

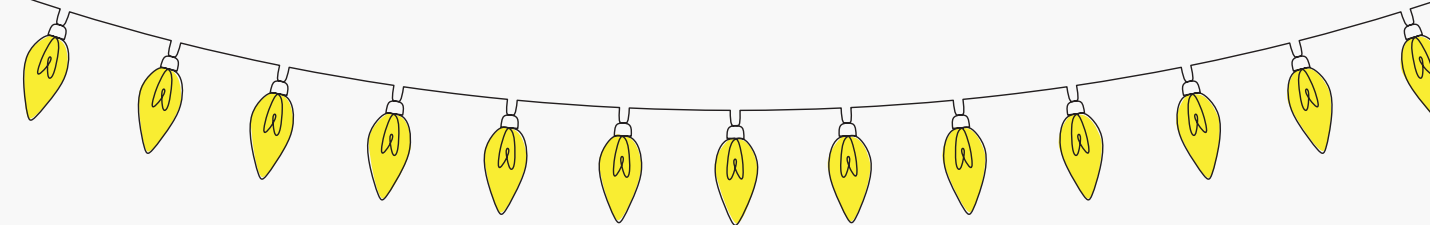


FESTIVAL!

12 easy recipes to cook up a
great all-age gathering
from scratch in your church

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Norwich



It is a great joy to commend Festival! to the parishes, benefices and Christian communities of the Diocese of Norwich.

Our diocesan vision is to be Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic. Part of our prophetic task is to call generations not familiar with the gospel into the life of prayer and the Church's pastoral care. Festival! offers step-by-step ways to do just that.

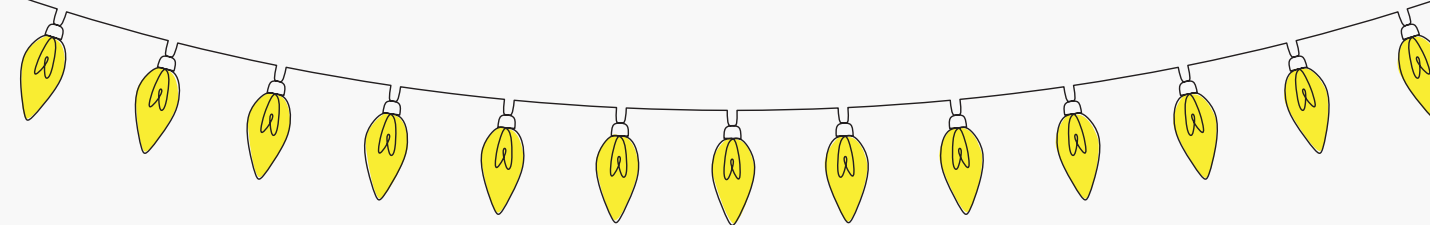
You can use these sessions in many ways. Some lend themselves to feasts and fasts of the Church or to the agricultural year: The Talking Pancake to Shrove Tuesday, The Secret to Loaf for Lammas, to name but two. Others fit any day of the year to spark imagination and worship.

Do try them. The sessions are so creatively put together that they might spark more ideas in you as well – ideas we might include in a Festival 2!

If you're wondering how you might afford some of the basic kit, don't forget that you can apply for an Archdeacons' Good News fund for up to 75% of the costs: go to: https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/parish_support-finance_stewardship_grants-grants_funds_available_from_the_diocese/to_find_out_more.

I do hope that you find this resource useful to you as you seek to draw new people to be Transformed by Christ: **Prayerful, Pastoral and Prophetic**.

The Rt Revd Dr Jane Steen
Bishop of Lynn, Diocese of Norwich



INTRODUCTION

How do you rescue a split béchamel sauce?

Delia Smith has the answer.

According to Christian Selvaratnam, tutor, author and practitioner in church planting, Delia suggests that instead of mixing in more and more ingredients and stirring harder, you should create a new 'roux'. (Church Times on 7th June 2024) The 'roux' simply means the essence of the sauce. Once this is formed, if you gradually stir the split sauce back into the roux, you rescue the sauce and end up with something new and tasty!

The frustrations felt by many a chef are the frustrations felt by many a church leader, lay missionary or PCC in trying to revive or revitalise their local church. Christian Selvaratnam encourages us to think of Delia and start with a new roux. Are there a few people who are excited about trying something new? A little team who you can gather to begin to dream and pray? Some people with whom you can journey and pilot and fail and fly together? If not, start praying for this little team. One or two will do. Don't begin with a board meeting. When you have them, begin with a cup of tea, a blank sheet of paper a big dollup of prayer and a main course of faith, hope and love.

These will be your best ingredients for the journey ahead. Aprons on!

Are You Ready?

In 2 Peter 1 we read:

"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

Did you know you already have everything you need to join in with what God is doing? God has given us great and precious promises and the invitation to participate with him in his heavenly kitchen.

But, before we jump to any 'to-do lists' for running a festival-style, all-age church service, let's stop, pray and listen. Let's ask God what He wants to do.

Vision is key. Jesus taught us to pray: "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven". What might more of heaven look like in your village? How might your festival church be a part of this? Maybe, you imagine all ages gathering to the building, caught up in wonder and worship? But you don't know where to start.

Taste and See

The goal of these gatherings is to create spaces where both the initiated and uninitiated can 'taste and see that the Lord is good' (Psalm 34:8). Nothing more, and nothing less.



Beyond the festival gathering, opportunities for connection and spiritual nourishment—such as coffee mornings, small groups, and exploration courses—are vital. The festival church can offer a foretaste and an introduction for people to dip their toe in the water and see if they want to swim.

The real and deep discipleship will happen in relational settings held between monthly gatherings. In the Finding Jesus Report (2025) the top two categories of people who had begun to explore the Christian faith were those 'needing help with life' and 'looking for meaning'. It is much easier to do this in a setting that encourages conversation and community.

Preparing The Table

If you were expecting new guests to come and visit your home what would you do to prepare?



I would put some music on, and make sure the heating is on, and lights, and maybe a nice corner lamp or two and I'd Hoover and hide the dirty laundry. I'd want to do my best to create an environment that is inspiring and relaxing. Today people are hungry for transcendence, whether it is through media, music, or melt in the mouth Müller yoghurt. They are also looking for community, but normally in places that make everyone feel more alienated and lonely. Many of our ancient spaces have buckets of 'wonder', but

it might be hidden under dust, damp and cold. Go and visit some inspiring spaces and ask yourself, why is this making me want to stay and ponder? Go and visit a cafe or music night and ask yourself why are people making their home here?

Light It Up

In my experience, a 100ft set of decent classic festoon lights for (for £40) can make almost any building look like an event! Nothing says 'welcome' and 'festival' more than a set of festoons lights outside and inside the church. There is a lot of fun to be had a relatively little expense that helps to show these ancient spaces in a fresh light and incredible things can be done with new white panel infrared heaters.



Hospitality

Drinks on arrival? Offer refreshments throughout the event. You would at home.



Why not borrow the Norwich Diocese candy floss maker and offer something different to guests when they arrive in the porch?

Coffee. A few pump thermos flasks and some quality coffee (ethically sourced makes it taste better), and why not dot these around the church so people can explore the space and find refreshments? Anything that helps them to feel at home.

