



September



Seed bombs

Activity

Tear strips of each colour of tissue paper and soak separately in some water in the bowls. Take some of each colour of the wet paper in your hand and flatten it out, then sprinkle some seeds on to the wet tissue paper. Squeeze the wet paper and seeds into a ball shape over a bowl to catch the excess water. Leave to dry a little, then place the seed bomb in your garden. Don't forget to water it and watch as the seeds grow over the coming weeks.

Talk About

Talk about how our world is full of beauty and how it is our job to look after it as best we can. Seed bombing an area helps new things to grow and can also provide a home for bugs.



Prayer ramble

Activity

Look at the map and walk around the stopping points. At each point, listen, look or collect the things listed. What will your prayer be? Examples could include thank-you prayers for the birds we hear, sorry for the mess we make of the world God made, thank you for clever people who made cars and wagons but help us to use fuel resources wisely, thank you for times when we can have a rest and when nature rests in winter time, thank you for the flowers, trees, etc. that we can see.

Talk About

Talk about looking and listening carefully to see the world around us that God made and to wonder how we can help to care for it.



Big, beautiful world

Activity

Cut the tablecloth into a large circle (you could do this more easily by folding it in half, then half again and cutting a quarter-circle). Using the coloured paper, cut out some shapes to represent some countries and stick on to the world shape. Cut pictures out from the magazines that show some of the things in our world that are beautiful – for example, pictures of mountains, animals, trees, food sources, people, etc. and stick them on to the world. Decorate further with your extra craft material.

Talk About

Talk about how the world is full of beauty – if only we would stop to take notice of the creation around us more; we see God's beauty all the time, everywhere we look!



Bird feeder

Activity

Cut two small holes in the lid of the crisp tube and thread a piece of string through them, tying it together to make a loop to hang the bird feeder with. Using the spatula, spread the peanut (or alternative) butter on to the tube (be aware of nut allergies). Fill the tray with the birdseed. Roll the butter-covered tube in the tray of birdseed until it is all covered. Hang the bird feeder up with the string and watch the birds enjoy!

Talk About

Talk about how it is our responsibility to care for all creation. Look to see how many new birds are coming to use the bird feeder in your garden!



My promised fridge-magnet

Activity

Using the printed template as a base, draw features that personalise the figure to look like yourself, adding hair, eye colour, etc. Think about a promise you could make to help care for creation and write or draw it at the bottom. Colour in the world in green and blue to show the land and the seas. Cut it out and stick a magnet to the back so that you can pop it on your fridge when you get home.

Talk About

Talk about how we all need to make promises and remember to care for God's creation. This fridge magnet will remind you and will help you to act on that promise.



Food travelogue

Activity

Look at the map and identify where you live. Put a card marker on the country. Choose a tin or pack of food and try to guess where it comes from. Look at the label to check your answer and then put a card marker on the map.

Talk About

Talk about the people who produce our food and the countries in which they live. How can we support them? Consider the miles our food travels. Could we grow more of our food closer to where we live? How can we reduce the travelling distance of our food?



Nature in our place

Activity

Choose three weather features and create an illustration of one in each of the three boxes. Choose three each of trees, wildflowers, birds, butterflies and draw one of each in a box on the grid. Stick your grid on to a piece of card and decorate the card. You can do this based on what you can see around you or from your imagination.

Talk About

Talk about nature being all around us and all the amazing things God created. How can we look after all of the things on our grid?



Treasure under the sea

Activity

Fold each piece of paper with the picture or word on several times and put them in a box. Gather around the parachute, with the box on the floor in the centre and practise making waves – stormy waves, big mushrooms, etc. As one of the mushrooms is made, call the name of one of the people around the parachute who ‘swims’ under it to the box in the middle and takes out one of the pieces of paper. Look at what is on the paper and decide whether it is good or bad to find it in the sea. Take turns calling the name of the ‘swimmer’ and repeat until the box is empty.

Talk About

Talk about all the things we find in the sea. Why are some things good and some things not so good? How can we help to keep rubbish out of our seas?



World cupcakes

Activity

Heat up the cake-maker/oven and make up the cupcake mixture according to the packet or the recipe. Put half of the mixture into a bowl and add a few drops of blue colouring. Add a few drops of green colouring to the remainder of the mixture. Put cake cases on a tray or plate. Put a teaspoonful of each mixture on to a large spoon and gently swirl it. Drop the mixture into each cupcake case. Bake the cakes for eight minutes (or according to recipe), then take them out (make sure an adult does this!). Allow them to cool on a tray.

