



Balloon Modelling

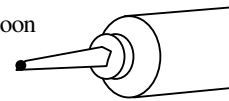
Compiled by Andrew Garvey-Williams

- **Acknowledgements**

- The models and ideas in this booklet come from many sources. Some sources are impossible to trace or are common to several books. A number of ideas come from Ralph Dewey's pages in 'The Christian Conjuror' magazine.

- **What you need:**

- Equipment: Balloons (260Bs are the most common for modelling), balloon pump (use a pump with a long and narrow tip- many regular pumps are too wide), permanent black marker pen.



- **Location:**

- Events, open airs, children's events, parties, family fun events, cafes... Wherever there are people and space - and permission, if necessary!

- **Getting Organised:**

- Know in advance what you are going to do and why. Are you modelling for money? How are you going to collect the money? What price? If you are modelling free give-aways, how many are you going to give to each child? Kids will demand an endless supply unless you restrict them to one each! What balloon models are you able or willing to make? In some contexts, for instance, I will not make sword or gun models.
- Keep unblown balloons out of sight and reach of children. Have a stock of balloons in your pocket and keep the rest out of sight
- Keep balloons in plastic bag or airtight container and out of direct heat or sunlight to prevent them perishing.

- **Control:**

- When busy have others to help keep children in an orderly line. In a club setting you could break the kids up into smaller groups and take one group at a time while the other groups are occupied in another activity. If there is a meal at a party, why not do the models while they are eating and sat down! You might also consider giving out numbered tickets to each child. Then call them up by number.
- To speed things up have another blowing up the balloons as you model.
- When you expect a lot of children have a bag full of previously made models. Make one or two models to demonstrate the skill and then just hand out the ready-mades.
- Most of the models described in this booklet are simple one-balloon models. There are some that take a bit more time and are more complicated – don't do these when there is a big queue of kids waiting! Keep it simple!
- If there are children still waiting for their first balloon don't give children a second balloon or repair a model that has come apart. Tell the kids to come back when everybody has had their first balloon.

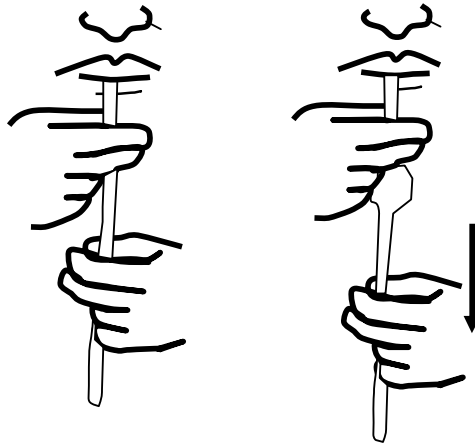
- **Safety:**

- As you give the balloon model explain that the balloons won't last forever; that they burst like normal balloons; and that they can come undone if not handled carefully.
- As you model leave a space between you and the child – you don't want the balloon to flick in their eye if it accidentally bursts.
- Balloons should not be given to babies and very small toddlers. They might chew the balloon and burst it or choke on it.

- **Inflating balloons:**

Balloons can be inflated by mouth, but many people find this hard or impossible! Even for those who can blow them up by mouth, you can feel decidedly light-headed when you have blown up 50 balloons in a session!! So, use a pump when you are going to do a quantity of models!

To inflate balloon by mouth hold the balloon lightly to your lips with fingers of one hand – as if inflating a normal balloon. Before blowing pinch balloon with fingers of other hand about 10cms lower down the balloon. Blow a short, sharp breath into the balloon, at the same time give a stretch to the balloon with the lower hand. The secret is to get a small bubble of air to form in the balloon. When you have a bubble of air, pinch the top of the balloon to seal the top, take another deep breath and then give another blow to inflate the rest of the balloon.



With most balloon models do not inflate the balloon fully. Leave about 10cms uninflated at the end. As you twist the balloon to make the model the air needs to move down the balloon towards the uninflated tip. Some models need more uninflated space, other less – experiment!

- **What if it breaks or pops?**

Balloons do burst at inopportune moments! This should not be a point of embarrassment, but can enhance your routine if handled correctly.

Here are a few quick asides suggested by Ralph Dewey that can help:

- That balloon was very POPular!
- I did say I was going to BLOW UP the balloon!
- It must have been my bad breathe!
- I was going to make LASSIE, but instead I made her brother LOUSY!
- The balloon didn't pop, it just took a little break!
- I knew that I shouldn't have named that dog, BUSTER!

- **Be creative!!**

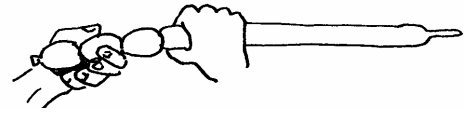
Try out the models suggested in this booklet, but don't just be limited to them. Invent your own creations. Play with different ideas. Some ideas will just occur to you, others will need some thinking about. Often children will come to you with a request like, 'Can you make me a Pterodactyl?' Don't let your immediate response be 'No way!' Take a few seconds to think how you might be able to do what they ask. If you can't come up with an immediate solution, say 'That would make a great model! Let me think about it and maybe next time I see you I might have figured it out!'

Have fun!!

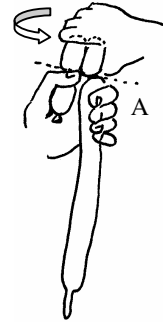
Getting Going

The Basic Animal or Dog Model

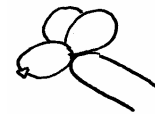
1. Inflate a balloon leaving ten centimetres uninflated at the end. Twist three small bubbles at the knotted end of the balloon



2. Fold the top two bubbles over as illustrated. Twist bubbles 2 and 3 together at point A. Give it several twists to lock it.



