

## Introduction to Worship

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Easter 4 A

*"I am the Gate for the Sheep"*



It's with much sadness we worship God this Sunday knowing Margaret Edgington, a beloved member of our church family has passed away. Everyone I've spoken with remembers Margaret as a good friend, a positive and delightful person who never said a bad word against anyone, a wonderful storyteller and lover of singing.

We can be comforted by the fact Margaret died suddenly and didn't suffer. She passed away peacefully.

Please uphold her son Alistair and extended family and her dog Ricki in your prayers.

This week we have extra worship resources about upholding one another up in prayer and many people's favourite, psalm 23. I'm sure God is with Margaret and she is singing hymns in heaven with those who have gone before her and the angels. If you know Margaret's favourite hymn, please email me the name of it.

I hope you find comfort in this Sunday's *Worship at Home* and *Communion at Home* (an Agape Meal), and in the extra resources for prayer and reflection included here later.

There are also Young At Heart activities on the last pages of this resource.

We hope to expand our usual worship resource options, including Communion at Home, by offering recorded video options in time for June 7<sup>th</sup> Communion. These are likely to be made available on a Mountview Uniting website and by links provided in our weekly Notices emails.

You will need bread and juice for this Sunday's Communion service; and again for Sunday June the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Blessings  
Rev Tina

## Mountview Worship @ Home

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020

#### Praise God

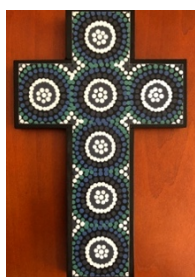
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
 Praise God, all creatures here below  
 Praise God above, you heavenly host  
 Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost

*Thomas Ken 1637-1711 alt.*

#### Welcome to our Service

Today is a time to come before the lord and receive comfort and blessings. It is a time for us to uphold one another in prayer and find nourishment and strength in worshipping God

We acknowledge those who were here before us, the first inhabitants of this place  
 We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.



#### Call to Worship

The Lord is My Shepherd  
 I shall not want

#### Prayers of Adoration, Invocation and Confession

Lord our God, our Shepherd, you care for us and provide for all our needs  
 You nourish and restore our soul and lead us to still places within us, where we can find life

You love us and lead us on paths to life and made us for yourself

Even when we walk through dark valleys, we need not be afraid for you are with us  
 every step of the way, beside us and within us

Your spirit fills us with hope, we need not fear

Your presence is with us always, comforting us

Even when our inner enemies threaten to overwhelm us,  
 enemies such as fear, boredom, worry, anxiety and anger,  
 you come to us as host and sit us down in peaceful places,  
 feeding our soul, loving us as your precious child

So much so, that our cup overflows with gladness, hope and gratitude  
 as you fill us with life for the journey, in this life and the next.

We are confident of always dwelling in your house, forever.

#### **We give you thanks and praise**

Jesus our Lord, you call us and we follow

You know us by name and we know your voice in our hearts

We listen for you to call us into your sheepfold where we are safe in your arms

You lead us out into the world on your path,  
 to green pastures where we find abundant life  
 you walk with us wherever we go and carry us on your shoulders  
 when we become weary and weak

### **We give you thanks and praise**

Holy Spirit, you open our hearts to God  
you pour God's love into our hearts  
where we sigh with prayers too deep for words

### **We give you thanks and praise**

So, Come Holy Spirit  
open our mind and heart to the gospel  
Help us understand and comprehend today's message of hope  
so we may be fed and live out the gospel in our lives  
And Lord, we come before you with all that's on our hearts,  
seeking your forgiveness and the grace to forgive  
Make our hearts anew and set us free from all that troubles us

*Moment of silence*

Hear then Christ's words of grace to us  
"Your sins are forgiven"

**Thanks be to God**

## **Readings**

### **Psalm 23**

23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters, 23:3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. 23:4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me.

23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

### **John 10: 1-10**

10:1 Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 10:2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

10:3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 10:4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 10:5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." 10:6 Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. 10:7 So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, **I am the gate for the sheep.** 10:8 All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them.