Talk About

Talk about mixing lots of things to make the cake. Which part was the most fun? Where do we get flour, butter, sugar and milk from before they go into the packs in the supermarket?



Plenty-to-eat placemat

Activity

Use the template to make a placemat for each person, cutting where shown. Take a strip of paper and weave it in and out across the base. Put a little glue at each end to stick it down. Decorate the placemat with the food stickers.

Talk About

Talk about all of the food we eat, what we like the best and what we don't like as much. Do we always eat all of the food on our plate? How much food do we waste? Can we do more to waste less?



October



Dendro-generational

Activity

Look at the trees. The rings tell us about weather patterns and growth patterns that are unique to certain years. When you find a dramatic dark line, it relates to a certain year of growth and then you count outward to determine the age of a tree. Each ring represents a year. Try to determine the ages of the trees you can see.

Talk About

Talk about if a tree is better when it's older or younger. What makes it better? Strength? Durability? As a tree ages, it grows thicker and stronger – does it reach an age when it's not getting stronger? Is the same true for people?



Remembrance circles

Activity

Take the items from nature and create a heart or circle shape with them. Then use more items from nature to create a symbol or symbols of a person, group of people or pet that you are remembering. For example: to help remember a pet dog, you might make the shape of a ball or spell their name out. Then take a photo of the remembrance circle. If you make your circle in an area that can remain undisturbed, you can leave it as a memorial until it returns to the earth.

Talk About

Talk about what you remember about the person or pet that is special to you. What do you miss about them? What can you carry forward in your life from their life?



Pass-it-on game

Activity

Line up in age order, from oldest to youngest. Give each person one to three ping-pong balls depending on the number of players. Have the oldest person hold the plate and place the ping pong ball(s) on top of the plate and pass it to the next person in line and they will add all their balls and pass it to the next person down the line. The goal is to keep all the balls on the plate as you pass them on. If you drop the balls, you must pick up all the balls, put them back on the plate and pass them backwards. As you do so, take their balls and when it returns to the oldest person, begin again. This can be played as a race with two teams against each other or one team timed to see who has the fastest time.

Talk About

Talk about what skills or things has someone passed down to you? Has it been valuable to know? What has Jesus passed down to us?



Family history documentary

Activity

Act out a family history story, or what you think life was like for your ancestors. Or act out the story of Joseph and his family. Film it and show it to the group.

Talk About

Talk about whether you think life was more difficult for people who lived a long time ago or whether it was easier. Do you think Jesus did chores? How do you think Jesus helped his family? Why do you think he did or didn't?



Food family

Activity

Take the different foods and create a food family (people-shaped characters) on a plate. You could try and make them look like your family or another family!

Talk About

Talk about whether anyone included Jesus as a member of their food family. Do you think of Jesus as part of your family? Why or why not?



Heritage photo frame

Activity

Paint a small amount of glue on the rim of the frame. Tear or cut pieces of material and supplies and glue on to the frame, wrapping around the sides of to cover all the surfaces with paper or other materials. When it is complete, if desired, you could coat the entire frame with PVA glue or Mod Podge to seal it. Take the frame home and put a picture of your family in it to remember your heritage.

Tip: If you use bigger pieces of paper, it covers the frame much quicker, so this would be better for smaller ones or people who like to try to complete as many activities as possible.

Talk About

Talk about when you use an old thing to make something new, you honour your ancestors, but also take care of the planet. What are other ways you can do this? When we put a picture of our family in a frame and place it somewhere special, we honour them. How do you honour God as part of your family?



Bring it on game

Activity

Place four cups in a square no further apart than 5 cm. Lay craft sticks in a square on top of the cups. Place another four cups in a square on top of the sticks. Then another layer of sticks. Build a tower as high as possible before it falls.

Hint: There is a trick to this. Practise it before demonstrating it.

Talk About

Talk about how taking care of family can be challenging. There are often difficulties that are inherited. What challenges are part of your family history or your current family? What hope does God offer us? Did Jesus inherit any family issues?



We remember - light celebration

Activity

Activate the glow bracelet or stick, blow up a balloon and insert the stick or bracelet into the balloon. You may lose a little air when doing this, so reinflate the balloon if necessary. Tie off the balloon. Write the name of a person or pet that you wish to remember on the balloon with permanent marker. Depending on how many people you have, you can allow people to do multiple balloons or write multiple people or pets on their balloons. Say a prayer of remembrance for them. Something like: 'God, thank you for the wisdom of Aunt Martha and the love of Rex my dog. We are grateful for your love too. Help us to remember them and you every day. Amen.'

