**Messy Church – April 2022 – Arrest to Resurrection**

The stories of the arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection are written in all four gospels, but they are not all the same. Some things are in all four gospels, and others are in only one.

Matthew chapter 26, verse 31, to chapter 28, verse 10, tells the story from the time Jesus and his friends left the house where they had eaten the Passover meal, to when Jesus met the ladies. In the last 10 verses of the book (chapter 28, verses 11 to 20) Matthew tells what happened to the guards who were at the grave, and what Jesus said to his friends before they went out to tell the world about Jesus.

Mark chapter 14, verse 27, to chapter 16, verse 8, tells the story from the time Jesus and his friends left the house where they had eaten the Passover meal, to when the ladies were told that Jesus was alive, but they didn’t believe it and were afraid, and then there are several added bits, which cover more of the story, but were not in all the original versions of Mark.

Luke chapter 22, verse 39, to chapter 24, verse 12, tells the story from the time Jesus and his friends left the house where they had eaten the Passover meal (but puts the bit about Peter denying knowing Jesus earlier) to when the ladies have told the friends of Jesus, and they don’t believe the ladies. The rest of this last chapter of Luke, from verse 13 to 53, tell stories about what happened after the morning of Easter Sunday, up to Jesus leaving them again.

John tells the story of Jesus telling Peter that he will deny knowing him in chapter 13, verses 36 to 38, but the story of Jesus’s arrest doesn’t start until chapter 18. Then it goes on until chapter 20, verse 18, when Mary Magdalen tells Jesus’s friends that she has seen Jesus alive. The rest of chapter 20, and chapter 21 are more stories about what happened after Jesus’s resurrection, which aren’t told in the other gospels.

1. Arrest and Trial of Jesus
   1. Torches
   2. Bonfire
   3. Washing hands
2. Crucifixion
   1. Crosses – scratch art or painted wooden
   2. Good Friday plates
   3. Biscuits – baking and/or icing
3. Resurrection
   1. Happy/Sad faces (in the Celebration)
   2. Empty tomb (in the Celebration)
   3. Easter Cards

**Stories and Activities**

**1 The arrest and trial of Jesus**

At the end of last month’s celebration, we talked about Jesus and his friends having a meal together, when Jesus washed their feet, and gave them bread and wine to share to remember him, because he was going to die.

After the meal, the whole group left the house where they had eaten, and went out, outside Jerusalem’s walls, to a garden. There Jesus went off on his own to pray to God, because he knew this was the last quiet chance he would have.

While he was praying, some of the Temple guard arrived, led by Judas, who had been one of Jesus’ friends. Because it was dark, they were carrying torches. Judas led them to Jesus, kissing him, to show who they were to arrest. The rest of Jesus’ friends ran away into the dark.

The soldiers took Jesus to the High Priest’s house, where the High Priest and other members of the Temple Council questioned him. Peter crept into the courtyard, and sat with some servants around the fire there. He hoped to be able to see Jesus, but he couldn’t really hear what was going on. Some of the servants thought he had been with Jesus in the city earlier in the week, and asked him about it, but Peter was frightened, and denied knowing Jesus, three times. At this point, Jesus looked at Peter, and Peter remembered that Jesus had said he would deny him, and Peter was sure he wouldn’t. Peter left the courtyard and went away.

Jesus was then taken to the Roman governor of Jerusalem, who was called Pontius Pilate. The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus, because he had said that God was his father, but they couldn’t, under Roman law, so they had to persuade the governor to do it. Pilate didn’t want to order Jesus to be killed, but the Jewish leaders threatened and blackmailed him into it. Pilate gave in, but ordered his own servants to bring him soap and water, and washed his hands publicly, telling the Jews that he was innocent of wanting Jesus dead.

1. **Torches**

**You will need:** tissue or crepe paper in flame colours, a short, cardboard tube (from a paper towel roll, or a tin foil roll, or make a tube from card), glue, scissors, sticky tape, picture of the finished article.

Cut out strips of tissue or crepe paper, and glue into the top of the tube, so that just the ends are inside, but most of the strip is outside the tube. If you wave the tube, the ends of the strips look like flames.

**Talk about:** what it would be like to have no electricity to light our houses and streets. This sort of torch would have been used if people were going between houses in their village or town, or even outside the community for short distances, after dark. When fixed in brackets on the wall, they might even have been used inside the house. Really, the torch would have been rags wrapped around a sturdy branch, soaked in oil, and then lit from a fire.

1. **Bonfire**

**You will need:** an empty glass jar, glass painting pens, a tealight

Use the pens to draw flames on the outside of the jar. Put the tealight in the jar. It will make the painted flames flicker.

