



Introduction

Easter Sunday was on April 4th this year, but the season of Easter extends over seven weeks, so we'll be continuing our celebrations at Messy Church this month.

Easter is the time when we remember how Jesus came to life again after dying on a cross. This was a new life – very different from the one that he had before – and it's a life that we're all offered if we follow him.

The bible passage is from Matthew 28:1-10:

The Sabbath was over, and it was almost daybreak on Sunday when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² Suddenly a strong earthquake struck, and the Lord's angel came down from heaven. He rolled away the stone and sat on it. ³ The angel looked as bright as lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards shook from fear and fell down, as though they were dead.

⁵ The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, who was nailed to a cross. ⁶ He isn't here! God has raised him to life, just as Jesus said he would. Come, see the place where his body was lying. ⁷ Now hurry! Tell his disciples that he has been raised to life and is on his way to Galilee. Go there, and you will see him. That is what I came to tell you."

⁸ The women were frightened and yet very happy, as they hurried from the tomb and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them and greeted them. They went near him, held on to his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said, "Don't be afraid! Tell my followers to go to Galilee. They will see me there."

Contemporary English Version

It was the third day after Jesus died. He had been hastily buried in a tomb just before the beginning of the sabbath, when everyone had to rest. The disciples were probably bewildered, scared and perhaps disillusioned. Their master and teacher – their hope for the future – was dead.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb to wrap the body of Jesus in a proper way, as there was no time to do it on Good Friday. And they probably wanted some quiet and peace. But they got anything but peace. There was an earthquake, and Jesus had come back to life! The reason for this new life was not about proving a point or to provide a new spiritual experience. The reason was for the disciples to be commissioned for a new work, a new life – in fact, a new way of life, one that would fulfil God’s promise, the promise of John 3:16: ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.’

That commission is now ours – yours and mine. It started in Jerusalem and was carried throughout the Roman empire by people like Paul. And today we carry on spreading the good news to the whole world. Jesus is risen, death has been defeated, light and goodness have triumphed. Jesus asks us to go and make disciples.

Activities:

1. Easter egg nest

You will need: 200gm milk chocolate (ideally cooking chocolate), 2 shredded wheat (crushed), cup cake cases, Mini Eggs*, Easter chick* *both in Messy Church bags.



Melt the chocolate in a bowl over simmering water. Pour chocolate over the shredded wheat and stir well. Spoon into cake cases and press with the back of a spoon to create nest shape. Chill in fridge. Add eggs and/or chicks to create a scene of new life.

ENJOY!!!!!!

Talk about: how the egg was a symbol of rebirth, adopted by early Christians as a symbol of the resurrection of Jesus at Easter. What does it take for someone to give their life to Christ?

2. New life card

A5 stiff paper or card and an A5 piece of paper, felt tips, coloured paper, glue stick.

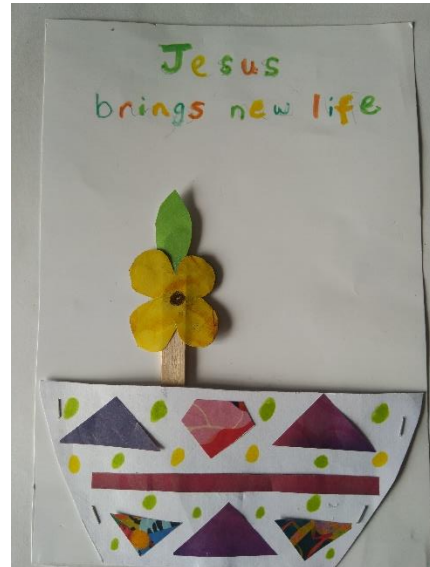
Fold the paper in half and draw a plant bowl or pot with the fold at the bottom. Using the width of a lolly stick as a measure, cut a slit in the centre of the fold. Decorate the plant container – felt tips, coloured paper, etc.

Cut out and staple, glue or tape the sides of the bowl or pot to the bottom of the card.

Cut out a leaf shape and a flower shape from coloured paper, or colour the shapes cut from plain paper. Stick the leaf to the top of the lolly stick and the flower just below it and put it into the plant container with just the leaf showing.

Write a message on the top of the card, such as “Jesus brings new life” or “New life with Jesus” and make your flower grow.

Talk about whether there is someone that you’d like to share the message of new life with Jesus with.



3. Lemon tree

You will need: lemon pips, flower pot, soil

Plant a lemon pip in a pot of soil from your garden or the park. Water it regularly and let’s see what appears from our pots over the next few months.

