



Get Messy: Aussie Add-Ons

Welcome to Get Messy Aussie Add-Ons (thanks to Mel Neumann -South Australia- for the name!)
In this second issue

- Reflections on the Messy Church International Conference from Judyth Roberts
- Messy church Music: Keeping it Real, Relaxed and Resourced (including a starter set of songs from diverse musical styles and ways to facilitate intergenerational musical engagement)
- Joy Marshall's info graphic on All age faith formation
- Celebration ideas for Bible engagement to accompany the themes in Get Messy: Luke 17:11-19, Matt 5:13, Psalm 23, Luke 1:26-38

Get Messy Aussie Add-ons is a supplement to Get Messy BRF addressing Australian contexts, in line with the Messy Church value of local grass roots innovation, contextualisation and creativity.

Messy Church International Conference, 2016

In May I was among 220 people from 12 countries and many denominations who attended the International Messy Church Conference in the UK. More than 20 Australians were there as we gathered to celebrate what God is doing through Messy Church.

We were welcomed and affirmed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a taped address. Archbishop Justin Welby described Messy Church beautifully as “a gift of the Spirit to the church... creating a circle of love that joins people together with Christ at the centre.” BRF Chief Executive Richard Fisher, Lucy Moore, Jane Leadbetter, Martyn Payne and other BRF staff were generous and playful hosts, ensuring the conference went smoothly.

There were two inspiring keynote addresses by George Lings based on his research of Messy Church in the UK. He is the Director of the Church Army Research Unit, and has evidence that Messy Church is more missional than any other form of church, in that the proportion of people attending Messy Church who have never had a previous connection with church is higher than any other form of church. He encouraged Messy leaders saying “Messy Church is showing the way!” and also “Messy Church is still finding the way ... draw on wisdom of the past and stretch ... your boundaries ...you are part of reasserting that messy is normal in Christianity.”

Fischy Music shared their music and Heather Price and Alison Davies from Newcastle, Australia played some great Messy Church songs from their 'I Am Loved' album. (<http://heatherprice.com.au/downloads/i-am-loved-album/>) There were workshops enabling people from around the globe to share ideas, encouragement and conversations that could

overflow and continue over meals. There was a sense of great joy and celebration in the worship experiences which brought us to the realisation that the hopes and challenges can be surprisingly similar whether your Messy Church is in South Africa or Canada or Australia – praise God!

Judyth Roberts (UCA Synod of SA Intergen Leadership Developer)

Photo: A few of the 22 Australian Messy Church International conference delegates: L-R Heather Price, Joy Marshall, Judyth Roberts, Julie and Richard Turnbull.



Leading Intergenerational Music



What this is: Messy Church Music Resources for training



Where it's used: Messy church celebration time

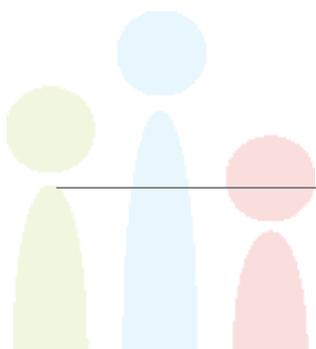
Messy Church Music – Keeping it Real, Relaxed and Resourced.

Music has a great capacity to help create community – combining the power of words and emotion, it can be wonderfully unifying, as people get on the same page. Music provides multiple pathways of participation through singing, movement, instruments, body percussion and listening.



Musical spaces can be some of the most hospitable and inclusive spaces. However, in Australian culture, community singing has been through a dry spell for several decades. The commercial music industry has splintered into hundreds of niche sub-cultures. It used to be that grown ups had easy listening on one station and teenagers listened to Rock 'n' Roll on another. Now young people listen to lots of different kinds of music, and there are dozens of niche stations for them to choose to align with.

Music is one of the ways in which people divide and define their identity – and so in communities music can sometimes be a separating rather than a unifying force. Still, with some basic skills in facilitating and keeping our focus on the function that music plays in community, musical elements of messy church celebrations can be rich, meaningful, inclusive and fun and embody the all values of messy church at once – Hospitality, Creative, Christ-centred and Intergenerational.



Leading Intergenerational Music

Five top tips for leading and facilitating great messy music.