3. You now have the basic head shape for a dog or animal model.



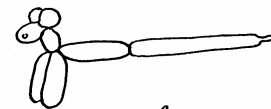
4. Twist to make a neck



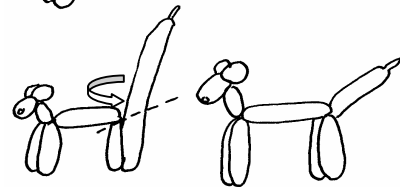
5. Twist again to form one front leg. Fold the balloon back up and pinch the top of the front two legs together and twist them together to lock the two front legs.



6. Measure a bubble for the body and then twist and measure another bubble for the hind leg (usually the same length as the front legs!). Form the other back leg as you did for the front legs.

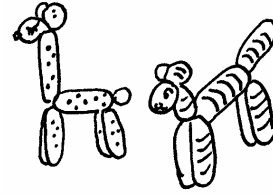


You now have a basic dog or animal shape. Use a permanent black marker and draw eyes and other details on the balloon as you wish. Adding whiskers makes the dog a cat!



Variations on the basic dog shape

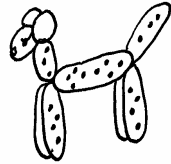
The basic dog shape can be varied to create a whole menagerie of animals – experiment!



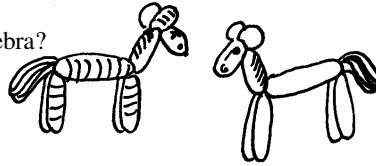
A long neck and spots makes a giraffe. Stripes make a tiger (orange or yellow balloon).



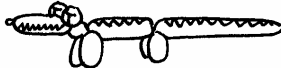
A long body makes a Dachsund or Weiner dog. Spots on a white balloon make a Dalmatian or a leopard on a yellow balloon.



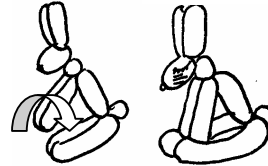
A horse or zebra?



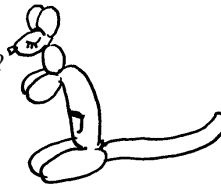
A crocodile?



A Rabbit?



A kangaroo?



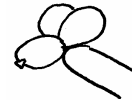
Jumping Mouse

This is a fun, quick and simple model.

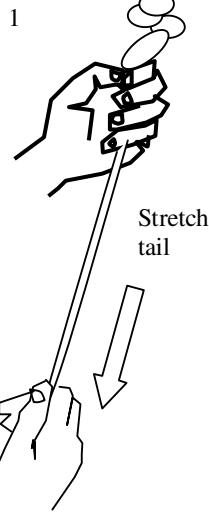
1) Inflate a 15-16 cm bubble in a balloon.



2) Model a small animal head – see ‘Basic animal or dog shape’

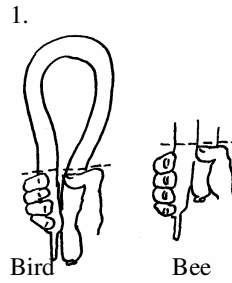


3) Rest mouse body loosely in one hand and pull tail with other hand. Let go of tail and watch mouse fly off into the air!

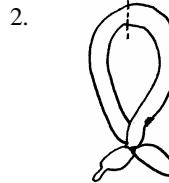


Bird and Bee

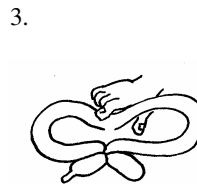
Decide if you are making a bird or a bee. Fold over the balloon to the appropriate position as in diagram 1. Twist to form a loop – 2.



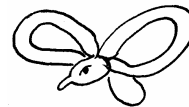
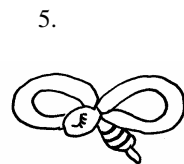
Push down on top and centre of loop until it reaches first twist – 2,3,4.



Then twist all together in middle - 4.



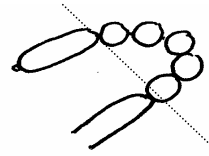
Decorate with maker pen – 5.



Friendly Lion

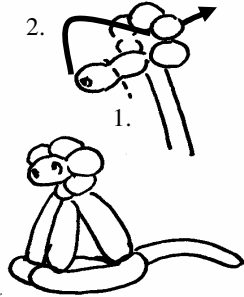
Twist one long soft bubble and five very small bubbles

Twist and lock first bubble to last.



Twist the soft bubble into two bubbles and push knotted bubble through loop.

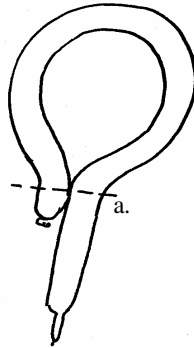
Make body as rabbit variation of basic dog shape.



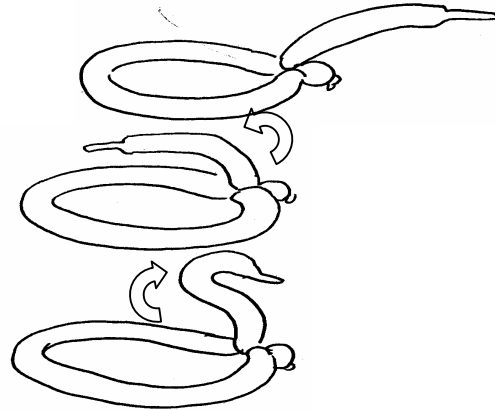
Swan or Snake Hat

Select a balloon – white or pink for a swan, red or green for a snake.

