



January-April 2022 £4.75

# get MESSY!

**Messy Church  
International  
Conference 2022**

**Messy Church  
Goes Wild**

**Growing young  
leaders**

**Reconnecting  
with  
Messy families**



**Includes  
Messy Church  
at home  
ideas**

## Sessions in this issue

**The parable of  
the lost coin**  
Luke 15:8-10

**Justice for all**  
1 Kings 21

**Celebrating small**  
Matthew 13:31-35

**The greatest love  
story ever told**  
Matthew 26:1-5





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

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ISBN 978 1 80039 086 7

First published 2021

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

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**Editor:** Olivia Warburton

**Subeditor:** Rachel Tranter

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

**Proofreader:** Kathryn Glendenning

**Cover photo:** Jillian Mayer, Messy Church USA

**Internal photos:** p. 5 (left) © Jocelyn Czerwonka, (middle) © iStock.com/RyanJLane; p. 6 © Jillian Mayer; p. 9 stills from *Voyage of Discovery* video, BRF; p. 11 © Jocelyn Czerwonka; p. 14 © Hannah Tarring; p. 16 © Katie Norman; p. 17 photos by Taisiia Shestopal, Andrei and Nick Fewings on Unsplash; all other photos by BRF staff.

Printed in the UK by Stephens & George Print Group

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Print copies are dispatched to arrive six weeks prior to the date on the cover of the magazine. The May 2022 issue should be with you around the middle of March 2022. The PDF version of the magazine is also available for purchase and immediate download from the beginning of March. [messychurch.org.uk/resources/get-messy](http://messychurch.org.uk/resources/get-messy)

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# Meet our session writers for this issue



**Mark and Jane Hird-Rutter** are the Regional Coordinators for Messy Church in British Columbia, Canada. They have been working as Messy Church leaders since 2009. They are both retired.

**Martyn Payne** worked with the BRF Messy Church team until he retired in December 2017. Bible storytelling, intergenerational mission and ministry, and schools work are particular passions of his. Martyn is a Messy Church trainer.



**Sharon Sampson** loves showing all ages that being a Christian can be a fun adventure! She runs church camp-outs, Easter experiences and interactive prayer stations, hides painted rocks around the village and in the last couple of years has set up a Messy Church.

**Leyla Wagner and Marty Drake** are from Huntington Beach, California. Marty serves as the director of children, youth and family ministries at Community United Methodist Church, Huntington Beach. They have both been on Messy Church teams since 2013 and are founding members of the Messy Church USA Board, for which Leyla is secretary and Marty is board president. They are both Regional Coordinators and Leyla is also a Messy Church trainer.



Marty Drake

Leyla Wagner

## Themes in this edition

There are four great stories lined up for this season of Messy Church. In **January**, we're suggesting Jesus' parable of the lost coin, one of the 'lost and found' parables. As we continue our theme of care for creation, it might be an opportunity to reflect on Christmas presents and other possessions, and how much we value them, as well as the utter joy of knowing ourselves to be infinitely valued by the God who does everything under the sun to find us when we're lost.

In **February**, when Fairtrade Fortnight happens, the story of Naboth's vineyard is a reminder that care for the earth includes justice for the people who work the land and provide food.

An old favourite of Messy Church to explore in **March**: the parable of the mustard seed, where one aspect to marvel at is the hospitable home the tree provides for all sorts of birds. Imagine if our neighbourhood was one where every person, creature, plant and insect found shelter and a warm welcome.

In **April** we revisit the rich story of Good Friday and Easter that sits at the heart of our faith. We say it every year, but in an increasingly secular world, remember your Messy Church *may* be the only time your families hear that Easter is about Jesus, not about bunnies or even chocolate. Have fun!

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## How to run a Messy Church planning meeting

### Why?

Whether your team is large or small, sharing creative ideas and prayers is beneficial to running a healthy and intentional Messy Church.

### Pray

Pray for your Messy Church, for the worldwide Messy Church network and for God to be at work.

### Where to hold a meeting

Choose a warm and friendly environment with refreshment facilities and a hospitable host. Wi-Fi is a bonus!