1. Use the messy church values as a checklist for your music choice and how you are using it. Is the song easily accessible and affirming to sing? Is it a means for creative expression? Is the song helpful in encouraging us to be followers of Jesus?
2. Combine music with another element of celebration (prayer, chat questions, reading the bible, assembling some art). This helps the few people who are genuinely uncomfortable singing still have a reason to participate and not 'zone out'. It also takes the focus away from the musical style and centres on the content of the music.
3. Mash-ups! Putting together two songs that relate to your theme that have different styles of music – especially if one has more of a 'child' vibe and the other would be usually thought of as an 'adult' song – helps to bring the generations together. This is much more effective than saying 'now we are going to have a song for the children' or 'this is a song the kids will know/like'. Much better to let music be music and invite everyone to share and enjoy a range of musical styles.
4. Community singing works well when it is like a conversation between the person leading and the community. To lead community singing well, you don't need to be a musician, or even a good singer. You need to be a good leader – open and invitational, strongly connecting with eye contact and body language with the group, creating a commentary of encouragement, instruction, affirmation, direction and reflection throughout the music.
5. Use music in lots of different forms – of course for singing, but also just listening for reflection, as a background to another activity, a video clip with music and visuals.

Leading Intergenerational Music

A Starter pack of Messy songs to use and ways to use them

The following songs are mostly home grown, collected from New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia, as well as a couple of items from further a field. They are varied in style and purpose to help enrich your Messy Church with a little Australian flavor.

Life is Better with a little Mess

(Messy Church Song -Adamstown Uniting Church, Heather Price)
<http://heatherprice.com.au/downloads/i-am-loved-album/>

This is a great song for gathering at the start of your celebration time – as a cross over song as people come into the celebration from their different messy experiences. The song is a generic welcoming and gathering and the tag line ‘life is better with a little mess’ is pretty sticky.



The Pop song

(Click; SU Vic)

The Pop song is also a great ‘gathering’ song – which lists lots of things that might happen in the average household during the week.

- Invite the group to put their hands up whenever they hear something in the words that has actually happened to them during the past week.
- Take a couple of minutes in the midst of the song to let people tell their neighbor something that has happened to them in the week, or do a few spontaneous interviews with volunteers
- The ‘finger in your cheek pops’ add an element of fun, that works best with some accomplished adults to demonstrate their skills.
- The most important line in the songs is ‘God can make good things happen out of all our mess’ – so teach this line first.

Understanding through your Lord

(Heather Price)

<http://heatherprice.com.au/downloads/01-understanding-through-you-lord/>

To introduce this song to your messy church community teach the simple three note refrain “I pray peace”

then invite the gathering to join in just on this line as your strong singer/leader sings the other lines.

After singing the song through once, go through the words and invite volunteers to sing the other lines (just where they are standing, no need to make it a performance)

Before too long the rest of the community will find themselves singing all the words.

Leading Intergenerational Music

A Starter pack of Messy songs to use and ways to use them

You are welcome

(Four Plus Three; Snack)

sample: <https://www.snackmusic.com.au/samples/four-plus-three/You-Are-Welcome-Sample.mp3>

<https://www.snackmusic.com.au/products/four-plus-three/>

The is song underlines the really important Messy Church value of hospitality and welcome and connects the welcome we extend to one another with the primary welcome that God has shown to us. Snack music have a short video tutorial demonstrating some actions. <https://www.snackmusic.com.au/resources/actions/you-are-welcome/>



A good way to get the actions happening quickly and without making too much fuss, is to ask a few families or enthusiastic individuals to learn the actions on their own from the video in the weeks before Messy Church, and be ready to do them as you sing the song next time you gather. You don't need to compel others to do the actions – or even teach them – just let the solid enthusiastic demonstration do its infectious work.

Now thank we all our God

(Martin Rinkart; Various traditional hymn books)

This traditional old hymn is brilliant for Messy Church: easy to sing, references the family, based on thankfulness, and has a wonderful messy backstory.

Make sure you tell the backstory at least the first time you sing the hymn, and then invite others to give a quick reminder of the story each time you sing it.

“Martin Rinkart was a Pastor in a German town during the 17th century in a time known as the Thirty Years War. That's a lot of war. His little town had a wall all the way around it, and it became a place of refuge, a safe place for people who were in danger in other places to run to. (You might want to link this to the decades of war in places in the world today that cause people to escape to safer places.) Not only the city, but his home was a place that people came to when they were in need. Times of hunger and disease were common in those days, and eventually the fighting came to Martin's town. What a big mess of trouble! In one year he conducted 4000 funerals – including his wife who died. But despite all of this sadness, Martin continued to look in hope to God and wrote this song of thankfulness to God, even in the mess.”