10:9 I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.

10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.  
I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

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## **For the Young at Heart**

*There are some extra sheets with activities at the end of this resource*

*My granddaughter (aged 5) made this cross by drawing hearts on a piece of paper and pasting a cross on top that is cut out of white paper. When you hold the finished work of art up to the light it comes through the cross and shows the hearts.*

*There is a holding cross on top of the paper made by Perce Box when he was in his nineties (he made 100 and most of them have found homes).*

*I gave my granddaughter one and she calls it a cuddle cross.*

*She was saying lots of prayers on Wednesday as she held it.*

*Children are aware of how people are feeling during this challenging time and prayer is just as comforting and empowering for them, as for us.*



## Hymn – The King Of Love My Shepherd Is (TIS 145)

*This is a hymn based on Psalm 23 - I invite you to prayerfully sing or read it*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=il1OeQfkVyl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il1OeQfkVyl) << or **Click this link to watch, listen & or sing-along** [emailed version only]

The king of love my shepherd is,  
whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his  
and he is mine for ever.

Where streams of living water flow  
my ransomed soul he leadeth,  
and where the verdant pastures grow  
with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,  
but yet in love he sought me,  
and on his shoulder gently laid,  
and home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill  
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;  
thy rod and staff my comfort still,  
thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;  
thy unction grace bestoweth;  
and O what transport of delight  
from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days  
thy goodness faileth never  
good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
within thy house for ever.

*Henry Williams Baker 1821-77 (based on Psalm 23)*



## Sermon

*In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen*

### **“I am the gate for the sheep”**

In ancient times a sheepfold was a circular structure built in the wilderness or fields, usually made out of rocks with walls that came up to a shepherd's waist or higher and sometimes with a roof made out of branches, to provide some shelter from the rain. The sheepfold didn't have a gate. The shepherd was the gate and slept at night at the entrance to protect the sheep from wild animals such as lions and jackals and from thieves and robbers. Shepherds had a rough life, yet they lived outdoors and may have loved the open spaces and the night sky. They gave their sheep names and the sheep knew their names and voice, and when they called the sheep would come and follow their shepherd. The sheep would trust the shepherd to care and provide for them and lead and protect them.

They wouldn't trust strangers who didn't know their names and would follow because they didn't know their voices. It sounds like the sheep were pets. Sheep provide milk for cheese, wool for clothes and meat to eat. They are valuable and worth protecting, but sometimes they climb up onto rocky ledges and shepherds need their staff to help them climb up and save them and use the hook to reach out and put around the sheeps neck to steer them in the right direction or use their rod, a large stick with a heavy round bit on end, to clobber wild animals or thieves. Looking after sheep is a time consuming task. I'm sure God is very busy looking after us.

We get ourselves into all kinds of situations and often need comforting and feeding.

Sheep need a lot of care. When I was child we had sheep on Gabo Island. They needed care such as mulesing, castration, dipping and drenching. We would need to protect the lambs from frosts and often found them half frozen in the fields and brought them home to put in the woodfire warmer under the stove and they'd revive.

Then we had to hand rear them. If we didn't rescue them the crows would peck out their eyes or the eagles would eat them. When I was at boarding school a friends family had a sheep farm and we needed to move the sheep from one paddock to another, which had greener pastures. The sheepdogs sat quietly watching their master, waiting for his word or hand gesture, so they knew in which direction to herd the sheep and then they would nudge them on the back of their legs to hurry them along in the right direction. I had a lamb over the saddle and all along the road to the paddock, it called out to its mother who followed us, calling for her lamb.

And when we arrived she sniffed her lamb all over, then fed it and it was a happy reunion.

Sheep need a shepherd who cares for them. Perhaps that's why Jesus used sheep as an analogy for us.

