



MESSY CHURCH TEAM TRAINING

Training outlines covering
Messy Church values to
explore with your team



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Messy Church Team Training

Welcome to Messy Church team training. These training sessions are for use with Messy Church teams and are designed to:

1. Introduce the core values of Messy Church

One way to highlight the foundational values of Messy Church is to share your own experiences, including photos, video clips or personal stories about each of the values:

- All-age
- Hospitality
- Creativity
- Celebration
- Christ-centred

2. Build good practice and reflection

One of the attractive aspects of Messy Church is that it gives a large team of volunteers the opportunity to serve others and to grow in their own discipleship as they do so. We hope that, as team members see God in practical action at Messy Church, they will be inspired to become better equipped for service through regular training where they can be upskilled. These training sessions should also encourage prayerful reflection on their hands-on experience, enhancing the hands-on experience for further reflection in a cycle of continuing learning.

3. Encourage personal growth

Team training provides opportunities for individual members to grow in personal discipleship, growing closer to God as they share and learn together. And as a team draws closer to God, they will demonstrate the life changing nature of his transforming love more clearly to the families in Messy Church.

Before offering training, please consider the following

- How often should you run training for your team? Running training over an extended period of time (meeting monthly or bi-monthly) will allow for time to reflect on the learning and to practice what has been learned.
- How much detail do you want to consider within each topic? The depth to which you take the topics will depend on your knowledge of the members of your team.
- Do you have team members who are new to faith or are 'not yet' believers? You may consider keeping the main focus on practical issues of Messy Church.
- Is there a Messy Church nearby? Would it be beneficial to connect with the team from this Messy Church to run training together? Your Regional Coordinator may be able to help facilitate this.
- How can you incorporate the Messy Church values (Christ-centred, all-age, hospitality, creativity, celebration) in your training sessions? For example, include a devotion or even a craft and talk about its relevance to a particular Bible passage as you create; have food available, being mindful of allergies; include a range of ages, especially teens who can contribute to the team; provide activities and resources that will engage all types of learners (audio, visual, kinesthetic) in the training; keep the training sessions short and focused.
- As you prepare your training session, keep in mind both your local context and how Messy Church relates to the wider church.



SESSION FORMAT

Each session will include each of the following:

1. Encourage and reflect

- Set a positive tone for the session. Thank everyone for attending and for their ongoing support of Messy Church.
- Highlight some things that went well at a recent Messy Church.
- Revisit the key big picture points from last session and any progress made.
- Include a Bible reflection.
- Consider the wider context of Messy Church (regional, denominational, national) and where your Messy Church sits in that bigger picture of serving God, doing mission, transforming your neighbourhood.

2. Introduce

- Introduce the topic for the session.
- Give examples relevant to your own Messy Church.
- Allow time to pray and seek direction for your Messy Church.

3. Get to work

- Explore the topic through discussion, interactive activities, scenarios.
- Makes use of the handouts.

4. Draw it all together

- Decide on three key big picture points for your team. These should be points that you feel are important for your own Messy Church on this subject.
- Pray together.
- Encourage communication within the team before your next training or Messy Church session.

1. TEAM

1.1 Encourage and Reflect

Required: Quote to distribute; Download from International Messy Church Conference

- Welcome – Thank everyone for the contribution they make to this new way of being church – Messy Church. Highlight some observations from your last Messy Church gathering.
- Wider context – Set what you're doing in your Messy Church into the bigger state, national and international context of Messy Church.
- Reflect – Use the following question and response from George Lings (First International Messy Church Conference 2016). Either read aloud, have available on a handout or download the video from the Messy Church website to show the relevant portion.

What is the essence of Messy Church?

To know what something is – you also need to know what it isn't.

Take a domestic example. Put your hand up as soon as you know what I am describing.

- *You find it in a house.*
- *It has four legs. (not one of the children, not yet clear if furniture or creature).*
- *It has fur and a tail (not a chair or table).*
- *It likes to jump up on the sofa and be stroked (clearer?)*
- *If I then said, you daily take it for a walk (I'm pretty sure it's not a hamster or a cat. It's a dog.*

This animal was like others but also was distinctive. There was what it is and what it is not.

Messy Church exists alongside inherited church. For some people it is a live questions whether it is church or not. Part of the problem is that it is both similar to inherited church and different from it. Messy Church, as you will know, has several values that can be boiled down to a few statements. Each one contains both what it is and therefor also what it isn't. I've gone on a bit beyond the official list.

- *Messy Church is for **all-ages**; it is not merely a children's activity. As a result Messy Church aims for transformation of family life; it is not simply fun for kids.*
- *Messy Church **hospitality** is a conscious value; it is not merely easy access.*
- *Messy Church is about **creativity**; it is not narrowly about craft.*
- *Messy Church is about **celebration**; but that is about all of life not just public worship.*
- *Messy Church is **Christ-centred**; it is not a secular club, or even just theistic.*
- *So Messy Church is about **mission, worship and community**; it is not a bridge back to real church.*

I think it is in the combination of these factors that we see both how Messy Church is like the rest of church and how it is different from other expressions of church.

For every expression of church there is a temptation to focus on external distinctive features. In the OT you could name circumcision. Later Jesus criticised the Pharisees for reliance on external marks of piety. Church history contains bitter



fights about forms of leadership, what are right forms of worship and who is allowed to do what.

I think Messy Church faces a related temptation if it should focus on its craft or its meal time. Many of your values have an obvious out-turn. That helps because the values become visible. I'd like to suggest to you that the least visible value is the most important one, though it is the most elusive.

I suggest to you it is about being Christ-centred. It is needed because, although the other values are heart-warming, and they are evocative of what it is to be human, you could find them in a secular group or in another world faith. They are not necessarily Christian. Yet with Christ at the centre they gain a particular taste.

Why do hospitality? Because it is derived from God's hospitality shown to us in Christ and the character of welcome he gave the unlovely.

Why do creativity? Because it reflects the joyous riot of the Trinity's untidy but deliberate creation and the creative way Jesus interpreted the OT.

Yes, all-age springs in part from God's image being found in all people, but we also hold it because the body of Christ includes all kinds of people and all stages of being human.

Why celebration? For Christians it is rooted in triumph of the resurrection, the beginning of the arrival of the kingdom, and the joy of life with a meaning. The celebratory instincts for praise and thanksgiving will be complete at the return of Christ and the arrival of a new heaven and earth.

And why do discipleship? Because the whole point is encountering Jesus, following and becoming like him.

Yet, facing the sharp question, 'What are we going to do at Messy Church next month?', too easily the least visible value fades and pragmatism rears its head. That same temptation attacks a music group in a charismatic church, the precentor of a cathedral and preacher looking for new jokes.

My suggestion to you is to rejoice in your external differences; like the all-age fun, creativity and meal, but every so often go back to the heart. Is this Christ-centred? Is the team living this value? How is encounter with Jesus being shown, modelled and pursued?