Make a loop with balloon to fit size of head. Twist and lock at point 'a'.



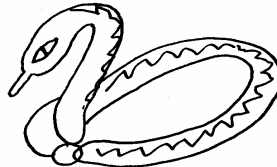
Shape and mould the neck first back and then forward, manipulating it to look like a swan or snake head.



Decorate with marker.

Put a zig-zag pattern on for snake and slit eyes.

For swan put a thick black line just over beak and delicate eyes.



Dachhund Head

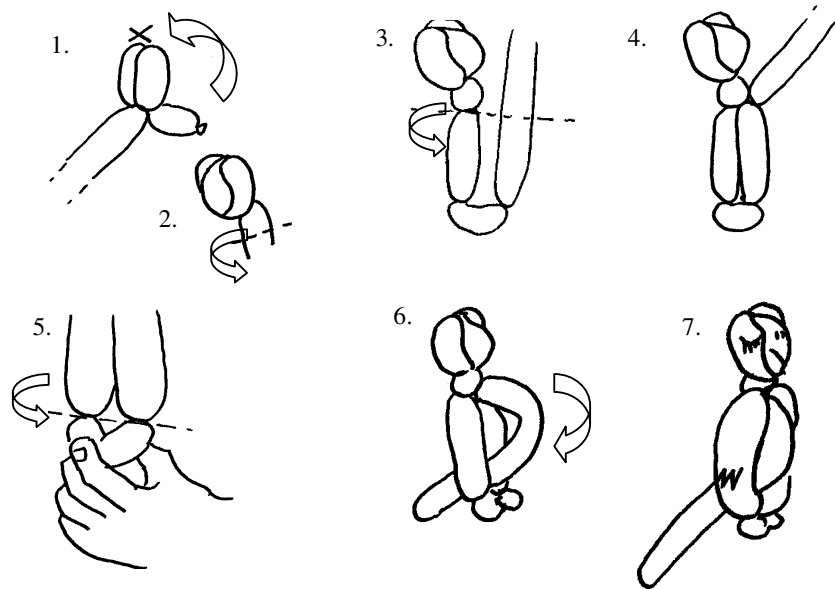
Make basic dog's head with a slightly long and soft (squeeze some air out before you twist when making the bubble) bubble for nose. Turn head to face back on body.

1. Pull and stretch nose out and then fold over the two ear tops (2) as in diagram.



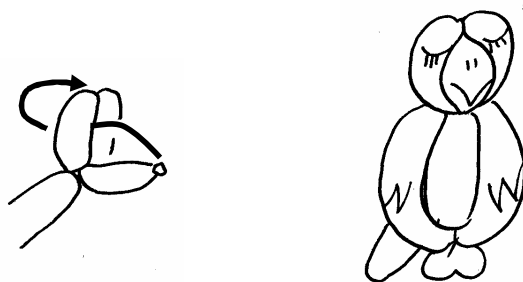
Parrot

1. Grasp knot on nose and pull up and tie knot between two 'ear' shapes. This makes the beak.
2. Twist a neck
3. Twist one wing bubble, a feet bubble and a second wing bubble. Lock two wing bubbles at neck with a twist to end up with diagram 4.
5. Pull feet bubble down in middle and twist ends of the bubble together
6. Feed remainder of the balloon through the wings to form body and tail.



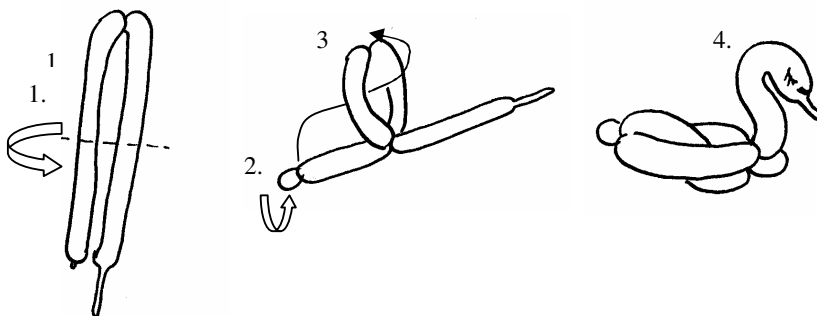
Owl

Form as parrot, but loop knot between two 'ears' and tie rather than over the 'ears'. Do not make a neck as in parrot.

