



get MESSY!

Messy
Church goes
outdoors

Try the
discipleship
pilot

Join in with **Thy
Kingdom Come**



Sessions in this issue

God 24/7

Matthew 28:16-20

The money puzzle

Mark 10:17-27

Wonderfully made

Psalms 139:14

Creating and caring

Genesis 1:26-31

May-Aug 2018



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messychurch.org.uk/resources/get-messy

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Meet our session writers for this issue



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Jen Robertson is the church/school youth development worker with Hamilton Presbytery and Scripture Union Scotland. She is the Lanarkshire Regional Coordinator for Messy Church and really enjoys helping congregations start, maintain and develop their Messy Churches. She loves to run and read, but not necessarily at the same time!



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Themes in this edition

What a privilege to explore key biblical themes in creative, hands-on ways! They may be familiar stories, but approaching them through the different senses and through play can bring so many insights. In **May**, when the church around the world celebrates the coming of God's Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we have the opportunity to join in with the Thy Kingdom Come initiative and to explore what it means to have God with us 24/7.

In **June**, we explore a theme that may be a concern to many of your families in this 21st-century world: how do we handle money so that it's healthy for us and for the world around us and is a fun part of our discipleship? And **July** ties in with Bishop Rachel Treweek's #liedentity campaign around helping all our families to have a positive godly image of ourselves, not one shaped by what the world wants us to think. Self-image may have been highlighted as a preoccupation of many teenagers, but we can help children and adults as well as teens to see themselves and others with God's eyes.

August gives us a chance to explore God's wonderful world and our stewardship of it – check out the article on page 6 about taking Messy Church outdoors.

1. Ask God to bless and guide you as you consider what's most helpful to bring families in your community closer to him in the coming months.
2. Glance through the four sessions so that you have an overview of the months ahead, noting down resources that will take time to source.
3. Use the downloadable planning sheets to share this month's session with your core team in plenty of time to shape the ideas together to suit your own situation.
4. If you're meeting face to face with the team, talk about this month's theme, using the Messy team theme provided.
5. Tell God your worries.
6. Ensure that the whole extended team has copies of your final version of activities, together with the Bible reflection provided to give them the background they need. You could give them the link to the passage on www.biblegateway.com if you're not certain they have their own Bibles.
7. Include take-home ideas on handouts, texts or a Facebook page.
8. Print copies of the mealtime question cards for the meal tables.
9. Encourage review and reflection from everyone after the session has taken place and respond to suggestions for change ready for next time.
10. Thank God for wherever you saw him at work.

Planning suggestions

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Go to messychurch.org.uk/getmessymay18 to download all templates at A4 size

In our next issue

September: Which way?

October: Safe and sound

November: Listening and learning

December: God so loved the world



Lucy Moore writes...

#discipleship

The more we explore what ‘Messy discipleship’ means, the more our small team at BRF becomes convinced that there aren’t any easy answers. If only we could suggest to you that to make disciples in Messy Church – to ‘move people on’ – you should simply pop them on a course. Imagine! You could measure your outcomes so easily:

- Number of people on course (with bonus points if they are men, teenagers or Millennials)
- Number of people transitioning through to Sunday morning church service attendance
- Number of people joining the planned giving scheme (oh yes please)
- Number of people getting ordained.

But we’re just not seeing a natural progression from Messy Churches on to courses. Real life, of course, tends to be messier than the nice, neat theories of what should work. And another issue could be that many discipleship courses assume far more commitment, biblical or liturgical literacy, or indeed simply that everyone attending will be an adult. So how do we do discipleship in a Messy context, where one of the most precious aspects of church life is that everybody is important, whether young or old, with or without special needs, able or unable to read?

The most glorious thing is that God is just quietly getting on with drawing people to himself through the gentle work of a Messy Church without any extra effort on our part. 86% of leaders in the Great Big Messy Survey said they thought God was drawing people closer to him through their Messy Church. And 49% of families who responded would like to know more about Jesus! It’s hard to see growth when we’re in the middle of it, which is why we’re so grateful that the Church Army Research Unit is taking an objective look at discipleship in Messy Church (see pp. 14–15). It also helps to have the results of the Great Big Messy Survey year by year, which so many of

you and your families have been kind enough to complete. These results are already giving us many insights and will give us even more over time. And as more and more teams take part in the Discipleship Pilot (p. 13) and share their findings, we will all grow in our understanding and practice. Do give it a whirl and let us know what works and what doesn’t so that we can all minister more effectively.

The questions we ask of Messy Church discipleship need asking of traditional church too: how do we measure the discipleship of the inherited church which meets on a Sunday? Is it enough just to attend a service? How are each of those people growing in Christ? Do we expect everyone to ‘move on’ as they grow? It’s not about Messy Church and traditional church competing to see who makes disciples best, but rather about asking, how can what we know about discipleship in one sphere of church life inform us in another to help more people of all ages know Jesus more vividly and be more open to working with his Holy Spirit to change the world for the better?