- Read the following quote:

Fresh expressions of church need to develop leadership growing cultures. Where there is a main founding leader it is part of their responsibility to empower members and invest in their leadership potential. It is vital that a team is created which shares real responsibility as soon as that is viable. Those pioneers, whose primary gift is to found the new, have the responsibility to leave behind a community which can carry on without them. Leaders are better grown for a community rather than for an event. When a leader is very creative it is important that they use their creative gifts to involve others rather than to deskill others.

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1.2 Introduce

- Remind everyone that whatever their age or ability, we can always learn something new and improve our skills. Today's session aims to help the whole team to think about how to do the job of leading Messy Church even better than they already do.
- Introduce the topic and why you find it particularly important/ difficult/ challenging/ interesting. If possible cite something that happened in your own Messy Church that is directly relevant.
- Pray to be aware of the nudging and wisdom of the Holy Spirit as you look at this topic.
- Read the following:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails... .

1 Corinthians 13:4 – 8

- Ask how this description mirrors your team in your Messy Church.
- Or perhaps that question results in an embarrassed silence! Pray for God's love to repair any damaged relationships and open everyone's eyes to see each other the way God sees us.

1.3 Get to work

Required: Messy Church DVD; Audio-visual equipment; Handout Team – 1; Handout Team – 2.

- Ask for short, one sentence reactions to the following:

One criticism levelled at Messy Church is the requirement for a large team.

NOTE: Others should not comment on the statements or reactions given.

- Tell your own stories that illustrate this point or use the UK DVD and show track 8. Ask for reactions.
- Gather in small groups or pairs and discuss the questions on the Handout Team – 1.
- Work through Handout Team – 2.

1.4 Draw it all together

Required: Sheets of paper; Pens

- Using the Handout Team – 3 decide together the three key big picture points for your team that have emerged as a priority for today's topic. These should be those things that you all feel are important for your own Messy Church.
- Pray. Thank God for all the people in your team and ask him to open your eyes to all the gifts he's given you all.



- Give each person a sheet of paper and ask them to write their name at the top. Everyone should then pass their paper to the person on their left and write one thing that the named person on the paper they've just received brings to the Messy Church team. Continue passing the papers to the left until they have gone all the way round or until a time limit is reached. Each person can then read their own paper.
- Allow time for quiet reflection.

2. MESSY CHURCH AND THE WIDER CHURCH

2.1 Encourage and Reflect

- Welcome everyone and highlight some observations from your last Messy Church gathering.
- Set what you're doing in your Messy Church into a bigger context. Read one of the following to think about the wider church in which your Messy Church is set:

One of our great allies at present is the Church itself. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean the Church as we see her spread but through all time and space and rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners. That, I confess, is a spectacle which makes our boldest tempters uneasy. But fortunately it is quite invisible to these humans.

C. S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters (1942)

In the same way fresh expressions of church and more traditional forms are to honour, support and pray for one another. They are to recognise each other's integrity and distinctive gifts. The younger can learn from the older without having to use the same cultural forms. The older can have faith, for their own mission, renewed through seeing what God is doing among the younger. The older will need to exercise patience while the newer finds its own shape and identity. While the newer recognises that the older gave it birth. Above all the mixed economy is about mutual generosity.

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We are a mixed economy church, just as the New Testament church, which engaged with Jews and Gentiles, was a mixed-economy church - all baptised into the one body. When one part was in need the whole body suffered. When one part was blessed the whole body rejoiced. The weakest was treated with the greatest concern, and so on. Let that be a picture of the mixed economy church in practice.

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2.2 Introduce

Required: String, cotton, threads of different sorts

- Introduce the topic and why you find it particularly important/ difficult/ challenging/ interesting. Share what you appreciate most about being part of your denomination or your local church.
- Pray to be aware of the nudging and wisdom of the Holy Spirit as you look at this topic.



Read the following:

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Corinthians 1:10

- Have a pile of pieces of string, cotton, wool and thread of different sorts and talk about the different 'strands' that make up your own church life locally, regionally, nationally and internationally... you might even mention the church going back through history and the Church of the future.
- Invite individuals to weave or plait the threads to make a cord.

If the different strands are tangled, or separated, they're not much good to anyone, but if they're bound together, they form an unbreakable cord. We shouldn't look down on any form of church that has Jesus at the centre, just because 'we don't like it': we need to appreciate the different strengths each strand of the church brings to God's kingdom.

2.3 Get to work

Required: Messy Church DVD; Audio-visual equipment; Handout Wider Church – 1; Handout Wider Church – 2.

- Use the UK DVD and show track 9. Ask for reactions.
- Gather in small groups or in pairs and discuss the questions on the Handout Wider Church – 1.
- Work through Handout Wider Church – 2.

2.4 Draw it all together

Required: Handout Wider Church – 3

- Using the Handout Wider Church – 3 decide together the three key big picture points for your team that have emerged as a priority for today's topic. These should be those things that you all feel are important for your own Messy Church.
- *'Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace'*
Ephesians 4:3.

Pray for Christians everywhere who are making sacrifices in order to bring unity and peace to their church, community or family.

- Invite everyone to finish off this prayer with their own words: Help us keep your body united...



3. LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1 Encourage and Reflect

- Welcome everyone and highlight some observations from your last Messy Church gathering.
- Set what you're doing in your Messy Church into a bigger context. Read the following

Fresh expressions of church come into being through discernment and incarnational or contextual mission.

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3.2 Introduce

Required: Cloth; Range of materials for model

- Introduce the topic and explain that this is all about how your local situation can and should influence the way you do Messy Church
- Pray to be aware of the nudging and wisdom of the Holy Spirit as you look at this topic.
- Read what God tells his people in exile in the book of Jeremiah:

'...seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile.

Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper'

Jeremiah 29:7

- Using a piece of cloth as a backdrop, and a selection of materials to represent houses, rivers, mountains, fields, schools and so on, put together a model map of your area, adding all the key features you all consider significant.
- As you look at your map, pray for God's Holy Spirit to bring peace and prosperity to every part of it.

3.3 Get to work

Required: Messy Church DVD; Audio-visual equipment; Handout Local Context – 1; Handout Local Context – 2.

- Ask for short reactions to the following:

What makes one Messy Church different from another?

How important is the local context?

- Use the UK DVD and show track 7. Ask for reactions.
- Gather in small groups or in pairs and discuss the questions on the Handout Local Context – 1.
- Work through Handout Local Context – 2.



3.4 Draw it all together

Required: Handout Local Context – 3

- Using the Handout Local Context – 3 decide together the three key big picture points for your team that have emerged as a priority for today's topic. These should be those things that you all feel are important for your own Messy Church.

- Read Paul's words to the people in Athens:

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

Acts 17:24 – 27

- God has put us where we are and living at the time we are living for a reason. Pray for your area and for the role of your Messy Church in helping families where you are 'seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him'.



4. BEING INTENTIONALLY INTERGENERATIONAL (ALL-AGE)

4.1 Encourage and Reflect

Required: Statistics from Messy Church website; Downloaded video from International Messy Church Conference; Research details; Bible.

