

An Easter Journey for Little Ones

Created by Riandi Ackerman



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Remember to also print the 12 theme cards and the bible text cards.

Introduction

This twelve-day program was created with little ones in mind. It serves as a gentle, interactive and playful introduction to the Easter story. It aims to explain Jesus' last acts on earth to create an understanding of the big sacrifice that Jesus made for us so that we can have eternal life.

The program is easy to use and gives a variety of activities, crafts and reading materials. The user can choose to do it all or just certain pieces that suit their time, needs and interests. The program was created for children between 2-5 years of age, but can be adjusted to suit older or younger children.

Every part of this program is intended to be supervised by an adult or responsible person. Children should not be left unattended when materials/items are used that can pose a risk in any way. Where possible, use non-toxic and child friendly materials.

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How to use this program

The program is meant to be spread over 12 days, but can be adjusted if needed. Each day has a theme image that is accompanied by a bible text, an activity and a craft. Each theme uses items to represent a concept/story.

Supplies used in this program, can be found easily, but one can also simply print or draw the image instead of having a physical item to represent a theme. Each item is placed in an empty egg and each day a new egg and the theme can be explored together as a family. The items in the eggs or the supplied images can be hung on an Easter tree or the images can be stuck on to the accompanying Easter journey path. The bible text cards can be bound together with a key ring to form a small booklet so that a new page can be read daily.

If you choose to do the additional crafts and activities, use that time to talk to your little one about that day's theme and how the activity/craft relates back to Jesus. Some of these crafts/activities may be too difficult for a young child to do alone and may require you to do it while the little one assists only. That said, my children were 1 year and 3 years old when this was developed and could participate in every activity. It is not about how perfect it can be, but rather the time that is spent with the child so that the time can be used to provide a broader explanation.

Keys



To be placed in egg/envelope



Activity



Craft

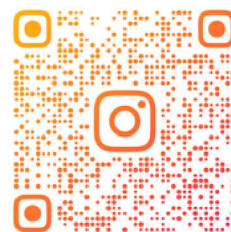


Bible text



Time consuming/difficult

For inspiration and ideas, follow our journey on Instagram. Check in daily and feel free to share your journey with us too.



@POPPET_AND_PEA

Supplies needed

- 12 empty plastic eggs (or envelopes) to place the theme-items or image cards in
- Leaves represents palm branches. Use real leaves or use the provided template to cut out some leaves
- Coins to represent the 30 silver pieces that Judas Iscariot received to betray Jesus or use the template to cut out coins
- Small piece of fabric and small toy bowl or bucket. If you don't have a toy, a piece of fabric only will also suffice. This is to represent the washbasin & towel that Jesus used to wash the feet of the disciples
- Small biscuit/piece of bread or toy bread & glass to represent the last meal
- A flower to represent the garden of Gethsemane
- Piece of string/shoe lace to represent Jesus being bound when He was arrested
- A toy chicken or a feather to represent the three times that Peter disowned Jesus
- A small wreath that represents the crown of thorns that was placed on Jesus' head. This can be made easily by either string or a pipe cleaner tied in the form of a circle or by using a soft twig twisted to make a small wreath
- A small cross that represents the crucifixion. Use two small sticks and tie together in the shape of a cross with some string. Craft sticks can also be used.
- Small piece of fabric and a leaf/some herbs to represent the burial of Jesus
- A small stone represents the stone that was rolled away to show an empty tomb
- Fold paper to make a small book to represent the bible.
- Printed images
- Printed path or a few tree branches to make an easter tree
- Items for crafts mentioned in each theme
- Items listed for each activity
- Paper or felt for cut-outs
- Glue
- Scissors
- Pencils/crayons

Toys that work well:

Playmobil
Lego/Duplo
Plastic/wooden animals
Plastic/wooden food
Barbie/doll accessories

Alternatives

- If your little one is still mouthing a lot, use taste safe paint & textures. For example, instead of using play dough, use fondant and instead of using regular paint, make your own edible paint. (See taste-safe paint recipe)
- If your little one is too young to paint or colour, add few blobs of paint to the image. Place into a ziplock bag and seal properly. Let your little one paint. by using their hands to spread the paint that is inside the bag.
- This program mainly uses food for sensory play trays but can be replaced with anything appropriate.
- Instead of using sticks to make a cross, use long pretzel sticks.
- Instead of using the printed Easter journey path, use a wall during this time to create a path. Stick the supplied images on the wall and add the daily craft/art on too.

Special Acknowledgements

Katriena, Marsa & Desi, thank you for your time and patience, and for helping me to make this program a reality.

Remember to always supervise your little one.

Enjoy!



