



January-April 2023 £4.85

# get MESSY!



**Making a  
difference  
this Easter**

**Bin Twinning**

**Messy Church  
self-review  
toolkit**

**Team planning  
sessions**

**Includes  
Messy Church  
at home  
ideas**

## Sessions in this issue

**Are you willing?**  
Luke 5:12-16

**Everyone is welcome  
at this party!**  
Luke 14:1-23

**Heavenly hope**  
Matthew 5:1-12

**Redeemed**  
Matthew 27:45-56



BRF, 15 The Chambers, Vineyard, Abingdon OX14 3FE  
+44 (0)1865 319700 | enquiries@brf.org.uk  
brf.org.uk

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**Editor:** Olivia Warburton

**Subeditor:** Rachel Tranter

**Designers:** Rebecca J Hall, Alison Beek,

Ben Bloxham and Rose Edwards

**Proofreader:** Becca Turnbull

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## Meet our session writers for this issue



**Anne Offler and Sharon Pritchard** are based in County Durham and have worked with each other and various Messy Churches for many years. Sharon is children's ministry adviser for the diocese of Durham and Anne is a Methodist local preacher. Both



have written resources for churches and children's ministry publications.



**Sandy Brodine** is a minister in the Uniting Church in Australia with a passion for finding creative new ways to help people follow Jesus and engage with their faith. Sandy ministers with a number of new faith communities in the Banyule Network of Uniting Churches: a Messy Church, an intergenerational interactive Sunday community called Common Ground and SPACE, a contemplative community.



**Becky May** is founder of The Resources Cupboard, supporting the local church to make young disciples. She helps to lead a Messy Church and enjoys engaging with Messy Church with her family. Becky is a member of the Messy Church writing and training teams.

**Lydia Harrison** is team leader of the Messy Church prayer support team, and a member of the writers support team, and she works as children and family work enabler for the Goole and Selby Methodist Circuit. She loves cows.



## Themes in this edition

We continue our theme about 'making a difference' by being who we're called to be and by who we're becoming through Christ, which in turn makes the difference in our communities. **January's** session asks if we are willing to be the people that reach out and touch those in our communities who are excluded and marginalised, through the story of Jesus' healing of the man with leprosy in Luke 5:12-16.

This theme is continued in **February** with a session on everyone being welcome to the party! The parable of the heavenly banquet in Luke 14 gives us a picture of the upside-down values of God's kingdom, where those who are considered the least and last in society have a place at the table.

In **March**, we take a look at the beatitudes and consider what it's like to live God's way. When we follow Jesus, we can have a heavenly hope and be blessed even in the hard moments of life. Equally, we might be a blessing to others as we show kindness, compassion and help to make peace.

Our Easter session in **April** focuses on how Jesus made the ultimate difference to the needs of humanity, redeeming the whole world. The session invites us to make a personal response to this story of redemption.



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## What is Messy Church?

**Messy Church** is a form of church for all ages together that involves creativity, celebration and hospitality. Church, but not as you know it!

### What are its values?

Christ-centred  
All-age  
Celebration  
Creativity  
Hospitality

### What's involved?

A Messy Church usually meets once a month and includes:

- **Welcome:** a warm welcome.
- **Activities:** An hour of fun interactive activities exploring the biblical theme.
- **Celebration:** a short gathered time with story, song and prayer.
- **Meal:** A sit-down meal for everyone.



Go to [messychurch.org.uk/getmessyjan23](https://messychurch.org.uk/getmessyjan23) to download all templates at A4 size, including a session planning sheet.



If you are using these sessions for a Messy Church at home, look out for this symbol! These are activities that can easily be adapted to the home.

## In our next issue

MAY Sustainable faith

JUNE Sustainable community

JULY Sustainable world

AUGUST Sustaining our team



Aike writes...

# Welcome to 2023!

The start of a new calendar year often heralds fresh starts, a moment to reflect on our lives and our ministries. Is there something new we will take up or is there something that can be set aside? How can we make a difference in this new season?

Depending on where in the world you are reading this, you may be experiencing the start of the summer grain harvest, a harvest of snow in the depths of winter, or perhaps it is dry and you are waiting for a harvest of rain? Whatever type of harvest you physically face, the Bible reminds us that:

**The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.**

Luke 10:1-2 (NIV)

Jesus is busy sending out 72 disciples, in pairs, on their first mission trip to prepare the ground in the towns and places he's about to visit. It's a verse that came to mind when the BRF Messy Church core team (Sally, Jane and I) spent two days on retreat at St Katharine's, Parmoor. We were taking time out to pray, listen to God, re-imagine the new season of Messy Church ahead of us and consider how we can best encourage the Messy Church network. Blessed by beautiful sunshine and keen to try a Messy Adventure on the move ahead of the Messy Church Goes Wild roadshows, we embarked on a prayer walk, noticing and encountering God through his creation that surrounded us.

