

Romero cross design activity

Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador was shot dead while saying Mass on 24 March 1980. At the time, his country was governed by the wealthy who were oppressing the poorest with help from the army. Thousands were imprisoned, tortured, killed or simply disappeared.

Romero denounced the violence in his Sunday sermons, which were broadcast by radio. He became known as the voice of the voiceless. CAFOD supporters funded the rebuilding of his radio station when it was bombed by those who did not want his voice to be heard.

Romero knew his life was under threat. A few days before he died he said, "If I am killed, I will rise again in the Salvadoran people."

In El Salvador, there is a tradition of producing very colourful crucifixes. The bright decorations not only have a figure of Jesus at the centre but also include images of the local community.

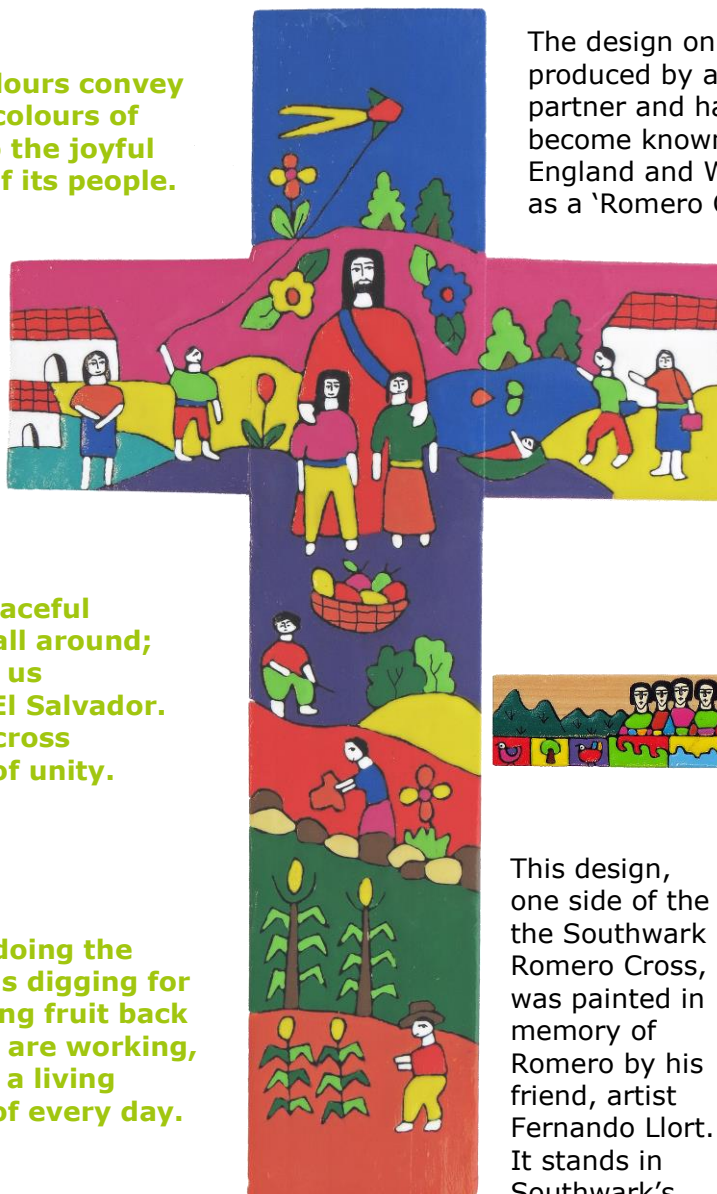
- What can you see in the large cross below?
- Why do you think these images are depicted on the cross?

“**The bright colours convey the bright sun and colours of El Salvador but also the joyful spirit and warmth of its people.**
Clare Dixon, CAFOD