Palm branch

	Leaves	Represents the palm branches strewn on the path when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey's colt.
	John 12:12-15	"The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.""
	• Paper • Pencils • 2 clothing pegs • String • Glue • Template of donkey	Print the template of the donkey or draw an outline of a donkey. Use clothing pegs as legs and stick some string on for the tail. Decorate as desired.
	• Oats/brown lentils • Leaves • Donkey • Toy people (optional) 	Set up a sensory play activity. Use the oats or lentils to form a path. Strew some leaves across the path. Use the donkey that was made or a toy donkey to represent the colt that Jesus rode on. Some toy people can also be used to represent the people welcoming Jesus. Act out the scene and let the child explore the story.



30 Silver pieces

	Coins	Represent the 30 silver pieces that Judas Iscariot received to betray Jesus.
	Matthew 26:14-16	"Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over."
	• Stamp pad/paint • Coins • Printed template with coins (optional)	Print the template of 30 coins. Tap the coin onto the stamp pad/paint to make an imprint on the empty coin images on the paper.
	• Play dough/salt dough • Coins • If using salt dough—ingredients for salt dough (see recipe)	Roll play dough out. Make coin imprints on the rolled out dough. Be creative by using small round cookie cutter to shape small coins and stamp with coins. If salt dough was used, this can be baked and used as play money in the future.



Washbasin & towel

	Small toy bowl/bucket and/or small piece of cloth	Represent Jesus washing feet of the disciples.
	John 13:4-5	"...so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."
	• Paint • Paper	Paint a thin layer of paint on child's feet. Gently tap foot on the paper to reveal a lovely footprint.
	• Container with lukewarm water • Towel • Wash cloth • Bath oil/essential oil (optional)	Add 2-3 drops of lavender (or other child-friendly oil) to a container of lukewarm water. Wash child's feet and dry. Allow child to wash your feet too. This can also be done by washing the feet of a doll.



Bread & wine

	Small biscuit/piece of bread or toy bread & glass	To represent the last meal.
	Like 22:19–20	“And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”
	• Printed template of the last supper placemat • Pencils/crayons	Print the placemat template. Colour in. If you have a laminator, laminate it and use it as a placemat for the next meal.
	• Flour • Water • Salt • Pan	This can be made in 5–10 minutes and is really easy and simple to execute. (See recipe for unleavened bread.) Allow little ones to roll and explore the dough. Enjoy together as a family and use the above placemats when serving the bread.



Garden of Gethsemane

	A flower	Represents the garden of Gethsemane.
	Mark 14:32-34	"They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."
	• Paper/cardboard • Glue • Scissors • Different textures e.g. tissue paper, yarn, twigs/popsicle sticks, etc.	Make a texture garden. Some ideas: use green yarn as grass, twigs as tree stumps, real leaves on the trees, crumpled tissue paper for flowers, etc. Be creative and use what you have available at home.
	Option 1: • Floral foam/oasis • Artificial plants/flowers or real flowers Option 2: • Well-draining planter/planting pot • Baby plants/cuttings • Soil • Decoration (optional) 	Option 1: Use floral foam/oasis as base. Supply your little one with a variety of real/artificial flowers to make a small garden. Option 2: This is a more long-term activity. Make a real mini garden. Add soil to the desired container (make sure it drains well). Use small baby plants or cuttings of a plant/herb and plant in the small garden. The garden can be left as is or decorated with e.g. small stones or a wooden cross. Help child to water and maintain the little garden and plant the plants out if they are growing too big.



Rope

	String/shoelace	To represent Jesus being bound when he was arrested.
	John 18:3, 12-13	"So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons... Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year."
	Option 1 (0-2 years) • Yarn/string • Paper • Paint Option 2 (3+) • Printed rope (template) or drawing • Glue • Yarn/string	Option 1: Dip string into paint and use the paint-dipped yarn to paint or make imprints on the paper. If your little one does not like getting paint on their hands, tie the string to the middle of a spoon or pencil and use it to move string across the page. Option 2: Print the template of the rope. Use string to stick onto the outline of the rope.
	Option 1 (0-2 years) • Adhesive paper • Yarn/String of different colours and lengths Option 2 (3+) • Yarn/string • Large beads/penne pasta/fruit loops, etc	Option 1: Stick a large sheet of adhesive paper to a wall or onto a table with the sticky side up. Give your little one a container of different textured yarn/string to stick onto the adhesive paper. Option 2: Help your little one to thread a remembrance bracelet. Let them wear the bracelet during this time to remind them of Jesus' sacrifice or hang it on your Easter tree.



Rooster

	Toy chicken or feather	To represent the three times that Peter disowned Jesus.
	Mark 14: 29–30	"Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.""
	• Rooster template (printed) • Feathers • Glue • Paint/crayons/pencils (optional)	Colour the image of the rooster. Add some glue and stick the feathers on.
	• Popcorn kernels • Feathers • Toy chicken	Create a sensory play tray for your little one. Use popcorn kernels (or any other food texture). Add some feathers and toy chicken. Act out the 3 times the chicken crowed. Allow children to play with the textures and explore on their own terms.