### Resources

A variety of Bible translations, Messy Church publications, the Messy Church website, Pinterest ([pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF](https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF)), the BRF

Ideas Hub ([ideas.brf.org.uk/topics](https://ideas.brf.org.uk/topics)). Use planning sheets, all-age song lists and recipes.

### Follow-up

Organise individual team member actions, communicate, pray and be faithful to one another.



Go to [messychurch.org.uk/getmessyjan22](https://messychurch.org.uk/getmessyjan22) 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 Pillar of comfort

JUNE It's all about fishing?

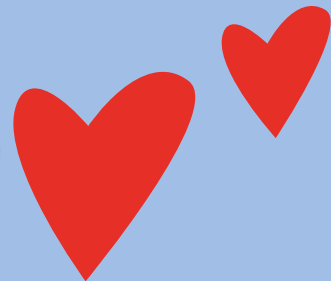
JULY Zac's up the tree!

AUGUST Forgiveness is a loving action



Lucy Moore writes...

# You are important



Have you any idea how important you are? 'Who, me?' you say, peering over your shoulder, expecting those words to be addressed to someone seriously holy / significant / worthy, with a gazillion followers on Instagram and even more on TikTok. But yes, indeed, I mean you, dear fellow Messy Church leader or team member, who may, like me, look at Instagram and whimper.

I'm sure, most fundamentally, you know you're important to God: you're God's own pearl of great price, God's sheep worth staying out all night to track down. You're important enough for God to go to the cross out of love for you. When everything else falls away, you will still be the apple of God's eye and yours will be the name God doodles absent-mindedly in the margins of agendas of angelic committee meetings.

You're also important because of the Messy work you're doing.

I'm very lucky in this role of Messy Dogsbody to sit in on a few strategic groups in several denominations and hear what people are saying about Messy Church. And what I hear, over and over from different quarters (from people who are indisputably 'important'), is how significant Messy Church is considered to be, to the church in the UK at least. I know people are nice and say nice things and some of it may be nice to my face because I'm there, but the fact remains, Messy Church is hugely valued by the churches.

That could be very difficult for you to hear, if you're one of the many Messy leaders who've had stick from your local church leadership, or who've been unsupported, or who've had to step back or rein in your missional efforts because nobody locally has understood.

But the ministry God is blessing and that your denomination is appreciating is yours. Like the parables we're enjoying this season in the magazine, you're

the person prepared to put the mustard seed in the ground and cope with all the joys and stresses of a new habitat popping up; you're the person throwing all their energies into finding those precious people who've been lost over generations to the local Christian community. (And throwing a monthly party as a sign that those coins just keep being found!) You're important because you're the pioneer, you're the one making it happen where it counts, you're the host with the most, you're the missionary God's called to tell the next generation just how brilliant Jesus is so that they too can have life in all its fullness.

You're important because in one denomination alone, the Church of England, recent figures show that over the last 18 years 50% of under 16s have been 'lost' from church. 68% of Church of England churches have five or fewer 0-16s.

And 38% have no 0-16s. You and your church council or PCC might be tempted to feel that you're only one church, what can you do to turn things round when the bigger picture is so bleak? But that's very unbiblical thinking. You are important, you are significant, because in the kingdom environment, the 'one' matters. I heard someone 'important' declare his denomination wasn't interested in 'small but faithful'. Well, I don't often say this, but he was wrong, absolutely wrong. Especially for a faith that centres around one man giving up his life to change the course of the cosmos.

Messy Church itself started from one small but faithful church. God and BRF have helped it be a wider blessing. Your own Messy Church, be it a 'usual' one, a Wild one or a Vintage one, a monthly or termly one, is one more delightful and delectable mustard seed being planted in a land threatened with desertification.

It's a symbol of life and hope for the future. Yes, it's only one tree, but this glorious forest/orchard/garden/jungle/wood grows one tree at a time. And you are infinitely important as a key planter in God's messy, marvellous mustard-seed forest.

Your own Messy Church... is one more delightful and delectable mustard seed being planted in a land threatened with desertification.



# Session material: January 2022



Go to [messychurch.org.uk/getmessyjan22](http://messychurch.org.uk/getmessyjan22) to download all templates at A4 size, including a session planning sheet.



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## Bible story

### Luke 15:8–10 (NIV)

‘Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.” In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.’

### Pointers

Jesus often used stories to get his point across. In this short parable, he is trying to describe when someone is found, after being lost to us.