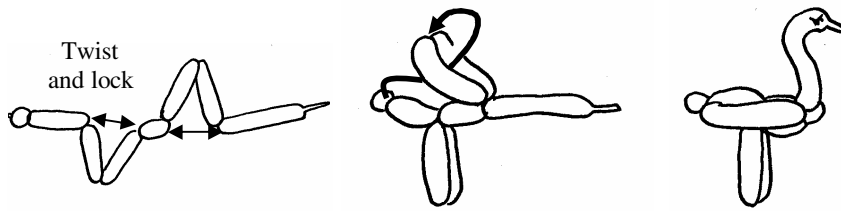


Swan

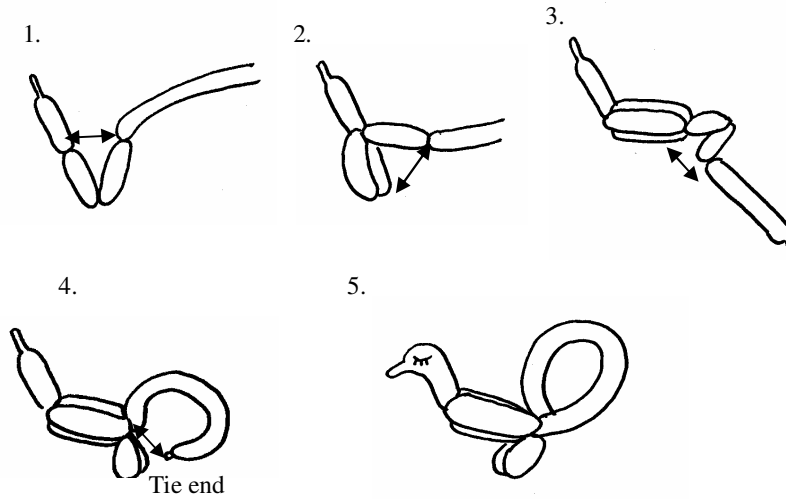
1. Twist a balloon at half way, then fold in half and twist again at about half way as in 1.
2. Make a small bubble as in 2.
3. Push bubble through wings and lock at wing as in diagram.
4. Shape head as in swan hat. Decorate with marker



Ostrich



Peacock



The Double Bubble

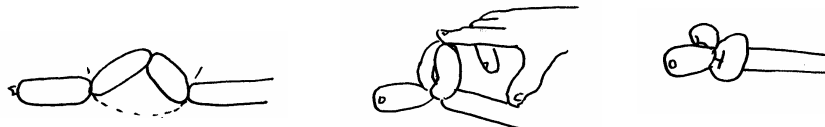
The double bubble is useful for modelling animal ears.



Twist a soft bubble – as you form it stretch it.

Fold the bubble, twisting the two ends together

Version 2. Double ears

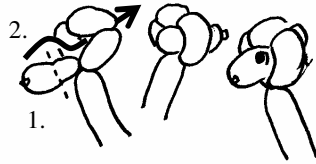


Form two bubbles.
Twist and lock ends

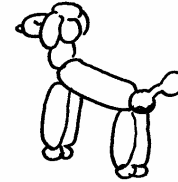
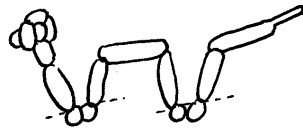
With finger, push down and lock twist the two centres

Poodle

The head - form four bubbles. The first should be a longer and soft bubble. Lock bubbles two, three and four together as diagram. Twist first (soft) bubble in half to form two bubbles - 1. Push bubble with knot through between the ears - 2.

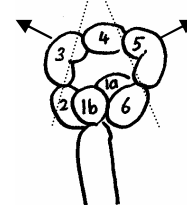
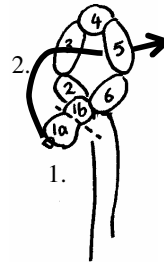
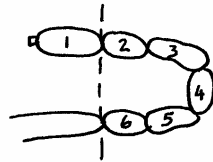


The body - form as basic dog shape, but add a couple of bubbles for feet. Twist these to lock them together. A bubble can be formed on the tail if there is some uninflated balloon left at the end. Simply use your mouth to suck air into a bubble at the end of the tail.



A Teddy Bear or Koala

The head - form six bubbles. Bubble 1, 3, and 5 should be slightly longer and soft bubbles. They will form the nose and ears. Twist and lock bubble one to six as in diagram. Twist bubble 1 into two bubbles and push nose through the other bubbles. Do a double bubble twist on bubbles 3 and 5 to form the ears.

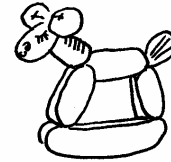
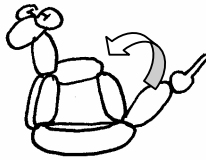
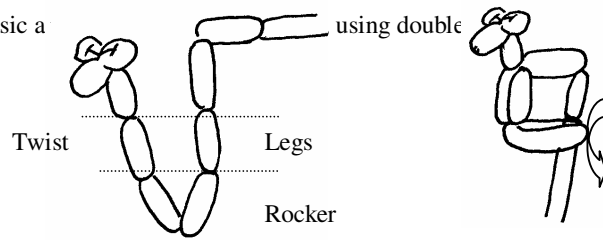


The body - form as the basic animal or dog shape. You can make a hat like the swan hat and have the bear climbing a tree - just thread the tree trunk through the legs and twist the top of the trunk to make a branch.



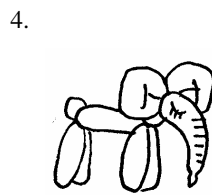
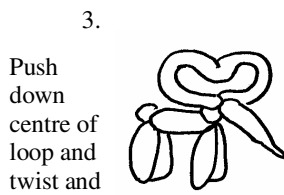
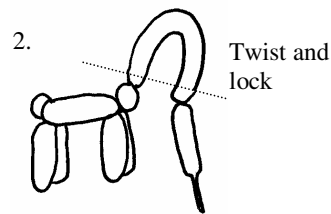
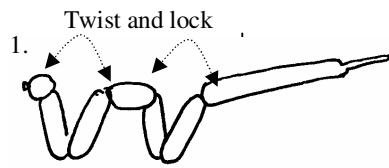
Rocking Horse

Form a head either using basic a



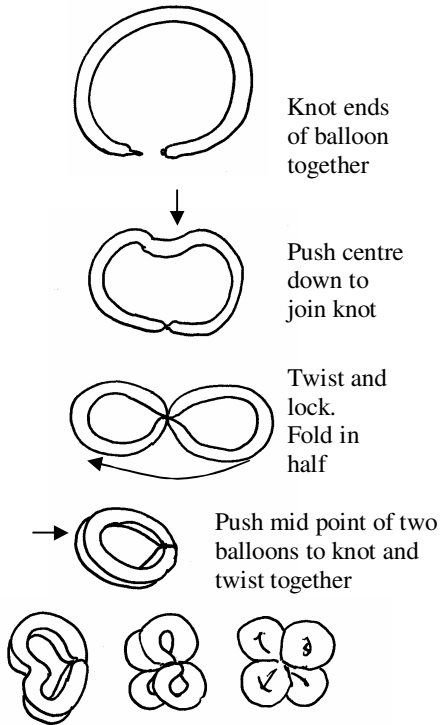
Elephant

This model is unusual in that it starts with the back legs – opposite to the dog shape!