Music. Grab a bluetooth speaker and stream some songs from Spotify - Next time you are out why not have a listen to what music is playing in the shops, the cafes, the community spaces?



How does it make you feel? What's your playlist? I have one called "Future Church" and its all my favourite new songs with a good message and vibe.

Identity

Your new roux needs a name, a flavour, a sense of direction and vision and purpose. Listen in prayer. Have fun with it and be honest with yourself. If you aren't good at this sort of thing then get help.

Perhaps as a rule of thumb, if you can't imagine any of your favourite artisan coffee shops, retailers or online shopping using your flyer, then don't use it.

The whole point is to attract people, not put them off and in this age there is no excuse for poor publicity. Make sure you get the word out via social media and all local channels.

A very simple **service sheet**. I dare you to make it no more than one folded piece of A4. Three songs, a prayer, a reading, a talk and a final blessing.

And why not add a QR code to help people follow up? It could be a link to your website (or a daily devotional app like Lectio 365, Bible in One Year, Everyday Faith)

An opportunity to sign up to a **mailing list**. You are enabling their journey of exploration. They might want to follow the pathway that you are setting out. So why not help them? Create a clear distinct name for your gathering, an identity and a mailing list. This way they can join in and follow, like and subscribe.

I think we are ready to start.

EXAMPLE OF IDENTITY

A flyer tells people what's coming up and to 'save the date'

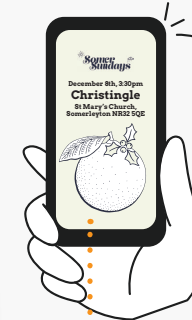
Include a QR code to the church website for more info

Prepare a simple order of service in a matching design










Matching social post

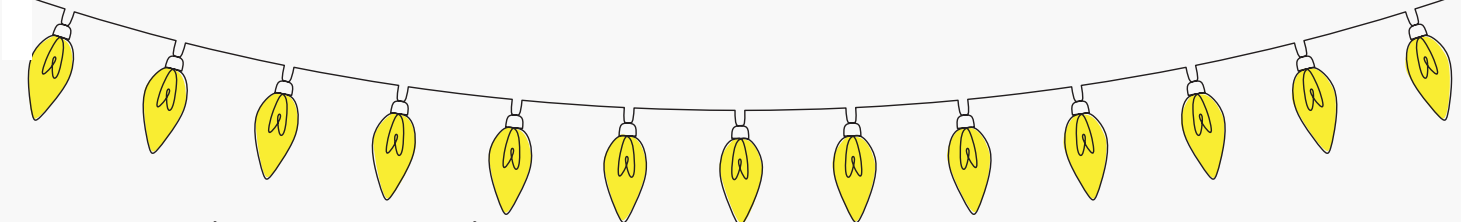
Scan this QR code to access more resources and template at churchofengland.org



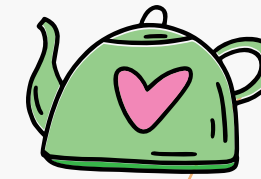
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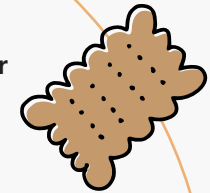


BEFORE WE START



Preparation is key

Preparing the church, like you would get your home ready for a guest to come and visit.



Hospitality

Heating and light - festoon lights?
Nothing says welcome more than these!

Toilets and welcoming facilities

Put the kettle on

Bring out the best biscuits and snacks

Put on some music - a nice playlist - maybe even
create one on Spotify called "Festival Church"?

Access to wifi



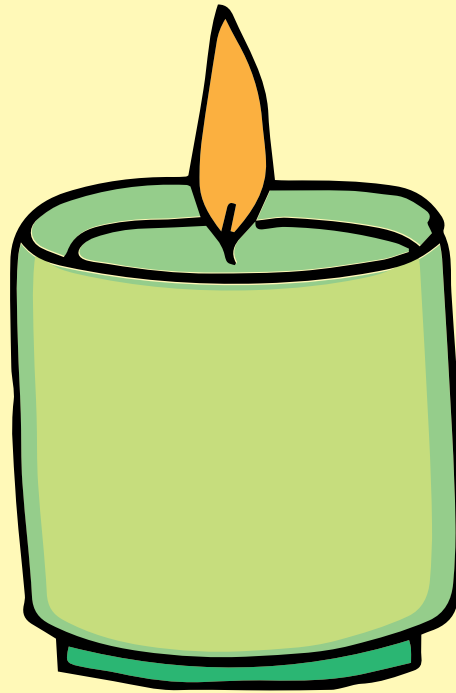
Follow Up

Point people to the bible apps for daily reflections
- how can they experience the daily bread?



“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12



JESUS, THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WENT OUT

TIP: This is great for advent.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 “magic candle” (relights when you blow it out)
- 1 big birthday cake on a tray or solid board
- 1 lighter

BIBLE VERSE

John 8.12

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

STORY BOARD

We are celebrating Jesus’ birthday.
We already have a tree, some carols, candles...
but what is missing?... A cake!”
Reveal the birthday cake.

“What else is missing?...”

Reveal the candle and add it to the cake.
“...a candle!”

Jesus was born and as he grew up he described himself as ‘The Light of the World’. He said John 8.12: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

But his life wasn’t straightforward. Who else can relate to that? (Tell a short funny personal story of recent setback).

HUFF AND PUFF (but nothing will blow the light out)

With all ages, have fun exploring four big challenges in Jesus’ own life and see if anyone can extinguish the light:

1. When Jesus was born King Herod tried to blow out the flame - who wants to be Herod?

(Person comes forwards and blows out the candle... wait... it will relight by itself).

2. Teenage Jesus lost in the Temple for three days -

his parents lost him for a few days! Who wants to be the careless parents and blow out the flame? *(Again, a person comes forwards and blows out the candle... wait... it will relight itself)*

3. Temptations of Jesus in the Wilderness for 40 days - who wants to be Satan and try and blow out the flame?

(Do it again and the candle will relight)

4. Jesus on the cross - who wants to try and blow out the flame on the cross?

(And again... Jesus is the light that never goes out)

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

Jesus’ name means ‘saviour’. We celebrate the birth of the light that never went out. That means in any and every situation, no matter how bad, or how difficult or how sad or how impossible there is ALWAYS hope....I wonder what flame of hope you, or someone you love might need today? Lets Pray.

PRAYER

“Lord of light. Come and be with us in our darkness. Come and show us your way. Fill us with your wonder as we trust in your word this Christmas.”

“Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.”

Matthew 7:17



THE BIG JAR

TIP: Great for setting priorities at the start of the New Year.

INGREDIENTS

- 5 big plastic jars (like the ones that you see in old-fashioned sweet shops - available on Amazon)
- Old tennis balls
- Marker pens
- Lots of packets of cheerios

BIBLE VERSE

Psalm 1

Matthew 7.24-29 The wise and foolish builder.

Matthew 7.17 “every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit”.

SET THE TASK

The challenge is to get (6? - experiment before hand) tennis balls into the jar as well as two packets of cheerios/rice crispies. You might want to use other random objects that illustrate key important things, or something other than cereal.

Write on the large objects the name of something key to everyday discipleship eg ‘time with Jesus’, ‘prayer’, ‘bible’, ‘church’, ‘sabbath’, ‘serving’, ‘exercise’, ‘friends and family’ or ‘love’.

