**Messy Church – January 2023**

**Paul – Jerusalem to Rome**

The activities are:

1. Collecting for the famine in Jerusalem –
   1. Money pouch/box – open origami style, with chocolate money – in the Celebration
   2. Coin rubbing
2. Bread – staple food for everyone –
3. Going to the temple – demarcation of areas – clay stones, or painted stones –
4. Armour for Roman soldiers –
5. Voyage to Rome
   1. Shipwreck – paper boat in water –
   2. Snakes in Malta – in the Celebration

**Stories and Activities**

1. **Collecting for the famine in Jerusalem** – Acts chapter 11, verses 28 to 30, 1 Corinthians chapter 16, verses 2 and 3

The book of Acts tells us that there was a famine in the Roman Empire, but from Paul’s letters, it appears that it was worst in Palestine. The churches of Greece and what is now Turkey collected money to send to the church in Jerusalem, to help the Christians there buy food. (When food is short, it is very expensive). In the course of Paul’s travels back to Jerusalem, he picks up the money from the various churches he visited, to deliver it on arrival in Jerusalem.

* 1. **Money container –** we’ll make this in the celebration

**You will need:** a square of paper (scrap paper is fine), the instructions (on a separate sheet), a pair of scissors (to make the square), chocolate money or chocolate buttons, tin foil

Make a square of paper by folding one corner across (see the image here) to the opposite side. Cut off the strip at the bottom, so you have a square at the top. Follow the instructions on the separate sheet. Put one or two chocolate coins or buttons in the pouch. (If you are using chocolate buttons, wrap them in tin foil first, or the chocolate will damage the container.

* 1. **Coin rubbing**

**You will need:** paper (again, scrap will do), some coins – different sizes can be good, but not too old and worn, wax or pencil crayons (not felt tip pens)

Put a coin on your work surface, and put the paper over it. Hold the paper down firmly – you could use blue tac to hold the coin down, as long as it won’t damage the surface you are working on. Rub your colouring pencil or wax crayon lightly over the coin, through the paper, until you can see the design of the coin on the paper. Turn the coin over and do the other side, or use a different coin.

**Talk about:** how we get our food – shopping or making. If we make, where do the ingredients come from? For older children, who are more aware of the current state of affairs, talk about food banks.

1. **Bread – everyone’s staple food – especially for the poor**

In every part of the world, there is a food-stuff which is cheap and readily available. It is usually based on a grain crop, although not always, but it is never meat, which is expensive to produce. In east Asia, the food-stuff is rice, or rice based, but in Europe and the middle east, it is bread. The grain used may be rye, or barley, or wheat, or a mix of these, perhaps with oats added as well, although not oats alone. In the times of the bible, bread was made by every household, even the poorest, every day. When Paul collected money to help feed the Christian poor of Jerusalem, it would have been flour or grain that he expected people would need to buy, perhaps with olive oil to mix in, to make the bread.

**You will need:** 500g packet of white bread mix – any brand will do – hot water, some additional bread or plain flour, sesame or poppy seeds, a little milk, a mixing bowl, a fork to mix with, a pastry brush, and baking sheets. If you want a table protector of some kind, use that. There are some pictures of bread shapes on the website, or emailed with this booklet.

Follow the instructions on the packet until your dough is ready to shape. Split the dough into the number of pieces the recipe suggests for rolls (usually 10 or 12), give each person at least one piece and allow them to shape their own – plaits, ordinary roll shapes, twists, will all work – see the suggestions in the picture. Leave to rise as the recipe suggests, then brush the tops with milk and sprinkle them with sesame or poppy seeds (or both!) and bake according to the recipe.

**Talk about:** the staple food in different parts of the world – in Asian countries, this is often rice, and in northern countries, where rice doesn’t grow at all well, it is bread – made with rye, or barley or wheat. A staple food is the basic foodstuff of people – the thing they eat when they cannot afford anything else. Without the staple food, they die of starvation.

1. **Going to the Temple – different areas for different people – boundary stones**

The Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, in the days of Jesus, was divided into various areas. At the boundaries between two area, there were marker stones, so that people did not go where they should not. If you look at the picture supplied with the booklet, you can see the different parts of the Temple. Anyone could go into the outer areas – anyone at all! – but this was the space used as a market place for animals and birds, and for changing Roman money to temple money, so it was often quite busy, and difficult to find a space to pray. The next space in was only available to Jews, men and women. If you weren’t Jewish, you couldn’t go in. Paul took some Greek Jewish Christians into this area, but because they spoke Greek, not Aramaic, which is what Jerusalem Jews spoke, the local Jewish authorities thought they were not Jewish. This caused a riot, and Paul was arrested by Roman soldiers and taken to the Roman governor.

**You will need:** a piece of clay, or a middle to large size garden stone, some paint, and a brush if you are using a stone, or the brush handle or a lolly stick if you are using clay.

If you are using clay, make a stone shaped lump, with a flat surface, and carve the words “keep out” on it.

If you are using a stone, paint the words on the stone, so that they can be seen if the stone is lying down.

If you have space, you can add the word “Gentiles” at the top in either version.

**Talk about:** places where some people cannot go – in Afghanistan, today, women are not allowed to go to parks or restaurants. In Belfast and Londonderry, in Northern Ireland, 40 years ago, Catholics and Protestants did not go into the areas where the other group lived.