- Some women in this time wore a headband with coins sewn in it. Each coin would represent one day’s wages.
- The woman in this parable searched everywhere for the lost coin, probably for days. Imagine if someone important in your life became lost, either literally lost or emotionally lost.
- When the woman found the coin, she celebrated with her friends and neighbours. Celebration is one of the Messy Church values.

## #discipleship: team

### Messy health check

Challenge each member of the team to name one thing about the last Messy Church that made them ‘rejoice’.

### Messy team theme

- Do you have any first-hand knowledge of someone who lost their way, then eventually found their way back?
- Consider people who are living paycheck to paycheck. How can Messy Church support these people?

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

This session gets us to think about how we help those who have lost their way. How do we sweep the doubt out of our heads and find our way back to rejoice in the presence of God?

## #discipleship: families

### Mealtime card

- Have you ever lost something important? Did you find it?
- Whether you eventually found it or not, how did you feel?
- God celebrates when you rejoice with him.

### Take-home idea

Give a chocolate coin to someone and invite them to come to Messy Church with you.

### Question to start and end the session

So... how do you think God feels when one of us turns away from him?

## #discipleship: extra

The story’s main character is a woman who lived in poverty, so she had to be very careful with her money. One of the best ways to fight climate change is through education, especially the education of girls. Education helps people rise out of poverty, brings more equality to society and reduces population growth. Get together with friends and create a fundraiser and donate the money to a charity that educates girls.

### Social action

Make sure that people are aware of the importance of educating girls, because their education is an excellent way to help to improve their society. Example charities would be PLAN International ([planinternational.org](http://planinternational.org)) or The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund ([pwrdf.org](http://pwrdf.org)).



# Session material: February 2022

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

In life, bad things happen, but God cares about what happens to us. In the story, he sent Elijah to hold the king and queen accountable for their actions and injustices to those without power. God will always be on the side of justice for all people.

## #discipleship: families

### Mealtime card

- Ahab and Jezebel were bullies to Naboth. How do you stand up to bullies in your school or workplace?
- Can you think of examples in your community where power has been abused at the expense of others?
- How hard is it to do what God wants you to do when you feel pressured by your friends and peers to do something else?

### Take-home idea

With your family or friends, come up with a different ending to Naboth's story, where Ahab and Jezebel treat Naboth fairly.

Dear God, help us to keep our eyes open so that we can see when people in our community and world are being treated unfairly. Give us the courage to speak up to those that are hurting others. Help us to be moved to action to help change the story. Amen

### Question to start and end the session

So... how does God want us to stand up against the injustices we hear about?

## #discipleship: extra

Go to the supermarket together and look for the Fairtrade logo on foods like coffee, tea, honey, fruits and chocolate.

1



## Social action

Identify an organisation in your community that advocates for a group without a voice, and make signs to put in your front garden or your window to let others know about the issue and the organisation.

## Activities

### 1. Injustices in our world prayer walk

**You will need: world map; string; pictures and articles about injustices (fair wages, health care, education, access to food, etc.) printed on paper; Post-It notes; pens**

Place the pictures on the map and use string to connect the issue with the country or countries where the issue is happening. Have people read about injustices and write prayers about these issues on Post-Its and stick them to the map.

**Talk about** what God might be asking us to do about these situations.

2



3



# Session material: March 2022

**Talk about** the kingdom of God being like a big tree where people are at home. The root that is Jesus holds everyone together. I wonder what sort of tree your Messy Church family is most like.



## 4. Seedscapes

**You will need: a good quantity of seeds of different sorts, sizes and colours; PVA glue; A4 sheets of card; wipes; pencils**

In pencil, draw the outline of a beautiful scene (rural or urban) which for you represents a special place where you feel at peace and close to God (maybe by a lake, in a park, on holiday, in your home or at church). Keep the design simple, leaving spaces which you can fill with seeds, stuck in place by a thin layer of PVA glue. Another idea might be to create a rainbow of different seeds to represent God's promise always to be for us and with us.

**Talk about** why the picture you have chosen is special for you.



## 5. A bird mobile

**You will need: metal coat hangers; thread; sticky tape; string; scissors; printed pictures of birds; ribbon**

Cut out the bird pictures and attach thread to each with tape. Tie the threads on to two coat hangers that have been

fixed together with string in a cross shape, with their hooks removed. Using ribbon, attach the mobile to a high point in a room.