Flower

Flower Head

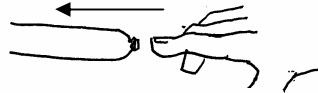


Stalk

Take a second balloon for the stalk. With finger push the knot into the balloon.

Push in about 5cm. With the hand holding the balloon pinch and grip the knot through the balloon.

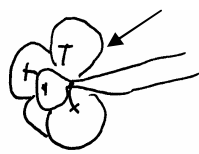
While holding the knot pull your finger out of the balloon and then twist a bubble at the end. You will have a 'tulip' end.



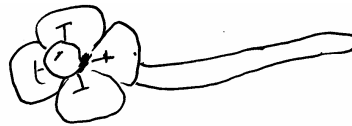
1. Pinch knot 2. Pull out finger



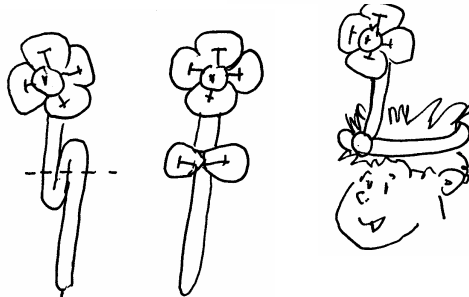
Twist at knot point



Twist stalk bubble into centre of flower head and secure. Arrange petals around flower head.

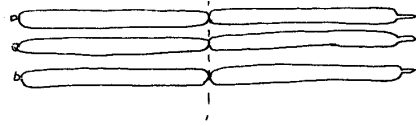


Either make leaves on the stalk or form into a flower hat!

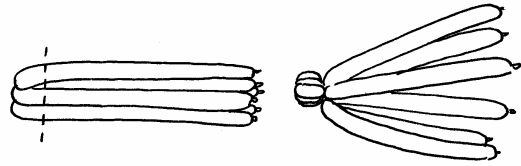


Umbrella

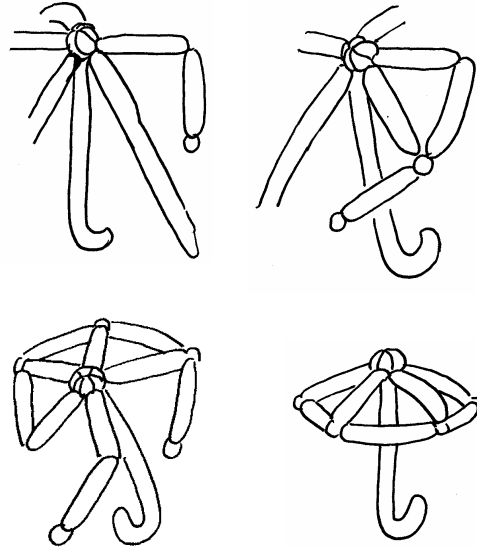
Use three balloons. Twist together in the centre.



Fold all ends together and twist near the centre.



Mould one end to make the curled handle. The other ends join together as in diagram to form a circle.



Message Ideas Using Balloons

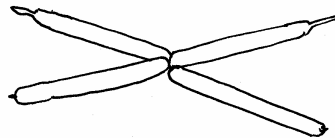
The following pages give suggestions as to how you can use a balloon modelling routine to give a Christian message. They are just sketchy outlines and you need to develop and adapt your own story and application to each one.

Freedom

Text: Psalm 124:6-8

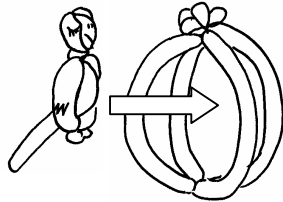
Build a message or story around a bird in a cage - use parrot model inside a model cage. How sad and trapped it is and how it cannot release itself. The bird was born in captivity. It never knew what it was to fly free. One day a boy came and broke open the cage – break or burst the cage balloon. Describe how the bird felt – first afraid, uncertain, not knowing how to use its wings, but then how it began to fly free. End with reading and describing how often things trap us and get us down, but God has come to set us free.

Making the cage:



Twist two balloons together in the middle.

Fold ends up and twist together to make a cage.



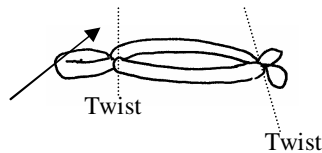
Insert parrot model .

Armour of God

Text: Ephesians 6:10-18

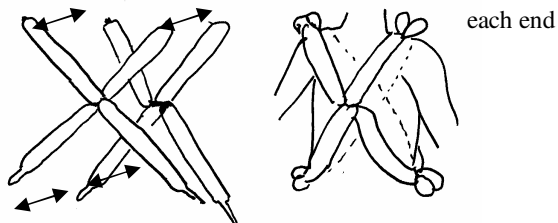
Paul outlines the spiritual armour that the Christian needs. Have a child out front and dress him with the appropriate piece of balloon modelled armour as you talk about each item. You can write with a black marker on each balloon model the quality it refers to, e.g. on the belt write 'Truth'.

