

The Pretzel

A resource for use during the first year of the new Diocesan Vision by those who work in schools across the Diocese of Norwich and in churches with children, families and the young at heart...

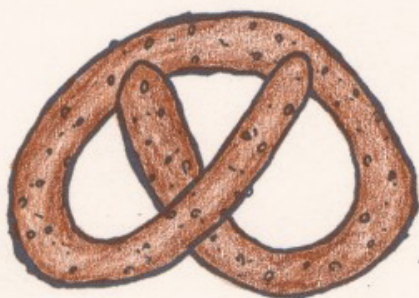
Transformed by Christ to be more **Prayerful** (Advent 2021 – Advent 2022)



History of the Pretzel

Tradition has it that pretzels were first made in Italy by a monk in the 7th century. He was preparing a simple Lenten bread of water, flour and salt in the monastery kitchens when, through the monastery kitchen window, he saw children praying in the monastery garden. They had folded their arms over each other across their chests, touching each shoulder with the opposite hand (one of the earliest attitudes for prayer).

Inspired by this, he rolled the bread dough in strips and shaped each strip in the form of crossed arms, before baking them in the oven. Because these breads were shaped into the form of crossed arms, they were called *bracellae*, the Latin word for “little arms.” From this word, the Germans derived the word *bretzel* which has since mutated to the familiar word *pretzel*.



Simple Soft Pretzel Recipe

There are many recipes online: watch the recipe below in use at <https://sallysbakingaddiction.com/easy-homemade-soft-pretzels/>

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cup warm tap water
- 1 packet active dried yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 3 ¾ - 4 cups plain flour
- sea salt for sprinkling on top

For the water bath

- ½ cup baking soda
- 9 cups water

Method

- 1** Preheat the oven to 204°C. Line 2 baking sheets with slightly oiled parchment paper or, even better, silicone baking mats, and set aside.
- 2** Whisk the yeast into warm water. Allow to sit for 1 minute. Whisk in salt, brown sugar, and melted butter. Slowly add 3 cups of flour, 1 cup at a time. Mix with a wooden spoon until dough is thick. Add ¾ cup more flour until the dough is no longer sticky. If it is still sticky, add ¼ - ½ cup more, as needed. Poke the dough with your finger – if it bounces back, it is ready to knead.
- 3** Turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Knead the dough for 3 minutes and shape into a ball. Cover lightly with a towel and allow to rest for 10 minutes.
- 4** Add ½ cup baking soda to 9 cups of water and whisk together. Bring to a boil in a large pan over medium heat.
- 5** For substantial pretzels, cut the dough into 12 equal portions. Roll each dough ball into a long snake 50-55cms long. Take each end and pull up, around, and down with a twist to form the pretzel shape, pinching the ends of the dough to hold. Use shorter, thinner snakes of dough for making smaller pretzels.
- 6** On a slotted spoon, dunk each pretzel into the boiling water for about 20 seconds. (Any more than that and they will have a metallic taste.) Then lift out, allowing excess water to drip off. Place onto prepared baking sheet and sprinkle with coarse sea salt while still damp. Bake for 12-15 minutes (depending on size of pretzel) or until golden brown.

N.B. To avoid the faff of dunking, simply brush with beaten egg before baking...

Curriculum links

Pretzels are cheap to buy and easily available (and the *hard*-baked ones last a long time) but you could also *make* pretzels with children. If working in school, link the activity to the relevant phase of the National Curriculum (art? technology?) and/or the locally agreed RE syllabus (prayer as our response to God's love and as a way of listening to God; prayer as a way of sharing our own concerns and those of the wider world with God).

You could then build an act of worship around the pretzel, emphasising God's unconditional love for each person young or old the world over, and letting the pretzel shape speak of being *hugged*, as it were, by God. Give each child/teacher present a pretzel to pop in their pocket as a reminder of all these things. Teach the pretzel prayer.

Pretzel Prayer

Use a short piece of ribbon to tie a small card bearing the prayer to each pretzel?

Loving God,
may this little pretzel
remind me that I am
enfolded in your love.
Help me to love you back.

Amen