Crown of thorns

	Small wreath	To represent the crown of thorns that was placed on Jesus' head.
	Matthew 27:27-29	"Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said.."
	• Play dough/salt dough • Tooth picks/pieces of spaghetti	Twist the dough to form a round circle. Stick the toothpicks/spaghetti into the crown to represent the thorns. If salt dough and spaghetti were used, this can be baked and played with afterwards.
	• Twigs • Leaves • Any item from nature • Paper • Glue • Scissors 	Go for a walk and collect some natural items such as leaves, acorns, flowers, twigs, etc. Use this time to tell this part of the Easter story to your little one. Fold a crown with paper and let your little one decorate with the collected items. Write Galatians 4:7 "So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir." on the crown. Explain to your child that through Jesus, we are princes/princesses.



Cross

	Small cross	To represent the crucifixion of Jesus.
	John 19:17-18	"Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle."
	Option 1: - Printed cross (template) - Supplies to decorate (stickers, paint, crayons, gems, etc) Option 2: - Glue - Popsicle sticks - Supplies to decorate	Option 1: Print the template of the cross. Be creative and let your little one decorate as desired. Cut out and hang on your Easter tree. Option 2: Make a cross using the popsicle sticks. Decorate. Hang on the Easter tree or add to your Easter path.
	Option 1 (0-2) - Play dough - Green coloured rice - Cross (made with twigs/popsicle sticks or the one used in egg) Option 2 (3+) - Wooden block/styrofoam block - Nails/toothpicks - Hammer (if using nails & wood) - Yarn/string 	Option 1: Create a sensory play tray for your little one. Use the play dough to mould a hill. Scatter the green-coloured rice (grass) around the 'hill' and let your little one place the cross into the play dough hill. Talk about this part of the story and let your little one explore the textures. Option 2: Draw a cross on a piece of wood/styrofoam. Hammer the nails/push the toothpicks along the outlines of the cross. Tie one end of string/yarn to a nail/toothpick and give to your little one to wrap the yarn across the cross shape at random. When done, tie the end to a nail/toothpick.



Linen, myrrh & aloe

	Small piece of fabric and some leaves/herbs	To represent the linen, aloe & myrrh that was used to wrap the body of Jesus in.
	John 19:38-40 NIV	"Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs."
	Option 1 • Paper bowl/cup • Scissors • Paper • Paint/crayons	Option 1: Tomb Paint the cup grey to resemble a rock. Cut a hole at the bottom of the cup or bowl. Crumple the paper to form a ball that will act as the rock in front of the tomb.



Linen, myrrh & aloe (cont.)

	Option 2 • Medium-sized round planter • Soil • Small seedling planter • Moss/grass (e.g. cat grass) or baby plants • Stone • Small pebbles • Wooden peg doll/Playmobil figuring/Lego figurine (optional) • Piece of fabric • Resurrection garden/tomb 	Option 2: Resurrection garden Add soil to the round planter. Turn the small seedling planter on its side and stick into the soil so that only half is visible above the soil. This is the tomb. Scatter the pebbles in the front of the 'tomb' and plant the moss/grass or baby plants on the sides, behind and if you want, the top the 'tomb'. Put the bigger stone next to the half-planted 'tomb'. Wrap the figurine in the fabric and place in the tomb. Roll the 'rock' in front of the tomb. Tell this part of the story to your little one. If you do not have a small figurine to place inside, only place the fabric piece.
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Stone

	A stone	To represent the rock that was rolled back to reveal an empty tomb. He is risen!
	Matthew 28:1-2 & 5-7	"...Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it...The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."
	- Printed "He is Risen" template - Crayons/pencils	Print the "He is risen" template and colour in.
	Option 1 Tomb that was created the previous day "He is Risen" sign Option 2 (3+) See recipe for Resurrection rolls)	Option 1: Use the tomb/resurrection garden that was created the previous day. Roll the 'rock' away and remove the figurine. Place the "He is Risen" sign inside the tomb and explain this part of the story. Option 2: Follow instructions on recipe



The bible

	A folded paper book	To represent Jesus' instruction that we must go into the world and share the Word with everyone
	Matthew 28:18-20	"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.""
	• Paper • Crayons/pencils • Googly eyes • Yarn • Scissors • Glue	Make a paper doll chain. Turn A4 sheet of paper so that it is in landscape. Fold in half (the long way). Open paper up and cut along the fold line. Use one of the long strips of paper and fold in half (this time sideways). Fold the top bit of paper back to the original fold. Turn the paper around and fold the back bit to the original fold. You should now have a small rectangle in portrait view with 4 folds. Draw a doll with head, arms and legs. Make sure the arms reach the edges of the paper. Cut out and unfold to reveal your paper doll chain. Colour in. Use yarn for hair and stick googly eyes on.



The bible (cont.)