Each tennis ball (or big object) will represent something important that we wouldn’t want to leave out of our lives, as we seek to build on a solid foundation and become a ‘good tree’.

STORY

You might want to explain a story where, with the best intentions, you ran out of time to stick to a commitment that mattered. Every relationship needs quality time. What would you like to put time into this year?

Did you know that God loves to spend time with us? He loves to show us more of his wisdom and joy and truth. It is so easy for us to become what we love, and the more we spend time with God and in His presence the more we will grow like Him (Psalm 1).

What fruit would you like to see this year? What are the big things you want to put in place? How will you do this?

START THE CHALLENGE

It’s a race to get all the balls and all the cereal into your jar. Each team has a jar, an equal amount of cereal and tennis balls and they have to fill up their jar leaving nothing out! Ready, steady go...

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

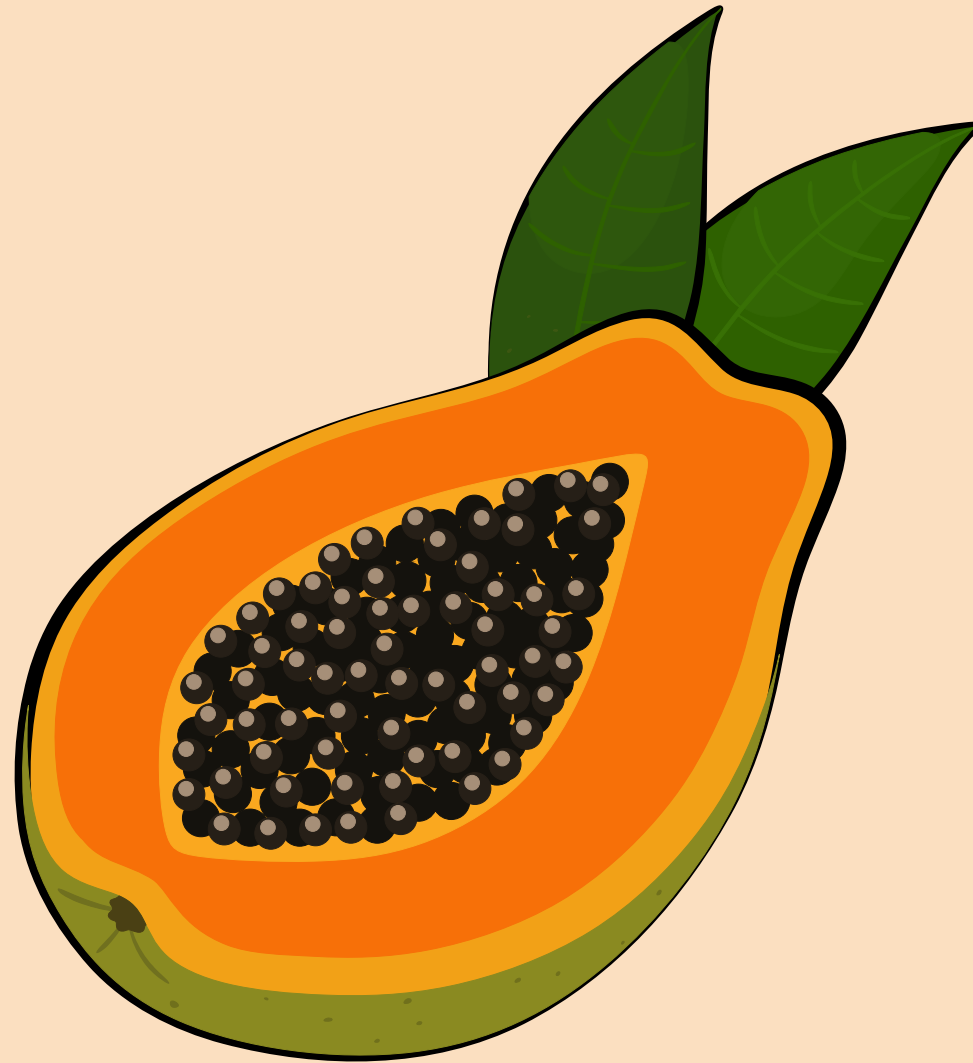
You might soon discover that the only way to fit everything in to the jar, is to put the big things in first (tennis balls) and then fit everything else around them (cereal). So often we fill up our lives with the small things that seem important but aren’t. When we do that we can leave behind those things that are precious and life-changing, like prayer and spending time with God.

PRAYER

“Lord would you help us to align our will with yours. Would you enable us to put you first and to trust you in all things in the year ahead for your Kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Matthew 5:14



PAPAYA PEOPLE

INGREDIENTS

- A big torch or lamp
- A container of salt
- Papaya
- Knife and chopping board

BIBLE VERSE

Salt and Light

John 8:12 “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Matthew 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

BIG IDEA

Columbus called papaya ‘fruit of the angels’ because it tasted so good. They have a soft and juicy outer layer, but the seeds at their centre are potent. Rich in antioxidants, high in healthy fats, enzymes and essential micronutrients. Amongst many other things, they have been used as a natural way of treating parasites like worms in humans.

The people of God are called to become ‘salt and light’. Attractive and potent, like the Papaya, learning to resist temptation and embody the gospel of grace and truth.

LIGHTHEARTED IDEA

I wonder if you have noticed how, as we get older we can become more settled and more complacent and our idea of fun can change! I saw a Facebook post that had a picture of an old man sitting in a chair. It said:

“1. Going to bed early; 2. Not leaving the house; 3. Not going to parties. My childhood punishments have now become my adult goals!”

I wonder how you have changed over the years?

Maybe share a personal story of contrast.

Use the bible passages to illustrate how Jesus imagines his people growing and changing.

Use the Papaya to illustrate how Jesus is both grace and truth, salt and light. Cut it open. Show everyone the contrast. Maybe they would like to taste some?

Jesus was like a torch, he wasn’t afraid of going into dark places to shine a light.

Like salt, he wasn’t afraid of preserving what mattered, saying ‘no’, being ‘salty’ in society. If you use this idea at lent you might want to see how Jesus was salt and light in the wilderness. He was able to resist temptation (salt) and shine a light on the deception of satan (light), exposing the Father of lies for who he is.

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

Let’s seek to become ‘Papaya People’. Like Jesus, full of grace and truth, salt and light, prophetic and pastoral together for the sake of His Kingdom. I wonder what Papaya Projects you could think of this week that might help someone? A text message, a prayer, an act of kindness in the community?

PRAYER

“Lord help us to be a people of salt and light. Let your light shine in us that we might follow your pathway and be an encouragement to others who are seeking your way.”



INGREDIENTS

- One very large bucket of water
- A 2 litre clear plastic bottle.
- A stool
- A small inflatable toddler paddling pool
- A variety of messy ingredients that enable you to play with good food puns

For example:

- Egg (on your face?)
- Beans (full of beans?)
- Dog food (dog's dinner?)
- Wine (stop whining?)
- Doughnut (I dough-nut care what people think?)
- Ketchup (running too fast to ketchup?)
- Espresso coffee (hard to espresso my feelings well?)

BIBLE VERSE

John 4.4-28 (with a specific focus on vs 13 and 14)

"Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

RUN UP (CONTEXT)

A shocking story in which Jesus crosses radical boundaries for a drink!