**Talk about:** what it would be like to have no heating in our houses – no fireplace, no radiators. Cooking was done outside as well!

1. **Soap carving**

**You will need:** a bar of ordinary hand soap, tools to carve it – blunt knives, forks, or clay working tools are all good

Carve the soap to look like a hand. Any large pieces you cut off the bar can be used to wash your hands with, so don’t waste it!

**Talk about:** washing – as a necessity, to be clean, and as a symbol of not wanting to be involved in something that feels “dirty” or not nice.

**2 Crucifixion**

When Pontius Pilate gave in to the Jewish leaders, his own soldiers had to organise the crucifixion – which was their particular way of killing criminals. First of all, they beat Jesus (which was their idea of fun), dressing him up, because the Jews had said he claimed to be the King of the Jews. They put a crown of thorns on his head. Then they did the official bit – they made him carry the cross piece of the cross out of Jerusalem to the place where he would die. When they got there, they nailed his hands (probably his wrists) to the cross piece, and his feet to the upright. And then they left him there, while they watched to make sure no-one tried to free him. A big crowd gathered round. Some of them laughed, and some of them cried. In the crowd were some of Jesus’ friends and relatives – his mother, and John, the youngest of his friends, are the ones that are named. Jesus looked at them, and asked John to look after Mary, his mother.

In some versions of the story, two other people are crucified, one each side of Jesus, and there is some conversation between the three of them.

In the middle of the afternoon, it got very dark. Jesus died, and there was an earthquake, shaking the city, and damaging the Temple, ripping the curtain which stopped people seeing into the special room of the Temple.

Because this happened on a Friday, and Saturday is the Jewish sabbath, or day of rest, Jesus could not, under Jewish law, stay on the cross (normally, people would be left there for days, if it took them that long to die). So late in the afternoon, the soldiers got ready to take Jesus down from the cross. To be sure he was dead, they stuck a spear in his side. Then they took his body down, and gave it to his friends to deal with. One of the Jewish leaders, called Nicodemus, who had not wanted Jesus to die, showed them a grave cut in the rock in a nearby garden, which he said they could use for Jesus. So his friends and relatives wrapped the body up quickly, and put it in the grave. The Jewish leaders asked for Roman soldiers to guard the grave, and put a rock in front of it, so that Jesus’ friends could not take the body away. (They thought that Jesus’ friends would claim that he was not dead, if they hid the body.)

**a. Crosses – Scratch art or painted wood or card**

**You will need:** a scratch card cross and a scraper, or a wooden or card cross, and paints and paint brush

For the scratch art cross, use the scraper to scrape away the surface to show the colours underneath; for the wooden or card cross, paint it how you like.

**b. Good Friday plates**

**You will need:** a paper plate, brown or grey card to make crosses – could be part of an old box, a little green and red card or paper – or colour in some white paper, colouring pencils or pens, scissors, glue, the picture of the finished plate (this is in a separate file).

Cut halfway round the inside rim of the paper plate, and fold up the cut out part, so that when the plate is flat, it stands up. Write “He Died for All” around the bottom rim of the plate.

Cut the brown or grey card into strips, and make three crosses. Tear the red card into small pieces, and glue them to the top of one of the crosses. Glue the three crosses to the upright part of the plate, with the cross which has red card on it in the middle. Use pieces of the green card or paper to stick around the bottom of the crosses, and if you have enough, on the flat part of the plate as well, as the picture shows.

1. **Easter biscuits (to be iced in the celebration)**

**You will need:** the recipe, supplied separately, the ingredients, and the tools – a mixing bowl and wooden spoon, a bowl to beat the egg in, and a fork to beat it, a teaspoon to measure the spice, and scales to measure the rest of the ingredients, spare flour for the rolling out, a rolling pin, and a biscuit cutter, greaseproof paper and baking sheets. To ice the biscuits, use some squirty icing.

Follow the instructions. When the biscuits are cool, ice a cross on them

**Talk about:** sad things that might turn out to be a good thing. Is it wrong to be sad sometimes?

**3 Resurrection**

On the Sunday after Good Friday, (after the Sabbath, which is Saturday), early in the morning, three of the ladies who were among Jesus’s friends went to the grave to prepare his body for final burial – remember that on Friday evening, they could only make rough preparations, because they had so little time. On Sunday morning they took with them everything they would need – more linen cloth, the herbs and lotion they would use to clean the body and wrap it up. They wondered who would roll the stone away from the grave for them, but as they went, there was a small earthquake, and the stone moved.