	Option 1 (0-2 years) • Play dough • Items from option 2 Option 2 (3+) • Dominoes/Jenga blocks • Magazines & scissors (optional) • Reusable adhesive (Blu-tack/Prestik, etc. (optional))	Use a magazine to cut out faces of people (at least 6 to illustrate the idea). Use the reusable adhesive to stick the pictures on to the Jenga blocks/dominoes. Option 1: Use some play dough and let your little one explore placing all the dominoe/Jenga people into the play dough. The layer of play dough should be thick enough to keep the blocks/dominoes stable. Gently tap the domino so that it moves, but not fall over. Explain to your little one that through Jesus, we are protected. We may have some "wobbles", but He is with us ALWAYS! Option 2: Pack neatly in a row. Let first one fall over and see the rest collapse. Now take the paper doll chain and surround some of the dominoes. Show that the dominoes that are surrounded by people who believe in him, do not fall over as they are protected. Explain to child that we should tell people about Jesus as Jesus is our protector. He is with us ALWAYS!
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Unleavened Bread

Servings: 5 (depending on bread size)

Preparation time: 5 min

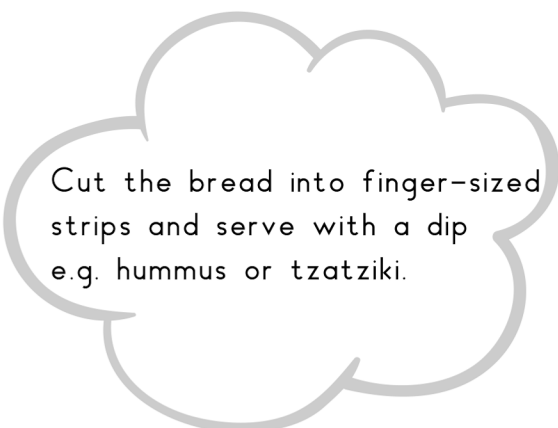
Cooking time: 3 min

Playing time: according to own wishes

Total time: 8 min + playtime

Ingredients

- 2 cups & 2 tbs flour
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 tsp salt
- Butter (optional)
- Rosemary (optional)



Cut the bread into finger-sized strips and serve with a dip e.g. hummus or tzatziki.

Mix salt and flour together in a bowl. Add water and mix until a ball is formed. Knead for 5 minutes.

Form 5 dough balls and flatten using a flour-dusted rolling pin.

Optional: Season with rosemary

Cook on a pan for 2-3 minutes.

Serve as is or with butter.

Salt dough recipe

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup salt

Mix salt and flour together in a bowl. Add water and mix until a ball is formed. Knead for 5 min.

The dough should be soft and not too sticky. If too sticky, add a small amount of flour until the desired consistency is reached. If the dough is too stiff, add a little bit of water.

Bake at 100-120 degrees celcius for 90 min to 2 hours

When it has cooled down, it can be painted.

Resurrection buns

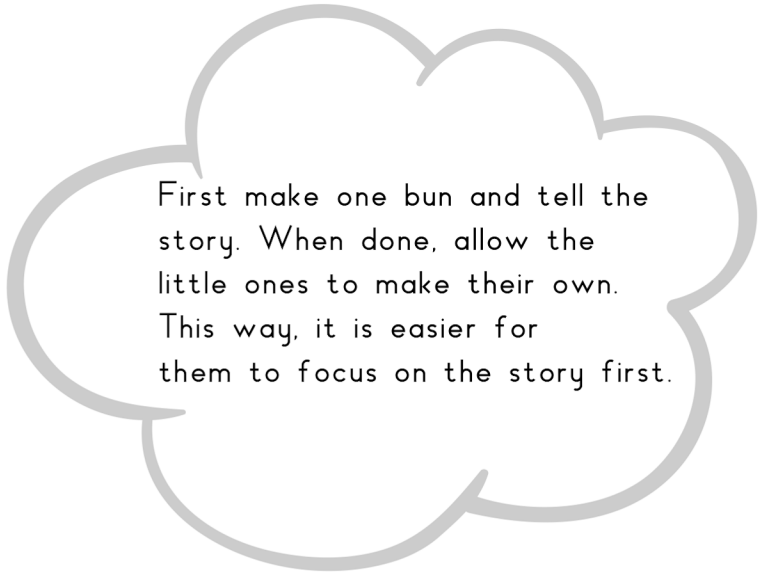
Servings: 9 rolls

Preparation time: 15–20 min

Baking time: 15 min

Ingredients

- 1 roll of defrosted puff pastry
- 1/4 cup salted butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 tbs cinnamon
- 9 large white marshmallows
- Story cards
- Baking paper (optional)



First make one bun and tell the story. When done, allow the little ones to make their own. This way, it is easier for them to focus on the story first.

Preheat oven to 200 degrees celsius.

Cut 9 pieces of 12.5 x 12.5 cm baking paper.

Sprinkle some flour on worktop and roll puff pastry into a large square (about 30 x 30 cm) and cut 9 equal squares.

Mix the cinnamon & sugar together. In another bowl, melt the butter.

Dip marshmallow into butter, then roll in sugar mixture and place in the middle of each square.