The Belt of Truth

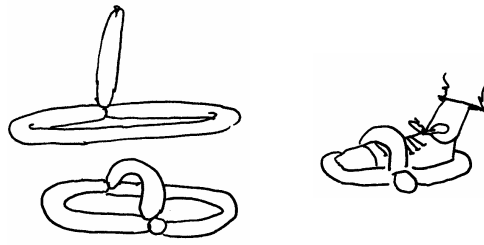


Loop for the sword

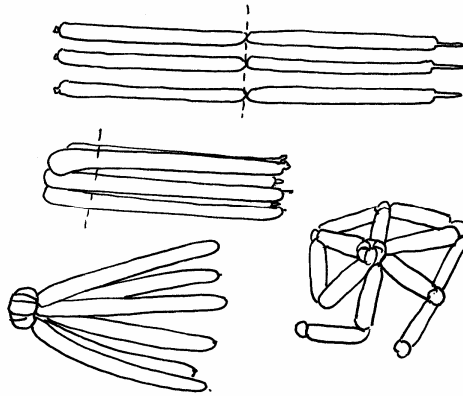
Breastplate of Righteousness



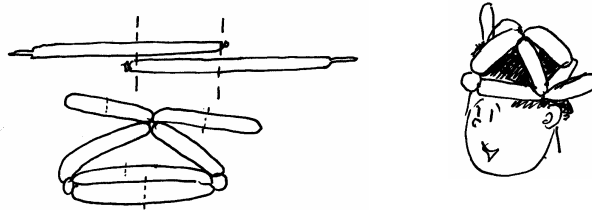
Feet with the Gospel of Peace



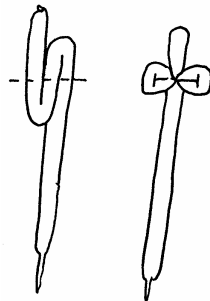
The Shield of Faith
(Similar to the umbrella)



Helmet of Salvation



The Sword of the Spirit



Put the sword in the loop on the belt

Jonah and the Fish

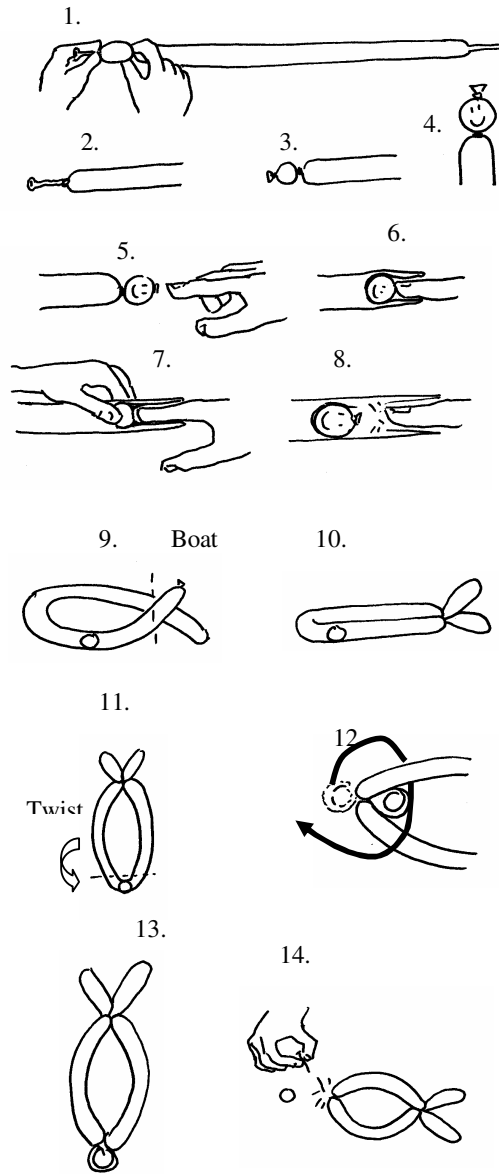
Blow balloon up. Twist a large bubble at knotted end (1). Grip twist and release all air from bubble. This should leave you with a length of uninflated balloon - tie this at the inflated end (2). Inflate a small bubble in the remaining end and tie off (3). Draw a face on the bubble - this makes Jonah (4). Do this before the story starts.

Introduce Jonah in the story. Explain how he tried to hide from what God wanted to do. As you do push head inside the balloon (5,6). Explain how disobedience breaks our relationship with God. Grip bubble inside with other hand through the outer balloon (7). Remove finger from balloon - as you do break the connecting strand (7,8). With the other hand pinch balloon above bubble inside to ensure air does not pour out. Shake inside bubble down and tie end of balloon.

Put a twist in to make a boat (9,10). Talk about Jonah hiding in the bottom of the boat and the storm. Explain the taking of lots and Jonah being thrown overboard.

Tell about Jonah being eaten by the big fish. Drop ball to

bottom of fish shape and twist around ball to make a fish's mouth (11). Twist the ball and mouth a couple of times through and around the loop (12). Explain how the fish spat Jonah out onto the shore. As you do burst mouth balloon with a pin. Jonah bubble will fly out (14). End and apply story.



Tortoise and Hare

Use the models to retell the well-known story of the tortoise and the hare that had a race. The hare thinks he is the faster and sets off at a fast speed. When he realises that he is miles ahead, he decides to have a rest and falls asleep. Meanwhile the tortoise slowly ambles on and overtakes the sleeping hare and wins the race. Life is not about speed or reputation, but wisdom and finishing well!