If you are the kind of community that prefers to sing along with a bearded hipster guitarist, try this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ecqss2ZvN2c>

Leading Intergenerational Music

A Starter pack of Messy songs to use and ways to use them

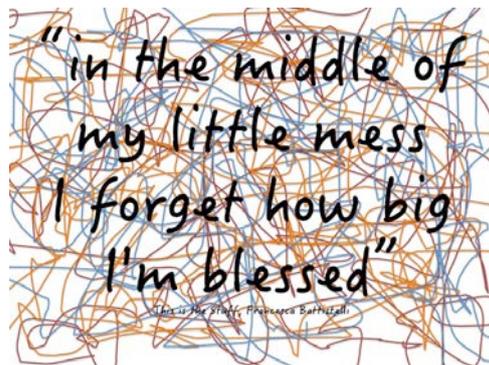
This is the Stuff

(Francesca Battistelli)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xe4SckesWLE>

With perky ukulele and a brush backbeat, this is the kind of song that gets stuck on replay in your head. The video is fun lighthearted 'drama queen' in style with bright colours and cartoonish backgrounds. The messy theme is realistic yet positive:

This is the stuff that drives me crazy
This is the stuff that's getting to me lately
In the middle of my little mess
I forget how big I'm blessed
This is the stuff that gets under my skin
But I've gotta trust you know exactly what You're doing
Might not be what I would choose
But this is the stuff You use.



Luke and the Very Messy Desk and Luke and the Very Messy Cupboard

(Sean W. Smith)

<http://seanwsmith.com/album/god-is-all-around/>

This is a mix of story telling and music. Its included here as a masterful example of how you might blend music and story telling in your celebration, as well as to introduce the music of Sean W. Smith and because, well, who can resist a very Messy Story?

Better than a Hallelujah

(Amy Grant)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOHJghBU0XA>

Not a 'community sing along' piece, this is the kind of song to use as a background to a prayer activity, or to play at the end of a celebration which has touched on some sensitive issues (and we hope that celebration times celebrate both the delight and despair of human life) for those who want to sit quietly for a few more minutes.



a short picture of

Why All Ages

need each other
for Faith Formation



How all age

could work on Sunday morning

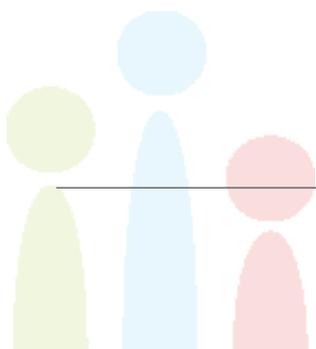


Messy church

Why all ages need each other for faith formation

Joy Marshall is the Messy Church Leader and Family and Community Pastor at Canterbury Baptist in Victoria. She is a wonderfully visual theologian and shared this infographic of her reflection on the sessions presented by George Lings at the International Messy Church conference in the UK in May. She brought this back into the staff team at her church who all engaged in a discussion about church for all – the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Youth pastor, Family and Community Pastor - all gathered around the whiteboard to rethink generations, worship, discipleship and mission drawing on Messy Church wisdom and questions.

- The timeline along the left hand side chronicles a history of faith formation from the giving of the law to the ancients, through the centuries to the contemporary digital age. The impact of Christendom, the industrial revolution, developmentalism and Sunday secularization are signaled as points of impact that merit our reflection. She depicts the emergence of segregated faith formation streams as an extremely recent practice, along with diminishing numbers accompanying this, and the monochrome church as a result.
- The Triangle in the middle summarises an approach to faith formation that intentionally draws together believing, belonging and behaving as simultaneous dimensions of faith – no particular one precedes the other. Each of these aspects of faith formation are then associated with a different mode of interaction (formal, informal and apprentice) and a different configuration of generational connection. We note how the Apprentice mode is helpful in shaping behavior, through close modeling, in a one on one relationship, while the informal multi-age family based setting is the space for nurturing the important identity of belonging. She affirms the formal space of age-segregated learning as still an important facet of information transfer. What do you think? How would you combine these modes, relational configurations and objectives in faith formation in your messy church?
- Finally, Joy asks how the insights of intergenerationality can speak prophetically and helpfully back into more conventional Sunday morning gatherings. Perhaps we can see through the messy church lens that all of our gathering time, including sharing a morning cuppa is part of faith formation. Joy suggests that morning tea is the best ‘age segregated’ time; that service in which we use our gifts is best done on an apprenticeship model; and that learning and worship in intergenerational household groups will build strong and deep understanding of the faith to which we are all called.