Have someone help you or place some tape on the balloon and tape to the ceiling or high on the wall. You will need this activity for the celebration, so encourage as many participants as possible to do this activity.

Talk About

Talk about how it can be hard sometimes to remember your family members or pets. How can you turn those memories into a positive thing? How does the story of Joseph help you remember to care for and honour your family?



‘Remember me’ lantern

Activity

Clean the outside of your jar with alcohol to remove any dirt and make sure it's dry. Using the acrylic paint marker, make a pattern on your jar. You can also write the name of a loved one. Let it dry. Tie a piece of twine around the opening of the jar leaving one end about 20 cm. Repeat with a second piece of twine, leaving the long end on the opposite side of the jar. Put about 2.5 cm of sand on the bottom of the jar and place the candle inside. Put the ring of the lid on the jar. Tie the two ends of the twine together over the top to make a hanger.

Talk About

Talk about how, in many places around the world, we remember people in our family that have come before us by lighting a candle on All Souls Day (the Saturday after Halloween). Do you remember your relatives in any way in your home? How do we remember Jesus?



‘We are woven together’ paper braiding

Activity

Glue two strips of one colour together at one end at a 90-degree angle. Rotate the point of the 90-degree angle so that it is at the top. Glue two more strips of another colour on top of the 90-degree angle strips, as in the photo provided. Fold paper at right angles starting on the left side, then the right side, left side, right side until you have completed a short braid. Glue additional strips of paper to each end to lengthen the braid. Continue to braid until the length can be folded around to make a crown. Write the words or help them to write the words ‘God’s family is stronger together’ on the braid anywhere. Staple the ends together to make a crown. Take your crown to the celebration time.

Talk About

Talk about how our lives are woven together with our family. Biological? Church? God’s family? How can we help to make the lives of these family members better?



November



Plentiful garden

Activity

Carefully plant the seeds or seedlings in the pots or ground. Make sure they are placed somewhere so they get enough sun and water in order to grow.

Talk About

Talk about how we're told in Zechariah that the people will not need to worry about where their food is coming from as God will provide fertile earth and rain so the crops will grow. It takes hard work to create a vegetable garden. Is there someone in your Messy Church who grows their own food? How much time do they spend looking after their garden?



Walls

Activity

Take a careful look at the wall – it could be a brick wall, a drystone wall, a fence. What can you see making its home in the wall? It's important to use just your eyes, as you don't want to hurt any small creatures or be bitten by them. Look but don't touch. I wonder if you can see a spider web, or a tiny bug darting between the shadows. I wonder if there is lichen or moss growing on the wall. What does this tell you about creation?

Talk About

Talk about our Creator God being the source of all life. All faiths and cultures through time have sacred stories about how the world and all creatures came to be. Did you know there are two tellings of the creation story in Genesis? Humans are called by God to care for the earth, not to abuse it or trample it. How might we care for the earth in our local community and globally? What are the steps we can take as individuals and as communities of faith?



Hopscotch

Activity

Instructions to play: players take turns to throw the pebble so it lands on each square in turn starting with the first. The player who threw the pebble then lands with one foot on the single square and both feet on the double square, but not landing on the square with the pebble. If someone is unable to hop, they can throw the pebble and have a partner for the jumping.

Talk About

Talk about what the favourite games are of those in the group, both older and younger.



Build a city

Activity

Build a city together using the materials provided, just as the people rebuilt the city of Jerusalem. Work with others in a team and allow each group to add their own parts, whatever is important to them. Remember it is the process, not the finished result!

Talk About

Talk about what you think is important for a city today and why? How might that be different to Zechariah's time? What might be the same? Why?



Create a faith wall

Activity

Look around your space – inside and outside – and find different surfaces. It could be a wall, a plaque, a floor tile, leaves. Place the paper over the surface and gently rub the wax crayons over the surface so that it makes an impression. Cut the rubbings into bricks and create a wall of Jerusalem in your worship space. On each brick, write the name of someone who has guided you in faith/discipleship.

Talk About

Talk about who you chose. How have they been a brick in your faith wall? The Western Wall in Jerusalem is all that is left of the temple after it was destroyed in 70AD. It is described as a prayer wall for all nations. Information is available online – jerusalem-insiders-guide.com. People write down their prayers on pieces of paper and leave them in the cracks of the wall. Churches around the world have prayer walls both inside and outside for people to add their own prayers.



Peace dove

Activity

Stick all the white things on to the dove. Once you've stuck something on, write down your own prayer for peace. Bring all the prayers to the celebration time.

