

Kippington Cat

28th February 2021



A time for reflection

And so, the church calendar moves on, and we find ourselves in Lent once more. This is a period of about six weeks and is a time when Christians all over the world are encouraged to be quiet and thoughtful, contemplating all that Jesus did for us during His time on earth with us, and preparing ourselves for the lows and highs of the Easter season.

Lent lasts for 40 days (but see note on page 3) because that is how long Jesus wandered in the desert, fasting, while he resisted Satan's temptations. Lent is our opportunity to be like Jesus. We too can resist temptations and use this time to become closer to God.

In his letter in the February issue of the church magazine, our vicar – Mark – writes the following:

In Lent a common practice is either to give something up, or to take something on – or both! We do these practices not because we have always done them – part of the traditional landscape of this season; but because we see the benefit of doing them. They bring us closer to God; deepen our faith; enable us to understand more about ourselves...

He asks all the grown-up members of our church to think about what they can do during Lent, suggesting:

... give something up or take something on: or both! ... The something may be within the arena of prayer, or worship, financial, or practical acts of kindness; of reading, or study, or reducing what we have become too dependent upon. Whatever it might be, and in whatever arena it might be found, this season of Lent could become real to us because we are doing something with it and in it.



What about us children?

Well, there are lots and lots of ways we can approach Lent – from the traditional giving up of a favourite food (most often chocolate), through to taking on new behaviours and practices, like being helpful around the house (without being asked!) or being thoughtful and kind to other people.

We are a bit limited this year, as we cannot go out and about – so cannot volunteer to visit an older neighbour who lives on their own, for example – but there are still lots of ways to observe Lent. Maybe you have already come up with your own ideas, but – if you have not yet decided on a course of action – it is not too late, and here are some thoughts ...

Some Lenten Verses

Each and every single day
Find a "something" you can say
about how glad you are to be
a member of your family!



Ask yourself what you can do
to help your mum (and father, too)
By doing things you know need done
With a smile and having fun!

If at sums you're really ace
But your brother can't keep pace,
Please don't tease him – that's not nice!
Instead just offer him advice.



Grandad has a little flat
But now that's not where he is at!
He's living with his family
And loves his little cups of tea.

Jesus taught us how to pray
and we should thank Him every day
For the world in which we live
and the gifts that He does give.



Be Kind

Jesus showed us the true way
We know that we should never say
things that hurt, but we should mind
the need to – always! – just be kind.

Do you think that – if everybody on the planet decided to do one – just one – kind thing every day, that the world would be a much happier and nicer place? I do!

It is so easy to do wrong things – to be unkind, or use bad language, or listen to a bit of gossip (and maybe even pass it on). It is even easier to create hurt by doing nothing at all: not putting a stop to the nasty rumour about a friend, not helping someone you know is struggling, not getting involved.

It can be a **lot** harder to do the right things – and harder yet to say that the reason you are behaving in this way is because you believe in God.

Nowhere in the Bible does Jesus promise that following Him will be easy – in fact, He clearly states the opposite. One of the readings for today is Mark 8: from verse 31. In that passage, Jesus says: *Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*

And *“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words ... the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels.*

But, if we start to concentrate on doing right things and giving up wrong things through Lent, and then if we simply continue to do right things and not wrong things after Lent, and it just becomes a habit – wow!

We could change the world one good thing at a time! And it could start right here in Sevenoaks, right now. What do you reckon? Shall we?



Father,

*Thank You for the opportunities of Lent.
A time when I can think of how I act
and pray for Your guidance.*

*Help me to get into the habit of being kind
and teach me how to think of the needs of
other people before my own.*

*And help me, Father God, to tell anybody I meet
that anything good I do is because of You –
This I ask in Your holy name.*

Amen.

*I love imagining how wonderful the
world would be if we all practiced
kindness every day ...*

With love, K.C.



Note: Did you know (I have literally only just learned this myself) that Sundays are not included in the count of Lenten days? True! Sundays do not count ... Sunday is the Sabbath. Sunday is a feast day. Sunday is the day we celebrate no matter what the season. You can take Sundays off! (Though, of course, if you prefer not to – that is totally up to you!)

