**Messy Church – September 2022**

**Harvest/Creation**

Celebration: wheat and tares

The activities are:

1. Chocolate mouse with green sprinkles
2. Marzipan fruit and leaves
3. Growing cress – in the celebration
4. Stencil pictures of animals
5. Leaf printing
6. String and crepe paper collages of fruit and vegetables
7. Play-doh fruit and vegetables
8. Wheat and weeds headdresses – in the celebration

The bible is full of stories about farmers and their animals, or their crops, and what happens to them. Some of them are stories about real people, and some of them are stories told by other people to make a point.

In the Old Testament, there are the basic creation stories, at the beginning, in the book of Genesis, the first book of the bible, and then there are the stories about Jacob and the animals he looked after, David and his sheep, Solomon and the animals of his armies. There are the details of what animals God’s people could eat, and which they could not eat.

In the New Testament, Jesus told stories about sheep farmers and wheat farmers. Some of his best friends were fishermen, and there are stories about them not catching fish, or catching nets full of fish.

Today, we are focussing on God’s creation – not how he made the world and what is in it, but what he made. We will make pictures in various ways, try growing something – which you will have to finish off at home – and generally think about things that exist in our world, which is God’s world.

**Stories and Activities**

**1 Chocolate mousse with green sprinkles**

**You will need:** chocolate mousse packet, milk, green sprinkles (we have dyed desiccated coconut green!) but if you have anything else that would work, that’s fine, small bowls to put the mousse in to set, a whisk or fork to blend the mousse powder with the milk, a bowl to do the mixing in, and a jug to measure the milk in. You could just measure the milk in the jug and add the mousse powder to the jug, so you don’t have to have a bowl.

Make up the chocolate mousse according to the instructions on the packet, and pour into small bowls to set. When it is set, sprinkle green bits over the top.

**Talk about:** the chocolate mousse represents the soil that plants need to grow, and the green sprinkles represent the plants that grow. Think about what else is needed besides the soil and the seeds.

**2 Marzipan fruit and leaves**

**You will need:** marzipan (you could use ready mixed icing), food colourings in fruit and vegetable colours, paper plates to put your fruit and leaves on, leaf shaped food cutters if you want or have them, a blunt knife if you want to mark the veins in the leaves, icing sugar so that the marzipan doesn’t stick to you!

With clean hands, take small pieces of marzipan and colour each one in the appropriate colour – green for leaves, orange for oranges, etc. if you want to make a grapefruit, you might decide not to colour it at all! Use a little icing sugar on the marzipan if it is sticky

Shape the coloured marzipan into the fruit you want. If you are making leaves, and you have cutters the right shape, flatten the marzipan with your hand, and cut out the leaves as you like. You can make leaves without cutters.

Put your created leaves and fruit on a paper plate, and put on one side to eat later!

Wash your hands again!

**Talk about:** how different plants have different shaped leaves, and different fruits grow in different ways – grapes in bunches, apples (among others) as individual fruits, bananas in bunches which are called “hands” because the bananas look like fingers!

**3 Growing cress (in the celebration)**

**You will need:** cress seeds, paper towel, a waterproof container to grow them in – yoghurt pots would work – and some water

Cover the bottom of your container with a couple of layers of paper towel, and make it very wet – but make sure that all the water has soaked into the paper towel. If there is too much water, tip out the extra.

Sprinkle the cress seeds over the paper towel. Leave them in a warm place – on a windowsill, as the weather is now, will be fine. Make sure that the paper towel is always damp – a little water every day should be fine. The seeds should sprout in about 24 hours, and be ready to eat in about a week.

**4 Stencil pictures of animals**

**You will need:** paper, pencils or crayons, as you choose, stencils of animals (you could print off animal shapes of the internet and colour those in, if you don’t have stencils)

Draw the stencils as you like (or colour in your pictures) and colour them in. Can you make a picture, or do you prefer individual pictures.

**Talk about:** where the animals you have drawn or coloured live, and why. What do they eat – have you drawn those animals too?

**5 Leaf printing**

**You will need:** paper, paint – thicker rather than thinner, leaves (don’t use bramble leaves, they are prickly and don’t print well. The best are tree leaves that will lie flat, or grass leaves), pieces of sponge, trays to put different coloured paint in

Either put a leaf into paint in a paint tray, or put the paint onto the leaf with a piece of sponge, then put the leaf flat on the paper and smooth it down. You can use your fingers, or a clean piece of sponge to smooth down the leaf. Carefully lift the leaf up, so that it doesn’t smudge the image. Repeat with more of the same colour, or a different colour, or a different leaf, to make a pattern on the paper. If you have leaves from different plants, you can compare the different patterns on the leaves

**Talk about:** where trees grow, and where they don’t. Do different trees need different conditions? Why do trees or animals show different characteristics in different places?