Talk About

Talk about how, around the world, nations remember those who have died in wars on special days, e.g. Remembrance Day in November, ANZAC Day in April in Australia and New Zealand. We all seek peace. Is there somewhere in the world that needs peace right now? This activity may need to be adapted depending on the ages of the participants. If you have any veterans or serving members of the armed forces in your faith community, ask if they would be willing to take part in this activity. They will have interesting reflections to share.



Prayers for others

Activity

Create a prayer collage from the words in the newspapers. Avoid the temptation of cutting out whole articles. Cut out words and create your own phrases to spell out your thoughts and prayers.

Talk About

Talk about how God knows what is on our hearts and therefore prayer is for humans. It is a time to be still and talk/listen with God. When we share with God in prayer, we are naming what is going on for us and bringing it to our own attention and awareness. Prayer is also a time when we make ourselves accountable to God to be his hands, feet, eyes and ears in the world. And we commit ourselves to action. As you create your prayer, what are you thinking about? Are you feeling a call from God to take action somehow?



North, south, east, west

Activity

Where do you come from? Can you find your country, town and the church on the maps? Can you use the compass to work out if you are in the north, south, east or west? Are you north or south of the equator?

Talk About

Talk about how Zechariah tells us that people came from all over the known world to Jerusalem to worship God. They came from the north, south, east and west. This message is very inclusive and has echoes of the Western Wall in Jerusalem which is known as a prayer wall for all nations.



‘Enough rain’ science experiment

Activity

Take the glass filled half-way with water and then add a thick layer of shaving cream filling up to 3/4 of the glass. Add the food colouring very gradually until it starts to ‘rain’.

Talk About

Talk about how clouds hold water. The shaving foam is our cloud. It can hold a lot of water until it’s so heavy it has to release some as rain (or snow or sleet). Zechariah tells us that in Jerusalem, the people will have enough rain to grow their food – no one will go hungry as there will not be floods or droughts. What happens to crops when there is either too much or too little rain? How does that impact food production?



Heart of remembrance

Activity

Create the heart shape – we used cane which we moulded into the heart shape. Tie on the scraps of fabric, yarn and ribbon to represent people who have died from the community and people's families.

Talk About

Talk about the story of the person each member wants to remember as you tie on the scraps. Do this activity in small groups so you can give space for everyone to speak and respond.



December



Candle making

Activity

Put the wick at the long edge of the sheet and roll it so the wick is in the middle of each candle sheet.

Talk About

Talk about how Jesus is the light of the world. Take this candle home and light it each night in the run-up to Christmas to remind you of Jesus as the gift of the light of the world.



Christmas candle bags

Activity

Draw a beautiful creation scene with Jesus as part of it. Put a rock in the bottom of each bag to keep it upright in the wind. Place a tealight or electric tealight in each bag. Put all the bags in a row with a bit of spacing and light them. Let everyone appreciate the bags that have been created.

Talk About

Talk about how Jesus is the light of the world. Take this candle bag home and light it each night in the run-up to Christmas to remind you of Jesus as the gift of the light of the world.



January



Discipleship - mini stick ship

Activity

Can you make a ship out of the natural materials around you? Then test it out on the water to see if it floats. If you are using a bowl of water, you could mark up some ports around the rim or islands ('Prayer', 'Praise', 'Bible').

Talk About

Talk about how discipleship, or following Jesus, is like an adventure that we are all on, even those who have been Christians for years. Our boat can stop off at various ports along the way to help us on our journey. We might capsize a few times, just like the apostle Paul who travelled around the Mediterranean, but we can help each other to get back on board and keep going.



Worship - stained-glass window

Activity

Use paints, crayons, stamps, etc. and all manner of implements to get creative like our Creator and decorate the paper. Then take off the masking tape at the end. Alternatively, you could make one per person, or take it outside and decorate it with mud, berries, grass, leaves and flowers.

Talk About

Talk about our amazing Creator God as you paint. Ask God to speak to you through the creation. What can you see? What could he be trying to say to you?



Discipleship - pipe cleaner fish

Activity

Thread some beads on to half a pipe cleaner, leaving space at each end. Bend the pipe cleaner around into an oval, then twist the ends together to make a tail.

Talk About

Talk about how in Mark 1:17 Jesus said, 'Follow me... and I will send you out to fish for people.' Early Christians would use the fish symbol to indicate a Christian meeting place, when it was dangerous to meet up, like a secret code. Nowadays you can see it on the back of cars. What will you do with yours? Maybe attach it to your keyring or school bag.