- Welcome and reflect on your last Messy Church gathering.
- Choose one or more of the following:
 - a) Get statistics from the Messy Church website.
 - b) Share the video greeting given to the International Messy Church Conference in May 2016 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.
 - c) Read the following quote from Bishop Graham Cray (reproduced with permission from e-xpressions © Fresh Expressions 2011)

Fresh expressions of church are for all generations, from pre-school children and their families to the 'Jagger generation' (Old Mick is a pensioner now!) and every possible local combination. But it is particularly good to see older generations blessing God's work among younger ones... One of the evidences of God's Spirit at work is when we can rejoice when God does something in the next generation, which we have not seen in our own, and encourage young disciples to trust God's Word.

- d) Share some of the findings from research of George Lings presented to the International Messy Church Conference in May 2016.
- e) Include a quote from your denominational leader in support of the Messy Church movement.
- f) Read Psalm 78:1-7

4.2 Introduce

Required: Butchers paper; Pens

- Remind everyone that whatever their age or ability, we can always learn something new and improve our skills. Today's session aims to help the whole team to think about how to do the job of leading Messy Church even better than they already do.
- Introduce the topic and why you find it particularly important/ difficult/ challenging/ interesting. If possible cite something that happened in your own Messy Church that is directly relevant.
- Pray to be aware of the nudging and wisdom of the Holy Spirit as you look at this question.
- Have a volunteer lie on a large sheet of butchers paper and draw around them so that you have an outline of a body. Ask everyone to draw themselves or write their name in the part of the body that they think they might represent. For example if Jane loves to knit, she might draw herself in the fingers; if Flynn is a very loving person, he might draw himself where the heart is.



- As you look at this amazing body you have created, being so different from each other, and yet still working together, ask team members to picture every person – old or young, friend or stranger, good at craft or good at football, loud or quiet, strong or weak – who comes to your Messy Church. Pray or imagine the love of God surrounding and welcoming them.

4.3 Get to work

Required: Messy Church DVD; Audio-visual equipment; Handout Being All-Age – 1; Handout Being All-Age – 2.

- Ask for short, one sentence reactions to the following:

Messy Church is a church for all-ages, not just for children.'

NOTE: Others should not comment on the statements or reactions given.

- Tell your own stories that illustrate this point or use the UK DVD and show track 3. Ask for reactions.
- Gather in small groups or in pairs and discuss the questions on the Handout Being All-Age – 1.
- Work through Handout Being All-Age – 2.

4.4 Draw it all together

Required: Handout Being All-Age – 3; Messy Church DVD; Pens and paper

- Using the Handout *Being All-age – 3* decide together the three key big picture points for your team that have emerged as a priority for today's topic. These should be those things that you all feel are important for your own Messy Church.
- On the picture you drew earlier, invite everyone to draw or write in the body one or more of the following:
 - the families who come or might come to your Messy Church,
 - other Messy Churches locally or in other places (nationally or internationally)
 - BRF (Bible Reading Fellowship) who publish the Messy Church resources
 - Intergen and the Australian Messy Church National Team who support Messy Churches around Australia.

- Read aloud together

'Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.'
Corinthians 12:27

- Invite everyone to write, draw or say short prayers about the picture that results.

OR

- Use track 11 on the Messy Church DVD – a biblical reflection on the body of Christ from 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 and respond to the questions at the end of the track.



5. HOSPITALITY

5.1 Encourage and reflect

Required: Book Messy Hospitality

- Welcome – Thank everyone for the contribution they make to Messy Church. You could also highlight some of the things you observed at your last Messy Church gathering.
- Reflect - One of the gifts that Messy Church offers is to invite people who are un-churched or de-churched to have a genuine family meal around a table. For many families today this can be a rarity. For some people who come to Messy Church, eating alone may be the norm, or perhaps only eating take-away foods or pre-prepared meals. Others will not know what to do with cutlery. The sharing of simple meals that are easy to repeat at home can encourage and maybe even inspire people to try the same at home. Even pausing to say or sing a blessing before the meal may be a chance to open a window for the work of the Holy Spirit in people's lives.
- For Christians the heart of our faith is when we gather around the table and remember the instruction of Jesus to his friends that they were to remember him and make him real whenever they gather to eat and drink. A Messy Church meal can be a way to open the door to talking about Holy Communion or the Eucharist.
- While meals at Messy Church are not designed to be competition winners or feature on an a la carte menu, you may like to take some reviews of the foods that are available at your local eateries and pubs and compare them to what is offered at Messy Church.
- Lucy Moore's book *Messy Hospitality* offers a wealth of resources and encouragement for Messy Church teams. If this is not available you may choose to read an excerpt from one of the Messy blogs on hospitality.

5.2 Introduce

Required: Bible

- Introduce the topic for the session. Talk about something fun or thought-provoking that happened recently at one of your Messy Church meals or during the welcome time where you may also offer some hospitality as people gather.
- Read the following Bible verses and consider the place of food in the gospel message.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Psalm 23:5

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

Revelation 3:20

- Pray, thanking God for being both the host who invites us to share a meal together and the guest who waits to be invited to our tables. Ask God to help you to model the generosity of Christ in all your discussions and ministry.

5.3 Get to work

Required: Messy Church DVD; Audio-visual equipment; Handout Hospitality – 1; Handout Hospitality – 2

- Read out or display the following and invite short one sentence reactions.
‘One of the core values of Messy Church is hospitality.’
- Discuss how hospitality affects the mission and outreach of a church.
- Share a story about the way that hospitality transformed someone’s life.
- Tell your own stories with pictures or show the Messy Church DVD track 4 and ask for reactions.
- Use the discussion questions on the Handout Hospitality - 1.
- In pairs or small groups, work through the checklist on the Handout Hospitality – 2 and discuss.

5.4 Draw it all together

Required: Handout Hospitality – 3; Bible

- Using Hospitality Handout – 3 decide together the three key big picture points for your team that have emerged as a priority for today’s topic.
- Decide who will take responsibility for overseeing each of the priorities and dates by which there should be some progress.
- Read Isaiah 55:1-2. Invite people to pray that the families in your Messy Church will enjoy ‘the richest of fare’.



6. CELEBRATION

6.1 Encourage and reflect

- Welcome – Thank everyone for the contribution they make to this new way of being church – Messy Church. You could also highlight some of the things you observed at your last Messy Church gathering.
- Read the following:
Bishop Graham Cray made this helpful observation in September 2010.

