**Messy Church – April 2023**

**Easter Appearances**

There are several stories about Jesus after the Resurrection, and they appear in all four of the gospels. Some of them only one or two stories, and others have quite a lot.

Here is a list of the places to find the stories:

Matthew chapter 28

Mark chapter 16

Luke chapter 24

John chapters 20 and 21

1. Crucifixion to Resurrection - Jesus
   1. Clay crosses
   2. Edible empty tomb
2. Resurrection – the friends and disciples
   1. Sad face, happy face
   2. Footprints (in the Celebration)
   3. Fish – mosaic or play doh (in the Celebration)
3. Resurrection – how we remember
   1. Butterfly
   2. Marbled eggs
   3. Pastry puff eggs

**Stories and Activities**

**1 Crucifixion to Resurrection – Jesus**

Last month, we talked about Jesus being arrested and crucified, and we tried to make a palm cross. Today we will make a clay cross, and then decorate it to remember that although Jesus died on a cross, God made him alive again, and for us, the cross is empty. We will also make an edible empty tomb, to remind us that although Jesus was buried, when his friends and disciples came to finalise the burial, there was no body there!

1. **Clay cross**

**You will need:** some air-drying clay (or plasticine or play doh), some tools – clay working tools or a blunt knife, small beads and/or sequins. A paper plate to work on, and a bowl of water to keep your clay moist.

Roll out the clay with your hand, so it is not too thick, and shape or cut it into a cross shape. Put it on the paper plate. Press beads and/or sequins into the clay until the shape is full. Leave to dry somewhere safe.

**Talk about:** remembering what happened to Jesus. We cannot imagine what Jesus and his friends felt, but we can try to remember. Wearing a cross, or having one in our room, can help to remember that Jesus died for us.

1. **Edible empty tomb**

**You will need:** three savoury crackers, a bagel, some squirty or soft cheese to stick the bits together, (optional – chopped fresh chives). Tools: a knife to cut the bagel, a fork to spread your sticky stuff, and a paper plate to work on.

Stand the bagel up on end – and then cut off enough from the bottom to enable the bagel to stand on its own. Spread one cracker with squirty or soft cheese, put it on the plate, and then stand the bagel on it. Use the other two crackers – add squirty cheese as needed – as the back and front of the tomb – make sure the one at the front is moved to one side so that you can see the hollow in the tomb. If you want green grass, sprinkle the chopped chives on the base biscuit to cover the cheese.

**Talk about:** what Jesus friends found when they went to where Jesus was buried, on the first Easter Sunday

**2 Resurrection – the friends and disciples**

When Jesus’ friends and disciples woke up before the sun rose on the first Easter Sunday, they believed he was dead. The women were ready to go and finish preparing his body to be properly buried – on Good Friday, they didn’t have time to do it properly, because they all had to be away from the tomb by sundown.

They knew that there was a stone across the tomb entrance, and they knew there were Roman guards there. The women may have hoped that the soldiers would help them remove the stone. However, there was an earthquake, and when they got to the tomb, the stone had moved. But there was no body in the tomb. Some of the women ran away and told the disciples. Some of the disciples came running to see if the women were telling the truth! John, in his gospel, says that Mary Magdalene stayed in the garden where the tomb was, crying. Jesus found her there, and asked her why she was crying – and then she recognised him.

As the news got around during the day, Jesus’ friends didn’t know what to believe. Some of them stayed in Jerusalem and some of them didn’t. Among those who didn’t were two who lived in a village about 7 miles from Jerusalem, and they decided to go home. As they were walking along, a man came and joined them. They told him all about what had happened in Jerusalem in the last few days, and explained that Jesus’ body had disappeared. The man tried to explain what the Bible said about the Messiah, that he would die but God would make him alive again. When they got to their village, the friends asked the man to stay overnight, as it was getting dark, and they prepared a meal to share. The stranger broke the bread, and blessed it, and then they realised that he was Jesus. Jesus was suddenly not there – and the two of them ran back the 7 miles to Jerusalem, to the house where the others were staying, and they found that everyone (except Thomas) had seen Jesus in the course of the day.

**a. Sad face, happy face**

**You will need:** a paper plate and something to draw with – a felt-tip pen, or a pencil

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.

**Talk about**: how Jesus’ friends and family felt when he died – and how they felt when they found he was alive. Use your plate to think about their feelings.

**b. Footprints (in the Celebration)**

**You will need:** a piece of paper – or more than one, if you want to draw lots of footprints – a pencil, scissors.

Draw round each of your feet (with your shoes on) and cut out the shapes.

**Talk about:** how the women who went to the tomb ran away when they found no body there, and the disciples ran back to check. Also, think about the couple who walked 7 miles, and then ran back again when they discovered they had met Jesus. If you make lots of foot shapes, you could make a path to follow.

1. **Fish – mosaic or play doh (in the Celebration)**
   1. **Mosaic**

**You will need:** a piece of paper, and something to make tiles from – we will use sticky backed foam squares, but squares of paper of various colours, either ready to stick or without stick, will do. If your paper is not ready to stick, you will want glue and something to spread it with. You will also need scissors.

Draw a fish shape onto your base paper, cut it out, and cover the shape with “tiles” of assorted colours.

* 1. **Play doh**

**You will need:** play doh, and a paper plate to work on.

Make fish shapes from the play doh

**Talk about:** what the disciples might have felt, as they met Jesus on the beach, and he cooked their breakfast.

**3 Resurrection – how we remember**

Many of our Easter traditions have to do with remembering what Easter is about. Hot cross buns – fancy buns with crosses on the top – are reminders about Jesus dying on Good Friday, although shops now sell them from Christmas onwards.