As parents and grandparents, we watch our children growing up. It’s a time-consuming, gradual process as they come to maturity, and ‘growing up’ means different things to different children. But their maturity, sense of self-worth, resilience and ability to shine depend far less on any courses and programmes that we might send them on, and far more on the unconditional love we lavish on them over the course of months, years, decades. In the same way, Messy discipleship seems to be far less about a great course, though that may help for particular aspects of life and learning, and is much more about our readiness to love and keep on loving the families God is sending our way so generously. What does that loving look like for you?



Session material: May



Go to messychurch.org.uk/getmessymay18 to download all templates at A4 size

Spirit, directing our ways and filling us with the confidence we need to do his works.

#discipleship: team

Messy health check

Who finds it hard to talk about God during the activities? What one thing can you do as a team to help each other?

Messy team theme

- What doubts do you have as you worship Jesus?
- Would it help our Messy congregation to share these doubts?
- The words 'Therefore go' can be translated: 'As you go now'. What impact could that translation have for us as we live life together as a Messy congregation?
- How can our Messy Church show that 'Christ is with us always' every month and in the weeks within those months?

How does this session help people grow in Christ?

This session helps us to wonder about the last words of Jesus before he returned to heaven, 'I am with you always', helping us to consider whether we have ever known this to be true, and what life would be like if we knew Christ was with us in everything and in every place. As we look at this together, in the context of Jesus instructing the disciples to go into all the world and make disciples, we will consider how we can share that brilliant promise with those around us, at home, school and work.

#discipleship: families

Mealtime card

- Who do you most enjoy being with?
- Do you think that Jesus is with you always?
- What difference might it make at work or school to know that he really is with you?

Take-home idea

The Thy Kingdom Come website (www.thykingdomcome.global/prayerresources) has lots of ideas to help us pray together as families. Here is an idea to get started. Collect a bundle of craft sticks from the welcome desk before you leave Messy Church. When you get home, write the name of

#discipleship: individual

Messy reflection by Becky May

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Matthew 28:16–20 (NIV)

After three years following Jesus in close proximity, learning everything he would say and do, Jesus' disciples had the best experience of what it meant to be his followers. And yet, during the events of Easter and in the subsequent days, it is no wonder that they found themselves tested, confused and full of self-doubt. Having just been reunited with their friend and teacher, they would have been forgiven for wanting never to let him out of their sight again.

Against this backdrop, Jesus prepares to leave his friends on earth for the final time and he takes this opportunity to say two things: 'Go and share what you have learnt with others' and 'You won't be on your own'. Although they won't be able to see Jesus beside them again, they will continue to feel his presence and power at work in their lives.

How great a reassurance this is for us too! We who never physically walked beside Jesus can still know what it means to be with him. We stand on the testimonies of Jesus' followers through generations, who have all been able to share what Jesus has done in and through their lives, and how he has been with them in every circumstance of life.

Jesus' great commission was not just for his first disciples but also for us today. We have the same command to follow: to go out into our Messy Church, our homes, our schools, our places of work and make new disciples, knowing that when we feel most alone, most vulnerable and most unsure of what we should do, Jesus is right there with us, through the Holy

Session material: June

what is most important: is it obeying all the rules, is it family and friends, or is it our friendship with Jesus that is most important? Invite people to really wonder about what they might be prepared to give up – in order to have what is most important.

#discipleship: families

Mealtime card

- Who is the richest person you have heard about or seen?
- Why do you think that Jesus told the rich young man to give away all his riches to the poor?
- Do you know of people who are 'poor' and who could do with your help?

Take-home idea

Could you go through your possessions and see if there are some possessions that you do not really need that you can donate to your local charity shop?

Perhaps as a family or with some neighbours, you might choose to have a 'garage sale' or 'yard sale' and donate funds from goods sold to help those in need in your community or in some of the situations of hunger and natural disaster around the world.

You could also set up your own Facebook Messy challenge for families – for seven days, get them to give away things they do not need. For an extra challenge, you could ask them to give away one thing on the first day, two things on the second day, and so on.

Loving God, thank you for the stories and teachings of Jesus that help us to focus on the really important things in our lives. Help us to share as freely with others as you share your love with us. Amen.

Question to start and end the session

So... what is most important to you?

#discipleship: extra

Put on an easy fundraising event for the whole family to join in with to raise money for a good cause (maybe even for BRF's Messy Church ministry).

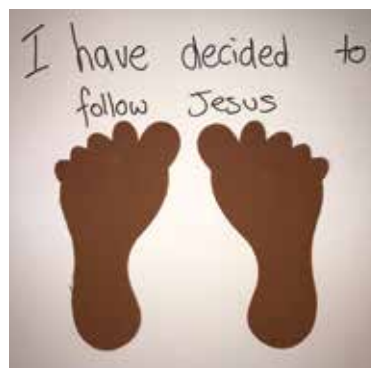
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4



Wonderfully made by Becky May

1



Activities

1. Praise ribbons

You will need: wooden rings (curtain rings or wooden craft rings); assorted ribbons; scissors

Cut some ribbons to length, perhaps providing a measure on the edge of the table. Tie these ribbons on to the wooden ring in a pattern of your own design. Wave your ribbon around as you dance to praise Jesus. You could use your praise ribbon in the sung praise and worship during the celebration time.