Our walk took us past a magnificent cedar of Lebanon, which predates the 300-year-old house. Imagine how our culture has changed during the lifetime of this tree! We were encouraged by the verse, 'Those who live well grow like a palm tree or a cedar tree with strong roots going deep and bearing as much fruit when they are old as they did when they were young' (Psalm 92:12-15, paraphrased), reflecting on the important role our senior Messy Church members have as we journey together in faith.

We walked on through the walled garden that was bursting full of a huge range of fruit, vegetables, flowers and industrious insects. A dedicated team of volunteer gardeners were taking a break in the shade. They've been nurturing this beautiful garden for ten years and seeing them helped us ponder our role as humans to steward God's creation and what small things we can do to make a difference.

We continued along the lane and were soon walking in the shade of trees, marvelling at the shafts of glistening sunlight. At a crossroads in the path, we faced the choice of either continuing in the cool woods (it was a hot day) or taking a detour into the sunshine-exposed field. The field caught our

attention as it looked different, gleaming white. Curious to discover what kind of crop was growing, we approached signs announcing the field had been left to rewild for the season to encourage greater biodiversity. We followed the mown footpath that bisected the field up a hill. As we climbed, the view expanded, and as far as the eye could see, we were surrounded by wild marguerite daisies. What a joyful surprise and what a great harvest!

I spotted two blue delphiniums, standing tall above the daisies. The verse 'the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few' (Luke 10:1-2, NIV) sprang to mind. It reminds us that even Jesus recognised that there are never enough volunteers for kingdom work, and post-pandemic, there are probably fewer. Yet the harvest is vast, and we are hearing encouraging Messy Church stories about people responding to the good news. Where situations seem impossible, God promises, 'I will be with you' (Exodus 3:12, NIV). Such reassurance! So, I encourage you to find a companion, or preferably a Messy Church team, and get out there into the harvest. It will be beautiful, like this enormous field of daisies.

As you read this issue of *Get Messy!*, I hope that you find encouragement from the stories from far and wide, and find strength to make a difference by being who you are and who you are becoming as you read about Paula's inspiring talks from the Messy Church Conference. You will find ideas to refresh your planning meetings and ways to review your Messy Church meetings with the self-review toolkit.

Go well in the season ahead, and I hope that some of you will join us for a Messy Church Goes Wild roadshow in the months ahead. I wonder how we will encounter God as we go on the move in 2023!



# Session material: January 2023



Go to [messychurch.org.uk/getmessyjan23](http://messychurch.org.uk/getmessyjan23) to download all templates at A4 size, including a session planning sheet.



If you are using these sessions for a Messy Church at home, look out for this symbol! These are activities that can easily be adapted to the home.



This symbol shows activities that work well for Messy Church Goes Wild sessions. See [messychurch.org.uk/goeswild](http://messychurch.org.uk/goeswild) for more ideas.

## Bible story

### Luke 5:12–16 (NIV)

While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.'

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' And immediately the leprosy left him.

Then Jesus ordered him, 'Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.'

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their illnesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

### Pointers

What does it feel like to be sidelined and left out? In Jesus' time, people with leprosy (a skin disease) were excluded from society as they were seen to be ritually unclean. This meant they were not able to earn money or have help from society. People with this skin disease lived on the edge or the margins of society, often in poverty.

Jesus was asked if he was willing to help the man to be healed, to which Jesus enthusiastically said, 'Yes!' This broke the norm and traditions of the day because Jesus touched the man in his uncleanness.

Jesus chose not only to heal the man, but to touch him. In those times this would have meant that Jesus became ritually unclean too. Touch is so important to inclusion or feeling part of society. By touching the man, Jesus broke that barrier and made the man part of society again.

How can we reach out and touch those in our society who are excluded or on the margins? What can we do today to make

excluded people feel part of society again? How can we make a difference today? What can we do to make a difference to those who are in need?

### How does this session help people grow in Christ?

Today, we will help people to explore what it might mean or feel like to be excluded or left out, and we will look at Jesus' response to the man as a guide for us to be radically welcoming and inclusive. Jesus made a choice to help the man to be healed, and we have choices too about who we exclude and who we include. Jesus met the man in his greatest need. How do we meet people in times of their greatest need?