In todays gospel Jesus says: *"I am the gate for the sheep"*. Jesus knew about shepherds, sheep and sheepfolds. He spoke about his disciples entering the safety of the sheepfold where they are protected, loved and cared for, like we are when we draw close to Jesus. He leads his disciples in and out of the sheepfold. It is an intimate relationship where Jesus disciples come to know him and where they are known, where Jesus leads them to pastures, where they are fed spiritually and find life abundant.

I wonder what kind of shepherd our Lord Jesus is? I believe he was the kind of shepherd who cares for us and about us. We don't want for anything, that really matters in life. We are deeply satisfied when we draw close to Jesus. At times we know our cup overflows with peace and gladness, where we find life and our soul is nourished. During prayer, worship and communion he leads us to peaceful places where we feel his presence and surrounded by God's love. We hear his voice in our hearts and trust him. We find hope to continue to follow him during challenging times and when its too hard, he carries us on his shoulders.

The hymn based on psalm 23 speaks of this hope in our hearts. *The king of love my shepherd is whose goodness never fails me*. The valley of the shadow of death is a scary place for some, a place where they may feel depressed and defeated, with no reason to continue on with life, especially when it seems like everything they have worked for, saved for and planned for, seems to have been taken away by some event or tragedy. Whether Covid-19, redundancy, unemployment, ill health or death. In that situation God is within us. That's how close God is to us. That's how we are protected, and find hope to continue on following Jesus through dark times. That's the time God becomes host and sits with us in the presence of our negative feelings and thoughts and comforts us. That's when our prayers make a difference for those we pray for. They can feel they are being prayed for and it can save their life. I know this because prayers saved my life. I fell off a mountain at 5,000m, onto a bed of rocks on a ledge and those rocks were carrying me to the edge of that ledge and certain death. I prepared myself to die and felt deep peace. Then I felt people praying for me and that's when I put my foot out and it hit a rock sticking up at the edge of the ledge, and it stopped me going over.

Now I value my life, what's left of it and know I'm still here for a reason and have come to know all of us have our own time to go home to God.

When we pray for others believe they know. Your prayers will help them reach out or put their foot out, so they don't die or experience feeling defeated by circumstances. Trust in prayer. It works.

The shadow of death can be frightening for some during this time of Covid-19 or when loved ones die.

We can easily be reminded of our fragility and mortality. But for Jesus, dark times are as bright as day and he conquered death and darkness and is with us night and day. He is host and we are guest, where we receive God's abundant grace.



*The king of love my shepherd is,  
whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his  
and he is mine for ever.*

## **Offering Prayer**

*about offering up ourselves and giving thanks to God for all we have*

**Lord and giver of every good thing we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom  
all for transformation through your grace and love  
made known in Jesus Christ our Saviour, amen**

## **Prayers of the People**

*John Gerrand has prepared the Prayers of the People for you today*

Loving God, we bring to you our intercessions for others. You already know our needs, Lord, but our prayers also bring these needs to our own minds. Praying for the needs of others reminds us that we cannot simply transfer responsibility for those needs to you. We remain responsible as your hands and feet in the world to alleviate needs and right wrongs.

Our world prayer cycle focuses today on the people of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

We give thanks for:

- the diversity of peoples in these countries: their cultures, values and spirituality
- for the resilience of minority religious groups and those on the margins of society such as indigenous communities, Dalits, women, youth, the disabled and sexual minorities, amid discrimination and persecution
- for the contributions of Christians and Christian churches in these countries to education and health services and for their innovative attempts in contextualizing their worship, theology and institutional life
- efforts to forge inter-religious solidarity for the sake of the common good

We pray for:

- those who struggle to overcome grinding poverty
- Christians and others who selflessly work in the community, their efforts at ensuring the rights of all citizens, and their collaborative work
- efforts to build understanding and harmony among peoples across religious, caste and ethnic identities
- peoples' movements struggling for the rights of women, Dalits, Indigenous peoples, and the integrity of the earth
- leaders to keep priority on the wellbeing of the people and the earth itself amid demands for economic growth.

