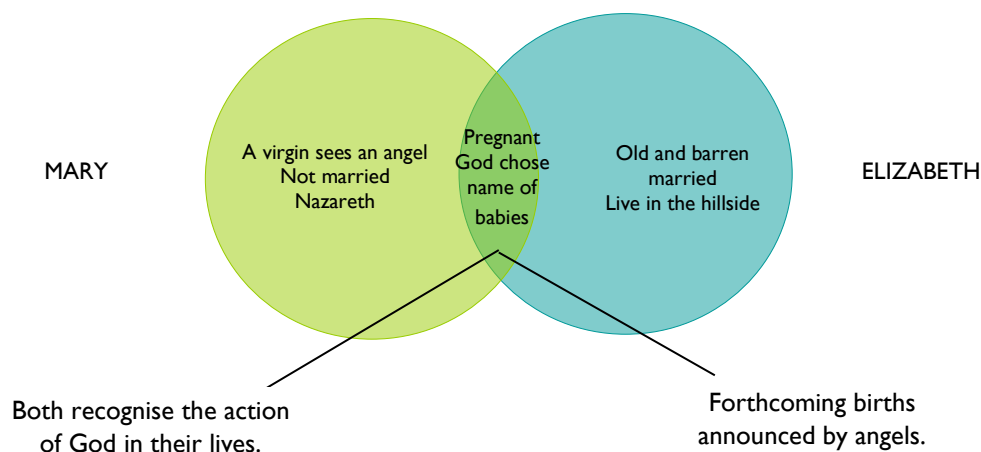
DIFFERENTIAL VISUAL TOOLS

- The idea with differential visual tools is to give children the opportunity to reflect on different points of view. It helps children to see a story from different sides; to see the similarities and differences between two different characters within a story or two different stories. The visual tools give children the opportunity to question and debate their own choices.
- Differential visual tools include:
  - Venn diagrams
  - Force field analysis
  - SWOT analysis
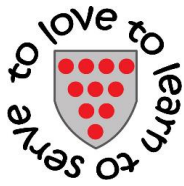 - Continuum line
  - Priorities grid

Venn diagram

A Venn diagram allows children to compare two different characters in relation to a specific scenario. As with all Venn diagrams the section in the middle shows what both characters have in common in relation to the specific situation or scenario. Depending on the complexity of the scenario, which may have more characters involved and therefore more circles to compare, children can see the connections between different characters.

E.g. Comparing Mary and Elizabeth's experience – The Annunciation

In this example both Elizabeth and Mary have the experience of an angel visiting them to tell them about the birth of their sons. However, the experience for both women is very different even if there are a great number of similarities.

MARY

A virgin sees an angel
Not married
Nazareth

Pregnant
God chose name of babies

Old and barren
married
Live in the hillside

ELIZABETH

Both recognise the action of God in their lives.

Forthcoming births announced by angels.

Force field analysis

This a complex way of looking at an event. It helps support children to see different sides of the same situation and to begin to think of counter arguments. Driving forces are things that have contributed to an event happen or reasons why an event must happen. Resisting forces are reasons why an event should not happen. You could then begin to look at what the consequences might be if the event did or did not happen. This can apply to a wide range of scenarios.

E.g. Why should Jesus die?

Driving Force	Resisting Force
Jealousy of Pharisees and others	He is the Messiah
Claimed to be King of the Jews	New type of king
Public unrest threatened	Too popular with the poor
Lack of faith in him	Miraculous powers

This idea can be applied whenever a character needs to make a decision, for example:
- Mary accepting the God's invitation to be the mother of Jesus.
- Jesus going ahead with the crucifixion.
- Joseph marrying / not marrying Mary.
- Judas betraying Jesus.
- Jonah visiting Nineveh.

SWOT analysis

<u>S</u>trengths   <u>W</u>eaknesses   <u>O</u>pportunities   <u>T</u>hreats

SWOT analysis helps children to see the big picture of an event or scenario. It helps develop their concept of strengths and weaknesses of characters, decisions or actions.

As part of the activity, you could give a group of children each section and then ask them to come together. Alternatively, you could then ask positive group (strengths / opportunities) to work with negative group (weaknesses / threats), to help them to begin to justify their thoughts and ideas.

E.g. The Prodigal Son

The opportunities arise from taking the inheritance early and the threats are the things that would prevent him from being happy.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Lives life to the full Thinker Strong relationship with Father	Greedy Poor concentration Reckless
Opportunities (The Prodigal Son)	**Threats**
Freedom Create new relationship Secure family background	Older brother Famine Immigration
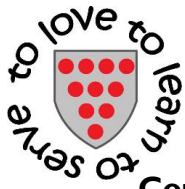
Continuum line

The continuum line helps children make decisions about what is and isn't important within a story. Children plot ideas on top of the continuum line, but also discuss clear reasoning and rationale behind the placement of their ideas. This is different from a diamond-9 card sort in that all of the elements are relevant to the story and it also demonstrates the position of one part of the story to another. You can also change the focus of to whom it is important, which may change their order.

E.g. The Last Supper

Place these aspects of the story on the continuum in relation to their importance to Jesus achieving his goal of dying.