"I did not know that!"



Collop Monday, anyone?

Here in England, we can find many strange practices and traditions associated with the lead-up to Lent. Some are still part of our celebrations to this day – like pancakes on Shrove Tuesday – whilst others have fallen by the wayside.

Shrove Tuesday always falls 47 days before Easter Sunday, so the date varies from year to year, falling between 3rd February and 9th March. And, yes, I know that it's been and gone for this year – but these little snippets might be of interest anyway – and can be stashed away for use in an essay sometime about Lent and Easter!

In Christian traditions, the 40 days before Easter are known as Lent, and they represent the time that Jesus spent fasting in the desert. Traditionally, Christians would mark the period with prayers and fasting, abstaining from a whole range of foods, including meat, eggs, fish, fats and milk.

The word 'shrove' comes from the old Roman Catholic practice of being 'shriven' – meaning to confess one's sins. The shriving bell would be rung on Shrove Tuesday to call people to church to confess. But, before Lent could begin in earnest, all edible temptations needed to be removed. This took place over a period of days known as 'Shrovetide'. Meat such as bacon would be eaten up on 'Collop Monday' (a collop is a thin slice of meat). And on Shrove Tuesday eggs, butter and stocks of fat would be used up. One of the easiest ways to dispose of these items was to turn them into pancakes or fritters, a custom which continued long after the Church of England separated from the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century.

The pancake has a surprisingly long history and features in cookery books as far back as 1439.



The tradition of tossing or flipping them is almost as old: "And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne." (Pasquill's Palin, 1619).

As well as giving up "luxury" foods, the faithful were expected to forego fun pastimes such as dancing and playing games like football. Therefore, Shrovetide (the four days preceding Lent) was a time for merriment and great festivity before the coming days of abstinence.

Another name for Shrove Tuesday is *Mardi Gras* – the French name that literally means "Fat Tuesday". It is celebrated in predominately Catholic locations around the world, most famously in cities such as New Orleans in the USA and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. Brazil's week-long Carnival festivities feature a vibrant mix-up of European, African and native traditions. In Canada, Quebec City hosts the giant Quebec Winter Carnival. In Italy, tourists flock to Venice's Carnevale, which dates to the 13th century and is famous for masquerade balls. And, known as Karneval, Fastnacht or Fasching, the German celebration includes parades, costume balls and a tradition that empowers women to cut off men's ties!



What the cat has been laughing at this week...

... about pancakes!

(yes, yes! I know it's over, but these are too good not to include them for your amusement!)

I can't believe its pancake day again already...
It's really créped up on me!

Q: What's the best thing you can put into a pancake?

A: Your teeth.

Q: Why is it so rare to hear pancake jokes?

A: They usually fall flat.

Q: Did you hear about the angry pancake?

A: He totally flipped!

Q: Why did the pancake fail in his attempt to become a singer?

A: He was always flat.

A woman goes to a restaurant and orders a pancake. She is in a rush and her food is taking a long time to arrive, so she asks the waiter: "Will it be long?". The waiter replies "Well, no madam. It will be round!"



Do you like to toss your pancakes? The highest ever flip was a whopping 10 foot, nine and a half inches (329cm) high ... and the most ever flips with a pancake stands at an impressive 349 in just two minutes.

Now, *that* is flipping amazing!

The Tale of the extraordinary car

Once upon a time, there was a rather eccentric inventor who came up with all sorts of wonderful machines. He was maybe just a little bit mad – but all the best inventors are – or so they say!

Professor Brite let everybody know he was about to unveil his latest creation next Tuesday, and on the day, the town square was full of journalists from all over the world, agog to see what this brilliant scientist had come up with now.

“Ladies and Gentlemen”, Professor Brite spoke into the microphone. “Thank you all for coming to see my newest, most wonderful invention. It has taken me years to perfect, and I am thrilled to present to you all “*The Emoti-car*!””



