**Messy Church – 20th July 2024**

**The Big Picnic – Feeding the 5,000**

The activities are:

1. **Picnic food:**
	1. **Iced cakes**
	2. **Fish**
2. **How do you carry your food? Picnic basket or box (in the Celebration)**
3. **Picnic pictures – what do you eat, where do you go? (in the Celebration)**
4. **In the park:**
	1. **model swing**
	2. **flowers**
5. **On the beach: paper plate crab**
6. **It’s too hot: paper fan**

**Story and Activities**

The story of Jesus feeding the crowd of people, at least five thousand, can be found in Matthew chapter 14, in Mark chapter 6, in Luke chapter 9 and in John chapter 6. The stories are slightly different, but the basics are all the same.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all say that it happened when Jesus heard about the death of his cousin, John the Baptist, in prison. He took his friends to a quiet place around Lake Galilee – they went by boat – so that Jesus could pray by himself. Unfortunately for this idea, someone saw them go, and guessed where they were going, and went to meet them there – going by land. Some of the stories say Jesus healed people who were sick and taught the crowd, and some say he just taught them. All four stories say that his friends told him, late in the day, to send the people away to get a meal. Jesus said it was too late to do that, and the friends should provide the meal, and asked what food they had. Only John says that the five small loaves of bread and two fish were provided by a child in the crowd, but all the stories have the same food.

Jesus told his friends to get everyone sitting down, while he blessed the food, and started to break it up into pieces to give out. The friends gave out the food, and everyone ate enough. For much of the two thousand years since whatever happened, happened, Christians have wondered how it happened – whether lots of people really had their own food, and when it was shared out, there was enough to go round, or whether the five loaves and two fish really fed all those people – but it doesn’t really matter. What happened was that Jesus made sure that five thousand men, plus women and children, were fed a meal, and that there was food left over. All four versions of the story say that there were twelve baskets of bits left – the implication being that there was a basket for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. We don’t know whether that was symbolic, or real, or how big the baskets were! Sometimes, the questions are irrelevant.

Our activities are based on the idea of a picnic, not linked to specific bits of the story.

1. **Picnic food**
	1. **Iced cakes**

**You will need:** small cakes – you can make them (see the recipe in the file) – or buy them, icing sugar and a little water, food colouring (or you can use ready made icing in various colours), icing flowers.

Ice your cake(s) to look like a garden, or a park, with flower beds and grass.

1. **Fish**

**You will need:** a piece of card, silver foil, wiggly eyes (glue, if the eyes are not self adhesive), felt tip pens, scissors

Draw a fish shape on the card, and cut it out. Cover it in silver foil, both sides, carefully shaping it round the card. Stick wiggly eyes on – one on each side – and if you have time, draw scales on the sides of the fish.

**Talk about:** preparing to go out for the day – what will you take to eat, will you think about where you will eat?

**2. Basket or box** (in the Celebration)

**You will need:** the printed net of a box (with this file), scissors, glue

Cut out the net on the solid lines. Fold along the dotted lines, with the patterned side outside. Put a little glue on each tab – one at a time, and stick the box together – note that one side is the lid – don’t stick it down!

**Talk about:** packing your picnic to go out. Do you have to be careful with how you pack the food – is some of it in smaller boxes?

**3. Think about a picnic – where, what will you take with you? (**in the Celebration**)**

**You will need:** paper to draw on, and pencils or felt tip pens to draw with

Draw or write about what you would take out for a picnic.

Then draw or write about where you might go for a picnic – do you take a picnic to the beach, or to the park? Do you take a picnic lunch if you go on a school trip?

**Talk about:** the importance of what you take – can you take just anything, or are some foods not really sensible to take for a picnic?

**4. Picnic in the park:**

* 1. **model swing**

**You will need:** some slender wooden sticks – we will use bamboo skewers – but garden canes – short ones – will probably work as well, and the rest of the tools and equipment listed on the separate sheet, with the instructions.

Follow the instructions to make a swing. You could put a pipe-cleaner or play doh person on the swing!

1. **flowers**

**You will need:** a piece of paper, crayons or felt tip pens, tissue paper to make flowers, or stick on flowers of any kind. If you are going to make tissue paper flowers, you may need scissors and glue as well.

Make a picture of the park, with flower beds, trees and grass to run around on.