In our ecumenical prayer cycle we remember today your people worshipping at the several independent churches in Whitehorse. May they know your presence and guidance as they serve you. Be with them as they worship and work in their community.

Within our Presbytery we pray today for the congregations at Canterbury (Balwyn Road) and Canterbury (Highfield Road). We thank you, O God, for the difference these congregations are making in their communities and ask that you will bless their work. In their worship may they know your presence and be strengthened through that knowledge.

In all of these churches we ask your guidance and blessing on those who work to maintain the fellowship of the congregation during this time of enforced physical isolation. And for those members of these congregations who are alone and missing the uplifting effect of being able to meet together, we ask for your comfort and companionship.

We remember in prayer, too, the staff and students at Billanook College in Mooroolbark, which operates in association with the Uniting Church. In this time of transition from home learning for students to resumption of normal classes we pray that students, staff and parents will be able to work with each other to safeguard as much as possible the quality of education that students receive.

Here at Mountview we seek your blessing on our people, on our worship and our work together. Encourage and guide those who have accepted responsibilities within our congregation, we pray, and refresh those who continue to work quietly on a host of activities that support our community and enhance our relationships with each other and with you, O Lord. Be with our minister Tina Lyndon as she works amongst us in these difficult days while we are not able to meet as a congregation.

We pray especially today for comfort and hope for the family of Margaret Edgington including her son Alistair as they grieve Margaret's passing on 30 April.

Be also with Margaret's wider circle of friends both within and beyond the Mountview congregation.

We continue to seek your blessing, Lord, on Ayden, grandson of Diana Doukas.

Our prayers are also with Judy Ralston and those supporting her at this time.

We pray that Joyce Suto and her family will know your peace and comfort as they mourn the death of Joyce's sister Isobel in the UK.

We bring these prayers in our Saviour's name, praying as he taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

## **Communion at Home – An Agape Meal**

*This Sunday you are welcome to have Communion at Home.*

*The worship for 'Communion at Home' is in a separate document. [Link to Communion @ Home](#)*

### **Blessing**

May God bless us

May God keep us in the Spirit's care and lead our lives with love

May Christ's warm welcome shine from our hearts

and Christ's own peace prevail, through this and every day

till greater life shall call, amen

### **Dismissal**

Go out into the world in the power of the Spirit and in all things at all times remember Christ is with you.

Make your life your worship to the praise and glory of God. **Amen**

## Shalom To You Now

*Prayerfully read the words*

*Imagine your family in Christ and send them heartfelt blessings from the Lord*

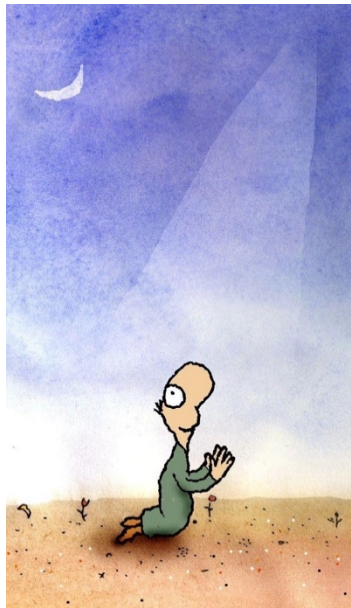
**Shalom to you now,  
shalom, my friends.**

**May God's full mercies bless you,  
my friends.**

**In all your living and through your loving,  
Christ be your shalom,  
Christ be your shalom.**

*Elise Shoemaker Eslinger 1942– ; © CCLI 122303*

*I have provided the following extra resources to accompany you on the journey*



*Leunig*

### **Upholding Others In Prayer (adapted)**

When we are praying for others, we often don't know what's the best outcome for the person.

When an elderly person is terminally ill do we pray for recovery or for a peaceful release? One farmer needs rain for his crops and sheep's pasture and another needs fine weather. What do we pray for? We often feel powerless to pray for a vaccine or end to lockdown for Covid-19 and the number of people suffering and dying because of it or for finding meaning for why natural disasters like bushfires take lives and destroy animals and the environment. Whatever the others situation we want God's will to be done yet can never know God's will.

