**Messy Church – 19th July 2025**

**Holidays: Jesus in the Temple**

The activities are:

1. **Going on a journey (out and back):**
	1. Directions
	2. Picnic food
		1. Cheese pull-aparts
		2. Iced biscuits
	3. String sandals
	4. Travelling companions – handprints – in the Celebration
2. **Jerusalem:**
	1. Clay or play doh bricks
	2. Cardboard colonnade
	3. Scrolls
	4. Being lost – in the Celebration

**Stories and Activities**

This account of Jesus going to Jerusalem only appears in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, verses 41 to 52.

Jesus’ parents, Joseph and Mary, went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival (about the time of Easter). They left Jesus, and any brothers and sisters he had, in Nazareth. But when Jesus was 12, nearly an adult in their culture, they decided to take him with them. They would have travelled in a group, for safety and defence against bandits on the road, and because lots of people would go to Jerusalem for the festival, as it was an important date in the Jewish calendar.

Everything went fine, until Mary and Joseph were on their way home. The journey took several days, and it was not until the end of the first day of the journey home that they discovered that Jesus was not in the crowd. They weren’t expecting him to walk with them, when there were other people of his age in the group.

So Joseph and Mary went back to Jerusalem, to start looking there. They spent a whole day looking in all the places in the city they could think of, and then, on the third day (a day’s travel back to the city, a day searching), they went to the Temple. He was sitting with the scholars and their students, listening to the lessons, and asking questions of the teachers. When they asked him questions, they were surprised at his intelligent answers.

His parents were amazed at finding him there, and asked him why he had worried them so. Jesus asked why they were worried and had to look for him – he thought they should know that he would be in the Temple – he called it “My Father’s house.” Then all three of them went back to Nazareth, where he was their usual dutiful son. Luke says that Mary treasured all the events of Jesus’ life, and the things he said.

1. **Going on a journey:**
2. Directions – how to get there

**You will need:** a piece of paper to write the directions on and a pencil or pen to write the directions, road maps, perhaps a computer. Additionally, we will supply a map of Palestine so that you can see the possible routes Jesus and his parents might have travelled.

Using the maps, work out how to get from the church to where you live. Write down the route.

Have a look at the map of Palestine to see Jesus’ route.

1. Picnic food
	* 1. Cheese pull-aparts

**You will need:** recipe, tools and ingredients, (on the separate sheet of paper). I use the Wrights white bread mix, because I know it works well, but if you have a favourite – or you want to make the bread from basic ingredients – that’s fine. Bear in mind that it may take longer to mix, rise and bake.

Follow the instructions to make the pull-aparts. Leave to cool before eating, although warm is very nice!

* + 1. Iced biscuits

**You will need:** plain biscuits (rich tea biscuits are best, but any plain biscuits will be fine), squirty icing

Using the squirty icing, draw stick people on the biscuit, to represent the crowds travelling to Jerusalem.

1. String sandals

**You will need:** sturdy card, big enough to draw round both your shoes, a pencil to draw with, scissors, string

Draw round your shoe onto the card – one for each foot. Work out where your big toe will go, and make a hole in the card between where your big toe and the toe next to it meet. Make two more holes in the card: one where the inside of your foot starts to get fatter for your heel (about ⅔ of the way from your toes to your heels) and one on the outside, level with the one on the inside. Repeat in reverse for the other foot. Check to see that you have got it right before you make the holes – your feet might not be quite the same width or length!

Thread two pieces of string through the toe hole, and tie them together underneath the sole. Thread the other ends through the other holes – making sure that you have enough length to go across your foot. You can either tie a knot in each end under the sole, or you can tie the strings together under the sole, so that you don’t pull the knots through the hole and wreck your sandal.

If you are not used to wearing toe-post sandals, you may need to practice before you can walk easily in them!

**Talk about:** going on a journey – what do you need? We have looked at planning the route, taking some food, and footwear – what else will you need?

1. Travelling companions – handprints – in the Celebration

**You will need:** paper (scrap, sugar, whatever you have), a pencil or felt tip pen to draw with, scissors. A large piece of paper

Put your hand flat on the paper, and draw round it – it doesn’t matter whether it is your left or your right hand. Cut out the hand. Repeat if you want. Get other people to draw round their hands as well, so you have a number of hands of different sizes, and ages, if you can.

Stick the hands to the larger sheet.

**Talk about:** going on a journey – who are you going with? Jesus and his parents travelled in a crowd, for safety – that’s why they didn’t know Jesus hadn’t started the journey back with them. Are crowds safe or dangerous?

1. **Jerusalem:**
	1. Clay or play doh bricks

**You will need:** clay, a waterproof work surface and a paper plate to put your bricks on, a bowl of warm water, to keep your hands, and the clay, damp.

Shape small pieces of clay into bricks. Do not let your hands or the clay get too dry while you are shaping it. Put the bricks onto the paper plate to dry.

If you want to use play doh, you won’t need the water!

* 1. Cardboard colonnade

A colonnade is like an open sided corridor, with pillars to hold the roof up, where the outside wall would be. If you look at the picture, there are several colonnades shown, with the open side facing the courtyards.