Sensational Senses



What this is: Sensory experience activity



Where it's used: Messy church



What's needed: Medium sized cardboard box; coffee mug, face washer, fork, sunglasses, key, pencil; a soft scarf and paper, a padlock that doesn't match the key



Time: 10-15 min



Bible focus/theme: Luke 17: 11-19

Place items into the box then try to guess what they are using only your sense of touch. No peeking!

As you pull each item out talk about what it might be like to try to use this if you have no sense of touch or pain.

Extension activities

What might be some of the dangers?

You can't tell how hot the drink or food is.

You could use too much pressure and damage your skin.

You could bite the inside of your mouth without realising.

Why is it difficult?

- Have a staring competition with someone at the table.

We blink when our eyes feel dry, our body makes us do this because our eyes will be damaged otherwise. If you have no sense of touch or pain, you no longer blink when you need to.

- Wrap the pencil in a soft scarf. Try to write with it.

Put the paper on the face washer and try to write or draw on it.

Our sense of touch helps us to know how much pressure we are using.

- Try to open the lock.

How do you know if it works or not? Did you hurt your hand trying to open it? What might have happened if you didn't feel pain?

Talk about the impact this type of disability could have on your life. Now think about how much harder it would be if you were rejected and excluded from your community because of this disability.

"One of the most challenging side-effects of leprosy is the stigma it carries. Believed for centuries to have been the result of dark spiritual causes, a diagnosis of leprosy means that those affected are often shunned by their communities; sadly, usually the families of those affected by the disease are shunned as well." <http://www.leprosymission.org.au/TLM/Effects>

Leprosy: Facts and Fiction

There are a number of urban myths about leprosy.

Firstly, that leprosy is incurable. In the last fifty years, leprosy has gone from a communicable disease, confining those affected to leprosy colonies, to a completely curable disease through Multi Drug Therapy (MDT). The World Health Organisation (WHO) provides MDT to any country working to eliminate leprosy. Leprosy can be cured if caught early enough; however, any resulting nerve or tissue damage may be permanent (that's where surgery comes in).

Secondly, that leprosy is extremely contagious. In fact, most people possess a natural immunity to the leprosy bacteria, with situational factors, such as diet, hygiene, sanitation, and overall health, contributing to immunity. For those who are susceptible, close contact to an infected person is not recommended; however, becoming infected by the leprosy bacteria does not happen as easily as most people expect. In vulnerable areas of the world, leprosy can be transmitted readily, but still only a few cases will develop into the clinically-identified disease.

Thirdly, that leprosy causes noses and fingers and toes to “drop off”. Put simply, this myth is ridiculous! In fact, less than one third of people who have had leprosy develop obvious permanent deformity. The main cause of such deformity is nerve damage; the leprosy bacteria have a particular liking for nerve tissue in colder regions of the body (such as extremities like noses, fingers, and toes), and multiply freely in this preferential environment. The body's immune system attacks the bacteria, with the resulting inflammation compressing and destroying the nerve fibres with varying degrees of loss of function. Muscles may therefore be paralysed, and the sense of feeling may be altered or completely lost, which can lead to infection, ulceration, and deformity through constant and unsensed injury. Fingers and toes do not, therefore, “drop off”, rather they gradually wear away from neglect and continued injury and damage.

<http://www.leprosymission.org.au/TLM/Disease>

End the Cycle of Poverty and Disability

<http://www.endthecycle.org.au/content/about-end-the-cycle/the-cycle>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNhVu6kD-NI>

Luke 17:11-19



What this is: Bible engagement



Where it's used: Messy church celebration time



Time: 10-15 min

In this passage from Luke 17, Jesus is going through a border area where there are villages or towns close to each other, but on different sides of the border, like the Victorian and NSW towns along the Murray, where there are different road rules or Tweed Heads and Coolangatta, where they can have different time zones on different sides of the street!

Divide your gathering space into two areas, 'Galilee' and 'Samaria'.

Create two 'villages' one in Galilee and one in Samaria, allocating all of your group into the two villages.

Use signposts to designate the areas, and create a 'border' between the two regions.