As he was talking, some assistants had rolled a big something, covered with a sheet, into the very middle of the square, and as he said the name of his invention, they whisked off the sheet to show a gleaming red sports car.

“This is not just **any** car,” said the Professor. “It is not powered by petrol, nor diesel, nor electricity. And I invite you to witness a test run on the track this afternoon to show you all how it works. There will be five drivers, chosen from my neighbours here in Amity – and you will find the names on the notice board over there,” he pointed, and all the townsfolk and reporters made a mad dash to see who had been selected, and nobody stayed to hear him finish what he was saying!

Now, it is important here to share something with you.

While Professor Brite was an amazing scientist and inventor, his wife was an equally brilliant judge of character. And just as he had been working hard to fine-tune his car, she had been hard at work investigating the characters of the people who lived in the town.

At the appointed hour, there were throngs of people at the racetrack – some had even flown in by helicopter! – as word had spread like wildfire about this amazing new car.

The first person chosen to drive was the town mayor.

Now, this is not meant as a comment on all town mayors, but it must be said that Mr. Windebag was rather fond of himself. He liked the sound of his own voice (even when it was just talking gobble-de-gook!) and everyone in town knew the only way to stop him was never to let him get started!



Hmmm – this was going to be interesting ..!

Mr Windebag talked for twenty minutes about what an honour (and yet not at all unexpected!) it was for **him** to have been selected, and go first, and ... at this point, an assistant to the Professor just switched off the microphone!

The mayor was helped into the car, and slowly, it began to move off. It went a few yards in a straight line, and then, sputtering and making loud “poop” noises, it started just going round and round in circles!

The professor and his wife smiled to each other. Exactly as she had anticipated, the car was behaving just like one of the speeches the mayor so liked giving. Round and round, never making any real point, until he simply ran out of words to say – just as, now, the car had come to a halt.

The crowd were looking perplexed, and the mayor also seemed confused as to why the car had behaved so strangely. He got out – a bit embarrassed – and went off with his staff members to discuss what had just happened.

The next driver was Mrs Hush, the town librarian. Into the car she stepped, and off it went at a sedate but steady 20 miles per hour. And then it stopped. And then it reversed half the distance it had travelled, veered right and headed that way for another minute, before again reversing, doing a complete U-turn and coming to a halt pretty much exactly where it had started.

The professor and his wife smiled to each other. Exactly as she had anticipated, the car was behaving just like Mrs Hush herself – she was a kind, but rather un-focussed, woman who was very easily distracted from the task at hand. Well-liked, she was also the butt of gentle teasing as she really could never stay on any one thing, but dabbled in pottery, poetry, embroidery and cooking – never quite finishing anything she had started.

Smiling and waving (but looking a bit bemused), Mrs Hush got out of the car as the next driver stepped forward.

The townsfolk looked at each other in surprise – it was Robin Banks, the least savoury character for miles around. Chest out, strutting, he threw himself into the driver's seat saying, "Now you will see what a **real** driver can get out of this contraption!" and he turned the key.

Bang! Thump! Pfft! Clouds of smoke spewed out of the exhaust pipe and the engine roared, but the car did not move. Not by a single inch. Not a jot. Not even the teeniest, tiniest – you get the idea. Robin Banks swore loudly and slammed his fists upon the steering wheel and the engine cut out completely.

The professor and his wife smiled to each other. Exactly as she had anticipated, the car was behaving just like Mr Banks himself. Lots of noise – and rude noises at that! – but not a lot getting done. Just how he behaved in his garage, where he was well-known for overcharging for the work he *did* do and charging for work he *claimed* to have done (but probably had not!). Nobody much liked him, but everyone was a bit scared of him.



Robin Banks slammed the car door as he got out.

"Rubbish!" he shouted.

"Call yourself an inventor? You couldn't invent a cardboard box, let alone a sports car!"

"Absolutely useless, unworkable, ridiculous ..." His shouting continued – getting less audible as he walked away in a total temper tantrum, his face red with rage.