**You will need:** thin card for the floor, the back wall and the roof, card tubes, the picture of the final product, (supplied with the booklet) felt tip pens or paint to colour the scene.

Glue the tubes to the card so that the card forms the floor, the back wall and the roof of the portico or colonnade. Make sure you have space between the pillars.

* 1. Scrolls

In Jesus’ day, books were scrolls, and rolled up to store on shelves. There are two ways to write on the scroll. You can have the ends, with the rods, at the top and bottom of the page, or you can have them at the sides. If you work the second way, the writing will be done in columns. The Temple would have had all the books of the Bible written as scrolls.

**You will need:** a piece of paper, two garden canes as long as the paper is wide (or a longer one cut in half), something to write with, a length of yarn or ribbon or string

Glue the canes to the top and bottom of the paper, on the right side of the paper. Write part of one of the stories of Jesus going to the Temple on the piece of paper. Roll the paper up from both ends, so that the rolls meet in the middle. Tie the scroll up, without scrunching the paper.

**Talk about:** what the Temple would have been like to visit – would there have been guides to show you round, like in tourist destinations today, or would you just be allowed to walk around? Jesus had gate-crashed a lesson – how would the teachers react today if someone just walked in to a classroom?

1. Being lost

Sometimes being lost is a very difficult thing to understand – Jesus didn’t think he was lost: he knew exactly where he was, and why he was there. His parents, on the other hand, thought he was, because THEY didn’t know where he was. They were very worried, and therefore angry, when they found him, after 2 days of searching. He didn’t understand why they had been worried – he thought he was quite safe, and where he needed to be, and he thought they would know that without having to be told!

Equally, sometimes children do feel lost – they may be in a strange place and unable to see anyone they know, for example. Understanding both points of view is important.

We are going to hide some sweets around the church. During the Celebration we will look for them. If you want to do this activity at home, you could use a small toy that your children will want to find, rather than sweets.

**Talk about:** what being lost feels like – cover all angles – the views of those who don’t feel lost (like Jesus); the view of his parents; and the views of those who have been lost and didn’t like it.

**Celebration**

At this time of year we often think about holidays. We usually go away for holidays. Some people travel a short distance, others might go half way round the world!

Sing He’s got the whole world in his hands <https://youtu.be/PJhV_6vrGaE?si=_crCcOjZ_Pw9VHKw>

Jerusalem was (and is) the central place for Jews. Passover is a major celebration for them. If you don’t actually live in Jerusalem, you may not be able to celebrate Passover there, but Jews often say “Next year in Jerusalem”. In Jesus day most people would have to walk to get anywhere unless they were rich. How far can you walk in a day? If you lived any distance from Jerusalem, you wouldn’t be able to go every year, and it could take several days to walk there and as long to go back. Because journeys could be dangerous, people travelled in groups. Because it was a celebration, such a group could be like a big walking party. The Holy Day was a holiday. The Bible says that Mary and Joseph went every year.

We are going to make a display of hand shapes to represent a crowd of people travelling together. Some will be small, others larger to show growing up and all the differences there can be in a crowd.

Sing One more step <https://youtu.be/7PXV3dwaeNU?si=VMotMDclQ8YV1QFz>

The trouble came when it was time to go home. Have you ever got lost? If you were lost in a crowd as a child, you might not have thought that you were lost. After all, you knew where you were; it’s the others who are lost! Mary didn’t know where Jesus was, but that was OK. He was nearly an adult and sensible. He was probably with Joseph, or with one of his friends.

Joseph didn’t know where Jesus was, but that was OK. He was nearly an adult and sensible. He was probably with Mary, or with one of his friends.

By the time they realised that he wasn’t in the group at all, they had travelled for a whole day. Mary and Joseph hurried back to Jerusalem and looked for Jesus everywhere. They couldn’t find him. They searched all day. The next day they found him in the temple, talking with the teachers of the law, who were amazed at how intelligent his questions and answers were. When Mary questioned him he said they should have known where he was, in his father’s house.

We can’t let you get lost, so we’ve hidden some sweets in the church for you to fin. You have 5 minutes to search!

Let’s pray.

Dear God,

Thank you for holidays. Thank you that wherever we go, or if we stay at home, we can’t get lost from you.

Amen

Songs – You shall go out with joy <https://youtu.be/ivfUKd6AFXw?si=HBOuBA9rjrjlIK6d>

Next Messy Church is 20th September 2025. See you then.

Enjoy our celebration on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw>

Then have tea or a treat if it isn’t tea time!

If you send me pictures of anything you do, I can share them on the Church Facebook page or in the Church Monthly (if you want to send pictures that you don’t want shared, just tell me. I’ll only share the one’s you’re happy to share.)

Harlington Messy Church Team

We’ll have a Zoom meeting open for those who can’t come to the church. Our end of Zoom will go on YouTube during the celebration, but we won’t put pictures from your end on. Contact me if you want the link for Zoom. Look out for the broadcast on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw/videos>