**Talk about:** the fun of being outside, having space to run around

**5. Picnic on the beach:** paper plate crab

**You will need:** an orange paper plate (or colour the back of a white one), and some orange card (again, you can colour white card), double sided sticky tape, scissors, large wiggly eyes, and a black felt tip pen. If you need to colour the plate and card, you will also need orange felt tip pens, and you might want a pencil to draw the shapes to cut out from the card. You may also find it helpful to have the picture of the finished crab available – it is sent with the pack, along with two images of real crabs, so you can see the eyes on one, and the legs on the other – a lot of descriptions of crabs say that there are only six legs and two claws, making eight limbs, but there are eight legs and two claws, really – ten limbs!.

Colour the back of your plate orange (it is easier to colour the back than the front) and fold the plate in half, so the orange side is outside. (If you are using a bought orange plate, it will be the top that is orange, so the plate will be the other way up.)

From the sheet of card, draw and cut out 8 leg shapes – the picture only has four – I am not sure why! – two pincer (claw) shapes, and two short, thin rectangles.

Using double sided sticky tape, stick the legs around the bottom curve of the plate, mostly at the sides, as in the image of the paper plate crab, sticking them to the front part of the plate. Stick the pincer claws at the top outside edge of the back of the plate, and the two rectangles towards the middle of the top, as shown on the picture. Stick a wiggly eye at the top of each rectangle.

Use the black pen to draw a mouth onto the front of the plate.

**Talk about:** being outside on holiday – do you like to look in rock pools? Have you ever caught a crab? Some beach shops sell what you might need to do so – remember to put the crabs back before you leave the beach!

**6 It’s too hot: paper fan:**

**You will need:** a piece of paper – printed on one side will do if you don’t have any clean on both sides – felt tip pens or colouring pencils, and some glue.

Put the paper on your work surface so that the long sides are at the top and bottom (landscape). Colour the top two thirds of the paper – you can draw a picture, or just make patterns. If you have time, you could do a picture or patterns on the other side as well, even if it is already printed. The second side should just be the top two thirds as well.

Concertina fold the whole sheet, carefully, so that you can hold it between your finger and thumb.

Unfold the sheet of paper again. Spread glue thinly along the bottom half inch of the paper, being careful not to get the glue on the outside ends (at each end), and then fold it up again carefully, so that the glued sections stick together. Hold it like that until the glue is dry!

Spread out the top of the fan so you can fan yourself when it is very hot.

**Talk about:** spending the whole day outside when it is very hot. Would you wear a hat? Would it be nice to have a fan as well? Have you seen people using their hats as fans?

**Celebration**

Sing My God is so big <https://youtu.be/Aq1ZIC4lsEw?si=U_wm1XewzhB2dY7G>

Think about all the times and places where you might have a picnic. Maybe you’ll go to the beach for the day and take a picnic lunch, or possibly you will go to a park where there are swings and slides and take a picnic there. You might go for a long walk into the countryside, or be going on a car journey and stop somewhere for a picnic lunch on the way. We recently had a picnic lunch after a service – it should have been outside but the weather was too wet.

Draw a picture of your favourite place to have a picnic.

Jesus had had a bit of a tough time, and wanted to get away from the crowds. He set off with his friends, the disciples, and went to an out of the way place. But someone saw him go, and everyone followed him, not just one person, not just ten people, not even a hundred people. Five thousand people followed him. Was Jesus angry when he saw all the people? No! He looked at them and thought, “Oh dear, all these people, they’re just like sheep, sheep without a shepherd.” And he started to talk to them, to teach them about God.

Song The Lord’s my shepherd I’ll not want. <https://youtu.be/-eIQQayhpak?si=D0HQcfMu-QU7EZ2R>

Well, after speaking to the people for a whole day it should have been time to go home. But Jesus was concerned. Some of the people hadn’t eaten anything all day. They might not be able to go home safely. So he called his disciples to him and told them to feed the crowd. The disciples were thoughtful. They looked at the crowd and tried to work out how much food it would take to feed them all. “Jesus,” they said, “where can we get food from? It would cost nearly a year’s wages to feed this lot!” Then Andrew brought a boy to Jesus. The boy had some food. Not much, just 5 small loaves and two fishes.

Jesus told everyone to sit down, said a prayer over the bread and fish and broke them into pieces. He gave them to the disciples to pass round. Everyone had enough to eat! Afterwards the disciples picked up 12 baskets of leftovers.

Let’s pray.

Lord God, thank you for picnics and all the wonderful places where we can have them. Thank you for sharing. Help us to share, too.

Amen

We’ll sing Who took fish and bread (Not on YouTube)

Next Messy Church is 21st September. 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 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>