**Talk about** the birds of the air from today's story. Who or what do you think they represent?

## 6. Seedology

**You will need: a range of different seeds (the smaller the better); pictures of the plants/shrubs into which these seeds grow; sticky tape; card; small organza bags; paper and pens; seeds counted into a clear bottle (optional)**

This is mostly a quiz table. Tape the tiny seeds to cards and also have the pictures of what each becomes on the cards. Put some the seeds into small bags and number them for people to guess what each is. Each participant should keep a list of their guesses/answers. Optionally, also play a game of 'guess how many seeds there are in the bottle'.

**Talk about** how amazing seeds are and how so much comes from something so small.

## 7. Build an indoor treehouse

**You will need: two or three A-frame stepladders; large pieces of cardboard and cardboard boxes to cut up; packing tape; scissors; greenery with**

3



4



5



6



# The greatest love story ever told by Sharon Sampson

## Celebration

*Play 'Jesus says', which is very similar to 'Simon says'. If Jesus says something, then you copy the action, if not, you don't. Most of the actions are obvious, but the less clear ones are specified below.*

Jesus says: I **rode** into Jerusalem on a donkey.

Jesus says: The crowd were **waving** palm branches as if I was a king.

Jesus says: They were shouting **Hosanna** (*use banner from activity 10*).

I **got off** the donkey.

Jesus says: I **healed** lots of people (*put your hand out*).

I **kicked** lots of people.

Jesus says: I **told lots of stories** (*pretend to open a book*).

Jesus says: But lots of people **did not want to hear** (*cover your ears*).

Jesus says: I went to **pray** in the temple.

Jesus says: I got really **angry** when I saw they were using the temple as a market (*shake your fist*).

Jesus says: I **tipped over** all the tables.

Jesus says: I told my friends to **follow** a man with a water jug.

Jesus says: The man led us to an upstairs room where we **sat down**.

Jesus says: I **ate** my last meal with my friends.

Jesus says: I **prayed** with them.

I **pulled faces** at them.

Jesus says: I **washed their feet** to show them that I wanted them to look after each other.

Jesus says: I went to a quiet garden to **pray**.

It **rained**.

Jesus says: I was **arrested** (*wrists together*).

Jesus says: They put a **crown** of thorns on my head (*use crown from activity 2*).

Jesus says: They put a **purple robe** on my back.

Jesus says: They **laughed** at me.

Jesus says: They made me **carry** a heavy cross.

I **skipped** all the way.

Jesus says: They put **nails** in my hands and feet.

Jesus says: They **hung** me up on a cross (*arms out*).

Jesus says: I **died** (*drop head*).

Jesus says: They **laid** my body in a tomb.

Jesus says: But I didn't **stay dead** (*jump up*).

Jesus didn't stay dead. He came alive! When his friends the disciples saw him, they changed from being scared men, hiding away, frightened of being arrested and killed, into brave men, standing in the marketplace telling everyone the good news about Jesus. That good news is for us too. If we believe in him, we can have eternal life with him in heaven.

Our challenge for this week could be to be brave like the disciples and tell someone this story of life and death, of murder and miracles – the greatest love story ever told!

### Prayer

Have a giant white paper or cardboard cross. Get people to write thank you to Jesus on it, using red pen to represent his blood. Finish up with this prayer, read slowly.

Loving Jesus, you came down to be with us, you walked with us, you ate with us, you died for us. Thank you. Amen

### Song suggestions

'Zim bam boo' – Thankyou Music

'This is amazing grace' – Phil Wickham

'Easter jubilation' – Out of the Ark Music

'Sing out an Easter song' – Out of the Ark Music

'I danced in the morning' – Stainer and Bell Ltd

### Meal suggestion

Jacket potatoes wrapped in tin foil with a ribbon added after it comes out of the oven, like an Easter egg. Hot cross buns for dessert. Bread – encourage people to say to the person sitting next to them, 'This is Jesus' body, broken for you.'





*Enabling all ages to grow in faith*



Anna Chaplaincy  
Living Faith  
Messy Church  
Parenting for Faith

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