A few big shocks lost on us today:

1. Jesus is in Samaria. Samaritans were not popular amongst the Jewish community. They were seen as 'fake jews' due to their heritage being a mixture of Babylonian and Jewish. A 'fake' in those days might as well have been worse than nothing at all. What fake do you dislike and why?

2. Jesus is talking to a woman in Samaria. Jewish rabbi wouldn't speak to their wives in public let alone ask for a drink from a Samaritan woman.

3. Jesus is talking to a woman in Samaria in the middle of the day! The women who came to the well in the heat of the day rather than the cool of the morning might be the ones who were outcast and excluded.

4. Sychar is where the story happens. It means "drunken". It was a historic place where Abraham first stopped to build an altar in the promised land and where God spoke to him about the promise to bless all nations. But now it was in Samaria?! What a mess! Is Jesus is about to redig that old well?

PREPARATION

Chop the bottle in half to make a cup. Place the cup on a stool in the paddling pool and fill the cup two-thirds full of water.

STORY

Share the context of the passage in a simple relatable way whilst setting everything out. Have you ever crossed some boundaries? What lengths did you go to? The lengths that Jesus went to reach the unloveable always amazes!

Tell the story of the woman at the well. Use a mixture of direct reading from the bible and perhaps some paraphrased sections. Tell the story whilst standing in or by the paddling pool.

This was a lady who hadn't got everything right in life. I wonder if you can relate to that?

Begin a narrative that uses all of the ingredients and

see if the kids want to add them to the cup of water

For example:

"Once I sent an email out to make a complaint and I forgot to check who was cc'd... it was the worst email of my life... it left me with egg on my face". (crack the egg and add it to the clear water)

Use recent examples:

"This morning when I woke up I was feeling low and tired and didn't even want to come to church. I wasn't full of beans". (add some beans to the cup)

Have fun with it - the aim is to show that no one is sorted or perfect or has a tidy and clean life. also that we have thirsts that we try to quench in many messy ways. You will end up with a murky cup of water that is undrinkable. Hold it up and show folk that 'life happens' and we can feel like this inside. The Samaritan woman probably felt like this.

But as Jesus speaks with her he offers her living water... water that will quench her thirst.

As you share that Jesus said these words - pour the huge bucket of water over the cup and it will begin to displace the dirty water with clean water.

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

You will end up with a clean drinkable cup of water. What a blessing it is to know the transforming, healing, forgiving, redeeming love of Jesus. This is what he does with each one of us.

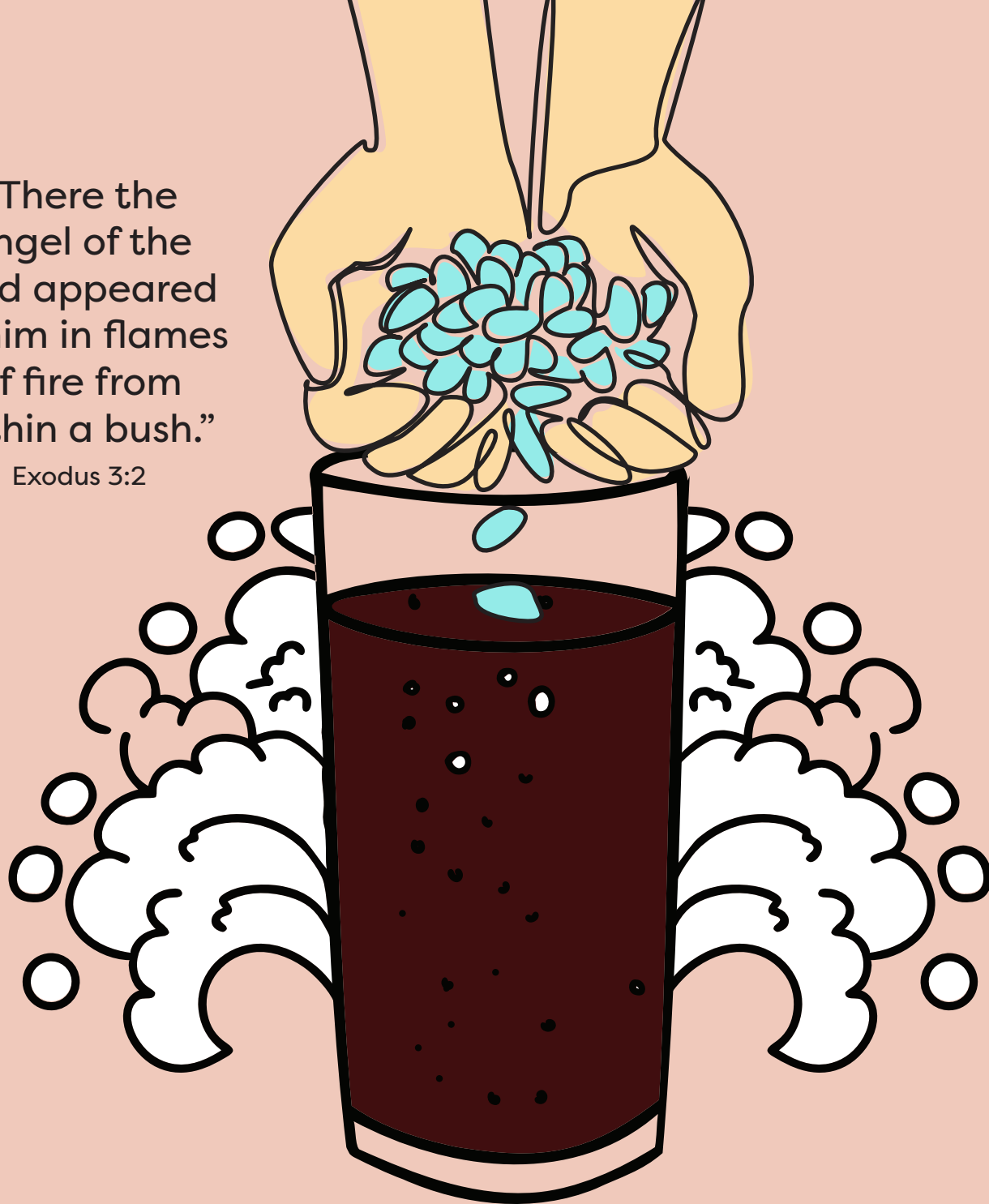
PRAYER

"Jesus would you come into my heart and pour out your love in my life that I might know your abundant blessings. Renew us from the inside out. Refresh us by your Spirit and transform us by your love."



“There the
angel of the
Lord appeared
to him in flames
of fire from
within a bush.”

Exodus 3:2



COKE AND MENTOS

INGREDIENTS

- Large bottle of Diet Coke
- A packet of Mentos
- A waterproof sheet or paddling pool
- A stool to place the Coke bottle on
- A postcard, or thin piece of card.
- A small plastic tube to hold the mentos, like a test tube

BIBLE VERSES

Exodus 3:1-10, Acts 9:1-9, Acts 10:9-20

MISSION, COKE AND MENTOS

“Mission begins with a kind of explosion of joy. The mission of the church in the pages of the New Testament is...like the fallout from a vast explosion, a radioactive fallout which is not lethal but life-giving.” (Lesslie Newbigin)

That’s a powerful way to describe it—an explosion of joy! It resonates with how encountering God’s presence and glory doesn’t just leave someone awestruck; it compels action. Moses, Paul, and Peter didn’t just witness something extraordinary; they were transformed by it, reoriented toward God’s mission in a way that demanded movement.