Talk about the different ways we can express ourselves in praise, such as dancing and singing. How do we show God how great we think he is?

2. Pipe-cleaner glasses

You will need: pipe cleaners (four per person)

Use two of the pipe cleaners to form two circles and link them together to form the lenses. Take the remaining two pipe cleaners and attach these to either side of the lenses to form the arms, bending at the appropriate point so that they hook over the wearer's ears.

Talk about how we can see more of who our creator God is when we look at the things that he has made.

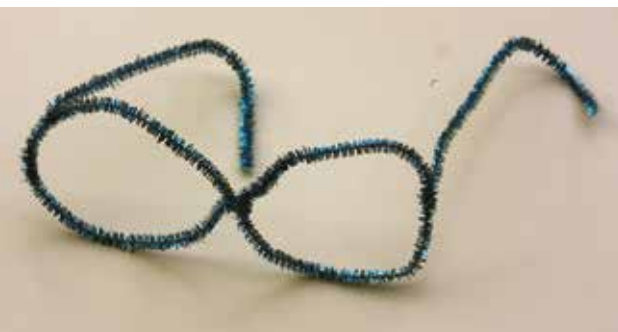
3. Mirror, mirror

You will need: mirrors (various kits are available from Baker Ross, or use small framed mirrors); assortment of stickers, gems, pens, etc. to decorate

Use the stickers, gems and pens to decorate the mirror frame with the intention of making the user feel good about themselves whenever they look into the mirror. You may want to write a feel-good message or the verse from this session, or you could decorate your mirror with images that portray this message to the user of the mirror.

Talk about how wonderfully God has made us, and what we notice about the way that he has made us when we really spend time looking carefully into the mirror.

2



3



4



Creating and caring by Jean Pienaar

Celebration

You will need: six tins or boxes (all of similar size), each labelled with one of the following: air, water, soil, plants, animals, humans

Get the congregation to fill in 'good' when the narrator uses the prompt 'And God saw that it was...'



A story about the beginning of the world helps us understand how we fit together with the environment around us, and what our responsibility is. In the beginning of time, when God's Spirit hovered over the world, God gave us the gift of light, so now there is light and dark. *And God saw that it was... good.*

Then God gave us the gift of water – all water everywhere – and divided the waters above from the waters below. The waters above form our atmosphere, the air that we breathe. *(Position tin with 'air' label.)* And people can only survive without air for a maximum of four minutes. The waters below are the streams, rivers, dams, lakes and wide oceans. And people can only survive without water for a maximum of four days. *(Position tin with 'water' label adjacent to 'air' tin.)* And God saw that it was... good.

Then God gave us the gift of dry land. *(Position tin with 'soil' label on the other side of the 'water' tin.)* And with the dry land, we also receive the gift of green and growing things. With air, water and soil, plants are now able to grow. *(Position tin with 'plant' label balanced on top of two of the base tins.)* And God saw that it was... good. Plants provide a source of food, and we can only survive without food for 40 days.

Then God gave us the gift of the day and the night, which help us tell the time. *And God saw that it was... good.*

Then God gave us the gift of creatures that fly, and those that swim. *(Position the tin with the 'animals' label, on the second level, adjacent to the 'plants' tin.)* And God saw that it was... good.

Then God gave us the gift of creatures that walk on the earth: many-legged insects, four-legged animals and two-legged humans. *(Place the 'humans' tin on the top of the pyramid.)*

And God blessed the humans and told them to multiply and to be responsible for the animals and to eat the seed-bearing plants. And everything that grows out of the ground is a source of food for the animals and birds. *And God saw that it was...* No, it wasn't good. God saw that it was **very** good.

And so we have created a simple **food pyramid**. Air, water and soil provide the basis for all life (bottom row), and plants and animals can exist because they have water to drink, air to breathe and an environment where they can thrive. And humans are at the top, with their God-given responsibility. And for us humans to properly look after the plants and the animals (and ourselves), we need to make sure that we also look after our air, our water and our soil. And we can all do our own little bit, because every little bit helps. And we imagine what would happen if there wasn't enough clean water for everyone... *(Remove the 'water' tin and the pyramid should come tumbling down.)*

So we each need to do what we can to be responsible stewards of our earth: reduce, reuse and recycle so that we can best look after the planet's life-support systems and all of God's creation.

Prayer

REDUCE: Using tight fists to make our uncaring attitude as small as possible, say a quiet 'sorry' prayer.

REUSE: Open your hands (palms down) and look at your hands. Think of ten different things you can be thankful for (one for each finger).

RECYCLE: Turn your hands over so that your palms face upwards. Listen to God speak to you – how can we repurpose our lives as we live in this world?

Song suggestions

'How we need you' – Fischy Music

'All things bright and beautiful' – Cecil F. Alexander

'I, the Lord of sea and sky' – Daniel Schutte

Meal suggestion

Macaroni cheese and green salad. Local fruit salad and custard (see activity 6).