Most Important	Betrayal	Institution of Eucharist		Washing of feet	Least Important

You could also place them in order of:

- Importance to the story
- Importance to demonstrating Jesus' humility
- Importance to key learning points for the disciples
- Importance of Jesus message in a story
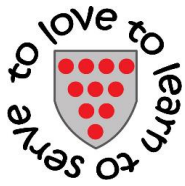
Priorities grid

Throughout the Bible, many different characters have journeys or decisions to make. Sometimes a group of characters have more than one journey or decision to make in one story. A priorities grid gives the children the opportunity to look in detail at these decisions. Being able to understand the risk that a character has had to endure gives an understanding as to how important it might be. The priorities grid allows you to plot events that would be easy / hard to do alongside having little / high reward. Children see that decisions which are hard may also bring great reward in terms of personal satisfaction.

Children could complete this as a group task using post-it notes, verbalising their decision making before the post-it is allowed to go on to the board. Good discussion can open up with different opinions about whether certain activities were easy or difficult.

E.g. The Wise Men (Magi)

In the story of the wise men, there are many things that the Magi must do, to complete their journey to Jesus; some of these are hard others are easy. There may be other events in the story relating to the wise men that you could plot.
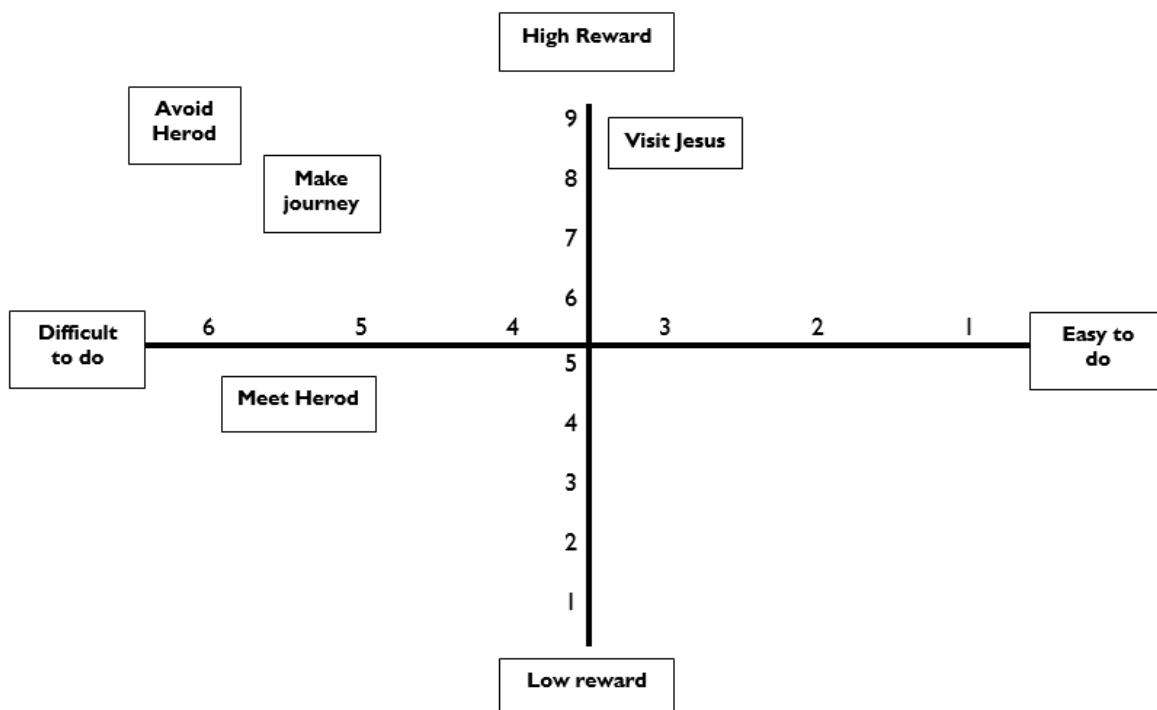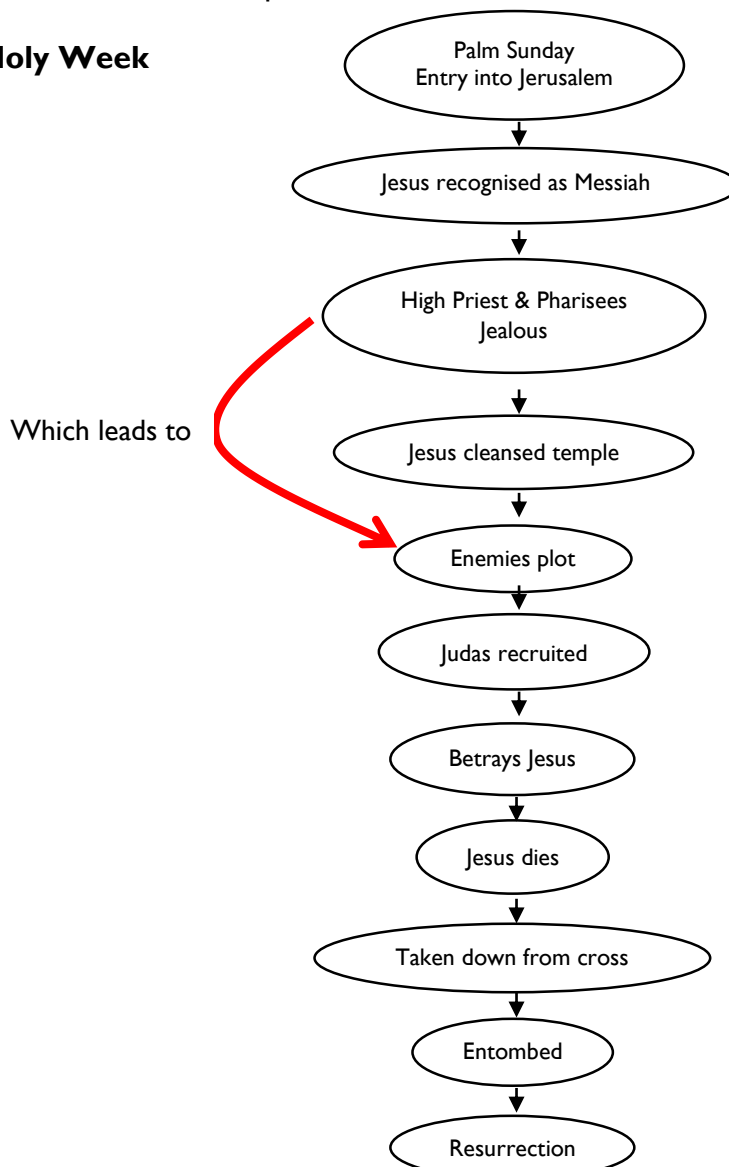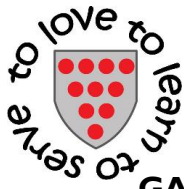
TEMPORAL VISUAL TOOLS