Bring the square's corners to the marshmallow's center and pinch them together. Seal along the edges of the dough so that there is no space through which the marshmallow can melt. It should look like a dumpling.

Dip the roll into the butter and then roll in the sugar mixture (as was done with the marshmallow).

Place the rolls with the sealed-side down in the middle of the baking paper squares and place into a muffin tray.

Bake at 200 degrees celcius for 15 minutes. The rolls should be puffed up and look crunchy.

Let it cool for 5–10 minutes before eating. Beware of the hot marshmallow inside.

Resurrection buns story

Show your little one the marshmallow

The white marshmallow represents Jesus. Just like the marshmallow, Jesus was pure and perfect. Even though Jesus was good, there were some people who didn't like him. They arrested him and he was crucified and he died on the cross.

Dip the marshmallow in the butter and then in the sugar mixture

then Roll in Cinnamon Sugar. When Jesus died, his friends put special oils and spices (myrrh & aloe) on his body

Wrap the marshmallow in the puff pastry square and seal properly

After they applied the oils and spices to Jesus' body, they wrapped his body in special cloth to bury him in.

Place rolls on the baking paper and then into muffin pan.

Jesus' body was placed in a tomb.

Place muffin tin into oven and close the door

The tomb was sealed and it was guarded day and night by soldiers.

Bake the rolls

Jesus was in the tomb for 3 days

Cut the roll open to reveal the hole in the middle of the bun

Some of Jesus' friends came to visit his tomb. But when they got there the tomb was open. They looked inside the tomb, but His body was gone. Jesus had risen! Jesus lives in heaven with God and is always with us. Just like we can't see the marshmallow, we can't see Jesus, but we know he is with us always..

Taste-safe fingerpaint recipe

This is great for babies 6 months and older

Ingredients

- 1 cup corn flour
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 2 1/4 cups boiling water
- Liquid food colouring

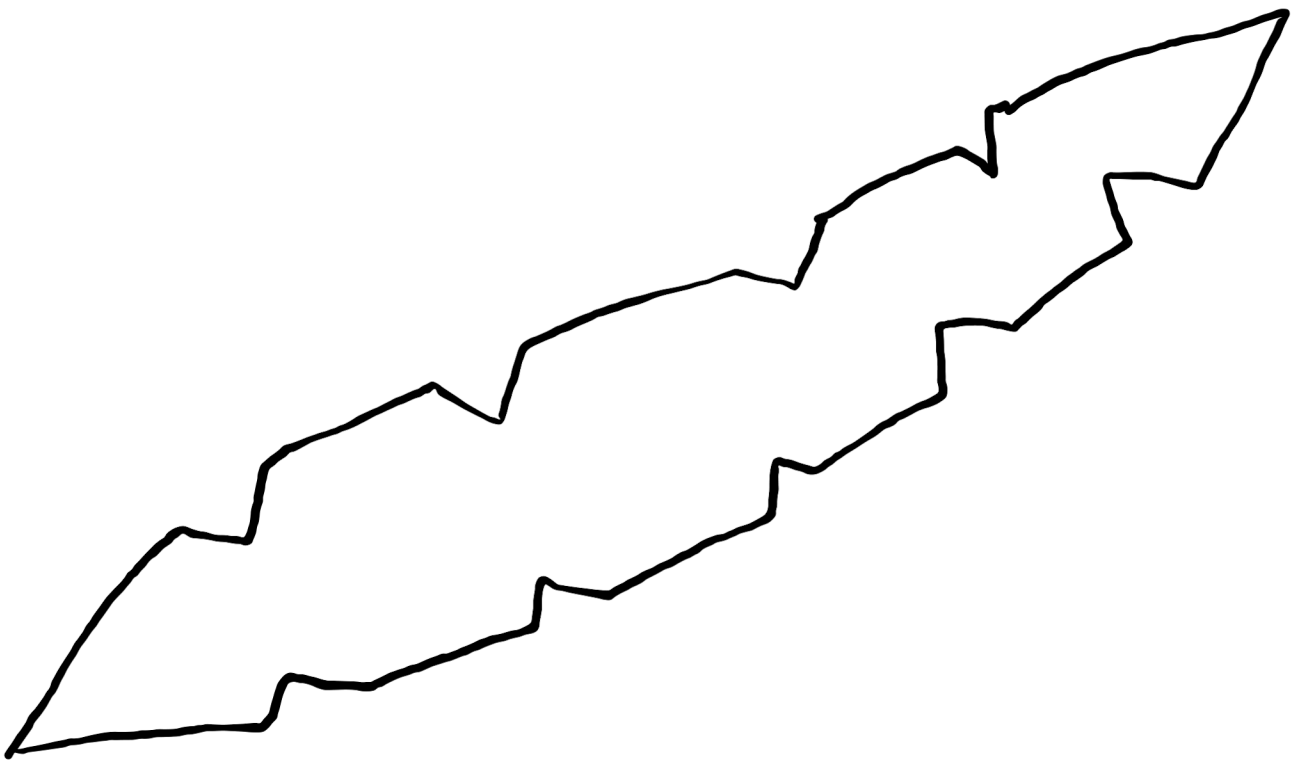
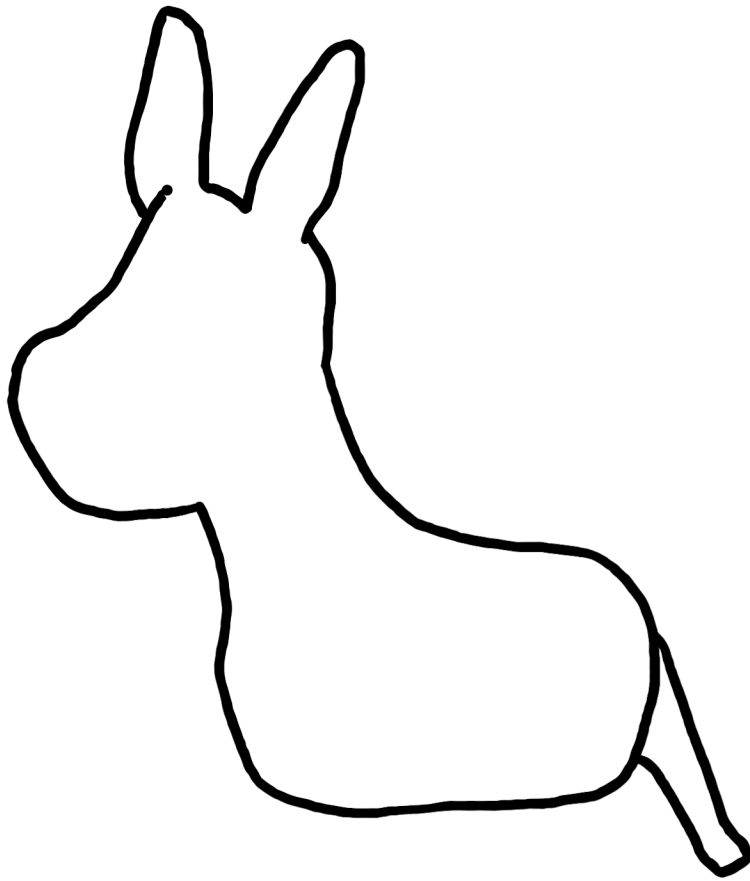
Mix the cornflour and cold water together. Slowly pour in the boiling water, stirring continuously. Keep stirring until it reaches the consistency of custard. If it is too thick, add more water and if it is too runny, add more cornflour.

