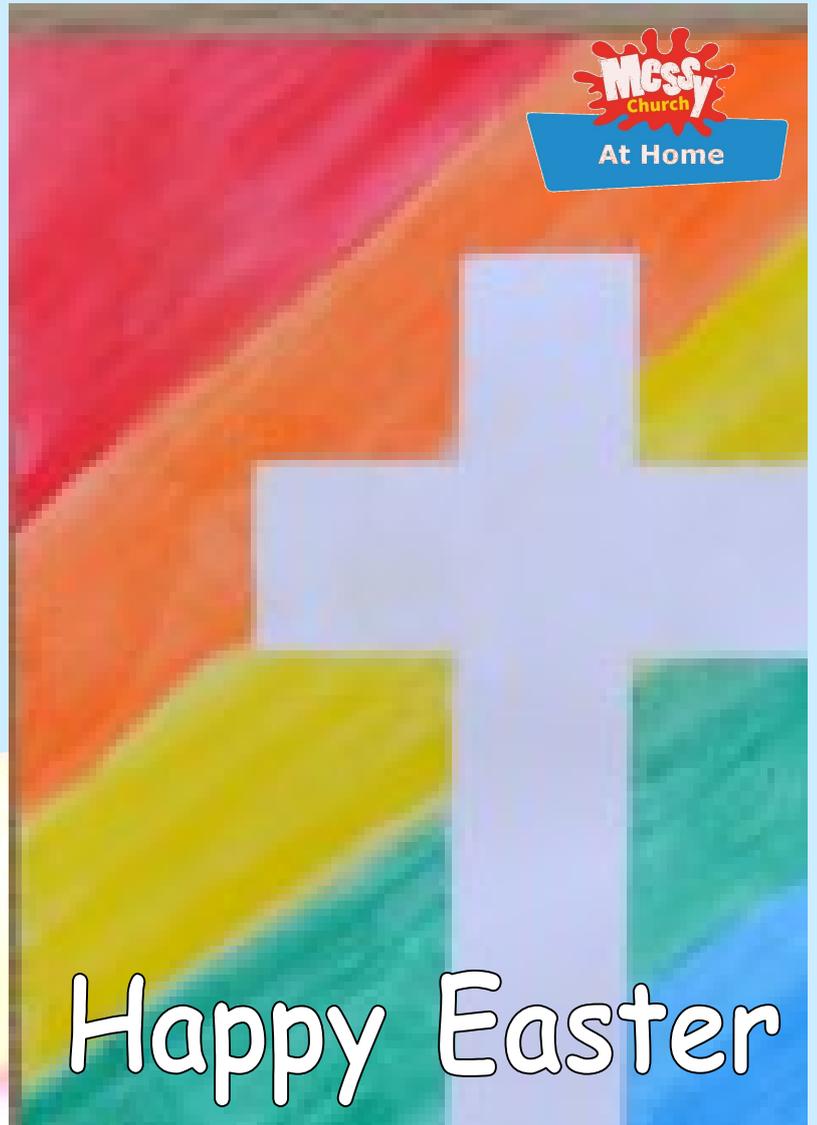


Our Easter Card to You!



Wishing You Easter Joy!

The word 'JOY' is such a short, simple word but for many of us joy has been missing from our experiences in the past year largely because joy is so much more joyful when it is shared.

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday. There is great expectation from the crowds as Jesus, hailed as the Messiah, is riding on a donkey into Jerusalem to the cheers of the people and the waving of palm branches. Quickly, this excitement is destroyed as Jesus angrily turns over the tables of the money changers and cheats who are selfishly exploiting others in the temple.

After the intimacy of the Last Supper Jesus is let down by his closest friends. He falls on the ground praying; 'Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering away from me, yet not my will, yours be done' (Matthew's Gospel Chapter 26 verse 39) He is falsely put on trial and sentenced to death, death on a cross. Although Pilate finds nothing wrong in Jesus, he bows to the wishes of the crowd shouting, 'Crucify Him'. The terrible darkness of the day of Jesus' death and brokenness on the cross, is held as if time is in suspension.

It is superseded by the brilliance that radiates from the empty tomb on that First Easter Sunday morning. The realisation experienced by Mary, knowing that Jesus is alive, is an expression of unbounded joy as she shares the Good News.