It’s striking how often in Scripture, revelation leads to mission. Isaiah’s vision of God’s holiness in Isaiah 6 is another example—his immediate response is, “Here am I! Send me.” When we truly see God—His heart, His power, His grace—it awakens something in us that can’t be ignored. In Mark chapter 1.16-18 we see the first disciples, Simon and Andrew, fishermen see Jesus and hear His call to follow him. It says that ‘immediately they left their nets and followed him’.

Have you ever had a moment like that—where you saw something so clearly that you knew you had to act? Arriving at a new holiday destination? Rushing

to get off the plane/train to explore a new place? Responding to the call of Jesus? - briefly share your own story. Perhaps one memorable way of remembering God’s way in these stories is through Coke and Mentos?!

God ‘drops a Mento’ so He can show, we can go and everyone can know.

ILLUSTRATION

1. Put the water proof sheet down.
Place the bottle of Diet Coke on the stool on the sheet and take the lid off.
3. Place the Mentos in a plastic tube.
4. Place the postcard over the top of the plastic tube of Mentos and the top of the bottle of Coke so that a thin piece of card divides the Mentos from the Coke.
5. When ready, slide out the piece of card so the mentos drop into the Coke. Remove the plastic tube and stand back! The Coke should fizz up out of the top in an eruption.

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

Just as the Mentos hit the Coke and create a fizzing explosion, so God sends his Holy Spirit to move us into action. Share a story of how God called you into ministry, or a moment in which he inspired you to act - in small and big ways

PRAYER

“Lord thank you for your Holy Spirit and for those who are faithful to follow you. Would you show me where you have spoken in my life. Would you reveal more of your mission to me so that I might ‘go’ in confidence and love and compassion.”

PACKED LUNCH PEOPLE



“Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted.”

John 6:11

INGREDIENTS

- A selection of everyday objects, perhaps:
 - a shoe
 - a tape measure
 - work items like a pen, apron, mobile phone
- A packed lunch box

BIBLE VERSE

John 6:6-14 Feeding of the five thousand

1 Samuel 17 David and Goliath

BIG IDEA

With God, we have the prerogative and challenge to dream big with whatever we have in our hands.

CONTEXT

Jesus is with his disciples up on a mountainside on the far shore of the sea of Galilee. The multitude comes towards them and Jesus asks, in order to test his disciples, “where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”

PICTURE THE FIRST EVER PCC MEETING

This passage might just as well be called “Jesus chairs the first ever Anglican PCC meeting”. It’s true, the meeting is unconventional in that it is held on a mountainside with the 12 disciples rather than in the parish hall with tea and biscuits.....it is perhaps more of an ‘away day’ than a meeting? But Jesus is with his disciples and together they are considering the problem of the approaching 5000 people who will all need feeding.

Jesus asks the PCC: How are we going to feed so many people?

He might just as well be asking how are we going to feed the 5,000 people of our parish? Or how are we going to share the love of God with thousands of people in our work places? How are we going to make a difference to all those people out there when we have very little to offer?

Now, I don’t have loads of experience of PCCs yet but perhaps you can identify with ‘Philip’:

‘Philip’ are invaluable in assessing the challenges and obstacles. Philip points out that financially it cannot be done. It simply costs too much. Even though he is talking to Jesus - he is quick to be hopeless and helpless. He explains to Jesus what is ‘realistic’. We can feel the irony. I wonder if you have ever told God what He cannot do? Philip is an ‘Anglican’t’ not an ‘Anglican!’

Andrew on the other hand, although lacking confidence and not exactly filled with faith, does speak up with a solution. He is what I would call ‘a packed lunch person’. Andrew offers a packed lunch to Jesus. It’s not much, its 5 loaves and 2 fish, but its a start. Its foolish but he has enough faith to bring what they have to Jesus and to offer it to him.

BEING A PACKED LUNCH PEOPLE TODAY

There are multiple ways you can deliver this simple idea between the tale of two people, Philip and Andrew. Have fun with it but you might arrive at what this looks like today? What do you have in your hand? Perhaps if you are a builder you have a tape measure? An accountant has a calculator? A parent who has a cooking spoon? A runner who has a shoe? Do we have enough faith, and vision, that in the face of the impossible, in the face of obstacles, and difficulties we can offer what we have to Jesus and ask him to use it, to multiply it and to transform it in the only way that he can? What do you have in your hand today?

St Paul says of God: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me”. 2 Corinthians 12.9

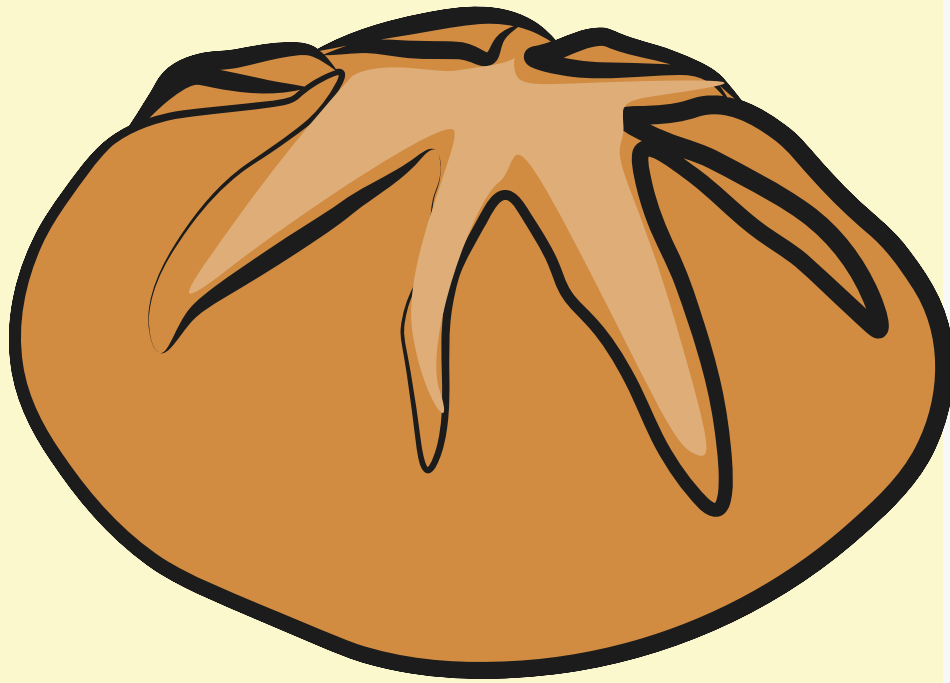
SERVE UP THE SAUCE

Let’s become a packed lunch people today.

PRAYER

“Lord we ask for your power today. We ask for the faith to be your packed lunch people who can dream big with a sling and a stone, loaves and fishes, a rod and a staff to see your Kingdom come.your mission to me so that I might ‘go’ in confidence and love and compassion.”

THE SECRET TO LOAF



“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty”

John 6:35

INGREDIENTS

- A marker pen
- Four A4 sheets of paper
- A fresh loaf of bread
- Pictures of the ancient Hebrew symbols for:
 - Lam
 - Chet
 - He
 - Mem

These make up the Hebrew word for bread: “Lechem”

BIBLE VERSE

John 6:35 “Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

STORY

Do you like the smell of fresh bread? Look at this fresh loaf today? How do you like to eat it? I love fresh bread and jam?