We can affirm that however great our love and concern for another, God loves both of us.

What can we do when someone we love is suffering or has recently died? We may have regrets. We didn't call them when they were on our hearts, we didn't spend time with them, which isn't easy during lockdown. All we can do is trust that God loves them and if they have gone home to God, we hope and pray they remember the happy times, just like we do. When we pray for another we can picture the person or situation for whom we are praying, in our minds eye, the home of our imagination, and it's just another step to see God or Jesus in that picture with them, in a hospital or at home or in prison. When we pray for another we affirm God's love for them and how its stronger than anything else, even death. In silence we pray and hand them and their loved ones over to God. And if appropriate, we can see Jesus' hand being placed on them with love. This is prayer and with trust, we commend them to the risen Christ who continues to intercede for them and for us.

*From Lacuna, making Space for God in our lives, UCA materials, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania 2003*





Everyone prays differently. Some like to have a moments quietness in the midst of chaos. For others posture is important for prayer, encouraging our body to be still and relaxed, where we are more receptive to deep prayer and listening, to the silence of God where we can find grace and peace. We can sit in a chair or kneel, stand or walk. Breath is also part of prayer, where the Hebrews word for spirit is ruach. Paul said in Romans 8:26-27: *the spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit.* Many who pray need a focus, and often recite scripture, such as the weekly readings or a psalm or the Lord's prayer or a devotional or *With Love to the World* (as delivered by our much loved Margaret Edgington). This type of prayer is a way of attentive listening to God revealed in Jesus Christ as an expression of love and faith in God's presence. It is about an intention to be attentive and receptive to God's presence and action within. If this is our method of prayer, it expresses our hearts desire for God, as do all other forms of prayer. This sacred focus helps us centre our mind and heart and enables us to leave behind our thoughts and worries. All forms of prayer lead to action.

The more we receive in prayer, the more we can give in active life.

*Uphold One Another In Prayer, Adapted, UCA CTM, 2007*

At this time our home is our haven and for many of us, we miss offering hospitality. The following are two readings about hospitality and community, for prayer and meditation and a grace you may like to say at home.

### **Psalm 23 – God as Host**

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

### **Acts 2: 42-47 – Hospitality of the Heart**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.  
Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.  
All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.



*Saying Grace, Cornelius Bega*

### In The Kitchen

Jesus, you visited homes of ordinary folk like us  
You sat in kitchens and talked about life and death  
and who would do the washing up.  
You invited yourself to dinner, and asked for a drink of water,  
you made a faith meal go further.  
For the cup of water given in your name  
For the cup of tea poured out in fellowship,  
For our ministry of hospitality in home, church and community,  
We thank you, Lord of love, amen.

*Jan Sutch Pickard, Blessed Be Our Table, Wild Goose Publications (slightly adapted)  
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**Christians throughout the world have been invited to say the Lord's Prayer every day.  
Please join them. You will find it within the Prayers of the People.**

*Rev Tina, for Mountview Uniting Church*

<https://www.mountviewuca.org/worship.html>

*Final collation by Mountview Multimedia team.*

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## Extra Resources for the Young at Heart – from *Messy Church*