By now, the crowd was getting rather restless. Three people had tried to drive thus far, and not one of them had really managed more than a couple of hundred yards! It did not seem that impressive and there was a lot of whispering and nudging going on.

The professor announced the fourth driver. Frank Fayr was a local businessman, who – along with his young family – was popular and well respected. He was one of those people every town or village needs: a man who did a lot of good things behind the scenes, for charity, the elderly and fund-raising for the church. But he never drew attention to himself, and looked anxious at being the centre of attention.

Professor Brite reminded him: "Just sit in the driver's seat, turn on the engine and keep both hands on the wheel."

Frank turned the key – and the car stalled! He smiled nervously at all the journalists with their cameras – this was making him uncomfortable. But he caught sight of his wife and children, nodding their encouragement, and took a deep breath and turned the key again.

"Vroom ... purr!" went the motor.

And off, he went. The car performed like a dream – smoothly round the bends on the track, speeding up on the long straights and slowing down as it finished the lap and came near the spectators. The professor waved at him to go round again – and the second lap was as impressive as the first.



The professor and his wife smiled to each other. Exactly as she had anticipated, the car was behaving in tune with Frank's personality. He was a kind and generous man; even-tempered, thoughtful and considerate of others. A thoroughly decent man.

As he stepped out of the car, he patted the bonnet. "What an amazing car!" he said.

Now, the crowd were enjoying themselves – that was MUCH more what they had expected! "And now for our final driver!" said Professor Brite. "Sunny, where are you?"

Up skipped a young girl – surely no more than eight or nine! What? A child is not allowed to drive! What on earth was the Professor up to?!

But, sure enough, into the car she got and off she went. It was the smoothest, most stylish of performances yet. The car behaved just perfectly. It seemed to speed up and slow down without any effort, cornering like butter being spread onto a slice of bread – this was extraordinary!

The press conference after the driving display was broadcast around the world, so nearly everybody in the whole world heard what the Professor had to say.

"My invention works according to the emotional quality of the driver. You cannot mask your true nature from the Emoti-car. If you are anything other than good, kind, honorable and generous, the car will detect that. It will not start for you. It will not perform for you. You cannot force it to do anything, nor bully it, nor bash it into shape. It will ignore you unless your heart is upright, noble, honest and clear-headed. We saw that demonstrated by the adults.

"You were surprised a child with no driving experience could master it?"

"Why – when she has the most blameless of hearts? Sunny is known in this town as a helpful, kind child, well-mannered and considerate of others. The car knows it too, and whilst I am not suggesting children should be allowed to drive on the roads – her ability today shows that goodness can drive things forward.

"Goodness can make things happen. Goodness is the thing this world needs, and we can find it in both adults AND children."



And all the headlines the next day ran along the lines of "Goodness shows the way".

I agree – do you?

If all of us were kind-hearted and all those other good things, the world really would be a better place.

Goodness really CAN make things happen!

BOREDOM BUSTERS... WHY DON'T YOU TRY...

... Getting ready for Easter by making your own Cards?

This is a really simple way to make amazingly beautiful cards!

To make six cards, you will need:

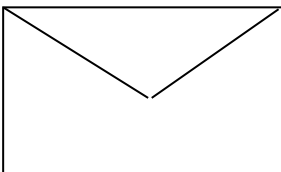
- Six envelopes
- White card
- Crayons or paints in bright primary colours
- Masking tape
- Pencil and ruler
- Glitter (optional!)



Start by marking out the greetings card shapes from the white card stock.

You will need to make each card just a little smaller than the envelope, so measure the envelope and then draw out, with a ruler and pencil, the card outline (obviously, remember your card will be folded in half, so that the result will be like this:

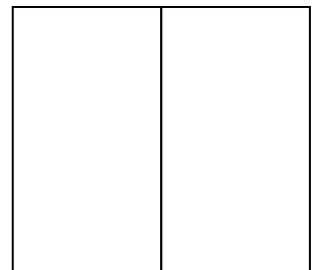
Envelope



Card



or



Now, carefully cut around the shapes, and fold in half either horizontally or vertically to make your card.