Easter eggs, and chicks and nests, are about Jesus coming back to life, and new life of all kinds. Eggs would not have been eaten for the last six weeks – remember that pancakes were to use up the last of the eggs – and in fact, many chickens would not have been laying eggs in the early spring, but by Easter, they would be doing so again.

We are going to make three different reminders of the new life that Jesus brings to all of us.

**Talk about:** how we remember – do we need to keep something in our rooms or pencil cases to remember, or do we remember better if we do something special regularly, or are special foods at Easter the best idea for us?

**a. Butterfly**

**You will need:** the butterfly template (supplied with this booklet), wrapping paper (paper, not foil), a pencil, scissors and some thread – cotton, or wool.

Print the template on card if you can, otherwise just use printer paper – scrap will do. Put the template on the wrapping paper, draw round it and cut out the shape. It doesn’t look like a butterfly, but it will. Starting at the narrow end, concertina fold the shape, keeping the folds narrow and creasing them well. Tie the folded shape in the middle, with cotton or wool, and gently spread the wings out to a butterfly shape. (See the pictures)

**b. Marbled eggs**

**You will need:** an egg-shaped card (cut from any clean card, any colour), a bowl of water, marbling inks, an ice lolly stick (or the handle of a paintbrush), and some paper towel. (If you are doing this at home, without access to marbling inks, there are alternative suggestions below). **Wear an apron, and roll your sleeves up**!!

Put a couple of drops of two or three different marbling inks into the bowl of water. Stir the water gently with the lolly stick or paint brush handle. Put the card gently down on the water, leave for a moment and then lift it up. Put the card on paper towel to dry.

*To do this without marbling inks, you could simply paint or colour your egg shape, but if you have access to shaving foam, here is a messy alternative!*

***You will need:*** *a waterproof tray, shaving foam, paint, plastic fork (or any implement that will stir your foam that Mum or Dad doesn’t want to eat with later!), egg-shaped card, apron, towel.*

*Squirt the shaving foam onto the tray and spread it evenly. Add squirts of paint on top of the shaving foam, and use whatever your implement is to stir the paint into patterns in the foam. Put the egg-shaped card on top of the mixture, and carefully press it down to make sure the front of the egg is fully in the mixture. Lift the card off, and wait about a minute. Carefully scrape off the shaving foam (you may be able to use the side of whatever you used to stir the foam and paint, or the edge of the card you cut the egg out of. Wipe the edge of your scraper in between each scrape. The finished egg will look like you used marbling inks!*

1. **Pastry puff eggs**

**You will need:** a paper plate, shortcrust pastry – ready made or home made – pie filling – again, home made or bought – oval cutters (or egg shaped cutters if you have them), some plain flour to stop your pastry sticking as you roll it out, a little milk or water to seal the edges, a pastry brush a teaspoon and a rolling pin. Also baking sheets, and greaseproof paper if you want to cover the baking sheet. Optionally, an egg, food colouring and fine brushes – very clean!

Roll out the pastry (not too thin) and cut out an even number of egg shapes. Put half of the shapes onto a baking sheet or greaseproof paper on a baking sheet. Add a teaspoonful of pie filling to the middle of each shape. Use the pastry brush and the liquid to brush round the edges of the filled shape, and press a second egg shape over the top (pressing seals the edges). Brush the top of the eggs with milk or water, and bake for 10 – 12 minutes at 190°.

If you want to colour the pastry eggs, before you bake them, separate the yolk and white of the egg, brush the tops with egg white, leave it to dry and then mix food colouring with the yolk, and paint the top of the pastry egg. Then bake them!

**Celebration**

We’ll sing Lord I lift your name on high. <https://youtu.be/c12Ta6_WJrw>

Last time we finished with Mary meeting Jesus just outside the empty tomb. Over the next six weeks a number of people met Jesus. Some of them are known by name, like Mary, and some of them aren’t.

One of the more famous ones was Thomas. He’s famous because he didn’t meet Jesus when the others did, and he didn’t believe them. Then a week later Jesus appeared again and quoted back to Thomas what he had said. Thomas was one of Jesus’ disciples, so we would have known his name anyway, but Cleopas is only mentioned because he was walking with a friend when Jesus came and joined them. Like Mary, they didn’t recognise him. He talked with them about why Jesus had had to die, and they invited him in for a meal. Jesus took a bit of bread and broke it and then they recognised him, and he disappeared. They had walked about seven miles, but they ran all the way back.

We’ll cut out footprints to help us think about all the people who met Jesus and then ran to tell others about it.

Let’s sing Jesus is Lord! Creation’s voice proclaims it

<https://youtu.be/8HHYt40whHQ>

Another time Jesus appeared, it was by the sea of Galilee. The disciples had gone back to Galilee and were fishing on the lake. They didn’t catch anything. A man on the beach yelled at them and asked if they’d caught anything. When they said “No!” he told them to throw their nets out on the other side of the boat. When they did that, they caught lots of fish. Peter realised it was Jesus and jumped overboard and swam to shore. Jesus cooked breakfast, but after he asked Peter 3 times if he loved him. Peter was upset by this, possibly because he remembered saying 3 times that he didn’t know Jesus. Here is a video of the story.

Peter has breakfast <https://youtu.be/Vb0Iohf6Ujg>

We are going to make some mosaic fish. If you’d rather, you can make fish shapes in Play-do.

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

Well finish with a song. This is the day. <https://youtu.be/26atGdbKhwY>

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>