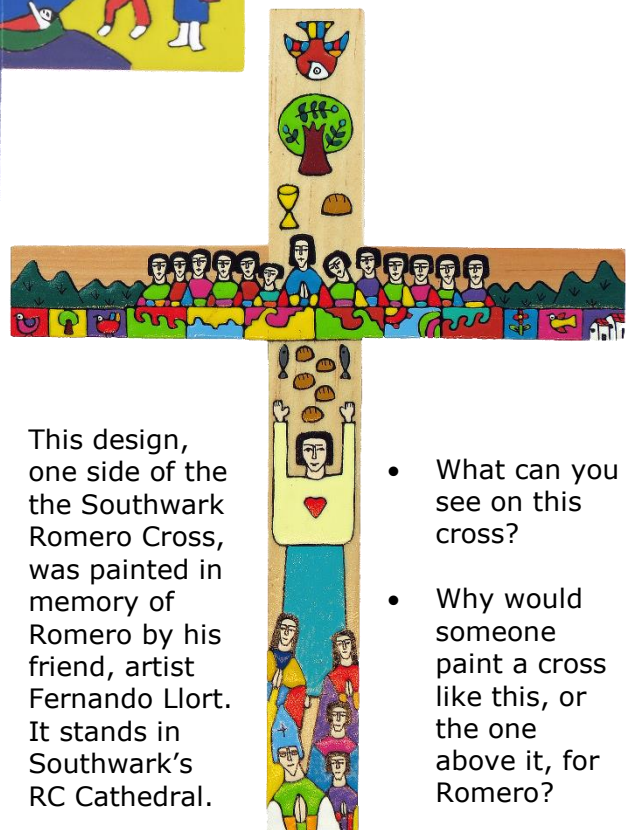
“**They're all on the cross because we carry Jesus in our homes.**
Danielle, El Salvador

“**It's a very peaceful scene and Jesus is all around; because he teaches us everything here in El Salvador. Everyone is on the cross because it's a sign of unity.**
Nicole, El Salvador

“**Someone is doing the washing, someone is digging for maize; one is carrying fruit back to his home... They are working, harvesting, earning a living through the sweat of every day.**
Nicole, El Salvador



The design on the right is produced by a CAFOD partner and has become known in England and Wales as a 'Romero Cross'.



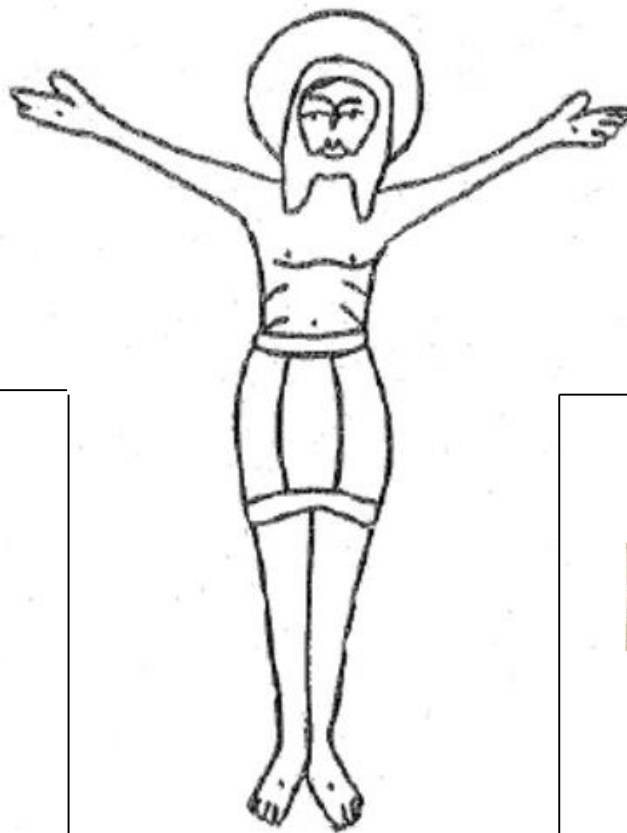
This design, one side of the the Southwark Romero Cross, was painted in memory of Romero by his friend, artist Fernando Llort. It stands in Southwark's RC Cathedral.

- What can you see on this cross?
- Why would someone paint a cross like this, or the one above it, for Romero?

Watch 15-year-old Isabel from El Salvador talking about this cross: cafod.org.uk/secondary/romero

Saints and martyrs activity

In the outline, design a cross that would be appropriate for one of the other saints or martyrs that you have studied. Think about the background landscape, the colours and which aspects of their life to include.



Reflection activity

Saints are called to a life of prayer, service and sacrifice. What does this call mean to you?

In the outline, design a cross with drawings or cut-out photographs to show your reflections. Think about the background landscape, colours that reflect your personality and which aspects of prayer, service and sacrifice you want your life to include.

As you work, ask God to help you to fulfil your calling.



Extension activity

This cross commemorates María Cristina Gómez, another Christian killed in El Salvador. What can you deduce about María from this cross? Research her life to see whether you were correct. Evaluate: "A crucifix should always depict the figure of Jesus."