Place masking tape in the shape of a cross in the centre of your card and around the edges to make a border.

Using your paints or crayons, simply create a colourful mosaic of bright, happy colours as your fancy takes you!

(Depending on how messy you like / are allowed to be, this would be the time to swirl or dab some glue in lines or blobs and sprinkle on your glitter!)

Once everything is dry, peel away the masking tape frame and cross, and you will be left with a quite beautiful card to send to family or friends for Easter.

How about ... Making Lamb with Lentil Salad?

It might be good for an adult to supervise the cooking of the lamb, while you can make the salad.



The ingredients below serve four people – and once you have tried it, I am sure it will become a firm family favourite as it really is the perfect combination of flavours!

<p>Ingredients:</p> <p>8 lamb cutlets or small chops (two each). 200g houmous. Salt and freshly ground pepper.</p>	<p>For the salad:</p> <p>4010g can of Puy lentils, rinsed & drained. 175g (6oz) roasted peppers from a jar, drained & sliced. 100g leaf spinach. 2 tablespoons olive oil. 2 tablespoons lemon juice. 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard.</p>
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- To make the salad, combine the lentils, peppers and spinach in a bowl.
- Whisk together the oil, lemon juice and mustard to make a dressing and then stir into the salad ingredients.
- Meanwhile, heat the grill to high and season the lamb with salt and pepper. Grill for three minutes on each side.
- Remove from the grill and spoon one teaspoon of the houmous on top of each cutlet.
- Grill for a further minute until the houmous starts to turn golden.
- Serve with the Lentil Salad and the remaining houmous as an accompaniment.



How about ... Baking your own pretzels?



Did you know that Pretzels were first baked during Lent because they can be made with only water, flour, and salt?

Or that the shape comes from a posture of prayer, with arms crossed and hands placed on opposite shoulders?

The story goes that a monk made dough into this criss-crossed shape, and the pretzel was born!

Our recipe is a little more indulgent than the one the monk came up with, as we also include a touch of sugar and a beaten egg to glaze them.

Note that these are giant pretzels – and should be chewy on the inside – not the mini, hard ones you sometimes get served as a nibble!

- 1 package yeast (.25 oz)
 - 375 ml warm water
 - 1 tablespoon sugar
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 480 g flour
 - 1 egg
 - extra salt for the tops- large salt works best!
1. Mix the yeast, water, sugar, and salt in a large bowl.
 2. Stir in the flour and knead until the dough is smooth – this part is FUN!
 3. Shape into the form of arms crossed in prayer and place it on a baking sheet.
 4. Brush the dough with a beaten egg to give it a shiny finish.
 5. Sprinkle the top with salt and bake in an oven preheated to 425F / 220C for 15 minutes.
 6. The yield on this recipe depends on how large or small you make your pretzels. However, I would suggest this recipe makes 5 - 6 pretzels.