## Add value

### Mealtime card

- Have you ever felt excluded? What did that feel like?
- How do we meet people and help them in their times of need? What can we do?
- How do we include people and show them God's love?

### Messy Church in a bag

Activities 1, 6 and 9 (scale down the den to fit in the house!) and *Messy Church Goes Wild* activities.

### Question to start and end the session

So... how do we show Jesus' radically inclusive love to people today?

### Social action

Look into the work of The Leprosy Mission. Find out more about what leprosy means for people today, or find information leaflets about it. Consider fundraising activities.

Try and think about the groups of people who are excluded today: refugees, people who are bullied, people in poverty/on the margins of society. What can we do as a church to help? What can we do as individuals?

# Session material: February 2023

## Add value

### Mealtime card

- Play 'Top five': Ask each person, 'What's your top five: famous people you'd invite to dinner? Dinner party meal? Dessert? Food you refuse to eat?'
- Do you say grace at home? Here is cube you can take home and make up to practise saying grace at the dinner table in your own family, as a way of reminding you to give thanks to God ([messychurchaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Grace-Cube.pdf](http://messychurchaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Grace-Cube.pdf)).

### Messy Church in a bag

Activities 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8 and *Messy Church Goes Wild* activities 5 and 7.

### Question to start and end the session

So... how can we make sure that our community is one that welcomes EVERYBODY?

### Social action

Who are the people in your community who are hungry, or lonely and not often invited into the social activities of your community? Think of some ways that you can include those people. Could you have a Messy Church picnic or BBQ in your local park and invite the whole community?

## Activities

### 1. Smiley face balloons

**You will need: balloons; felt-tip pens; balloon sticks and closures; sand tray**

Jesus invited everyone to the party! Not just the important people – he invited people who never normally got asked to a party! And he didn't just invite them, he gave them the most important places at the table. Take a balloon and draw a picture of someone invited to Jesus' party. When you've finished, stick them into the sand tray so we can see all of the people invited to the banquet! (Take these into the celebration and place them on the Communion table or central place where all can see.)

**Talk about** the best party you've ever been to. How do you think the poor and needy in Jesus' story felt when they received invitations to the banquet?

### 2. Get ready to party!

**You will need: necklace string/wool; coloured pasta; paper plates or paper squares; crepe paper (and other decorative elements); scissors; glue; felt-tip pens**

Make some party gear to go to the great banquet! Before the session, make some 'coloured pasta'. The pasta needs to be penne or macaroni, or any variety of pasta that has a hole to thread through. Put dry pasta in a ziplock bag. In a measuring cup mix several tablespoons of white vinegar and some food colouring. Add this to your ziplock bag and swish it around until all of the pasta has been coloured. Tip the pasta on to baking trays and put outside in the sun to dry.

During the session, make necklaces and jewellery by threading the pasta on to wool/string. Make some paper hats out of paper squares or paper plates and decorate with paper flowers, etc. Try not to give too many instructions so that the participants can be as outlandish and creative as they want to be!

**Talk about** how people often like to dress up when they're invited to a party! But sometimes guests cannot afford to do so. What are some ways that you can make your Messy Church/ events welcoming so that everyone can feel welcome regardless of whether they can afford the gear to fit in or not?

## 2



### 3. Prayer beads



**You will need: any colourful paper you have (such as recycled wrapping paper, junk mail, paper squares, etc.) cut into triangles; string; glue; pencils**

Create a prayer bracelet using leftover paper. Ensuring that your pattern will be on the outside, start with the large end of the triangle and roll it around a pencil. Glue the end closed,



# Heavenly hope by Anne Offler and Sharon Pritchard

## Activities

### 1. Facing feelings



**You will need: a set of twelve emoji cards (download online), cut out individually; an answer sheet (download online) for each person or group; set of coloured felt-tip pens**

Hide the cards around the space. Look for an emoji card and note the coloured tick. Match the card to the one on your sheet and put the same-coloured tick on your sheet. Put the card back where you found it. Look for the next card. Can you find all of the cards and tick each of your emoji boxes?



**Talk about** how this activity covers lots of different emotions, just like the beatitudes. Which emotions do each of the emojis show? Which one are you like today?