Have you every wondered what is in a loaf?

Maybe you think it is just some boring ingredients like flour, water, butter, oil, salt and yeast?

It is amazing that such simple ingredients can create something so universally brilliant at satisfying hunger.

In ancient biblical times a loaf was

seen as a quality meal. There is a strong tradition of bread and the bible. For example:

When God’s people were led away from captivity in Egypt and they wandered in the desert with Moses they were given ‘manna’ - Bread of Heaven - a daily sustenance from God (Exodus 16.2-5)

Jesus was born in Bethlehem a place that literally means ‘the house of bread’ (Matthew 2.1)

Jesus referred to himself as the bread of life (John 6.35)

Jesus broke bread at the Last Supper, before going to the cross and he told us to remember his sacrifice by it (Matthew 26.26).

There is so much more to explore. There is a lot in a little loaf!

But if we rewind and go back to the ancient symbols that make up the word. Before the time of Jesus. Before lots of things... we get a wonderful surprise!

Lechem - the Hebrew word is made up of: LAM, CHET, HEY AND MEM

LAM - A picture of a shepherds staff.

Psalms 23 Jesus said: I am the good shepherd

CHET - Outside the city wall.

Adam was disobedient and he was sent out of the garden. Jesus was obedient on the cross outside so we could come inside. Who is outside and needs to be brought in?

HEY - Man with open arms.

Tell the story of the prodigal son and the cross, the father with open arms. The invitation to be reconciled to God.

The cross is the trademark of Christianity and that

is reconciliation. The one thing we definitely have is the power to be reconciled and to reconcile. Jesus asks Peter who has betrayed him: “Do you love me”... (John 21)

MEM - Water.

In the story of the exodus God parted the waters and led his people to freedom. Jesus led people to baptism.

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

At the heart of the Hebrew word for bread (lechem) are ancient symbols that point to aspects of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Next time you have some bread, remember Jesus the bread of life and all the wonder contained in one simple slice!

PRAYER

“Lord thank you for the richness of your word. May we taste and see that you are the bread of life as we live out our everyday lives.”



“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

Mark 1:17



THE MUG

INGREDIENTS

- A smart commemorative mug preferably still in its box
- An old and used everyday mug for drinking tea
- A kettle and tea bag and milk on a tray.

BIBLE VERSE

Mark 1:16-18

“As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him.”

THREE ASPECTS OF THE FIRST FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

John Mark Comer in Practicing The Way talks about the three key aspects of being a disciple seen by the first followers of Jesus.

- To be with Jesus (**prayerful**)
- To become like Jesus (**pastoral**)
- To do as Jesus did (**prophetic**)

In this context we see these uneducated, unqualified fishermen being asked to follow the rabbi Jesus. It reminds me of when you land on “advance to GO” in a game of Monopoly! These fishermen must have been amazed to be invited to follow him.

Today Jesus invites ALL of us to come and follow him. To apprentice him and discover life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

Introduce the commemorative mug: Why is it special? Is it left on the shelf? Unused, unopened? The tragedy of this mug’s story is that although it is cherished it will never be used for what it was ultimately designed for. It will never know what it feels like to be filled up and poured out.

Introduce the everyday mug: This mug knows its purpose. It may not be shiny and amazing but it is fulfilling its role to the max each day. Jesus says in Matthew 5 “let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and bring glory to your Father in Heaven”. we were designed to follow Jesus, to make disciples, to live in friendship and relationship with our neighbour, to keep on learning how to follow God.

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

The mug is a picture, not just for us, but for the church. Do we want to see the church become a museum piece, tucked away on the sidelines of society? We, as a church, are designed to nurture and grow new disciples and to enjoy playing our part in the call of the Great Commission.

PRAYER

“Dear Lord, help us to discover our purpose as we take up the call to follow you. Would you inspire our hearts to drop our nets and seek you in our everyday, for your glory.”

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 10:10



FLEAS IN A JAM JAR

INGREDIENTS

- One empty jam jar with a lid

BIBLE VERSE

John 10:10

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Matthew 14:29-31

29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

STORY

Sony Playstation brought out an advert many years ago. In it a group of scientists put fleas into a jam jar and the fleas all jump out. Then they put fleas in a jam jar and screw the lid on and wait three days. The fleas can be seen jumping up and down hitting their head on the lid. After three days they take the lid off the jam jar. What do the fleas do? Instead of jumping out of the jam jar, they learn to only jump as high as the lid. Even though the lid is off, the fleas learn to limit their jumping.

EXPLANATION

Charles Taylor in his book *A Secular Age* (2007) describes secular society as being held within “an immanent frame”. In other words our social imaginary prevents us from knowing or easily believing in the transcendence of God.

The narratives around us try to remind us that what we see is all that there is, and yet as Augustine Of Hippo said in the 6th Century - “O Lord you made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find

their rest in you”. We are designed for more.

Even though we might attain or acquire as much as we possibly can on this earth we still discover that we are living with the lid on, and not only living with the lid on but we are built for heaven.

“I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it’s not the answer.” Jim Carrey

Without knowing the presence of God, His Kingdom, His love it is possible for us to still stay in the jam jar.

C.S Lewis famously put it:

“It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” C.S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory, and Other Addresses

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

What imaginary lids are holding you back? What would you like to ask God to help you with? Let’s jump into his fullness of life.

PRAYER

“Lord would you lift the lid on our imaginations, our hopes and dreams. Would your Kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33



THE FUNNEL

INGREDIENTS

- A big funnel
- A variety of everyday things that represent finding ‘a way’ e.g.:
 - Running shoes
 - Healthy Food
 - Luxury goods
 - Holiday items
 - Lifestyle Magazine

BIBLE VERSE

Matthew 6.33

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well.”

STORY

Do you have a personal story about trying lots of different things in order to try and get the ‘right’ one? When I was decorating our kitchen I bought lots of magazines to try and work out which one to copy.

When I took up running I was amazed at how many different types of shoes there were to make you go faster.

We are faced with a huge amount of choices everyday. In life we often seek far and wide for ways to fulfill our hopes. In Deuteronomy 30.19 Moses is coming to the end of his life, before entering the promised land and he says to the people of Israel:

“Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.”

Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth and the life.”
Irwin Macmanus the Christian writer says: “The most spiritual activity you will engage in today is making choices. Choices chart the course and determine the destination.”

Hold the funnel up and try and stuff all of the things into the top of it.

When we make choices we try and put lots of things in the top and hope that something good comes out the bottom.

Turn the funnel the other way up so the thin end is at the top and the wide funnel end is at the bottom.