From the people in each village ask them to nominate

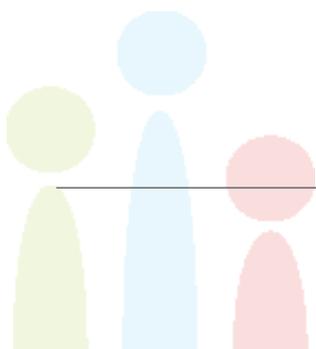
- a priest
- 5 people who are unwell – they have leprosy.

Give the priest a scroll with rules – explain that the rules for worshipping God in the villages are different, but the rules for sick people are the same: according to the rules, the sick people are not allowed to live in the village.

The 5 sick people with leprosy from each village have to live in the space between the villages.

Note that now there is a village of healthy people in Samaria, and village of healthy people in Galilee, and a community of people with leprosy mixed from both Galilee and Samaria.

Now you are ready to read the story from Luke 17. Ask each group to listen out for their group and give a wave!



Join the Dots...

VCCE Children and Families ministry formation through Communities of Practice



VCCE

Luke 17:11-19

11 On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus went along the border between Samaria
(Samaritans give us a wave!)

and Galilee.

(Galileans give us a wave!)

12 As he was going into a village, ten men with leprosy

(People with Leprosy give us a wave!)

came toward him. They stood at a distance 13 and shouted, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

14 Jesus looked at them and said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.”

(Samaritan Priest give us a wave; Galilean Priest give us a wave; Samaritan people with Leprosy, go and see your Samaritan Priest; Galilean People with Leprosy, go and see your Galilean Priest)

On their way they were healed (made clean). 15 When one of them discovered that he was healed, he came back, shouting praises to God. 16 He bowed down at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was from the country of Samaria.

(choose one Samaritan recovered leper to turn back and thank Jesus)

17 Jesus asked, “Weren’t ten men healed (made clean)? Where are the other nine? 18 Why was this foreigner the only one who came back to thank God?” 19 Then Jesus told the man, “Get up and go. Your faith has (saved you) made you well.”

Reflection:

What do you think happens next?

Here are 10 people from two different villages, who have lived together, making a new village because their own villages sent them away. In small groups talk about these questions.

- Now they are well again, do you think they will go back to living in their two different villages? Or keep living with one another in the mixed together village?
- If they go back to their own families in different villages will they stay in contact with their ‘used to be unwell friends’?
- Do you think these two villages will now understand each other better and become friends, even though some of their rules are different?
- What do you think Jesus hopes will happen next?
- Who do we live close to but have different rules or ways of living to? What do you think Jesus wants us to do about that?

*The CEV version doesn’t make clear the different words that are used for healing in this passage. The 10 men are ‘cleansed/made clean’ (katharizo). One discovered he was healed (iaomai). Jesus says to this one that although there were 10 who were healed, this one’s faith ‘saved/healed’ (sozo) him. You might decide to change the CEV text a little to use the different English words to make this distinction.

Quiz



What this is: Messy Church experience



Where it's used: Messy church



What's needed: Print out of questions and answers



Time: 10-15 min



Bible focus/theme: Matthew 5:13-16

1. What is this?



2. What is the only rock that humans regularly eat?

3. What is the chemical name for salt?

4. What do we use salt for today?

5. What number is Sodium on the periodic table?

6. Which historical person led protests against salt taxes?

7. How many grams of salt are there in the average adult human body?

8. Where is the world's largest salt plain?

9. Which of the five flavor senses (sweet, bitter, salty, umami, sour) does salt suppress?

10. Ocean fish drink sea water: True or False

Answers

1. Salt
2. Salt
3. Sodium Chloride
4. 12% Water Conditioning: Water is considered hard when it contains calcium & magnesium (hardness ions). Replacing them with 'soft' sodium ions softens the water avoiding scale build-up on hot water appliances.
68% Industrial Chemicals: The greatest single use for salt is as a feedstock for the production of industrial chemicals and in total accounts for 68% of all the salt manufactured
6% Food Grade Salt: All animals, humans included, require both sodium and chloride for life and health. Since the body cannot manufacture either, it is important these essential nutrients form part of our daily diet
8% Highway Deicing: Salt is the most effective, readily available, and economical highway deicer in use today and accounts for 8% of all salt production
6% Agriculture: Livestock, poultry and other animals need salt supplements as part of a nutritionally balanced diet to remain healthy and disease free
5. 11
6. Gandhi
7. 250gms
8. Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia
9. Bitter
10. True: Saltwater fish constantly lose fluids through osmosis, so they have to drink (their gills get rid of the salt and minerals); freshwater fish do not have this problem (they absorb water osmotically through their skin and gills). Salmon can do both and dolphins live like desert animals, obtaining fluids from the fish they eat.