### Cross section

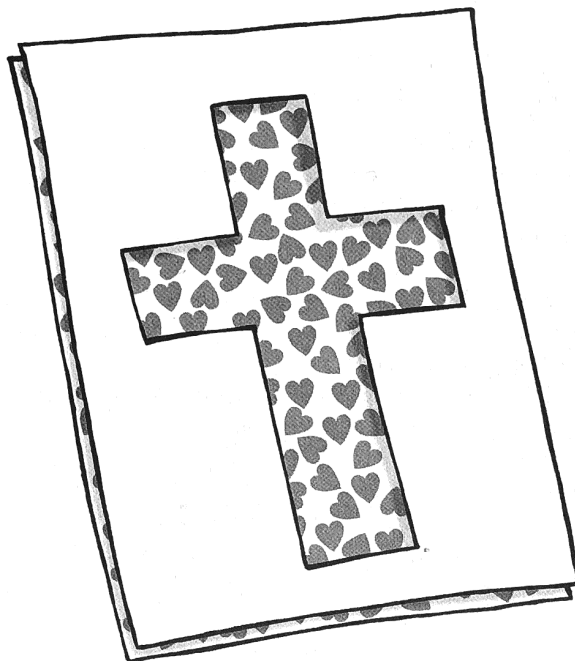
#### You will need

Ink stampers in the shape of hearts; different coloured inkpads; paper; scissors; glue

Cut out a cross shape from the centre of a sheet of paper and discard it, keeping the paper with the hole in it. (An easy way to do this is to fold the paper in half lengthways and cut out half a cross shape across the fold.)

On a different piece of paper, stamp as many hearts as you can. Glue the cross-shaped hole over the top of the stamped sheet so that the hearts show through the empty cross.

Talk about the way cross-sections show you what's under the surface of something. What's under the surface of Jesus' cross?



## Pamper corner

### You will need

Nail varnish; body butter; massage oils; foot lotion; towels; wipes

There are further ideas in the May–August 2013 issue of *Get Messy!* ('Calming the storm' session).

Have some pampering on offer for anyone who would like it (not only women).

Tell people the story of the party when a woman burst in, poured perfume over Jesus' feet and dried them with her hair. Have you ever been at a party where something surprising happened?

Health  
and  
safety

Beware of allergies.

## Last Supper miniature kits

### You will need

Small tins of the sort used for mints or tobacco; yellow, white and grey air-drying clay (or paint, if you don't have coloured clay); modelling tools; old white hankies; large white sticky labels

Using the clay, make a tiny cup, a plate with bread on it, candlesticks (if desired) and four small cubes to act as table legs. The tin will become a table when balanced on the four 'legs'. Cut a tablecloth out of an old hanky to cover the tin. Make everything small enough to fit inside the tin with the lid shut. Decorate the paper label and stick it over the lid.

Describe Jesus' last and best party, and invite people to retell the story using their own kit.

## Easy origami stars

### You will need

A4 paper, cut into strips about 2.5 cm wide; string or jars or vases and pea sticks (optional)

Go online and look up 'origami lucky paper stars tutorial'. There are lots of designs, and the one that looks small and puffy and is sometimes called a 'lucky star' is very

easy to make. Make lots of them, string them in a line as decorations or fill a jar with them or tape them on top of pea sticks in a vase.

Talk about how much fun it is to have parties and how Jesus loved going to parties.

## Decorating cupcakes

### You will need

Fairy cakes; icing; decorations; pictures for inspiration (an image search on 'cupcakes fish' will give you more than enough)

Invite people to decorate a fairy cake suitable for a party with lots of fishermen.

Talk about the way Martha and Mary made Jesus and his friends (many of whom were fishermen) welcome in their home. Talk about the friends you like to invite to your home.

## Vegetable party animals

### You will need

Vegetables; cocktail sticks; googly eyes

Invite people to design the funkiest 'party animal' they can out of vegetables.

Who is the best human 'party animal' you know? Why do you think people were desperate for Jesus to come to their parties?

## Musical instruments

Use tubes and bottles, metal lids, boxes, elastic bands and so on to make handheld instruments such as shakers, rain sticks, scrapers, cymbals and plucked 'guitars'.

Alternatively, make larger-scale instruments:

- Hang pots and pans or planks or metal pipes up on ropes and bang them with sticks.
- Make carpet roll-sized rain sticks.
- Make drums out of dustbins.
- Stretch lengths of elastic over wheelie bins to pluck.
- Fill jars and bottles with different amounts of water. Tap the bottles or blow over them.

Talk about whether you prefer quiet or noisy parties.