- Temporal visual tools help children to see events through time. They allow children to plot events in order to see how events are linked to together to make a story. You may wish to look at how the same event links to the chronology of two different stories.
- Temporal visual tools include:
  - Timeline
  - Storyboard
  - Flowchart
  - Cycle
  - Gantt chart

Flow diagram

A simple flow diagram helps represent sequences of events, either known or unknown. It can help with understanding cause and effect as generally the events follow on as one event is often the cause of another event. Additional arrows could be used to show where one event has been as a direct consequence of another.

E.g. Holy Week

```
        Palm Sunday
     Entry into Jerusalem
            │
            ▼
   Jesus recognised as Messiah
            │
            ▼
    High Priest & Pharisees
           Jealous
            │
   Which leads to ↘
            ▼
     Jesus cleansed temple
            │
            ▼
        Enemies plot
            │
            ▼
       Judas recruited
            │
            ▼
       Betrays Jesus
            │
            ▼
        Jesus dies
            │
            ▼
    Taken down from cross
            │
            ▼
         Entombed
            │
            ▼
       Resurrection
```

A Gantt diagram is another way of representing time in a story. It can help children to see the passage of time as well as having to think about the order of a story. It also may help children to see where events in a story happen concurrently rather than as a linear set of events. You could substitute 'Event 1' etc. for specfic timings, such as hours or days, if known.

E.g. Holy Week

As we know that certain events happened on certain days of Holy Week, in this example we could replace the 'Event' with the days and even break things down to morning, afternoon and evening.

	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Event 6	Event 7	Event 8	Event 9
Jesus dies							🟩	
Entry into Jerusalem	🟩							
Jesus clears the temple		🟩						
Enemies' plot			🟩					
Jesus in the Garden				🟩				
Judas dies						🟩		
Jesus is betrayed					🟩			
The Last Supper			🟩					
Jesus on trial						🟩		
Judas recruited				🟩				
Peter denies knowing Jesus						🟩		
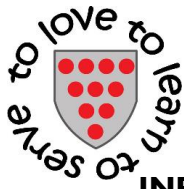
INFORMATION PROCESSING SKILLS

- Additional thinking skills could be adapted which do not necessarily have a specific visual diagram to accompany them, but may produce enough thought and discussion to generate other bits of work. These sorts of activities may include:
  - locating and collecting evidence or scripture that explain a certain point of view
  - sorting cards into statements which you agree with or disagree with
  - classifying
  - sequencing
  - comparing and contrasting
  - analysing relationships

- **Reasoning Skills:**
  - give reasons for opinions and actions
  - drawing inferences
  - making deductions
  - explaining what they think
  - making judgements and decisions informed by reason or evidence

- **Enquiry Skills**
  - asking relevant questions
  - posing and defining the problems
  - planning what to do
  - thinking how to research
  - predicting outcomes
  - anticipating consequences
  - testing conclusions
  - improving ideas

- **Creative Thinking Skills**
  - generating and extending ideas
  - hypothesising
  - applying imagination
  - looking for alternative, innovative outcomes

- **Evaluative Skills**
  - judging the value of what the learner reads, hears and does
  - developing their own criteria for judging the value of their own and others' work