Talk about our bodies actually need salt to survive. It has been an essential part of our life for thousands of years. It can be used to preserve food, heal wounds and add flavour. How does the good news of Jesus preserve, heal and add flavour to our world, our communities and our families?

October

Matthew 5:13-16



What this is: Bible engagement



Where it's used: Messy church celebration time

Matthew 5:13 (CEV)

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Give each person a small pile of salty potato chips, and a copy of the Bible verse Matthew 5:13 (or display on a screen).

Give the instruction that you will read this short verse all together as a group in unison. Each time you come to the word ‘salt’ or ‘saltiness’ or ‘salty’, everyone eats a chip and keeps reading.

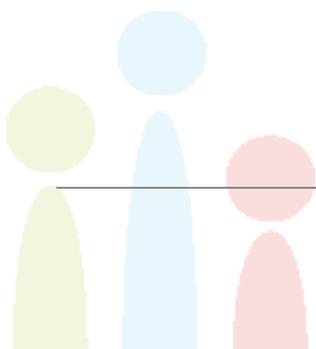
Read the verse as many times as it takes to eat all your chips!

As an alternative, empty a small peck of salt into each person’s palm straight from a salt shaker. Each time you come to the word ‘salt’ or ‘saltiness’ or ‘salty’, everyone puts a little bit of salt on their tongue and keeps reading.

Following this reading, most people will be feeling quite thirsty – be prepared for this and offer glasses of water, but also pause to recognise that one impact of salt is to make people thirsty – not for more salt, but for water.

When we live following Jesus, it makes people thirsty for Jesus, the living water.

* For some people ingesting salt like this isn’t a safe thing to do. Always make it clear that this is an invitation – that as a group we help each other by some people focusing more on the reading, and others help with embodying the experience and making it concrete for the whole community. Some people will both read and taste the salt, others will just read, others will just taste the salt, and others still will watch and observe, and some will help facilitate the participation of others.



Song and Prayer

Follow up Song: SALT (Beth Barnett, Welcoming Voices, 2011)

Living like Jesus
We can make a difference
We can make a difference
In this world
In this world

S – A – L – T
We make a difference
S – A – L – T
In this world
In the world

S – A – L – T
Stop things from going wrong
S – A – L – T
Help make good flavours strong
S – A – L – T
Help to heal
S – A – L – T
In this world
In the world

Follow up Prayer:

Lord Jesus, make us SALT.
Make our minds and all our senses alert

- to seeing your strategies for the kingdom.
- to choose your paths in salty service
- to stand in the way of wrong,
- to prevent evil where we can see it rearing its head
- to protect the weak, the poor, the left out , the pushed aside and the abused.

Lord, Make us SALT,
Bring out the strong salty flavour of your good news in our lives, in our conversations, in our decisions, in our caring and our creating.

Lord Make us SALT,
May our presence be an agent of your healing

- our communities,
- our schools
- our politics
- our churches

Heal the brokenness around us, and heal the wounds within us.

Sheep Stations



What this is: Messy Church experience



Where it's used: Messy church



What's needed: Squatter board game, someone who knows how to play it



Time: 10-15 min each player



Bible focus/theme: Psalm 23

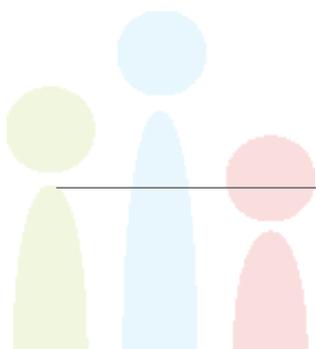
Start the game and as new people come along, 'hand over' the farm to them.
Can you keep all the farms going for the whole session?

Talk about any experiences of farming you may have. Invite people to share stories of a time when they were at the mercy of the elements.

What is it like to be impacted by things (such as the weather or the economy) that you cannot control?

Where do you find comfort in these times?

Think about where you have found lush meadows, quiet pools and abundant blessings.