### 2. Chocolate bouquet



**You will need: wrapped chocolates; tissue paper, cut into circles; small garden canes or wooden BBQ skewers; sticky tape; scissors**

Take a wrapped sweet and place it in the centre of a tissue paper circle. Wrap the tissue around the sweet and repeat with another sheet of tissue to look like a flower and twist the tissue paper to hold the sweet inside. Use the sticky tape to help it stay in place if you need. Take a garden cane or wooden skewer and attach it to the tissue flower. Make a few and gather them together to make a bouquet.

**Talk about** how this activity corresponds with verse 5: 'Blessed are the meek' – those who are caring. Sometimes we may give a gift of flowers or chocolates to someone to show them we care, or to say 'thank you' to them. Who will you be making this gift for today and why? Gifts make us happy, whether we are giving the gift or receiving the gift. I wonder why this is.

2



### 3. Light-up bees

**You will need: yellow plastic eggs or similar; black permanent markers; stick-on eyes; black pipe cleaners; sticky tape or glue dots; battery-operated tea lights; scissors**

Take the plastic egg and draw black stripes around the circumference. Stick on the eyes. Create six legs and two antennae with the black pipe cleaners, then attach these with the glue dots or tape. Open the plastic egg and insert the battery-operated tea light. Switch it on and then close the egg again.

**Talk about** how this activity corresponds to verse 10: 'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' The light inside the bee represents the light that is the hope Jesus gives us. How can we be that light of hope today?

3



# Redeemed by Becky May

## Celebration

**You will need: a curtain which can be torn (this could be a simple large sheet of paper held up by two people or a curtain suspended from a mobile clothes rail); a large cross**

Today's story is one you may have heard before. It's a story we remember every year because it is an important story. Actually, as Christians, this is our most important story. I'm going to use some props to retell this story today. I want to show you what this story is about because it's a story about the things we can see here on earth and the things we can't see but we know are happening in the kingdom of God.

Our story begins right at the beginning – the beginning of time. God created the heavens and the earth, the things we can see and the things we can't see. Everything was beautiful and God walked with Adam in the beautiful world that he had made. But then things went wrong. Humans made the first bad choice, we call that sin, and for the first time, sin entered the world. Because of that, God couldn't walk with humans in the beautiful world anymore.

A gate was put up to shut the people out from that perfect place and people were separated from God. (*Move the 'curtain' to the centre of your platform*)

But God loves the people he had made so much that he had a plan to make things right once again. God stayed with his people, but they couldn't enjoy the closeness that they had once had in the garden. In the temple, a curtain remained to keep people away from the holiness of God.

Then, after so many years, just as God had promised, he sent his Son, Jesus, into the world to make things right again. Jesus taught people about God's plan for their lives and for the kingdom he had made. Some people did not like what Jesus did and they arrested him, before sending him to die on a cross. (*Show the cross*)

This might seem like the end of the story and that God's plan had gone wrong, but it hadn't. This very sad part of our story was all part of God's plan to make things right between us and God once again. On the very moment that Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the temple tore in two from top to bottom and God showed the world that he had made things right once again and we could be reunited with him. (*Tear the curtain and pull it apart*)

But that's not the end of the story. Do you remember what happened next? Early on the Sunday morning, Jesus' disciples found that Jesus was not still dead and lying in the tomb – he had risen! He was alive once again! Jesus overcame death and completed God's plan, making all things right once again between God and the people who he loves.

### Prayer

*Pass out a lollipop stick and a pipe cleaner for each person and ask them to form a simple cross to hold in their hand as you pray. Hold a moment of silence before you pray.*

Thank you, Jesus, that you went to the cross so that we could be saved and reunited with you once again. Amen

### Song suggestions

- 'Rescuer (Good News)' – Rend Collective
- 'Thank you for saving me' – Martin Smith
- 'He's alive' – Mark and Helen Johnson
- 'He is risen' – Graham Kendrick

### Meal suggestion

Pasta bake, with a vegetarian version available, and hot cross buns or small Easter eggs for pudding.

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*Enabling all ages to grow in faith*



Anna Chaplaincy  
Living Faith  
Messy Church  
Parenting for Faith

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## 100 years of BRF

2022 is BRF's 100th anniversary! Look out for details of our special new centenary resources, a beautiful centenary rose and an online thanksgiving service that we hope you'll attend. This centenary year we're focusing on sharing the story of BRF, the story of the Bible – and we hope you'll share your stories of faith with us too.

Find out more at [brf.org.uk/cetenary](https://brf.org.uk/cetenary).

To find out more about our work, visit  
[brf.org.uk](https://brf.org.uk)