A fresh expression of church is not designed as a halfway house or a stepping stone to attendance at an existing service. These may be good and right things to do but we should not confuse them with fresh expressions of church. Fresh expressions are new congregations or church plants. Of course plans can change. There are projects which were set up for one purpose – such as a bridge to existing church – which later morphed into a fresh expression (people have a habit of getting on to one end of a bridge and refusing to cross). But fresh expressions work better if the clear intention, at the outset, is to plant a new congregation. (reproduced with permission from e-xpressions © Fresh Expressions 2011)

6.2 Introduce

Required: Bible

- Introduce the topic for the session. Talk about something fun or thought-provoking that happened recently at one of your Messy Church celebrations. Talk about Celebration not being limited to songs and story at Messy Church but being centrally related to ALL of life.
- Invite observations from the group. Share a 'moving toward faith' conversation you have had with someone in your Messy Church congregation.
- Read Psalm 27:1-6. Read in the style of Lectio Divina; read the verses aloud a number of times, asking people to listen each time for the words or phrases or images that speak directly to their heart, their mind, their imagination, their spirit.
- Remind the group that the formal part of Messy Church that we may refer to as 'Celebration' may be very different from the experiences of the Psalm writer. However our task as leaders of Messy Church is to create multiple pathways for people of all-ages and backgrounds to encounter God and to enable them to celebrate the present-ness of God in every part of life.
- Invite people to pray using a word or a phrase from the psalm.

6.3 Get to work

Required: Messy Church DVD; Audio-visual equipment; Handout Celebration – 1; Handout Celebration – 2

- Ask for short, one sentence reactions to the following:

Many Messy Church leaders find the celebration the part that's hardest to lead effectively. Couldn't we just... miss it out?



- If you have your own stories, photos and videos about 'celebration' as part of life and what modelling this within the scope of Messy Church looks like, share these now. Use open questions that invite people to enter into discussion.
- Show the Messy Church DVD track 6 and ask for reactions.
- Use the discussion questions on the Handout Celebration – 1.
- In pairs or small groups, work through the checklist on the Handout Celebration – 2 and discuss.

6.4 Draw it all together

Required: Handout Celebration – 3; Bible

- Use Handout Celebration – 3.
- Decide together the three key big picture points for your team that have emerged as a priority from today's topic.
- Decide who will take responsibility for overseeing each of the priorities and dates by which there should be some movement or completion.
- Read Acts 2:42-47
- Ask everyone to name one thing they have enjoyed or found valuable in one of the celebration parts at Messy Church.
- Invite prayers of thanks for the people who have led celebrations or enabled them to truly celebrate life in Christ.
- Pray to be open to the leading and wisdom of the Holy Spirit in planning future celebrations and for all of Messy Church to be intentionally Christ-centred.

7. CREATIVITY

7.1 Encourage and reflect

- Reflect on what you did last time at Messy Church.
- Talk about the importance of creativity or invite someone else to do so.
- Read the following quote from Thomas Merton in *No Man is an Island*:

Art is not an end in itself. It introduces the soul into a higher spiritual order, which it expresses and in some sense explains.

7.2 Introduce

Required: Modelling clay or play dough

- Describe briefly the topic for the session and give your own reaction to, and a reminder of, something fun or thought-provoking that happened recently relating to creativity in your Messy Church.
- Give everyone a lump of modelling clay and have them make a model of something they associate with the idea of being creative.
- Talk about what's been made then remind people that creativity is not about artistic skill but about imagination, re-creation, taking risks, the opposite of destruction. As families are given the chance to create during Messy Church, they are reflecting God's unstoppable creativity that brought the earth into being; they are taking part in his re-creative process in their own lives.

- Relate the way you have all just made something out of nothing to God's work;

'The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being'
Genesis 2:7

- Pray for God's breath, his Holy Spirit, to bring all of our creative endeavours to glorious life in the same way. Bring your thoughts to God in short prayers.

7.3 Get to work

Required: Messy Church DVD; Audio-visual equipment; Handout Creativity – 1; Handout Creativity – 2

- Ask for short reactions to the following:

'...turning being church back into a creative, participatory, communal hive of spiritual life is a worthy goal,

George Lings, Encounters on the Edge no. 46 Messy Church (Sheffield Centre: Church Army, 2010), p. 8.

- Show DVD track 5 and ask for reactions.
- Use the discussion questions on the Handout Creativity – 1.



- In pairs or groups, work through the checklist on the Handout Creativity - 2 and discuss.

7.4 Draw it all together

Required: Handout Creativity – 3; textas or crayons; music to play

- Use Handout Creativity – 3.
- Decide together the three key big picture points for your team that have emerged as a priority from today's topic.
- Decide who will take responsibility for overseeing each of the priorities and dates by which there should be some movement or completion.
- Invite everyone to take pens or crayons and colour/decorate/respond to what has been written on Handout Creativity – 3 while some quiet reflective music is playing.
- Read the following passage about bringing new life out of apparently dead situations:

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?'

I said, 'Sovereign Lord, you alone know.'

Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones and say to them, "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord." '

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live." '

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet - a vast army.

Ezekiel 37:1 - 10

- Thank God for the Holy Spirit, our helper, as we try to bring new life to families at Messy Church.

8. DISCIPLESHIP

8.1 Encourage and reflect

- Welcome everyone and reflect on what you did last time at Messy Church.
- Set what you're doing in your Messy Church into a bigger context. Read the following:

But we are also path-layers, so that those who belong to our fresh expression can grow, with us into Christian maturity. This requires a well-beaten path of Christian habits and practices through which the Holy Spirit forms Christian character. The style and language of these will need to be appropriate to the fresh expression and its content, but we need to be aware that there is something deeply counter cultural about Christian disciplines - regular prayer, learning from scripture, worship, Holy Communion, community and sacrificial service are intended to make us something that we will never become naturally. They are the pathway to becoming like Christ. And that also takes time.

Bishop Graham Cray Reproduced with permission from e-xpressions © Fresh Expressions 2011

8.2 Introduce

- Describe briefly what topic you're thinking about today - Discipleship. Pray for God's help as you look at this topic.
- Read the following:

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'

On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'

Matthew 9:9 – 13

- Ask how God called each person present into a friendship with him. Ask him for help as you seek to understand more about this call today.

8.3 Get to work

Required: Messy Church DVD; Audio-visual equipment; Handout Discipleship – 1; Handout Discipleship – 2

- Ask for short reactions to the following:

'Is Messy Church just about getting people into church or is there a way of going deeper?'

- Show DVD track 10 and ask for reactions.



- Use the discussion questions on the Handout Discipleship – 1.
- In pairs or groups, work through the checklist on the Handout Discipleship - 2 and discuss.

8.4 Draw it all together

Required: Handout Discipleship – 3; Crosses in a range of styles

- Use Handout Discipleship – 3.
- Decide together the three key big picture points for your team that have emerged as a priority from today's topic.
- Decide who will take responsibility for overseeing each of the priorities and dates by which there should be some movement or completion.
- Read the following:

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?'

Matthew 16:24 - 26

- Pre-prepare a collection of differently shaped crosses and invite people to pick one and (re)commit themselves to following Jesus as they hold it. Allow space for quiet reflection with some appropriate music playing.

Handout: Team – 1

Charis: ...about 30 different volunteers but they're not all here at the same time.

Jane: I have 47 names on a list as volunteers.
Lesley: Messy Church isn't something you can do on your own. You just can't. It's too much.