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

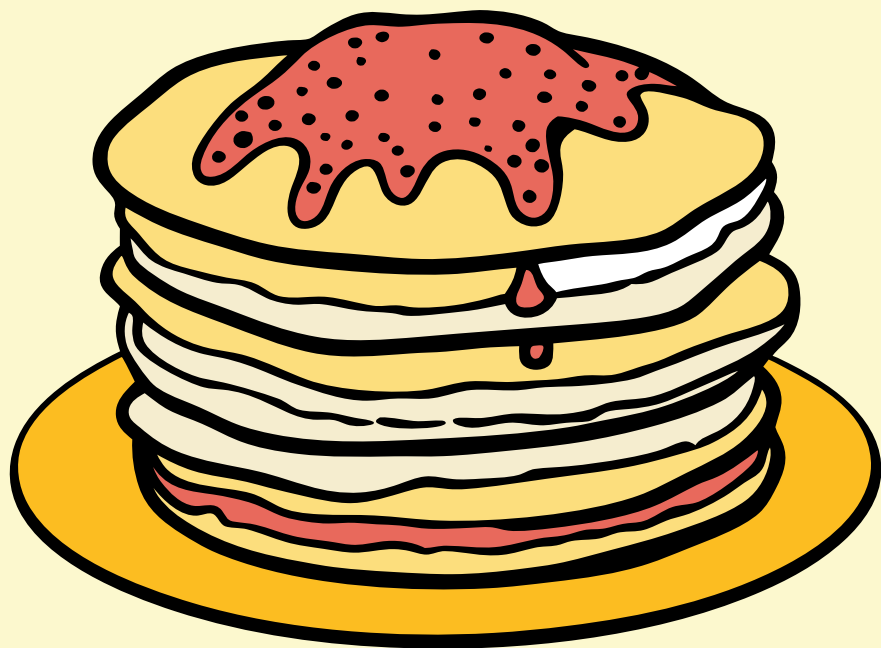
Jesus challenges us to seek first his Kingdom and the rest shall be given to us...

How might we first come to Jesus - on the narrow path and trust that he will lead us to a spacious place?

PRAY

“Lord would you turn our world upside down so that we seek you first and trust that everything else will follow.”

THE TALKING PANCAKE



“Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 18:4

INGREDIENTS

Pancake Ingredients:

- Flour
- Egg
- Oil
- Milk
- Salt
- Baking Powder

BIBLE VERSE

Matthew 18:1-5

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.”

STORY

Picture the scene: Jesus is standing with the disciples... he has watched them arguing on the road to Capernaum. The disciples are in a huddle and Jesus steps in and they decide to settle it once and for all... Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven they ask? All faces stare at Jesus. But although they wait for his answer, in their minds they are thinking of names.

Maybe it's John? I mean John is the one Jesus loves right? Or James? He got to go up the mountain to see Jesus transfigured (chapter 17). Or Peter? He always has something to say...he adds value...he's our spokesperson... he walked on water...its got to be Peter... its unlikely to be Matthew because he was a tax collector but he does pay for stuff... Jesus don't be a sell out... or Andrew he was the first with Peter.... if it wasn't for Andrew maybe none of this would have happened...

Let's try and explain the wisdom of Jesus through a talking pancake.

One morning I read this passage as I was making pancakes. Fluffy American Pancakes. I imagined what if the ingredients were like the disciples and they started to argue?!

What would they say? Who is the greatest ingredient of them all?

“I am the greatest says the flour - without me there is no substance”

Egg - “you are just bulk” - I'm the substance, people think i am boring, but i hold it all together around here.

What if everyone high fived the egg? Great pancake egg - you smashed it! How would the flour feel?

Milk - everyone forgets me. Yeah what do you do? (Treasurer?)

Oil - “nothing works unless you add me. You are all so dry and dull” (Pastoral Care team?).

Baking powder - “I make it happen.” (Pioneers?)

Sugar - “I don't even know why they put me on the same team as the salt?!” (Clergy?)

Who is the greatest ingredient in the pancake?

They all need each other - without each other there is no pancake.

Paul said something similar about the church.

1 Corinthians 12:27

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

It's not about comparison, or competition. The question they mean to ask is the question we all need to ask:

What does it take to be great in the kingdom of heaven?

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

Jesus says unless you “change”: the Greek is metanoia - it means turn around, u-turn. Repent. Unless you repent and become like little children, taking their lowly position you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

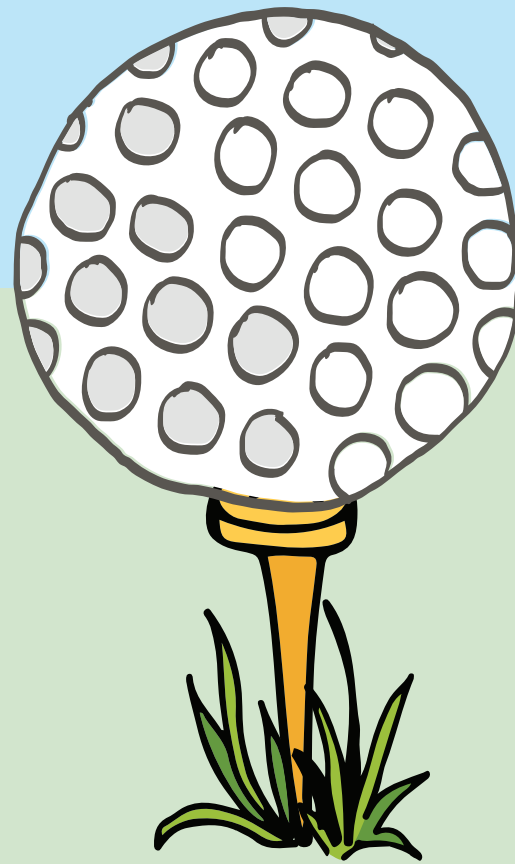
PRAYER

“Lord help us to value one another and to think less about ourselves. Help us to serve and love and lead.”



“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 14:6



I DON'T PLAY GOLF

INGREDIENTS

- Golf club
- Ball
- Golf clothes
- Membership card, or golf bag
- Any golfing kit

BIBLE VERSE

John 14:6

Matthew 28:16-20

BIG IDEA

I don't play golf, I don't own golf clothes, I don't know the language, I've never had a lesson, I don't have a membership of a club. However, one day a friend invited me to the park and when we were there we hit a ball around and belly-laughed. I loved it. How are we called to make disciples of Jesus today? Have we made it very complicated?

EXAMPLE SKETCH

Explain that you are planning to take up golf. Before you putt the ball, begin to go and get all of the items of kit that you think you need.

Start to put on as many items of golf clothing, hat, bags, membership cards, shoes, gloves, golf buggy?! Any other items you can think of.

Have fun with it! Or use a different hobby or interest...

Has it made hitting a ball very complicated?

FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY

Did you know that Jesus himself never used the word 'Christian', or the word 'religion'? They are both beautiful words, but it is sometimes good to remember that at the heart of the Christian faith is a call to follow Jesus, practice His way and become

His disciple.

Whether say we do or not, we all follow something. We are all apprentices. Sometimes I wonder if the idea of following Jesus seems very intimidating, like joining a golf club when you don't have the kit, the knowledge or the clothes?

SERVE UP THE SAUCE

I wonder if today, we might relearn, or try for the first time, what it means to have a swing at a ball in the park? What is the first step that you could take to explore the Christian faith?

If you have a phone you could download the Everyday Faith App. It's free and it gives you a prayer and a thought for the day to get you started.

Jesus calls us to follow Him and to make disciples of all nations - that's everyone! As we go about our daily lives can we invite others on the journey? How can they take a swing at a ball in the park?