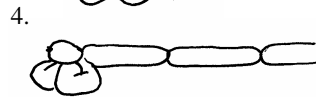
Make the hare first.



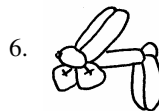
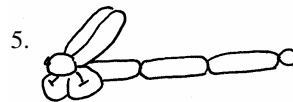
Make a double bubble (version 2) for the hare's legs (1,2,3).



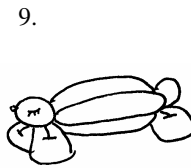
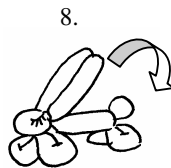
Make two long ears (4,5)



Model a body about the length of the ears and a double bubble for back legs (6,7).



This is now your hare. You can convert the hare to a tortoise by folding the ears back to the back legs (8,9). During the story you can change from hare to tortoise as you tell the story.

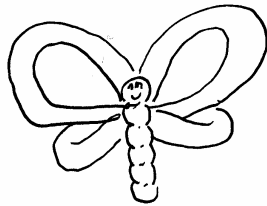
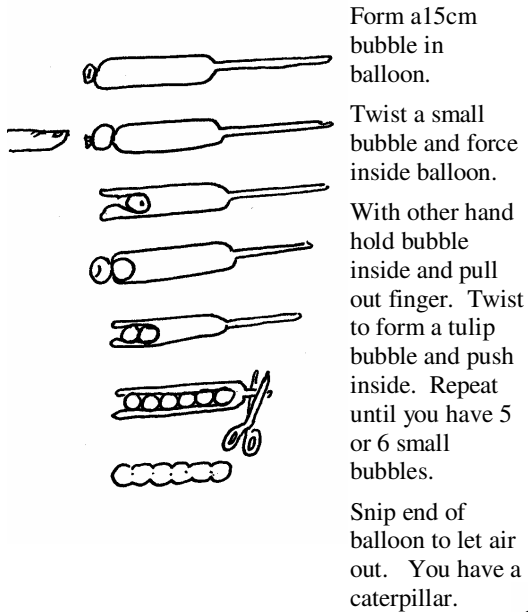


Caterpillar to butterfly

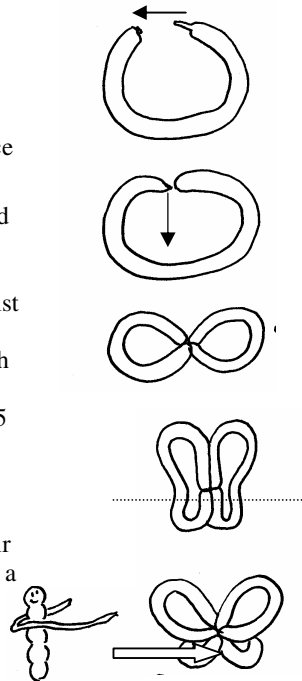
Text: II Corinthians 5:17

Build a message or story around a caterpillar that is ugly and can only move slowly – how frustrated he is as he looks at other animals that are more beautiful and graceful. He longs to be like them. Describe how often we can feel like that – frustrated at ourselves, wanting to do better. Tell how one day the caterpillar started to change, first things seemed to get worse as he transformed into a cocoon and his old self had to stop. Gradually inside he changes and becomes a beautiful butterfly. Explain how only in Jesus can we be the people he wants us to be. Model the caterpillar before the talk. During talk attach wings at appropriate moment.

The caterpillar:

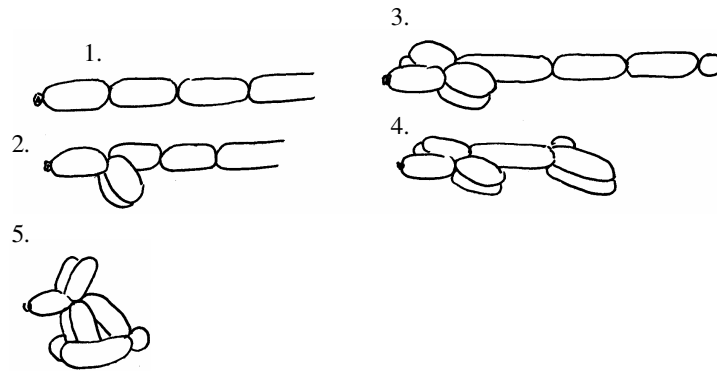


The butterfly:



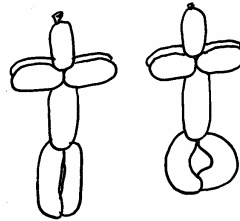
An Easter Message

Make a basic rabbit shape but without a neck bubble as in diagram



Talk about how many people think about Easter bunny at Easter rather than the real story of Easter. Turn rabbit into cross – 6.

Explain how the real meaning of Easter is about how Jesus died for us – explain cross. Explain how the body was buried and how the disciples came and found the tomb empty – open a hole at the bottom of the cross like an open door to the tomb – 7.



Captive to Cross

Text: Colossians 2:8, 13-15? Galatians 5:1?

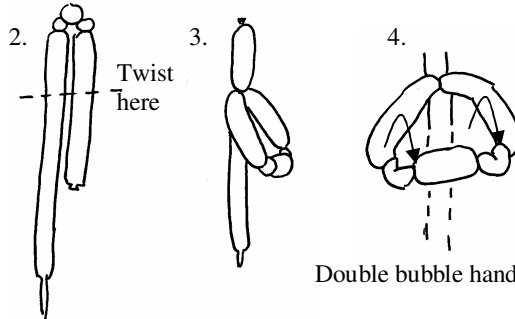
A model of a captive is set free and turns into a cross. The story or message could tell of a prisoner being taken to a slave market. Or you could tell of a child who gets does something wrong and gets caught. Or use your personal testimony to share some of the things in your life that held you captive and from enjoying God's freedom – hurts, habits, guilt, etc. Explain how Jesus through the cross breaks those things that hold us.