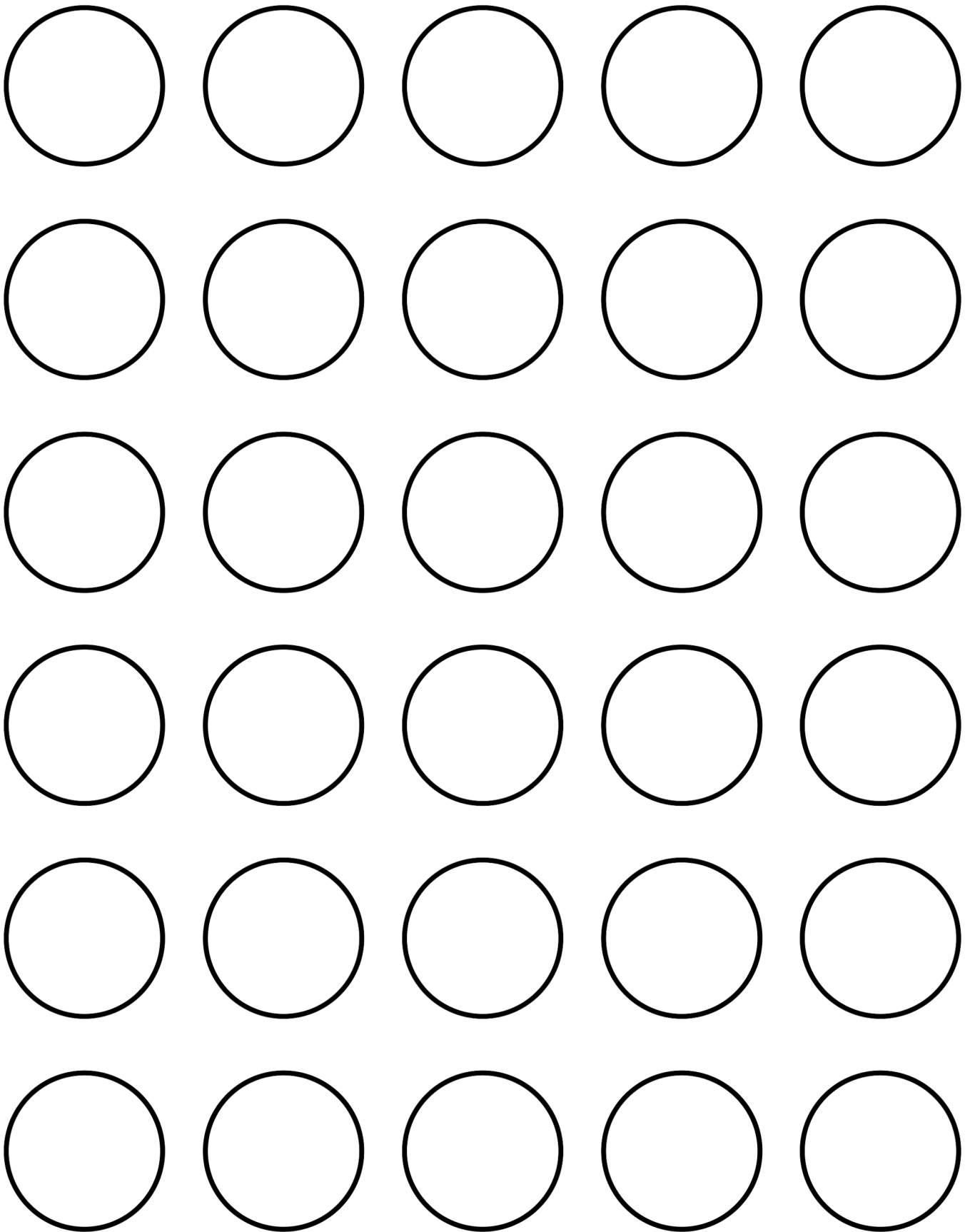
Divide the mixture into different containers. One container for each colour. Add the food color and mix well. Jam jars before adding colouring, but you can do it however you like and this is the stage to add colour.

