



Introduction

In some countries, and in the past, people fasted during Lent. This meant that they gave up luxury foods such as meat and cake. Instead they would eat bread, fish and vegetables. They thought that eating only plain food would help them to pray.

As they knew they were going to have a long time eating plain food, the day before Lent was a feast day. People made pancakes to use up the eggs. Some countries call this day "Mardi Gras" - "Fat Tuesday" and they have a carnival.

The reason they thought that eating less and very plain food would help them to pray was that this was what Jesus did before he started in his ministry when he went to the desert to pray. Being in the desert helped Jesus to focus more on prayer as there were no distractions there.

The bible passage is from Mark 1:9-13

⁹ About that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. ¹⁰ As soon as Jesus came out of the water, he saw the sky open and the Holy Spirit coming down to him like a dove. ¹¹ A voice from heaven said, "You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you."

¹² Right away God's Spirit made Jesus go into the desert. ¹³ He stayed there for forty days while Satan tested him. Jesus was with the wild animals, but angels took care of him.

(Contemporary English Version)

Jesus had just been told by God that he was loved and he was making good choices. God's spirit then took him into the desert to test him out: to see if he could carry on making good choices when it was more difficult to make those choices and there were other (more exciting) possible choices.

I wonder what it would have sounded like when Jesus was in the desert. What would have been there to eat?

Activities:

1. Tasty chocolate

You will need: chocolate bars, other sweets.

Make up a delicious looking plate of sweets and chocolate. How long can you



leave it in the middle of a table at home without eating anything on the plate?

Talk about: Jesus stayed for 40 days in the desert where there wasn't much food, but he still made good choices and listened to God in prayer, instead of eating food offered by a bad person called Satan. How easy do you find it to stop eating sweets?

2. Father, Son and Holy toast

You will need: a toaster, loaf of sliced bread, scraping implements (blunt knives, spoons, etc.)

Toast some bread until it's overdone and dark enough (but not burnt). Once the toast is ready, wait for it to cool a little, then draw a way that God gives us life on the toast using the scraping implements (e.g. the Bible, the cross, creation, church).

Talk about everyone's favourite food. Jesus told others that it wasn't just food that gives us life. Discuss what else gives us life and can lead us to God?



3. Frying pan & pancakes

You will need: a paper plate (silver is best), aluminium foil, thick cardboard, sticky tape, scissors.

If you do not have a silver plate, cover your paper plate with foil. Cut a 30cm strip of cardboard for a frying pan handle (or you can use a ruler). If you stick lots of cardboard strips together, it will be stronger. Cover the handle with foil and attach it to the back of the plate with the sticky tape.

Make a pancake to toss by cutting out a circle of thick card to fit in the middle of the plate. How many times can you toss your pancake without dropping it? If you have others in your family, you could have a pancake race – see who wins a running race holding the frying pan and pancake on the pan (without dropping it).

Talk about: Carnivals (a big parade and party) are traditional on pancake day. What fun things can you do with pancakes, as well as eating them and tossing them?



4. Making good food choices

You will need: Cardboard pancakes (as in activity 3), pictures of sweets and chocolate, pictures of fruit and vegetables

Stick pictures of bad food choices on one side of your pancake and good food choices on the other side.

Talk about: making good food choices is really good for you and means that:

- you'll have more energy;
- you'll feel healthier and stronger;
- you'll think more clearly;
- you're less likely to get ill from certain diseases.



5. Making pancakes

You will need (for approx. 12 pancakes): 100g plain flour, a pinch of salt, 2 large eggs, 200ml milk mixed with 75 ml water, 2 tablespoons of melted butter, extra butter to cook the pancakes, topping of your choice.

Sieve the flour and salt in a bowl, make a well in the centre and break the eggs into it. Whisk the eggs to include some of the flour and then add the milk-and-water mixture gradually and whisk until the batter is smooth and creamy. Stir in the melted butter.

Melt a teaspoon of butter in a pancake pan, swirl it around to make all the pan lubricated and tip out any excess into a jug. Pour about two tablespoons of batter into the hot pan and tip it around to cover the whole of the bottom of the pan. When the bottom is tinged with gold, flip it over to cook the other side. Add your favourite topping and EAT!

Talk about: What's your favourite topping on pancakes? How can you make pancake day into a party?

Song: Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, halleluia

When we met in the church building we sang a very joyful song which required people on different sides of the church to sing different parts. 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 are the words:

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

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

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

Prayer

Last time we remembered prayer as a way of keeping connected with Jesus. If you want to make good choices, like Jesus, prayer can help in this. One way of doing it is at the end of each day, to think of something that you're thankful for, something you're sorry for and something that you'd like to ask God for.

The first letters of thank you, sorry and please (tsp), give an abbreviation for teaspoon and we call these prayers teaspoon prayers. Here's an example:

Dear Father,

Thank you for my family who look after me.

Sorry for the times when I have upset them.

Please help me to good choices like Jesus did when he was in the desert.

Amen

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 12th March 2021

www.facebook.com/MessyChurchWestWickham/