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2015 has begun with a rush! Many new Messy Churches have begun, existing Messy Churches have grown and the Australian Messy Church Roundtable gathering has come and gone. As always, there are many exciting stories and resources to explore in this Newsletter. As you continue to play your part in the development of Messy Church in Australia, feel free to send your stories and ideas to [chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au](mailto:chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au) for sharing with the broader network.

## Where do we go from here?

What if - my mind throws the juggling balls up in the air one by one - what if, in Messy Church, we've done something more than just devise a robust way of introducing families to the Christian faith and community? What if we've inadvertently stumbled on a completely new way of being church? What if this Messy way of doing things actually has everything it takes to carry the faith far into the 21st century if we run with it wholeheartedly? What if we just need to have confidence that what feels so right really is right?

Lucy Moore ([read the full article here](#))

## St. Paul's, Albion Park (NSW) - Australia's first Catholic Messy Church

We began Messy Church one year ago. Some families haven't missed a Messy Church since. New families continue to join in, enjoy the experience and say they will be come back. Messy Church has been a great blessing to our parish.

Some things we have found over our Messy Church journey include...

- the sharing of resources makes Messy Church an opportunity for churches - no matter what their size or denomination - to join together and 'break down' some of the barriers that can often separate us
- Messy Church is only successful if you have a team and a pastor who share a passion for this ministry, and the project has the support of the Parish Pastoral Council and the wider parish
- As St. Paul says in one of his letters "there are a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there is all sorts of work to be done but always for the same Lord". This verse of scripture is lived out at every Messy Church as each member of the parish Messy Church team contributes to making the gathering a success.

Recently we hosted our first Messy Church workshop for interested pastors and members of local Catholic parishes. At this workshop our parish Messy Church coordinator and I invited those who attended to come and see Messy Church in action. About 3 Catholic parishes sent representatives to visit our first Messy Church for 2015 and are now considering 'signing up' and registering to start Messy Church in their own parish. Hopefully by Term 2, 2015 we will be able to say St. Paul's Albion Park is one of 3 or 4 Catholic Churches in Australia that has Messy Church.

One email that I received from a local Catholic pastor who attended summarises for me not only the conversion that people go through when they come to Messy Church but how this "ministry" can bring great blessings to any parish or congregation that gives it a go:

*"I guess I was sceptical heading into today. At one level [I thought it would be] just a large play group. Yet it was also so much more. It was authentically church. And probably the only church experience that so many of the parents will have during the year. And for them it said that church was fun. Enjoyable. Life giving. Connected. Real. And clearly loved by the children. All of this makes Messy Church something that should be celebrated and tried"*

David, St. Paul's Albion Park (NSW)



## Messy Unfrozen

The popular Disney film Frozen has prompted quite a few Messy Churches to consider the Christian themes and values of the story about real love. After many requests for help with ideas on Frozen themes we can now offer you a resource with twelve activities including Bible verses, craft links, photographs and a short Celebration Time message with a creative prayer. Click here for [Messy Unfrozen](#).

## New Resources

### Extreme Crafts for Messy Churches

These 50 new activities for Messy Church sessions, carefully crafted to appeal to male as well as female participants at Messy Church, offer approaches for Messy Churches to engage men and boys in an intentional way.



### Messy Family Fun

Fun, low-cost holiday time for your Messy Church families that strengthens their relationships with each other - and yours with them! Messy Family Fun gives you everything you need to run a holiday program for children and adults together.



### Get Messy! May-August 2015

Get Messy! is a four-monthly subscription resource for Messy Church leaders. Each issue contains four session outlines (one per month), including planning sheets and take-home handouts, together with information on the latest resources.



Nb. These resources are usually available from multiple sources, including [MediaCom](#) and [SU Victoria](#).

## Messy Church – A Report

As Messy Church goes from strength to strength, in Australia and around the world, there is an increasing volume of research that seeks to explore the Messy Church phenomenon. One recent Australian addition to this growing body of literature is the [Diocese of Melbourne Messy Church Report](#). Whilst this report was specifically commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of the Messy Church model as a means of parish growth within the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, it also has merit as a reflection on the practice of Messy Church in general.



## 2015 Australian Messy Church Roundtable (AMCR)

The third annual Australian Messy Church Roundtable (AMCR) took place in Adelaide on Monday February 23. Around 20 people from around the country gathered to reflect on their experience of Messy Church, learn together, discern together and pray together. Appreciation is expressed to the Uniting Church in South Australia for their generous hosting of the event, the Uniting Church in Victoria/Tasmania for the facilitation of the event, BRF for its prayerful support and to each participant for their willingness to contribute their time, energy and resources to the development of Messy Church in Australia.

Please e-mail [chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au](mailto:chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au) for a copy of the 2015 Australian Messy Church Report.



## Outcomes from AMCR 2015

At the 2015 AMCR gathering brainstorming took place around the questions “What do Messy Churches in Australia need?” and “What can the AMCR do?” It was agreed that work on specific actions for the *website*, *training*, *networking* and *holding intentional spiritual conversations* needed to be undertaken. If you have suggestions on how any of these areas can be developed further for our Australian context, please e-mail your feedback to [chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au](mailto:chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au).

## Regional Coordinators in Australia

Volunteer Regional Coordinators play a vital role in supporting Messy Church teams that are already operating, assisting new Messy Churches in becoming established and raising the profile of Messy Church across a specific region. Arising from the 2015 AMCR gathering, a process is now in place for the appointment of Volunteer Regional Coordinators in Australia. If you are interested in taking up a role as a Volunteer Regional Coordinator, please e-mail [chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au](mailto:chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au).