1. **Armour for Roman soldiers** –

The Roman army was what defended the Empire from invaders. The soldiers were grouped in 100’s, and stationed at various places around the empire. In some places, like Northern England, they were to stop the people outside from fighting their way in, and killing the locals. In Palestine, they were there to keep the peace between the Jews and anyone else who wasn’t Jewish, who the Jews were not happy with. Wherever they were, the soldiers wore the same basic clothing and armour, and had the same weapons. Additional warm clothing would be added for soldiers in colder parts of the empire, like northern England, or Switzerland and Germany.

**You will need:** thin card, pencils for drawing outlines, colouring pencils if you want to colour what you make, pictures of Roman soldiers – provided on separate sheets – tin foil, scissors, glue

Decide what armour pieces you want to make, draw them on the card and cut them out. Colour them in, or cover them with tin foil if they are metal pieces.

**Talk about:** What do soldiers do? Are they good – protecting, helping and looking after people? Are they bad – hurting and attacking people? Might they be both at different times? What makes the difference? Consider Paul’s story!

1. **Journey to Rome** Acts chapter 27 verse 1 to chapter 28 verse 6

Paul was held as a prisoner for more than 2 years, mostly in Caesarea, the Roman city, where he was safe from the Jews, who wanted to kill him out of hand. Eventually, when his danger from the Jews became very great, Paul said he wanted to be tried by the Emperor, as he, Paul, was a Roman citizen. He was put on a ship for Rome, but it was not a good season for sailing, and they ended up in a storm, and shipwrecked on the island of Malta – the bible calls it Melita. As they were building a fire to dry and warm themselves, and cook a meal, Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake. He shook the snake off, but the local people and the sailors and soldiers from the ship expected him to die. When he didn’t, they thought he was a god.

1. **Shipwreck – paper boat in water –**

**You will need:** a square of paper (see activity 1a), the instructions supplied separately, scissors, a bowl of water – be careful and ask for help if you need it!

Follow the instructions – and then see how long your boat floats for!

1. **Snakes in Malta – in the Celebration**

**You will need:** a paper plate per person, extra card (you could use any spare from the armour you have made), pencils, felt-tips or crayons, scissors and the pictures supplied.

Fold the plate in half, cut eyes and fangs from the extra card, attach them and draw the nose holes and scales as shown (see the pictures – you can make it more elaborate if you want). Cut a further strip of card the width of the plate and glue it to the back of the lower half of the plate (again, see the pictures). Cut a hole in the lower half of the plate, in the centre of the back, by the fold. Put your hand under the strap, with your fingers over the fold and your thumb through the hole, to make it the snake’s tongue. Your fingers make the snake’s head open and close it’s mouth.

**Talk about:** expecting things to go right, and they go wrong – like the sailing trip to Rome, and then expecting things to go wrong and they go right – like the snakebite.

**Celebration**

We’ll start by singing “Our God is a great big God” <https://youtu.be/8Hi8jW1qYsw>

Paul made three missionary journeys. At the time of the third journey, there was a famine in Jerusalem and so Paul collected money from the Christians he was visiting to bring back for the Christians in Jerusalem who were affected. He also brought some Christians with him back to Jerusalem.

Make Money pouches

Paul went to visit the temple in Jerusalem. He took with him some of the Jews who had become Christians, who had come to Jerusalem with him. He went into the court of the Jews in the temple with his friends. However, some of the Jewish leaders knew that Paul had converted non-Jews (known as Gentiles) to Christianity. They thought he had taken some of them into parts of the temple where they weren't supposed to go. The temple police grabbed hold of Paul and a riot started.

Felix, who was the Roman governor, saw a riot starting and sent Roman soldiers who grabbed hold of Paul and took him to the soldiers’ barracks in Jerusalem. However, people in Jerusalem wanted to kill Paul, so the Romans had to sneak him away to Caesarea Philippi, a place where they had more control.

Felix held a trial at which Paul defended himself but Felix would not let him go in case there were more riots. Paul was a prisoner for two years and he talked to Felix quite a lot. Later, because there was no sign of him being released, Paul appealed to the Roman Emperor as was his right. By that Felix time had been replaced by Festus, who then said, “Oh if you hadn't appealed, I'd have set you free!” He also talked to King Agrippa, who was king in the area just to the north. But Paul then had to be taken to Rome to be tried before the Emperor.

Sing “Who put the colours in the rainbow?” <https://youtu.be/l9GsKFIaRo0>

Paul was taken to Rome by boat. However, it wasn't really the right season to sail. As they were sailing by the island of Malta, the boat ran aground. The sailors tried to get off the boat, but Paul warned the Roman guard not to let them. He said that everybody would get off the boat safely. Despite the boat being completely destroyed, everyone was safe.

Everyone was wet so they tried to build a fire to warm up. Paul picked up a piece of wood but a snake was hiding there and it bit him. People who saw it said that the gods must be punishing Paul who had to be a terrible criminal for that to happen. But all that happened was the snake let go of Paul and fell off his arm and went away and Paul was perfectly fine. So then the people said that Paul must be someone great if even snakes wouldn't harm him.

So let’s make a snake!

They stayed on the island all over winter, when they got a new boat to Rome. Paul was never set completely free and remained under house arrest in Rome for the rest of his life. However, this was when Paul wrote a lot of his letters.

Our prayer

Father God, thank you for St. Paul. Thank you for the things he showed us and taught us (even if some of them are hard to understand). Help us to help others, as Paul did, and to use every opportunity to tell people about you.

And thank you that you looked after Paul and look after us.

Amen.

We’ll finish by singing “Praise him on the trumpet.” <https://youtu.be/d8yxHMmA65g>

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

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