Forming the captive.

Form a bubble and two small soft bubbles just off centre of balloon – as 1.

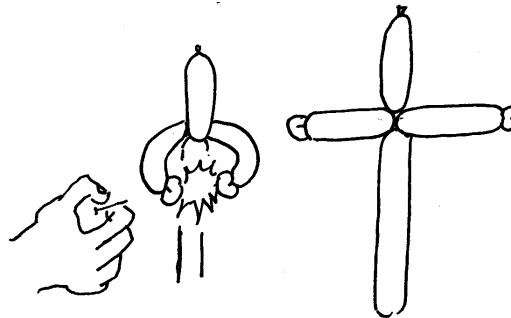


Fold as in 2. And twist to lock.



You now have 3. A man with hands cuffed in front of him. To finish model off double bubble each of the hands as in 4.

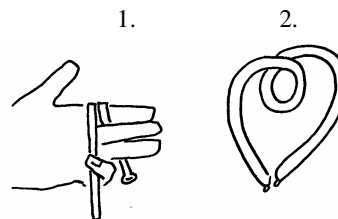
Turning the captive into a cross. Use a pin to burst central bubble. Space out arms to make a cross.



Love Heart Shape

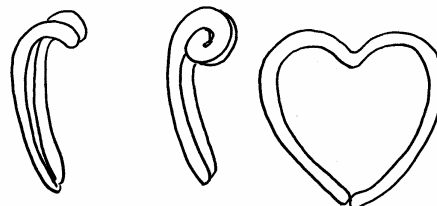
There are many messages that could involve love or hearts. The following balloon shape could be made to illustrate a message on love.

Twist a balloon around your hand as in 1. and inflate.



It should form shape 2.
Tie ends of balloon.

Open and mould to heart shape.



Breath of God

This can work with any balloon model.

Text: Genesis 2:7 'Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.'

Acts 2:2 ' Suddenly there was a sound like the roaring of a mighty wind and it filled the house where they were sitting'

Isaiah 64: 'Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.'

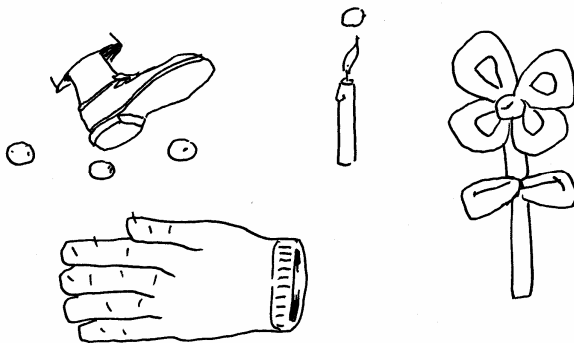
The word for wind in Hebrew can also be translated breath or spirit. A balloon that is not inflated cannot be twisted into a figure – show uninflated balloon. But, when inflated, it can be moulded into a work of art – make model.

So our lives without being filled with God's spirit cannot be used. When we accept Jesus and invite him to be Lord, we can be moulded and made into something useful.

The Sower

Preparation:

Make several little balloon seeds – use same method as for making Jonah in the fish's belly. Inflate several other balloons and make several flowers. Prepare a glove with sharp drawing pins or tacks pushed through. You also need a candle and matches.



Presentation:

Retell the parable of the sower – Matthew 13.

Some seeds fell on a path and birds came and ate it up. Scatter and, while acting as a bird, stamp on some of the balloon seeds.

Some seed fell in rocky soil and the sun withered it. Light candle – liken to the sun - and pop a seed or a flower using the candle.

Some seed fell among thorns and was choked. Put on glove and grasp a flower with glove popping it.

Some seed fell on good ground where it produced a good crop – bring out a bunch of balloon flowers and present to a female in the audience!

Explain and apply the story as Jesus did!

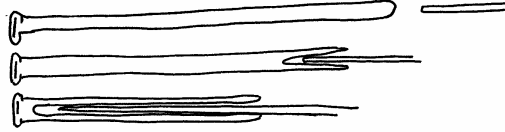
Cut and Restored Balloon

Effect: Cut an uninflated balloon and then restore it.

Application: Starting again, making things anew, restored relationships, etc.

Preparation:

Use a thin stick to poke end of an uninflated balloon inside itself as in diagram.



Cut the top section off another balloon of the same colour. Discard the top section and retain the bottom part.



Join the two sections as in diagram. It should look from a distance as one normal uninflated balloon.

Performance:

Show prepared balloon. Hold up in full view with one hand. With the other hand reach in pocket and get scissors. In view cut through balloon below the join. Allow end to drop.



As you bend to pick up dropped end put scissors in other hand with retained top of balloon. Pick up dropped piece. Take scissors back into that hand at the same time secretly palming the little remaining piece of balloon off the bottom of the top half. Place scissors, dropped piece of balloon and concealed fragment into your pocket.

Now you hold up in view the apparently cut top half. Lift balloon to lips with one hand. The other hand should lightly hold bottom of balloon concealing the bottom as you blow the balloon up. The tip of the balloon concealed inside will come out automatically as you blow and it will form a regular sized balloon before the audience's eyes!

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