All human emotions are captured in the events of Holy Week, from the deepest depths to the highest highs. May we each know Easter Joy. Let us share this joy with others as we hope to spend more time with family and friends in the coming weeks.

Prayer

Dear loving Jesus, thank you for your Easter story and help us to share this with our family and friends. May this Easter be life changing for us all, after this very difficult year, we pray.

Amen



Activities for Easter

Easter Story bracelet

Materials needed: Green, Purple, Gold, Red, Black, Grey, and White pony beads, pipe cleaner. Hopefully parents will help the children to make bracelets, explaining the meaning of each bead.

GREEN - When Jesus entered Jerusalem, people waved **palm branches** (as they would do for a King).

PURPLE - Jesus had a very special dinner with his friends called the Last Supper. It is called the Last Supper because soon Jesus would die. At that supper, Jesus offered **wine (kind of like grape juice) and bread** to his friends as a way to remember him after he died.

GOLD - Jesus had a friend named Judas who wasn't a good friend. **Judas took money to help others find and arrest Jesus.**

RED AND BLACK -Some people were not nice to Jesus and wanted him to die. Jesus was killed by mean people who nailed His feet and hands onto a wooden cross. **Jesus died and it was very sad.**

GREY - **Jesus' friends took His body and put it in a tomb** (it is like a small stone house.) People who died in Jesus' time were not buried in graveyards, but in a tomb. There was a big rock that covered the entrance to the tomb.

WHITE - When Jesus' friends later went back to the tomb, they found that Jesus' body was **GONE!** One of Jesus' friends, named Mary, cried as she thought that someone had taken Jesus' body away. Jesus was taken, but not by **MEN. GOD had "resurrected" Jesus' body (raised Him up from being dead)! We celebrate Easter because, through Jesus, all who follow and trust in God, we will have eternal life (it goes on after we die).**



Decorate the cross to wear or hang up

You will need: the;; wooden cross, stick-on jewels, wool.

Decorate the cross with the jewels all round it. Thread a piece of wool through the small hole at the top (you may need a blunt needle to do this) and either wear it or hang it up to remind you of the Easter story.



Felt Easter Eggs



You will need: pieces of felt (3 for each child), egg template, scissors, decorations, glue stick, ribbon, a twig placed in a pot or oasis

Draw round the egg shape on each piece of felt and cut them out. Decorate with the stickers and braid. Add a piece of ribbon to the top of the egg and decorate your twig with the finished eggs to make an Easter tree.

The egg is a symbol of the new life we have with Jesus, who rose from the dead on Easter Day.

Recipe for Easter: Hot Cross Cookies

You will need: 200g butter or buttery,
100g of sugar (perhaps Muscovado or Demerara),
1 egg,
250g plain flour,
1 teaspoon cinnamon,
2 teaspoons baking powder,
100g sultanas,
100g white chocolate chips,
1 / 2 baking trays,
a small amount of ready to roll white icing or icing sugar.

Heat the oven to 180/160 fan/ gas 4. Grease the baking trays. In a large bowl beat together the butter, sugar and egg until smooth. Add the flour, cinnamon and baking powder and make the mixture into dough. Mix in the sultanas and chocolate chips.

On a floured surface roll the dough into golf-size balls, flatten and place on the baking trays. Bake for 15/20 minutes or so until golden. Remove and cool. Roll out the icing and cut into strips. Brush the top of the cookies with a little water and place 2 pieces of icing on the top to make a cross. If you are using icing sugar, make a little glaze icing and pipe into cross shapes on the cookies. Leave to set. (makes about 18 cookies)



The history of the hot cross bun

The bun marks the end of [Lent](#) and different parts of the hot cross bun have a certain meaning, including the [cross](#) representing the [crucifixion of Jesus](#), and the [spices](#) inside signifying the spices used to embalm him at his burial.

One theory is that the Hot Cross Bun originates from [St Albans](#), in England, where Brother Thomas Rodcliffe, a 14th-century [monk](#) at [St Albans Abbey](#), developed a similar recipe called an 'Alban Bun' and distributed the bun to the local poor on Good Friday, starting in 1361.