Psalm 23



What this is: Bible engagement



Where it's used: Messy church celebration time



What's needed: Psalm 23 cut up into separate verses printed on coloured cards (see template) Coloured wool (grey, green, blue, purple, black, brown, orange, red)



Time: 15 minutes

What to do:

Divide your gathering into 8 teams.

Give each team one card with a verse/sentence of Psalm 23, and some wool in the matching colour.

Ask the teams to decide on one key important word from their card that will help everyone remember it.

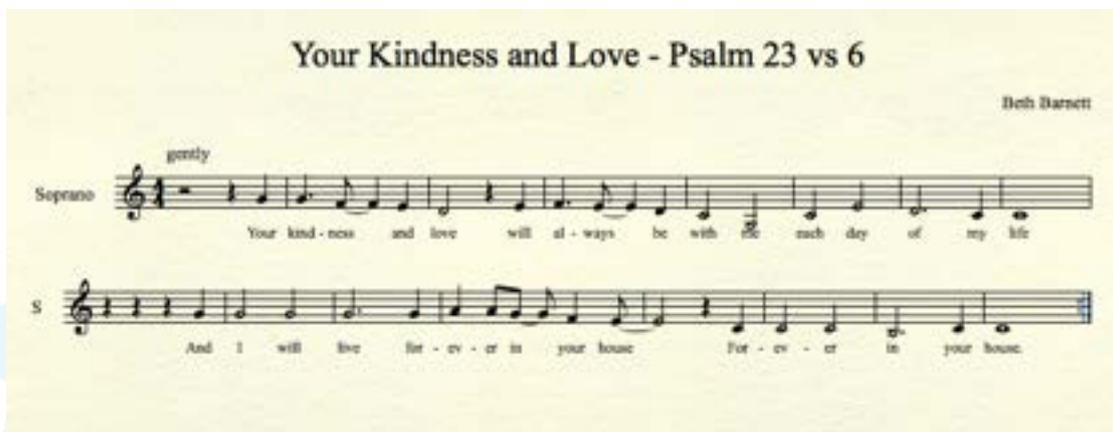
The group then uses the wool to 'write' that word on the floor, and to 'draw' something that illustrates the verse alongside it.

When all the groups have completed their words, re-gather, and read the psalm all the way through, moving to where each group has made their word and illustration. Invite a spokesperson from each group to explain how they chose their word and picture.

As you move from 'word' to 'word' around the room, sing the song below, based on vs 6.

Follow up song

Sing this song as a 4 part round



Your Kindness and Love - Psalm 23 vs 6
Beth Barnett

gently

Soprano
Your kind-ness and love will al-ways be with me each day of my life

S
And I will live for-ev-er in your house For-ev-er in your house.

**¹You, LORD,
are my shepherd.
I will never be in need.**

**²You let me rest in
fields of green grass.**

**³You lead me to
streams
of peaceful water,
and you refresh
my life.**

^{3a} You are true
to your name,
and you lead me
along the right paths.

⁴ I may walk through
valleys
as dark as death,
but I won't be
afraid.

^{4a} You are with me,
and your shepherd's rod
makes me feel safe.

**⁵ You treat me to a feast,
while my enemies watch.
You honor me as your
guest,
and you fill my cup
until it overflows.**

**⁶ Your kindness and love
will always be with me
each day of my life,
and I will live forever
in your house, LORD.**

Good News



What this is: Messy church experience



Where it's used: Messy church



What's needed: Newspapers, scissors, glue, large sheet paper



Time: 20 minutes



Bible focus/theme: Luke 1:26-38

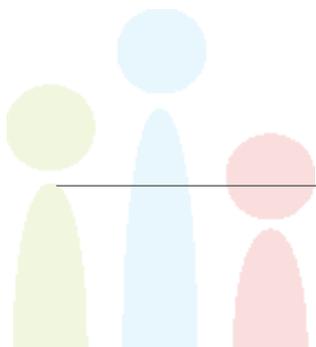
Find and cut out all the words in the reading and glue them onto the paper to reconstruct the passage. There may be words you need to spell out.



Talk about how difficult it is to find the good news in the regular news.

Our world is full of all kinds of news- local, national and world news. It is also full of personal news- Facebook, Instagram. It is often difficult to work out what news we need to hear and it is easy to become overwhelmed.

Invite people to use the prayer cards to reflect and pray for our world.



