



STIR UP A PUD!

Stir up a Pud took place on 23 November 2018 at Steep Turnpike Evangelical Church, Matlock. It was the initiative of three ladies from the church, who recruited a team of four or five helpers.

Stir up a Pud derives its name from the Anglican collect for the final Sunday of the church's year (the one before Advent Sunday): ***Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people...*** and which gave rise to the tradition of *Stir up Sunday* – when Christmas puddings are sometimes made.

The aim was to make the evening an attractive, light-hearted outreach event to which church members could bring friends and neighbours. As well as the communal pudding-making, the message of Christmas would be shared in a clear and simple way.

The evening had been promoted within the church (some excellent invitation cards and posters) and those attending had pre-booked and paid £3 per head. This covered a bowl for the finished mixture and all ingredients. Over forty people of various ages attended (including 6 men), about half of whom were guests – which was excellent for a church that has around 70 attendees on a typical Sunday morning.

From the outset the atmosphere was buzzing. People enjoyed the challenge of mixing the pudding, with plenty of laughs along the way, and the Good News of Christmas was shared sensitively. Several guests were effusive in their thanks for the invitation!



The general pattern of the evening was very successful and worth replicating - see the suggested timetable on page 4. It ran like this:

- 1 Chairs were arranged round the periphery of the hall, with nicely arranged and covered tables in the middle. Each table had its set of bowls, kit and semi-prepared ingredients. Scales and graters had been borrowed from church regulars.
- 2 As people arrived, an excellent non-alcoholic punch and seasonal nibbles were offered.
- 3 A brief welcome and introduction led into the 'serious' business of the evening.
- 4 Pud preparation was basically in pairs, with two pairs to a table. This reflected the fact that most people came in pairs, but allowed flexibility. It also meant that anyone struggling with any stage of the preparation had a ready ally and did not feel embarrassed if something went wrong. What a good idea to supply spare aprons!
- 5 A data projector was used to flag up each stage of the pud preparation, meaning that all the tables kept pretty much together as they worked. The screen was also employed to illustrate the talk and for a short video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmOGI_j88gw courtesy of Morrison's) on how to cover and cook the puds.
- 6 At a number of points a pause was called for some fun quiz questions or curious info about the derivations of Christmas puddings. This gave people a break from standing at the tables and proved amusing. It was also a good touch to dish out chocolates and little prizes!
- 7 The two-person team in the kitchen did sterling work all evening, supplying punch, serving tea / coffee and Christmas pudding, and washing up.
- 8 Once the puds were completed, a welcome portion of pre-prepared Christmas pud and tea / coffee was served, followed by a short Christmas message and invitations were given to the church's upcoming Christmas events. We also sang *We wish you a merry Christmas!*

Some tips, in the light of experience:

- Ticketing the event and having a firm closing date comfortably ahead of the evening means that the quantities for ingredients etc can be catered for accurately.
- Open the doors early!
- Allocate any groups of 3 or 4 people to tables before any pairs or singles. This makes it easier to get everyone happily installed.
- Vegetarians can use Atora vegetable suet. Gluten-free options should also be considered.
- A take-away pack including Scriptures, a booklet such as Alpha's *Why Christmas?*, info about the church's Christmas services and information about storing and cooking the pudding should be prepared well in advance.
- Each church would have to set its ticket price according to local expectations, how good a deal could be found for ingredients and materials, and the willingness of the church to subsidise the occasion.

Stir Up – Things you need

Per pair

scales
grater or zester
teaspoon
tablespoon
juicer
sharp knife
plate or chopping board
large mixing bowl
small bowl to weigh in
apron

Per person

pudding bowl
greaseproof paper circle
foil
string to tie around the pudding bowl and make handles

Per table

bin
wet wipes to clean hands

CHRISTMAS PUDDING RECIPE

For TWO puddings:

275 g / 9oz	Plain Flour
125g / 4 ½ oz	Brown Sugar
175g / 6oz	Chopped Suet (vegetarian)
750g / 1lb 8oz	Mixed dried fruit
75g 3oz	Bread crumbs
60g / 2oz	Ground almonds
60g / 2oz	White almonds chopped or sliced
60g / 2oz	Glace cherries
60g / 2oz	Candied peel
3	Eggs
½ tsp	Mixed spice
½ tsp	Cinnamon
¼ tsp	Nutmeg
3 Tbsp	Brandy
	Zest and juice of a lemon and an orange

Method

Weigh out all the dry ingredients
Chop the cherries and nuts
Place all the dry ingredients in your bowl
Add the eggs and brandy and stir with a wooden spoon until all are combined
Place in your bowl and cover the top with greaseproof paper and a cloth.
Note: the mix will not be as wet as for a cake mix!
Cook the next day. Either place the bowl in a slow cooker and cook on low for 8-10 hours or steam for 5 hours in a steamer.

Quantities for 20 puddings

2,750g	Plain Flour
1,250g	Brown Sugar
1,750g	Chopped Suet (vegetarian)
7,500g	Mixed dried fruit
750g	Bread crumbs
600g	Ground almonds
600g	White almonds chopped or sliced
600g	Glace cherries
600g	Candied peel
30	Eggs
5 tsp	Mixed spice
5 tsp	Cinnamon
3 tsp	Nutmeg
60 tbsp	Brandy

STIR UP A PUD - SUGGESTED RUNNING ORDER

This is intended only as a guide, and you may well have other ideas!

TIME	ITEM	COMMENTS
SETTING UP WILL TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME, DEPENDING ON THE SIZE AND COMPETENCE OF YOUR TEAM!		
1900	Refreshments on arrival	Available from 1845
1910	Explain the stir up Sunday Collect (<i>Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord ...</i>)	Google for full text!
1915	Explain that the participants will be working in pairs making the pudding and at the end the mix will be divided between the pair into 2 bowls to take home. Get people to the tables, in pairs. Weigh out the dry ingredients.	
1920	Guess the weight of the pud to be made	Guesses on Post-its; prize for best guess
1925	Chop cherries and nuts etc.	
1930	Which is the best pudding? Which supermarket do you think supplied the best Christmas pudding this year according to <i>Good Housekeeping</i> ?	Pictures in four corners; people 'voted' by standing next to one
1940	Measure out the spices	
1950	Fun Christmas Quiz (max. 6 questions); prize of easily-shared chocolates.	People in fours, back at seats
2005	Add the eggs and brandy and stir up the pudding	
2015	Divide it equally between the bowls and show short video or demonstrate how to put grease proof paper and foil on the top of the bowl and secure with string and make a handle.	Video produced by Morrison's (on YouTube)
2025	Secure the top of the pudding as per the instructions	Not particularly easy!
2035	Refreshments of Christmas pudding, custard or cream and tea or coffee	
2045	Reflection on the birth of Christ	Short, direct and visual!
2055	Sing and home	The clear-up begins!