When they got to the grave, there was no body there! An angel told them that Jesus was not dead, but alive. They were really puzzled! Two of the ladies went away, but one, Mary Magdalen, stayed in the garden where the grave was. she was crying, because she didn’t really believe that Jesus was alive again. Then she saw someone she thought was the gardener, and she asked him where Jesus’s body was. The person spoke to her – he called her by her name, and she realised that it was Jesus!

He told her to go and tell all his friends that he was alive, and that he would see them soon.

**a. Easter cards**

**You will need:** prints of the cards (for the 3D card, you need to print the instructions as well as the picture), (there are two card patterns, in separate files), the instructions, colouring pencils or pens, scissors

Colour in the picture on the card, and follow the instructions to make the card.

**b. Happy/sad paper plates (in the celebration)**

**You will need:** a paper plate, and a pencil or pen to draw with.

Mark (very faintly) the horizontal and vertical centres of the plate. Draw two eyes on the horizontal line (if you mark the nose as a vertical line in the middle of the plate, the eyes go either side (see the picture)). Fill in the other lines and shapes as in the picture. If you hold the plate one way up, the plate looks happy. Hold it the other way up to look sad.

1. **Empty tomb – in the celebration**

**You will need:** a paper plate or piece of card, green crepe or tissue paper, screwed up newspaper or scrap paper, cocktail sticks, a little black paper (or paper coloured black) and a little white or grey paper (could be white coloured grey!), scissors, glue

Screw up the newspaper or scrap paper to make a “hill”, and cover it with the green crepe or tissue paper. Glue the green paper down to the plate or card, so that it doesn’t move. Make crosses with the cocktail sticks, and stick them in the top of the hill. Cut out a circle of black paper, and then a slightly bigger shape of the white or grey paper.

Stick the black paper onto the side of the hill, so that it touches the “ground” level, to look like a hollow cave in the side of the hill, which was what Jesus’s grave was, and then put the white shape over the black one, so that you can move it out of the way.

**Talk about:** how much you miss someone who has died, what it would be like to think that someone was dead, and to discover that they were alive.

**Celebration**

Last time we finished with Jesus and his friends having a meal, then going out into the night. As they went out, they sang a hymn, probably a Psalm. We’ll sing a cheerful song based on Psalm 150.

Song Praise him on the trumpet <https://youtu.be/d8yxHMmA65g>

Jesus wasn’t very popular with the people in power. They didn’t want to listen to him, and he told them that they weren’t doing the right things. Lots of ordinary people listened to Jesus and thought of him as the person come to save Israel. The Romans had conquered Judea, and most of the Jews didn’t like them. There had been a number of uprisings against the Romans, and the Romans had defeated them and killed the people who had rebelled. Some of the Jewish leaders were afraid that Jesus would start another rebellion. So they were looking for an opportunity to get rid of Jesus. Finally they thought they had one.

Jesus went with his disciples to the garden of Gethsemane to pray. While they were there, Judas, who had agreed to betray Jesus, came with a crowd of people to grab Jesus. They had torches to light the way. Judas kissed Jesus to identify him, and he was grabbed and taken to the High Priest. They put Jesus on trial, with people who lied about what he had said, and they decided he was guilty of saying things against God. While the trial was going on, Peter sat in the courtyard by a fire. This was when he said he didn’t know Jesus.

Because the leaders wanted Jesus dead they had to take him to the Romans. Pilate was the Roman governor. He didn’t think that Jesus was really guilty, but he didn’t want to upset the Jewish leaders. He washed his hands of it and agreed to crucify Jesus.

We will put icing crosses on the biscuits we made earlier – if you didn’t make biscuits, you could put an icing cross on any biscuit you have.

Song From Heaven you came <https://youtu.be/R-IxT-2_jRg>

We’re going to make a paper plate face. If you hold it one way it looks very sad.

After Jesus died, he was taken down from the cross and put in a tomb, but this was done in a hurry because it was near the start of the Sabbath. Nothing could be done for a whole day, so early of the next morning 5the women went to the tomb to do all the things they would have done earlier. When the got there they found that the tomb was empty. They went back to the disciples and told them, and they came to look. They found the cloth that had been round Jesus, but he wasn’t there, and they went away again. But Mary stayed, and she saw two angels who told here that Jesus had risen to life. Then she saw Jesus. At first she didn’t recognise him, then he spoke to her.

Turn the plate round so the face looks happy.

We’re going to make a paper Easter Garden with an empty tomb.

Song Lord I lift your name on high <https://youtu.be/c12Ta6_WJrw>

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you that you love us so much that you were willing to die for us. Thank you that you beat death and came back, and so we don’t have to be afraid, even of death.

Amen

Enjoy our celebration.

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

If you send me pictures of anything you do, I will share them on the Church Facebook page (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>