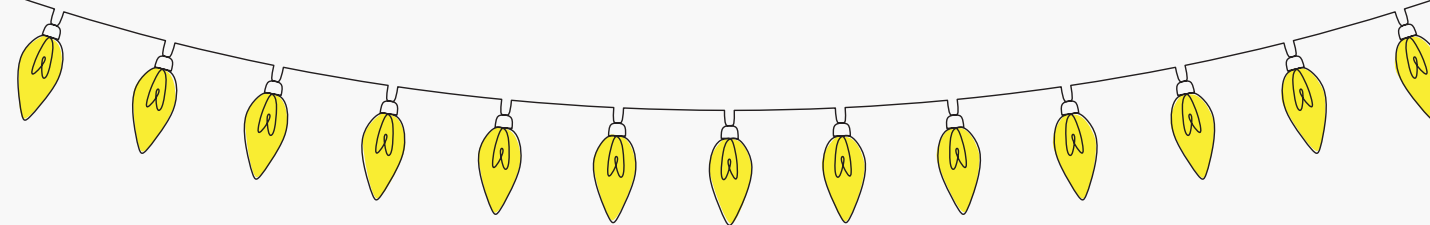
RESOURCES

- Lectio 365 app
- Bible in One Year
- Every Day
- Faith, Alpha
- Hope Explored
- Practising The Way
- Pilgrimage

Explore the many apps and why not include a QR code on the service sheet and show people how to use it at home?

PRAYER

“Lord, sorry that we have made it so complicated to follow you. May you lead us to someone this week who we can accompany on the journey of faith? Would you meet us on the road?”



GAMES

Games, often with just a tenuous link to scripture, are a great way to help connect us to one another, to the Bible and to God.

They offer fun and light-heartedness whilst creating a memorable moment that can remind us of a specific teaching, verse or prayer.

On the following pages are some ideas for games that will work alongside various passages and examples of verses they might accompany. This is an opportunity for creativity that will transform a simple talk into a talking point and help make the experience of being in church relatable and fun.

ANIMAL KINGDOM

- Prep time : 2 minutes
- Game time: 15 minutes
- Style: Small group

Instructions

Set up chairs in a semicircle. Once everyone is sitting in their seat, announce that they are currently sitting in the jungle. From one end of the semicircle to the other, go around and allow everyone to choose what animal they would like to be, starting with the smallest or least threatening and ending with the biggest or most dangerous which will be the ‘King of the Jungle’. I.e, one person might want to be a mouse and at the other end of the jungle someone might be a lion. Each person must introduce their animal by doing an action and a sound to reflect their animal. For example making their hands look like claws and roaring like a lion.

Game play

Once everyone has introduced their animal sound and sign, the animal at the top of the food chain begins. They must do their sound and sign followed by someone else’s sound and sign. Once they have passed it on it is then that players turn to do the same. You can not pass it back to the person who signed to you unless they are the ‘King of the Jungle’. This continues until someone hesitates, passes it back or does it wrong. They then must go to the bottom of the jungle and everyone moves up a seat and takes on the sign and sound of the seat that the person was before them. I.e, if the person signing a mouse moves up a seat to where someone signed a snake, they are now acting as the snake. This then continues for as long as people want to play. The ‘King of the Jungle’ wins the games.

Link

This game is great to spark conversations about what connects us to one another such as in **Ephesians 4:2; “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”**

It can also be a great game to connect us to the stories in the Bible with animals, such as Genesis, Noah and the ark or even Jonah and the whale!

COUNTING TOGETHER

- Prep time: 0 minutes
- Game time: 5 minutes
- Style: Small or large group

Instructions

You will be counting to a number (such as 20) as a group out loud. No player can count more than one number at a time and no two players can count the same number at the same time. You cannot use actions to say who can count next.

Game play

Announce that the game has started and see who yells out number 1! See how long it takes you as a group to reach number 20 and make sure to restart if any two people yell out a number at the same time.

Link

This game can link to lots of Bible themes. From working together such as in **1 Corinthians 12:12-13; “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”**

Or stepping out in faith like in **Matthew 17:20; “He replied, ‘Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”’**

KING DIZZLE OR TSWIZZLE

- Prep time: 2 minutes
- Game time: 5 minutes
- Style: Large group

Instructions

Even though Lamentations was written by Jeremiah - the title is a fun way of engaging the Old Testament with contemporary writing. The game involves finding verses from Lamentations, specifically from the Message translation and reading them out alongside song lyrics from Taylor Swift. There are lots of quizzes online that you can find and download with the verses and answers.

Game play

Create a sign to signify ‘King Dizzle’ such as a crown on your head, this will mean you believe the verse the quizmaster has read out is from the Old Testament. Create and show a sign that represents ‘TSwizzle’ this could be a pop star pose.

The quiz master will read out a verse and everyone will strike a pose to represent whether they believe it to be an Old Testament verse or a Taylor Swift lyric. Once the answer is revealed - those that get it wrong will sit down. The game ends when there is only one person standing or when the quizmaster has read out all the quotes. It is harder than one might expect!

Link

This is a fun game to engage people with the relevance of the writing of the Bible.

Choose a verse from the quiz that particularly spoke to you to focus on.

BOOM!!

- Prep time: 2-5 minutes
- Game time: 5-10 minutes
- Style: Small or large group

Instructions

For this game you will need an object that is throwable such as a ball or a cushion to represent the 'bomb'. One person must close their eyes and choose a number between 1 and 30. Players must throw the 'bomb' around counting as they go. I.e., the first player says 1 and throws the bomb and the person who receives it says 2 and throws it and so on.

Game play

The 'bomb' is passed from player to player whilst counting but once the person who has their eyes closed hears their number, they yell 'boom!'. Whoever said that number is now the person who must close their eyes.

Link

This game can link to lots of teaching about faith, stepping in to your calling such as in **1 Corinthians 9:24**; "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize."

Or **Esther 4:14**; "When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly."

It can also be used as a way to pray for countries that are at war and connecting it to verses to do with peace.

PRAYER ACTIVITY IDEAS

1. **Buy a bag of Haribo**, get people to pick a sweet, say what the shape is and encourage them to pray a prayer related to that sweet!
2. **Buy a bag of Skittles**, give each colour a theme that it signifies, when someone picks that colour they can pray for that theme! I.e., green could be praying for the environment whilst orange can be praying for families.
3. **Find a bucket, water jugs, and some cups.** Create a prayer environment where people can come and fill their cups with water from the jug, pray about something they wish to handover to God or that they are sorry for. They can then pour their cup in the communal bucket. At the end, find somewhere or someone to symbolically pour the bucket onto. That can be with a prayer that ties the activity together.
4. **Find a bucket, some paper and some pens.** People can write a prayer or something they wish to say sorry for; tear it and put it in the bucket. If suitable you can burn the paper at the end with a prayer.
5. **Find some pens and paper.** Write something you would like prayer for on the paper. Fold it into an aeroplane, when everyone is ready - fly your plane. Once paper planes are everywhere on the floor people can pick one up and pray anonymously for the prayer they have found.





Do you imagine all ages gathering in your church, caught up in wonder and worship... but you don't know where to start.

Festival! has everything you need to cook up great all-age gatherings from scratch in your church.

Each recipe combines fun and engaging activities with scripture and a short, actionable talk, designed to welcome everyone in your community.

With clear guidance for preparing a Festival service and ideas for games that bring people together, this is the ideal resource for sharing the gospel, showing hospitality, and transforming lives through the local church.

Written by David Lloyd

Designed by Andrew Piper

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 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Norwich