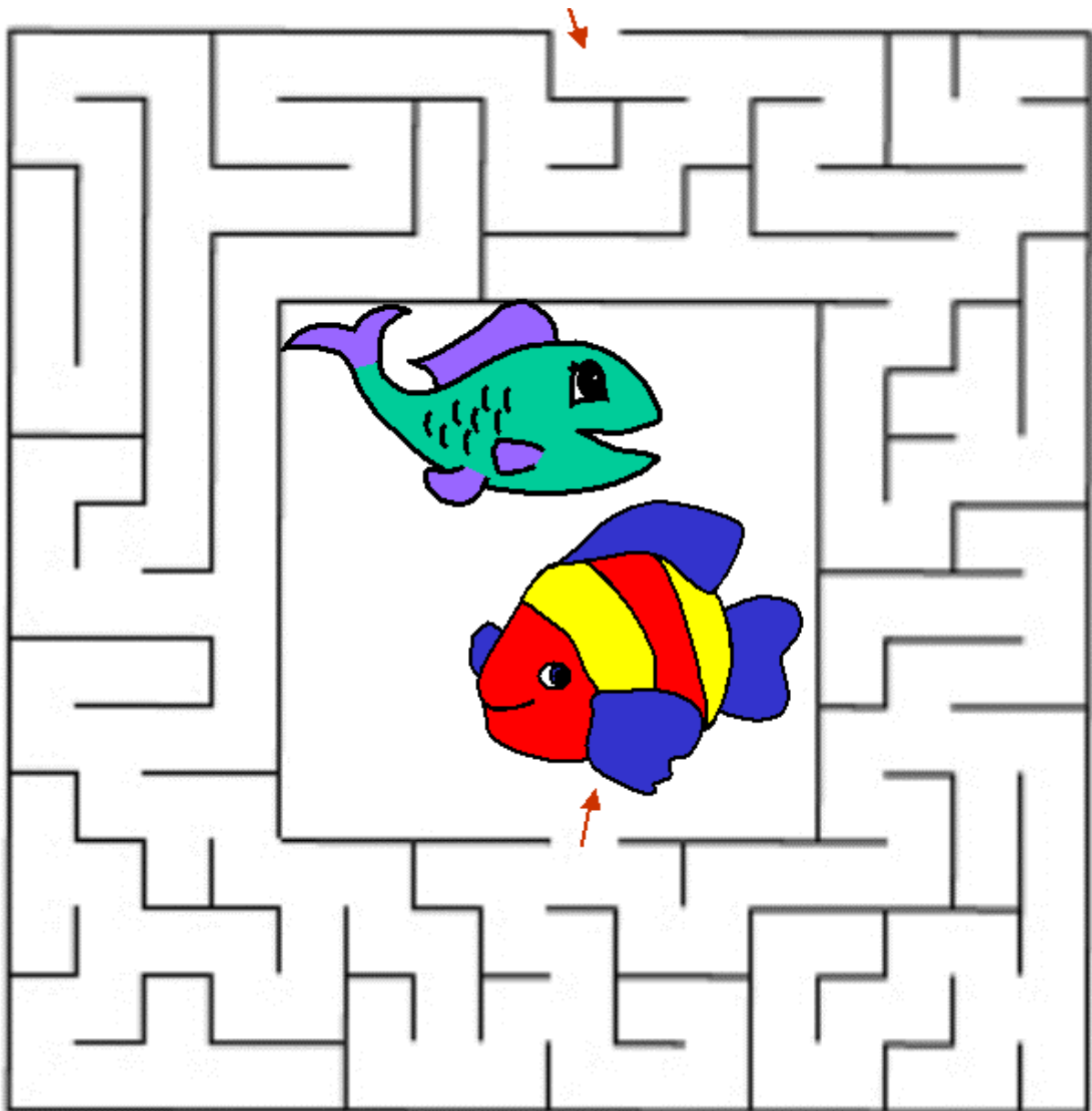


How to make the pretzel criss-cross.

Puzzles

When Jesus asked His disciples to follow Him,
He told them they would no longer fish the waters but would become "fishers of men".

Can you find their last catch of fish for them,
before they "cast down their nets" and go to follow Jesus?



"L" is for Lent.

Can you find the other words beginning with the same letter in the grid below?

Letter L Word Search

C Z F D A C T D J B
G U B Y D A L R D K
L E T T U C E A G E
U I P N L W M P N X
C K T A F D O O O A
J M M T E Z N E I N
T B S H L L V L L K
F A E L N E L O V E