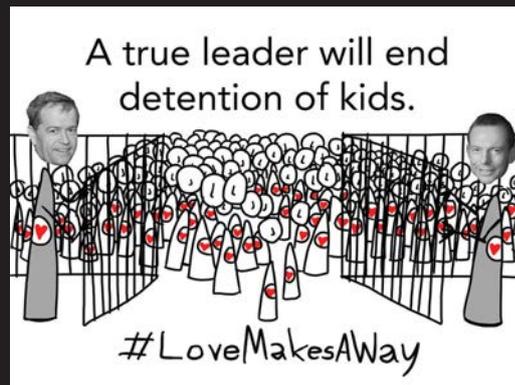
Prayers for our world

Using these images as a guide, make up a printed sheet or powerpoint relevant to your context and community.

Pray for our First Peoples



Pray about some of the key moral issues confronting our society



Prayers for our world

Using these images as a guide, make up a printed sheet or powerpoint relevant to your context and community.

Pray for our Leaders and parliament



Pray for those impacted by climate change and environmental degradation



Luke 1:26-38



What this is: Bible engagement



Where it's used: Messy church celebration time



What's needed: 6 Bibles, feathers, gold sequins, small pieces of paper with words (torn from newspaper); streamer roll, torch, party poppers



Time: 15 minutes

Prepare:

Gather the items required from the list below, placing a small pile of each item on an open Bible. Line up the Bibles in the order that the items appear in the text: feathers, sequins, tissue paper, streamer, torch, party poppers.

Invite someone from your group to be rehearsed and ready to read Luke 1:26-38 from the Bible. This is a deliberately 'mess-making' reading. Blowing feathers and sparkles and paper around, making shadows, throwing streamers and popping party poppers highlight the impact of the news of Jesus' coming as something that stirs things up and unsettles things.

With your group:

Explain that in this story are some unexpected appearances. Choose 6 pairs of volunteers. In each pair, one person holds the open bible, and the other blows/throws/pops the items at the appropriate time in the reading.

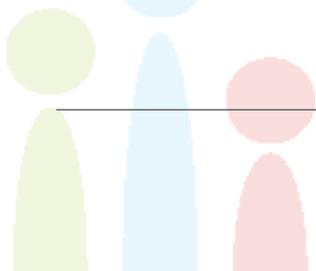
This should create a little liturgical cycle of

- open bible
- reading
- surprise appearance of items
- blowing breath/action
- mess

When you have finished reading and all of the items have been 'messed' and are on the ground, invite your group to come and collect up the items into one large pile, then to take a sample of each item back to their seats and use the items to tell each other the story they have just heard, perhaps in household groups, making sure that grown ups listen to children and children listen to grown ups.

Leave several minutes for this story sharing together.

Repeat the reading again, this time with participants doing their own actions with the tangible things they have collected – as you do this, stop and give some expanding comments connecting the actions to the bible reading (some suggestions in blue below.)



Opening the Bible

Bible reading	Tangible actions	Words to link actions to bible reading...
<p>26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.'</p>	<p><i>Feathers blown from the pages of an open Bible</i></p>	<p>God's message came gently to Mary through an angel.</p>
<p>But she was much perplexed by his words</p>	<p><i>Gold sequins blown from the pages of an open Bible</i></p>	<p>Mary, an ordinary young woman, was a special person in God's plans</p>
<p>and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'</p>	<p><i>Words on tissue paper blown from the pages of an open Bible</i></p>	<p>The words are a bit of a puzzle and will need sorting out and thinking about.</p>
<p>34 Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 35 The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.'</p>	<p><i>Throw a long streamer as far as you can</i></p>	<p>Look how far the streamer has gone – it just keeps going and going. Jesus' loving ways will never end.</p>
<p>36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.'</p>	<p><i>One person shines a torch, while others use their hands to make shadows on the Bible.</i></p>	<p>Shadows can show us what something we can't see directly is like - God's plans for Mary will bring Jesus into the world to show us what God is like.</p>
<p>38 Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.</p>	<p><i>Fire party poppers</i></p>	<p>When something impossible happened – it is exciting, and worth celebrating</p>

Meet the Contributors

VCCE staff generate intergenerational engagement and collate material for Get Messy Aussie Add-Ons from Australian Messy Church practitioners. Submissions of original resources are always welcome!

General resource sharing (such as links to pinterest and website ideas) is also encouraged through the Messy Church Australia Facebook page and Website.

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