Talk about: A plant or flowers represent life and growth. Is there something happening in your life, maybe associated with the ending of our national lockdown, at the moment that represents new life?

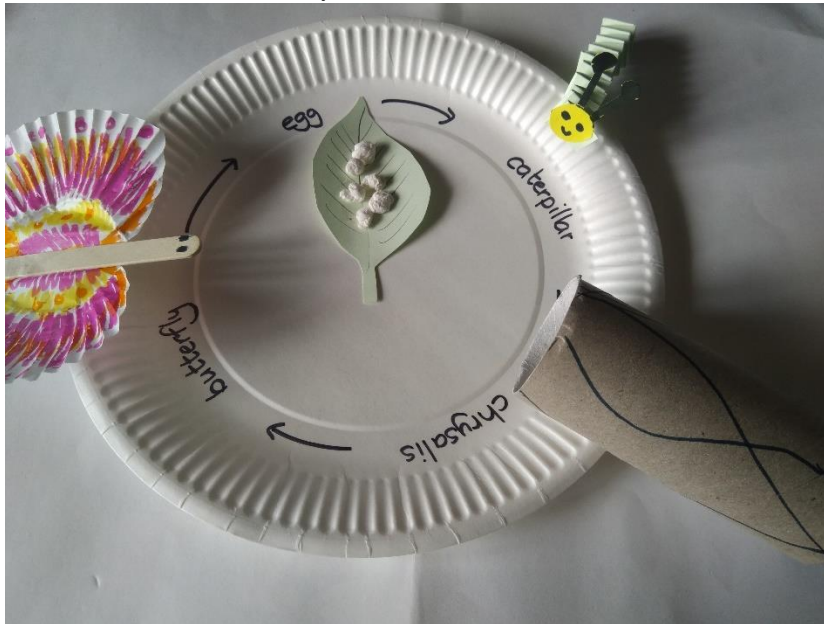


4. Butterfly life cycle

You will need: a paper plate, pens, a paper cake-case, lolly stick, cardboard tube, paper tissue, two strips and a square of green paper and a small square of yellow card.

Soak your paper tissue in water and then tear off small pieces, roll them into balls and leave to dry. Cut a leaf shape from the green paper and glue the ‘eggs’ in place when dry.

Glue the green strips of paper together at right angles at one end. Fold the strips over each other alternately, then glue the ends together. Make a caterpillar face (possibly with feelers) from the yellow card. Glue it in place at one end of the caterpillar.



Add a few lines with pen to your cardboard tube, so that it looks like a chrysalis. Make a butterfly by making two wings joined together from the cake-case (cut along the lines drawn on the cases in the Messy Church bags). Decorate the wings and then glue the cake case to the lolly stick. When

the glue is dry, carefully fold the wings so that the butterfly can hide inside the chrysalis, until you want to make it creep out and fly.

Put all your models on the paper plate and include descriptive words and arrows to illustrate the wonderful changes in the life-cycle of a butterfly.

Talk about Think about how different the butterfly is to the eggs and yet, they are the same creature. When Jesus came back to life after he died, he was very different. Talk about what might have been different about him.

Song: Hallelu, Hallelu

A wonderful song of celebration that we've sung before in Messy Church goes like this:

- Group 1/sit: Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, halleluia
- Group 2/stand: Praise ye the Lord
- Group 1/sit: Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, halleluia
- Group 2/stand: Praise ye the Lord
- Group 2/stand: Praise ye the Lord
- Group 1/sit: Halleluia
- Group 2/stand: Praise ye the Lord
- Group 1/sit: Halleluia
- Group 2/stand: Praise ye the Lord
- Group 1/sit: Halleluia
- Group 2/stand: Praise ye the Lord

If you have a few people in your family, see if you can share the singing. Alternatively stand up and sit down to sing different parts.

Here's a link to a version that you can sing along to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f50UKvfhku4>

Prayer

We've been praying 'teaspoon prayers' each month at Messy Church. Think about anything that you've been doing over the Easter holidays that represent new life. Pray **thanks** to God for new things to do or people to see again, say **sorry** for times when you might have upset others and ask God (with a **please**) to show you how you might celebrate these moments of new life with others. The first letters of thank you, sorry and please (tsp), give an abbreviation for teaspoon and we call these prayers 'teaspoon prayers'.

Messy Grace:

This is a prayer that we say at Messy Church to ask God to always be with us, as we try to keep connected to Jesus.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (hold out hands as if expecting a present)

And the love of God (put your hands on your heart)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (hold hands)

Be with us all (raise arms)

Amen (drop hands)

Next date: Friday 14th May 2021

www.facebook.com/MessyChurchWestWickham/