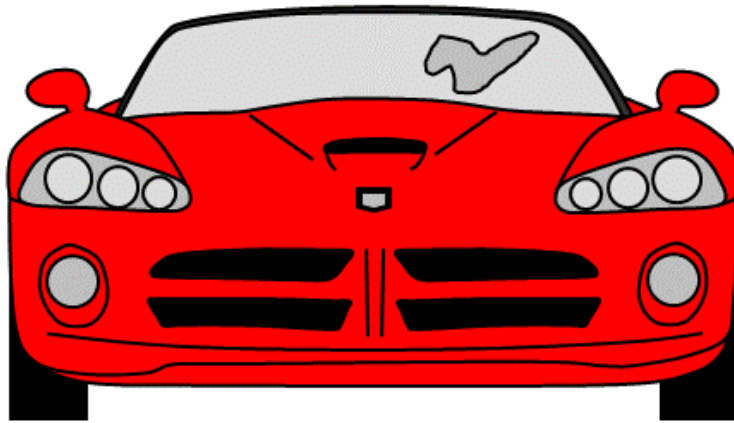
LADYBUG
LAMB
LEAF
LEAP
LEMON



LEOPARD
LETTUCE
LION
LITTLE
LOVE

Race Car Word Ladder

Make your way from **RACE** to **CARS** by changing just one letter on each step to make a new word! There are 5 steps in this word ladder.



R A C E

A competition to see who is fastest.

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To give something a score.

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A British word for friend.

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A type of horse.

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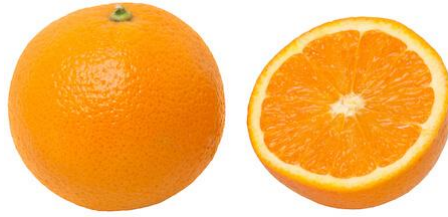
To look after someone.

C A R S

The plural of car.

(Answer at the foot of the back page.)

'A norange' or 'an orange'?



Many sources will tell you that oranges were originally called 'norange' and that 'a norange' migrated to being called 'an orange'.

Well, like so much folk etymology (a fancy word for *the study of the origin of a word and the historical development of its meaning*), that is not strictly true, but there is a germ of truth in it. There never has been a word 'norange' in English, but there very nearly was.

The climate in England does not qualify it as an orange-growing area – sadly! – and the fruit were first imported here in the 14th century.

Oranges originated in South-east Asia and when they arrived in Persia and Spain they were given the names 'narang' and 'naranja' respectively. As they got nearer to England, and hence nearer to requiring a name in English, they lost the 'n'.

This happened on their journey through France, where they were known as 'pomme d'orange'.

In English, the indefinite article may be 'a' or 'an', depending on whether it is followed by a word which starts with a consonant or a vowel. When the consonant is an 'n', we may run into the 'a norange'/'an orange' confusion.

It was this displacement of a letter from one word to another that led the Danish grammarian Otto Jespersen to coin the term 'metanalysis' in 1914.

Medieval words like 'a napperon', 'a nuncle' and 'a nadder' could be confused in everyday speech with 'an apron', 'an uncle' and 'an adder' – and so they were. The earlier forms are not now used.

The misaligning of word boundaries can go the other way too, with the 'n' being added rather than lost. The best-known examples of that are 'nickname' and 'newt', which were originally 'an eke-name' and 'an ewt'.

It's easy for us to see these examples now as errors, but we have to bear in mind that these confusions took place before dictionaries or even printing and reading were commonplace. It is hard to guess where words start or end when we only come across them in speech.

Nowadays, when we come across new words it is just as likely that we see them in print as to hear them spoken. But I find it easy to imagine that if we had to rely on speech alone we might now be saying we use 'a Niphone' to message our friends!



Thank You, Lord, for time to think.
Thank You that we can look at ourselves and our behaviour,
and decide to make changes for the better.

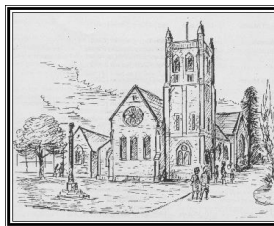
Thank You for time to pray.
Thank You that we can look to You and Your wisdom,
and ask for Your support and guidance.

Thank You, Lord, for time to act.
Thank You that we can look at the world and the problems it faces,
and take positive steps to make a positive difference.

Help us to see things through Your eyes
and to give up those things that do harm
and take up those things that bring us a step closer to You.

This we ask in Your name.
Amen.

*As we see the first sign of Spring appear in nature,
I encourage you to take advantage of a dry day
to simply sit among the crocuses and snowdrops.
Ahhhhhhh... lovely!*



Created by Kippington Cat
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Word Ladder: Race, rate, mate, mare, care, cars.