1. Is the need for a big team a problem or an opportunity?

Elizabeth: You need to be friends, you need to get along, you need to have a laugh, you've not to be afraid of getting messy, you've not to be afraid of getting it wrong, and each member of the team is valuable.

Lesley: My role in Messy Church is being on the planning team, and preparing things ready for the day and on the day enjoying Messy Church with my family.

2. How much do you value the low-key roles played by members of your team?

Jane: I approached people that were a bit more on the edge... .

Leader (clown): It's nice to see the teenagers

and the older ones, kids that I see on a different night at a youth club come and actually be helpers here.

3. Where does your team come from?

Cerys: The biggest problem we faced in our Messy Church is it being received by the people within the church. Unfortunately, we haven't had a great deal of support from

those and it's been difficult to build a team from that... .

Charis: Passing on information is a challenge.

4. What are your team's biggest challenges?

Dave: ...something that I personally feel that I want to be part of.

David: Why do I come? Because I love working for the church, I love working for Jesus and I love working with kids as well.

Janet: I just love seeing the children!

Jacky: It's great, it's a great feeling, everyone being together, and all working together for the community.

Chris: I have as much fun as the kids do, really.

5. How important is personal commitment for each member of the team?

Amanda: I think our team within Messy Church has definitely grown as disciples...

even a couple of them stepping out of their comfort zones... .

6. How have members of your team grown through leading at Messy Church?

Christina: I hope you'll be encouraged to continue the good work, to think and pray through how you can improve on what's

happening already, to share that good practice with others and to continue to grow the church in all kinds of different ways.

7. Do you see yourself as a crucial part of the work of growing the church?

Graham: Keep going, set yourself in for the long haul... don't let early excitement or ...early disappointment... distract you from the

sense of being called by God, ...part of a very specific thing he by his Spirit is doing in our nation and round the world at the moment.

8. Do you know you've been called by God to do this work?

9. What is it about your team that makes you thank God?

10. What would make you an even more effective team?

11. How could you grow your team?

Handout: Team – 2

Ideas from other Messy Church Leaders	We do this already	We don't do this because...	Action points
We ask for help from a whole family			
We have 12-month contracts for our team members			
We invite teenagers to be on the team in positions of real responsibility			
We build our team from the new Messy congregation			
We make sure the team all have the bigger picture, the vision of what we're trying to do			
We have appointed someone with the responsibility for pastoral care of the team			
We have occasional encouragement times - cheese and drinks, Messy teas, awards evenings...			
We were happy to start small and build the team up slowly			
We swap jobs within our team to keep everyone fresh and help everyone understand what's involved in each job			
We email everything to each other			

Handout: Team – 3

Whole team key big picture points

As a whole team, agree on three points from Hand Out 2 that you can act on together to enhance people's experience at Messy Church.

1. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

2. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

3. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

Further questions to consider:

1. Who could you invite on to the Messy Church team?
2. How can you encourage and affirm your team leader?
3. What do you value most about being part of the team?
4. Read Isaiah 43:1 - 4. How important do you feel you are to God?
5. How seriously do you take your role as front-line leader in Messy Church?
6. Might this form of leadership be the first step towards other leadership in the church?
7. How can you encourage the younger (and older) leaders on the team?
8. Is there any training offered by your church, wider area or similar that would help you serve better at Messy Church?
9. What are the particular challenges your team faces?
10. What can you do to improve communications across the team?
11. How do you see individuals in your team growing in Christ as they lead

Handout: Wider Church – 1

Graham: ... what we have to do is learn how church can go and be church where they are or in a way that's much more welcoming and accessible to them and yet clearly and distinctively still the Church of Jesus.

Christina: We have to make the gospel known in all kinds of different places and all kinds of different ways and this is just one of the ways that God is using at the moment.

Graham: I'm convinced we have caught a wave of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is teaching the church to do things differently, to engage with communities as they really are...

in the case of Messy Church particularly with families and children.

Richard: There is no doubt God is at work in Messy Church. The fact that it is growing so fast and inspiring so many people, to me, is clear evidence that God's at work.

Christina: Sometimes God does a new thing... and it seems to me that at the moment God is doing a new thing around the world through Messy Church and that we must praise him and thank him for that, pray that it'll go on growing and wherever we can, bless the work and encourage it on.

1. How strongly do you sense God at work in your own Messy Church?

Christina: ...is Messy Church church? ...I think it certainly is, because it's Christian people coming together to share the stories of Jesus with families, and to encourage people to find out what that might mean in their everyday life, to pray, to worship and to become disciples of Jesus.

Graham: Messy Church is definitely not just a club. It definitely is, as far as I'm concerned,

church: ...a group of people either moving towards or enquiring about or supporting their children finding out about Jesus, and community is forming around those tables. So as far as I'm concerned, it's church.

Richard: It's all about creating relationships, month in month out... meeting people where they are.

2. How is your Sunday church 'church'? How is Messy Church 'church'?

Graham: The challenges that come with it, not the downside, but the things you have to be patient about, are around growth in discipleship. If it is church, then one day part of the pattern will be sacramental, there'll be communion, baptisms will take place within it, and all of that requires working out within whichever denomination it is... .

Graham: I suspect that all that is needed for Messy Church to help people grow into quite mature informed discipleship is implicit in the basic picture and model, and I'm convinced now that the Holy Spirit almost unfurls or unfolds church stage by stage as we do these mission things and it will be fascinating to watch what the next things are going to be that are unfurled.

3. Is this true in your experience of people becoming disciples of Messy Church?

Graham: God honours those who take the risk of stepping out. If you wonder if you will have the spiritual energy, if you'll have the imagination, if you'll manage to keep it going,

if the church council really will pay for it... step out and find that God is faithful. And God is faithfully working all across and beyond his church so why don't you join in too?

4. How could you step out more boldly?

5. What do you think church is?

6. If your church congregations were a family, what member of the family would Messy Church be?

7. What can each congregation bring to and take from the wider church?

Handout: Wider Church – 2

Ideas from other Messy Church Leaders	We do this already	We don't do this because...	Action points
We include prayers for Messy Church at Sunday church and vice versa			
Deliberately decide to respect different ways of worshipping God even if they 'don't suit me'			
We invite Messy families to other suitable church activities			
We think imaginatively about the good things we can bring from our denomination into Messy Church			
We talk as a team about how God is at work in both Messy Church and inherited church			
Read more about Fresh Expressions and draw on these resources (website, books, training)			
Sign up our Messy Church on the website directory to be a resource to the wider church			
Invite leaders from our denomination to visit			
Stamp down on any hint of competition or rivalry or superiority between congregations			
Use our denominational structures to further the work of Messy Church (e.g. speak at synods, area meetings, write reports for our denominational media)			
We encourage each other to step out in faith in small and large ways			
Think creatively about the sacraments within Messy Church			

Handout: Wider Church – 3

Whole team key big picture points

As a whole team, agree on three points from Hand Out 2 that you can act on together to enhance people's experience at Messy Church.

1. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

2. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

3. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

Further questions to consider:

1. What do you value about your church? What do you find difficult?
2. Read Colossians 1:15 - 20. What really matters in your church?
3. What would you love other people to receive from your church?
4. What resources and gifts do you have that could be used in God's service?
5. Do you see yourself as a church representative wherever you go and whatever people you are with?
6. How much do you take from church to inform the way you live when you're not at church?
7. Are there other resources you could enjoy to enrich your walk with God?
8. When was the last time you stepped out in faith?
9. How do you see the Holy Spirit changing the climate of the church and of society where you live?
10. What do you praise God for at the moment?

Handout: Local Context – 1

Elizabeth: We have people coming in from all walks of life.

and is in the middle of two quite different housing estates. There's lots of private housing on one side and social housing on the other side.

Charis: The church is on the main high street

1. How would you describe the people in your local area without labelling them?

Paul: It's got quite a long history... quite a traditional church.

Amanda: ...it was built after a decision to plant a church in the council estate.

Stephen: We have three other churches close by... the churches support each other... .

Stephen: The traditional form of services we have here which is attracting quite a few people was not really attracting the families...

2. How does your Messy Church build on or change the direction of your church's tradition?

Stephen: We'd done a survey... and found that 4 o'clock seemed to be a bit of a dead time in family life... quite a good time before they sort of start getting ready for school the next day, doing their homework in a panic... .

this particular area we're very into clubs, so by the time we've taken the children to swimming or football... gone to do the shopping... been to visit in the hospital... they're ready for something at teatime on a Saturday.' And it would be even better if we could feed them too. And then, wow, if we could get them home in time for The X Factor that would be even better!

Jane: I went to the school gates and I asked the local organisations and the families involved when would be a good time to do church of any kind, and they all said, 'Well in

3. How ready is your church to put the needs of its local community first?

Christina: ...Find out what kind of community you're living in... think about how the church can reconnect with people 'in their context'.

community. It's like finding out what the soil is before you decide what's the right seed to plant into it.

There isn't a single answer to these things. It has to be different because there are so many different communities up and down this land.

Richard: It doesn't matter what kind of resources or limitations they might have, so long as they can think through how Messy Church might work in their context - we're pretty confident that Messy Church can work anywhere.

Graham: I think probably every church in the country has lost touch with some parts of its local community. The first thing you do is listen to God and listen hard to the

4. If all these statements are true, what do you think it is about Messy Church that makes it so universal in appeal?

5. How do you see churches adapting Messy Church to their local context?

6. What do you think are significant factors in your local context?

7. How do you/could you respond to these?

Handout: Local Context – 2

Ideas from other Messy Church Leaders	We do this already	We don't do this because...	Action points
We hold our Messy Church in a building where everyone feels at home			
We have considered sharing the facilities of another church or school			
We have thought creatively about the way we use the space available to us, including space outside			
We have taken Messy Church out of our building and into the heart of the community occasionally			
We have carefully considered the cultural needs of the people who come to our Messy Church			
We have adapted the Messy Church shape to meet our own community's needs and the restrictions of our own situation			
We look on our apparent limitations as opportunities to do something unique to our setting			
We use and celebrate the gifts of local people from in and outside the church			
We have ongoing strategies in place to listen to the changing needs of the families who come to our Messy Church			
We draw from our own church's tradition to enrich our Messy Church			

Handout: Local Context – 3

Whole team key big picture points

As a whole team, agree on three points from Hand Out 2 that you can act on together to enhance people's experience at Messy Church.

1. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

2. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

3. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

Further questions to consider:

1. Do you think the physical place where you live is important to God?
2. Do you believe God has brought you to this place at this time for a reason?
3. How much do you care about the place where you live?
4. Where do you see God already at work in your area?
5. What special 'flavour' can your community give to your Messy Church?
6. How is your church transforming the community around it?
7. If your area was a colour, what colour would it be?
8. Read Amos 9:11 - 15. What might this vision of restoration look like in your own life?
And in the area you live?
9. What can your unique Messy Church contribute to the worldwide network of Messy Churches?

Handout: Being All-Age – 1

Elizabeth: I think that the adults who come actually enjoy being a child for a while.

Stephen: I think some of the things we do like having tea (a meal) together obviously appeals to everybody. Funnily enough the

craftwork appeals to everybody as well and you find parents who have perhaps not played around with play dough for years sitting down and making little figures, squidding shapes or putting Lego together...

1. What do you observe happening when we encourage people of all ages to 'play' in church?

Mum: This is Benjamin... he's three weeks old...

2. I wonder if bringing Benjamin to church is important.

Mum: I've got two little boys. I come with them and I bring my next door neighbour's little girl. My two nieces come with my mum. They also go to clubs in the church but not with me. So this is something that we can all come to and interact, and meet other people as well...

Paul: ... the notion that church is just for a particular group of people or a specific age group is surely something that Jesus wouldn't go along with... clearly, families matter to Jesus very much indeed... He wants simply to bless the children, bless the families...

Amanda: ... In times past, when we had traditional Sunday School, it segregated people. And we've now come to a stage where children and family time is very important. So people want to do things they can do together.

Stephen: As a church... we've tended to do a lot for the older age group... And we've often done things for children, but there's a huge gap in between. And one of the great things about Messy Church is that we tend to get all ages coming along. And they're all actually doing things together and enjoying each other's company.

Jane: ... grandmas... children... single gentlemen... teenagers... families with special needs...

Christina: Being able to create a kind of church where people come together to learn is really important. I believe adults have got a lot to learn from children... Their innocence provokes in us a way of thinking which perhaps is completely new... [Messy Church] is a way of saying Jesus is for everyone and that's what the church should be saying.

3. I wonder how being an all-age church has enriched, challenged or blessed you.

Amanda: The hardest thing about trying to be a church for all ages is remembering that it is exactly that, trying not to focus on

one particular age group... trying to encompass everybody in what you're doing

4. Can you describe the hardest thing about being an all-age church?

5. What do you think is the most exciting about being all-age church?

6. Can you describe the thing you find most challenging about being all-age?

7. What are your prayers about the all-age aspect of your Messy Church?

Handout: *Being All-Age – 2*

Ideas from other Messy Church Leaders	We do this already	We don't do this because...	Action points
In our publicity, we aim to appeal to all ages not just children			
In our welcome, we remind adults that they are invited to take part in everything			
We plan our creative activities to include something for older and younger people, male and female, people with and without disabilities			
In the celebration, we make sure everything is accessible and relevant to everyone			
We have a checklist to make sure we consider access to each aspect of Messy Church			
We make sure that we have a range of people on the team			
We let everyone know they can ask for prayer			
We have a team member responsible for observing people who need support and encouragement to participate			
We endeavor to keep everyone informed about relevant events happening in the wider church community			
We try to remember that the welcome of God is offered to every single person, no matter how old or young, or whatever abilities			

Handout: Being All-Age – 3

Whole team key big picture points

As a whole team, agree on three points from Hand Out 2 that you can act on together to enhance people's experience at Messy Church.

1. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

2. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

3. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

Further questions to consider:

1. What do you personally enjoy about being in a Messy Church with people from all stages of life and of all abilities present?
2. What do you find hardest to cope with about being in a church service with people who aren't your own age? Why? Whose problem is this? Can anyone help?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-27. Is there a phrase that grabs your attention?
4. Should we ever split into different groups in church?

Handout: Being All-Age – 3 cont'd

5. Why do families want to come together to your Messy Church?
6. Why is it so hard to convince some adults to join in the creative activities at Messy Church? What might help them?
7. Why is it so hard to run an all-inclusive celebration? How could you help?
8. What Bible passage or story says most to you about what it means to be church?
9. How do you make time to play?
10. Which elderly/middle-aged/young person or person with disabilities has taught you something about Jesus?
11. What do you want three-week-old Benjamin to know about Jesus?
12. What do you want Joshua's great-nana to know about Jesus?

Handout: Hospitality – 1

Quote 1 *I think hospitality is absolutely fundamental to Christian mission. It's the first step... hospitality and welcome. ...Jesus... was known for welcoming people... He was*

demonstrating something about the kingdom of God, that where God is, there will be this acceptance and welcome of people first and foremost, and that their response to God.. is a secondary part of that.

1. Do you agree that hospitality is 'absolutely fundamental' to the church's mission?

Quote 2 *We always try and make people feel welcome when they come to Messy Church. I think there's a fine line between welcoming somebody and being too overbearing. When [they] arrive, they're welcomed with a cup of coffee and the children have a drink... it's a chill-out time.*

Just saying hello, making sure you've spoken to the child as well as the parent, just gently joining in conversations, being part of what we're doing, talking while we're doing the activities, just not pouncing on people...

2. How do you like to be welcomed?

Quote 3 *It's always worth bothering with food at Messy Church. It's key to the success here... Jesus was always eating with people... It's a very gospel... a very family thing to do and I think that builds community. It's so easy to sit down and chat to someone*

while you're eating a marshmallow or a plate of homemade soup... I think wherever people gather together and eat, there's a camaraderie and a fellowship that you don't get in any other setting. And actually I think theologically it's very sound: Jesus ate meals with his friends.

3. What does food bring to your church community?

Quote 4 *As simple as possible... fabulous homemade soup... We did start off with cooking hot food but that was quite*

a bit stressful... sandwiches... snacks... meatballs with spaghetti... fresh fruit salad and a shortcake biscuit... the cost is really minimal..

4. The DVD showed very different meals. What sort of food is right for your situation?

Quote 5 *A very good example of hospitality in Jesus's ministry is the story of the feeding of the five thousand... Jesus welcomes them, Jesus spends time with them... he provides enough for*

everybody, the men the women and the children have enough to eat and there's more left over, and that is a demonstration of God's kingdom, of the abundance of God's kingdom that's freely given to all people.

5. How does food demonstrate kingdom values to families?

6. What makes your Messy Church hospitable?

7. Which aspect of hospitality is most challenging for your church?

8. What picture of God do you think people receive from the way you welcome them to your church?

Handout: Hospitality – 2

Ideas from other Messy Church Leaders	We do this already	We don't do this because...	Action points
We have clear signs so that people know how to get into the building			
We have a person at the door who sees welcome as real vocation, not just a job to do			
We consider our rooms (including the toilet) from the point of view of someone new (especially those with a pram, a wheelchair, on crutches...)			
We have considered whether the team members need to be clearly identifiable			
We make sure newcomers know what's happening			
We have team members whose only job is to put people at their ease			
We keep some consistency in our sessions from month to month so that people feel safe in knowing what to expect			
We make the food accessible to all, including those with special diets			
We make sure the team members spread themselves around the tables			
The presentation of the food is made as attractive as possible			
We remember Jesus is among us as we eat			

Handout: Hospitality – 3

Whole team key big picture points

As a whole team, agree on three points from Hand Out 2 that you can act on together to enhance people's experience at Messy Church.

1. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

2. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

3. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

Further questions to consider:

1. Do you think of God more as a host or a guest?
2. What makes somewhere home for you?
3. When did you last go somewhere new? How were/weren't you made to feel welcome?
4. Read Luke 22 and picture the Last Supper: what is most vivid to you?
5. Imagine arriving at your Messy Church for the first time. What do you see? How do you feel? What do you smell?
6. Now imagine you're a child arriving at your Messy Church for the first time: answer the same questions. How are new people going to know what is happening at this Messy Church?
7. Who in your team do you think is the best welcomer? The best befriender? Is there anyone in the wider church who also has a gift for this, and could either join or train the team?
8. What's your favourite story in the Bible involving food?
9. How important do you think the meal is at Messy Church?
10. What difference do you think eating together makes?
11. Think of a really good memorable meal you've had. What made it special? Can you include this element in the Messy Church meal?
12. How hospitable are you?

Handout: Celebration – 1

Lesley *The worship part is so important because if we're saying this is church then worship is part of it. I mean, we might as well just run a secular craft club, really, if we're not going to have the worship... We're... trying to*

lead people along their journey of faith, wherever they may be, and we're trying to make that accessible for them, so without the worship it's just empty really...

1. How do the creative activities and celebration times complement each other?

Charis *...the idea of being together is central... all the things that we do during the afternoon are focused in on that fifteen minutes... a chance for people to explore together what we've been doing throughout the whole afternoon in a mad, creative way.*

2. How do you help people feel that 'togetherness'?

Elizabeth *... a time when we can share something of God's love together and to be really involved in expressing that, and a time for giving thanks...*

congregation is used to sitting and listening, we haven't got that kind of congregation at Messy Church

Jane *Unlike on a Sunday when our*

Amanda *Reading a story from a book just doesn't work.*

3. How participative can your celebration be?

Amanda *I think the adults really enjoy the celebration time: firstly, because they see that their children are enjoying it and, secondly, because most of the adults aren't regular churchgoers and it's quite a non-threatening*

time. They can hear Bible stories, and they get that linked to how it affects their lives, and also the songs we sing are really fun

Charis *We want it to be the adults and children singing together, listening together, sharing a prayer or a thought together*

4. What makes your celebration inclusive of everyone?

Amanda *You have to work within the talent that your team has*

Jane *We are inviting a rota of laity to be involved which is wonderful. We have different kinds of gifts and talents now that are offered each time*

5. What unexplored talents are in your team?

Charis *It's a much calmer, more focused time during Messy Church... it gives us a chance just*

to be a Messy Church group altogether and to enjoy that shared experience

9. How does the celebration give your Messy Church an identity?

10. What do you find most exciting about the celebration opportunities?

11. What do you find most challenging?

12. What would you like to hold in your prayers about Messy Church celebrations?

Handout: Celebration – 2

Ideas from other Messy Church Leaders	We do this already	We don't do this because...	Action points
We make our celebrations accessible to all ages and abilities			
We have carefully considered why we do/don't have music			
We do this' together with' our members, not 'for' or 'at' our members			
We have actively looked for gifts from the membership as well as from the team to help lead celebrations			
We have as many of the team as possible joining in the celebration			
We make opportunities to model ways adults could worship at home with children			
The whole team is certain what the celebration is for			
We have deliberately observed a celebration and reflected critically on it in order to improve next time			
We make sure adults and children are sitting together, not separately			
We offer the best quality worship we can in our Messy Church; it is never second best			
We appeal to all sorts of learners: watchers, listeners, movers, readers			
If someone asks for baptism we would offer the option of a Messy baptism			

Handout: Celebration – 3

Whole team key big picture points

As a whole team, agree on three points from Hand Out 2 that you can act on together to enhance people's experience at Messy Church.

1. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

2.

Action by (team member)

by (date)

3. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

Further questions to consider:

1. Why do you come to church?
2. Why do(n't) you think it's important to include the celebration at Messy Church?
3. In what ways do you think a Messy Church celebration is different from a 'normal church service' and in what ways is it the same?
4. What words would you use to describe the atmosphere of a Messy Church celebration?
5. Read 2 Chronicles 30:22 - 23. What do you think 'the whole assembly' was enjoying so much?
6. Where do you see God most vividly at work in and apart from Messy Church?
7. What would you secretly like to put in place to help people come closer to God in the celebration?
8. What would Jesus say if he walked into a Messy celebration? Or your other church services?
9. What helps you meet God?
10. What helped you feel close to him when you were a child?
11. How do you keep the mystery of God and the friendship of Jesus in a creative tension in your own discipleship?

Handout: Creativity – 1

Paul: ...everybody has a creative streak in them... I believe that God has made us like himself, we're made in his image, and that means we have this creativity within us.

Elizabeth: Perhaps people come closer to God through the crafts because we're all being creative together, we're all making things.

Amanda: ... for adults, it's a time when they can feel more childlike, which makes it easier, I think, to come closer to God because you forget all the things that you're worried about. You're just concentrating on that important time with 'the child'.

1. Do you think creativity is a helpful way to come close to God?

Amanda: ...it brings families together because it gets them talking about what they're doing.

Elizabeth: I think the craft time is so important because I think it helps families bond... it's wonderful to see families connecting and sharing a craft.

2. How do you encourage families to do things together?

Dave: It's not just for fun - there is a purpose to every activity.

Chris: You can learn about God and learn about the journey in the Bible through lots of different ways. And in these ways the kids

have actually been involved in physically doing something... . Rather than just having to sit down quietly and be told things, they actually get involved and they get more out of it that way.

3. How do you learn best?

Dave: Some of the amazing things I've seen are often in the eyes of the children when they realise that something they've done or tried to

do, and perhaps they thought they couldn't do it, has actually worked.

4. What else is going on in someone's personal development apart from just painting a picture or making a model?

Dave: ...we run crafts and sporting activities.

Judith: It's quite hectic in there, so we decided we'd put in a place where you can come and

reflect, and there's little activities... .

Vicki: As you can see, it's very messy!

5. What makes one activity 'holy' and another not?

6. What do you find most exciting about the craft or activity time?

7. What do you find most challenging about the idea of creativity?

8. What would you like to hold in your prayers about the creative time in your Messy Church?

Handout: Creativity – 2

Ideas from other Messy Church Leaders	We do this already	We don't do this because...	Action points
We think creatively/outside the box for all aspects of Messy Church, not just the creative time			
We draw on the creativity of the whole team, not just one 'arty' person			
We have somewhere to dry pictures and some way of taking creations home safely			
We give people freedom to use their gifts, explore and experience their own creativity			
We make sure the whole team is confident about the theme and Bible story			
In our planning, we reflect the fact that people work in different ways			
We include activities and challenges as well as 'make-it' crafts			
We make sure we include a variety of activities to help people of all abilities explore the theme			
We are prepared to risk being creative ourselves			
We encourage families to have a go together			
We consciously consider boys and men when we are planning activities for the creative time			

Handout: Creativity – 3

Whole team key big picture points

As a whole team, agree on three points from Hand Out 2 that you can act on together to enhance people's experience at Messy Church.

1. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

2.

Action by (team member)

by (date)

3.

Action by (team member)

by (date)

Further questions to consider:

1. How much do you enjoy the creative time in your Messy Church?
2. What creative skill do you have that the team leader knows nothing about, and which you could use at Messy Church to serve others?
3. When did you last make something you were proud of?
4. When did you last try to learn something new?
5. Whose company and conversation inspires you to think out of the box?
6. When did you last spend time on something for its own sake, rather than because it was 'good for you', profitable or useful?
7. 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made' - what part do you play in your Messy Church mission that only you can play?
8. 'I am a new creation' - where do you feel the Holy Spirit is most alive in your life?
9. When did you last do something spontaneous?

Handout: Discipleship – 1

1. How do we help the people who've never been to church before to grow in their faith?
2. What particular issues do you think Messy Church leaders should have in mind if they're thinking about 'we want our people to grow in faith'?
3. What do you feel this word 'discipleship' means?
4. How do you assess the effectiveness of your Messy Church as a way of growing people's faith?
5. What do you encourage people to do at home to continue Messy Church in between times?
6. Does Messy Church really show the cost of being a Christian?
7. In what ways have you seen people growing in your Messy Churches?
8. What would you like to say to Messy Church leaders who are grappling with this question of 'growing disciples'?

Handout: Discipleship – 2

Ideas from other Messy Church Leaders	We do this already	We don't do this because...	Action points
We see discipleship as much more than coming to church			
We provide means for families to carry on their discipleship at home			
We offer an alternative session at another time for those who want to go deeper			
We affirm the vocational nature of parenting			
We give opportunities to pray during Messy Church			
We accept that it is a long slow process for many people			
We have 'milestones' to mark stages of the faith journey			
We offer baptism in Messy Church			
We offer Holy Communion at Messy Church			
We intentionally help people understand the Bible			
We have thought about our own discipleship journey			
We are committed to being imaginative about the ways forward we offer to people to help their discipleship			

Handout: Discipleship – 3

Whole team key big picture points

As a whole team, agree on three points from Hand Out 2 that you can act on together to enhance people's experience at Messy Church.

1. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

2. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

3. .

Action by (team member)

by (date)

Further questions to consider:

1. How did you come to faith? Who was important to you in that process?
2. Who is important to you in that process at the moment?
3. 'But what about you?' [Jesus] asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Peter answered, 'God's Messiah.' (Luke 9:20, NIV©2011) Who do you say he is?
4. What do you do to follow Jesus more closely?
5. How does your church help you be a disciple?
6. How can you appropriately show love to the families who come to your Messy Church?
7. What special insights has God given you into who he is and how can you share those?
8. How important is service to others in your discipleship journey?
9. How do you receive food for the journey?
10. What does being a disciple mean to you?