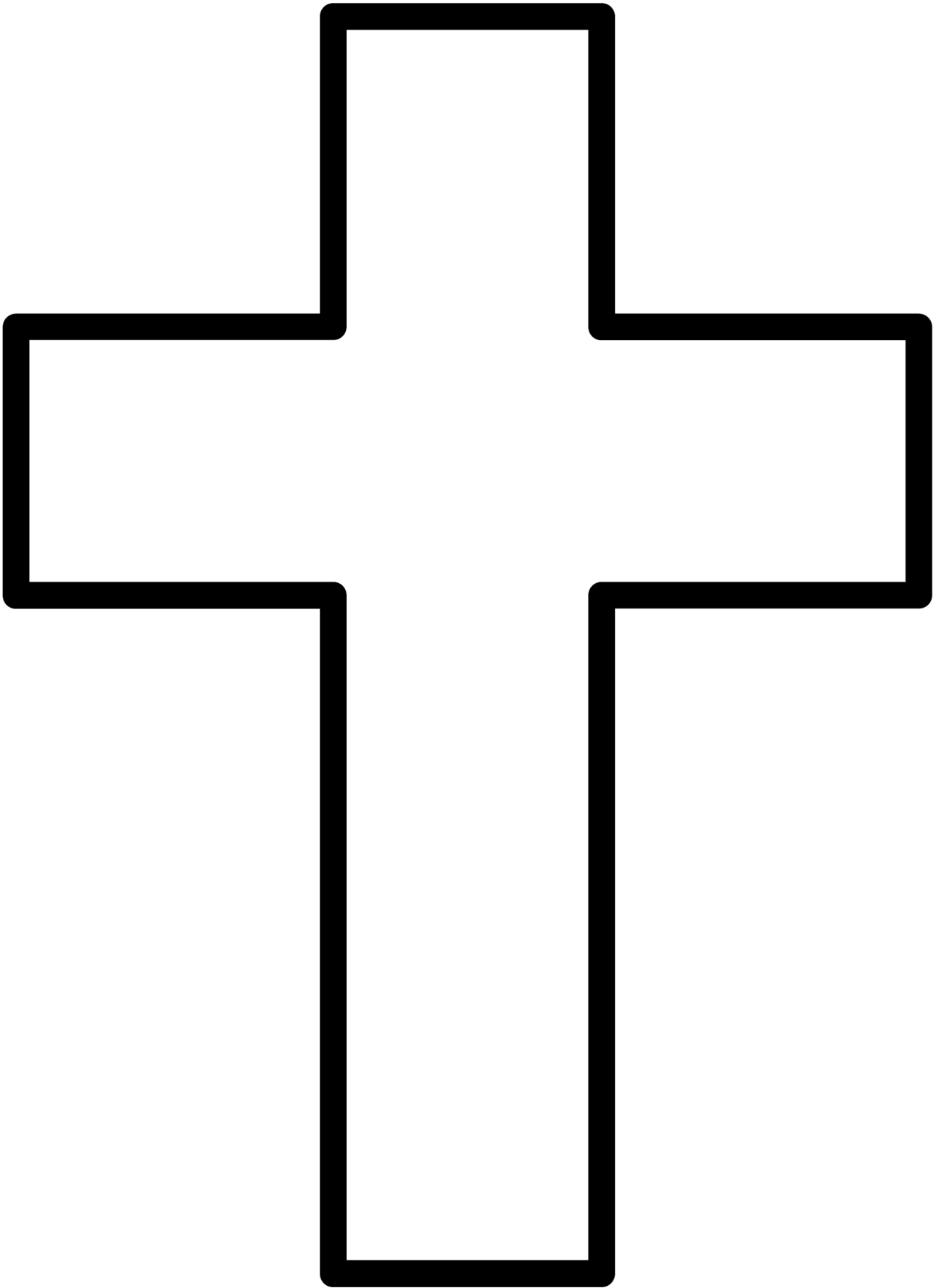
Taste-safe watercolour paint

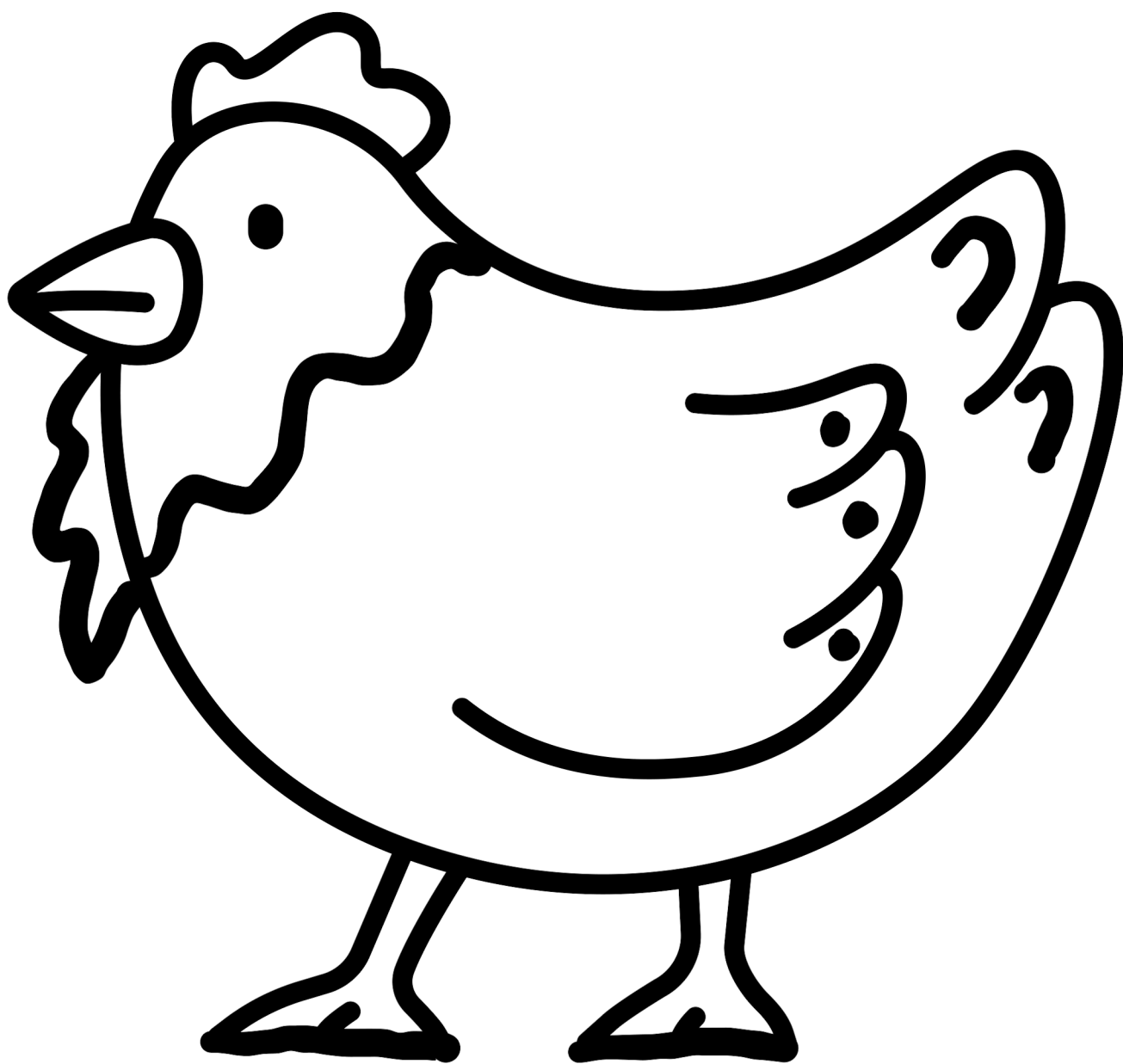
Simply mix water and food colouring and you have some lovely watercolours. You can make these colours as light or dark as you wish and even mix to create new colours.

Note: This may stain clothing, so wear aprons/old clothing when using this.









"Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times."

Mark 14: 29–30

He is
Risen!