**6 String and crepe paper collage**

**You will need:** string, crepe or tissue paper, pencils, paper to work on, pictures of fruit and vegetables, glue, scissors

Draw the fruit or vegetable on the paper. Stick string around the outline, and then fill in the middle with tissue or crepe paper. Could you make a picture of a full fruit bowl? If you want to do something a little different, you could make a picture of trees

**Talk about:** how different fruits can be, in taste, or looks, or how they feel when you squash them!

**7 Playdoh fruit and vegetables**

**You will need:** playdoh in various colours, a paper plate to put your creations on

Make your fruit and vegetables and put them on the plate. Ask an adult to take a photograph of your full plate, before the playdoh has to be put away at the end of the afternoon.

**Talk about:** why fruit and vegetables are good for you, what the difference between a fruit and a vegetable is

**8 Wheat and weeds headdresses (in the celebration)**

**You will need:** strip of paper or card long enough to go round your head – not green or yellow. If your paper is not long enough, fasten two strips together. Green and yellow offcuts of paper, or crepe or tissue paper, scissors, glue, sellotape

Fasten your strip of paper (or strips of paper) so that they go round your head, like a crown. Make wheat plants – leaves and/or ears – in yellow paper, or yellow tissue or crepe paper, and weeds, in green, and attach them all to the headband. To make tissue paper stand up better, twist the ends you are going to attach to the headband together before you fasten them to the headband.

**Celebration**

Sing Harvest Samba <https://youtu.be/dqpkWsR6Yew>

Jesus told people lots of stories. He told them stories because it was easier for people to learn from the stories than it would have been for them to learn if he’d just told them facts about God. For those who like the long words, we call the stories “Parables”, from para meaning “just like”. Many of Jesus’ stories start, “Now the Kingdom of heaven is like this…” or something similar. The long word for facts about God is “Theology”.

Jesus told people stories that were set in their own times. He could say, “Look around”. Some of the stories were long, some were short. Many were about farming, because a lot of people were involved in farming.

Wheat and weed headdresses.

So Jesus told this story. “Once a farmer had a field. He ploughed it and cleared all the weeds out, and when the time was right, just after the first rains when the soil was still moist he sent his workers into the field with baskets of the best wheat seeds to sprinkle over the field and then cover up to plant his good crop. When they had finished, the workers looked at the field and thought to themselves, ‘We’ll have a good crop from this field’. But the farmer had an enemy. That night, when everyone should have been asleep, he sent his workers to the farmer’s field, and they sprinkled weed seed over the field, and then went away. Well, the seed germinated, started to grow, both the wheat and the weeds. Before long the workers were hurrying back to the farmer. “Didn’t we plant good seed in that field? How come it’s full of weeds? An enemy must have done this! Shall we go round and pull up all the weeds?” Well, the farmer looked at the field, and he looked at the weeds, and he said, “If you try to pull up all these weeds, you’ll end up pulling out the wheat as well. And some of these weeds look just like the wheat. How will you be sure you’ve only pulled out weeds? I’ll tell you what we have to do. We have to leave the wheat and the weeds growing together, and when it’s time to harvest them, then we’ll know just what is a weed and what is wheat. That’s when we’ll sort them out. We’ll put the wheat in sheaves, and we’ll bundle up the weeds and get rid of them.”

Sing Cauliflowers fluffy. <https://youtu.be/PukdaXUzgOU>

One reason that Jesus told this story was to tell people that they shouldn’t judge people. It is too easy to make early judgements about who is good and who isn’t. God will do all the judging that needs to be done later.

Plant Cress seeds

Prayer

Dear God, thanks you for all the wonderful things you give us. At this time of year, when we see all the crops and fruit getting ripe we particularly thank you for harvest.

We remember that we often can’t tell what is a good plant until we see the fruit. Help us to remember that people can be like that as well, and that we shouldn’t be too willing to judge them.

Amen

Sing Give thanks for the harvest <https://youtu.be/DsqocyckoFc>

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 ones you’re happy to share.)

Harlington Messy Church Team

You can see the recording on YouTube, on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw/videos>