Stewardship - orangutang spinner

Activity

Colour in the pictures. Fold 1 m of string in half and stick it, parallel, on to the back of the forest with 3 cm between each line of string. Fold the card over and stick it together. Holding the strings at the end, make circles in the air so the strings twist, then pull the strings. The paper should spin, putting the orangutan back into its forest.

Talk About

Talk about how God has made the most amazing world for us and has called us to be stewards of it. We can help the orangutans by buying products which use sustainable palm oil so no more forests are destroyed.



Fellowship - secret police

Activity

In some countries, like North Korea, it is illegal to be a disciple of Jesus, so disciples must keep their faith secret. Wearing the secret police hats/badges if using, pretend to be the secret police. Can you find all the things around the room that give away that there are disciples here?

Talk About

Talk about being part of the body of Christ and about how 1 Corinthians 12:25–26 says, 'Its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it.' We can support persecuted Christians through prayer and through giving to charities like Open Doors.



Cardboard ships

Activity

Get families to create a ship that they can stand or sit in, cutting port holes and decorating the outside. Make sure adults supervise the scissors/knives. They could paint or draw water along the bottom. They could make flags. They could sit in these ships for the worship time.

Talk About

Talk about how discipleship includes looking after the world God created for us (stewardship), sharing our faith with others (fellowship) and spending time with him (worship). Which type of ship is yours?



Food craft - mini food ships

Activity

Make a boat. Make sure to put yourself and Jesus in it as discipleship is about a journey with Jesus. You can add others too as it is easier to travel this journey with other Christians.

Talk About

Talk about how far you would travel for Jesus. Think about the wise men who travelled hundreds of miles and for months or years, or Jackie Pullinger who got on a boat and asked God to tell her when to get off.



Fellowship - prayer station: the body of Christ

Activity

Bandage someone's hand and arm while praying for those in Nigeria. For example: 'Dear God, please stop the armed bandits in Nigeria from hurting people. Protect Christians and churches from attack and pour your peace into their fearful hearts. Heal all those who are hurt and help them to feel your presence. Stir up the government and security forces to do more to protect people. Amen.'

Talk About

Talk about how Nigeria is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a Christian. Although around 100 million people (half the population) are Christian, there are extremist groups who have vowed to eliminate Christianity from the country and are targeting men and boys in particular. Although we may not be in Nigeria, we are all part of one big body of Christ, and they will get incredible strength from knowing that we care and are praying for them.



Worship - decoupage cross

Activity

Decorate the cross by tearing off bits of paper and gluing them on to the cross. Then use half PVA glue and half water and cover the whole thing in glue as a type of varnish.

Talk About

Talk about how the first step to discipleship is belonging to a church family. We are not decorating our own individual crosses, but a large communal one which can serve as a centre piece to the celebration part of Messy Church. When we come back and see it, we will be reminded that we belong. This is our church.



Questions corner

Activity

Why did God create the world? Why does God allow suffering? Is reincarnation real? What is heaven like? Why did Jesus have to die? Hasn't science disproved the Bible? Why doesn't God answer my prayers? One of the best ways to journey further in your faith is by delving into these big questions with friends. We won't always be able to work out the answers, but that's okay. We are on a voyage of discovery.

Talk About

Talk about how, if you enjoy this session, you might like to sign up for an exploring faith course such as Alpha.



February



Created in his image

Activity

Use the mirror and pencil to draw an image of yourself or someone else if you prefer. Cut out the face and eyes. Stick the lolly stick behind the face and use it as a mask.

Talk About

Talk about how God created diversity, yet at the same time, we are all a part of God's image. You could read Genesis 1:27 together.



Fearfully and wonderfully made

Activity

Draw an oval shape around the image and cut around it, colour in (optional) and stick on the card. Hole punch around the image and thread the wool through the holes.

Talk About

Talk about how we are all known and loved by God, all are precious in God's eyes, even before we are born. Use Psalm 139:13–14 to guide you.



All one in Christ Jesus

Activity

For this group collage, cut out a food image that you would normally eat in your culture and place on the cross. If you can't find one, draw an image of your favourite cultural food on a Post-it note and place on the cross. By the end of the session, the cross should be covered with food images of what everyone in your Messy Church likes to eat.

Talk About

Talk about how it is easy to spot things that divide us and make us different, like the food we eat, or the way we speak or look, but we are all equal in God's eyes. Read Galatians 3:28. What foods do you like eating? Do you like trying new foods from different cultures? Describe a time when you felt different. Was it a positive or negative experience? Imagine you have just arrived from another country and you don't speak the language or wear the same style of clothes. You decide to try out Messy Church. What would help you feel welcome and able to join in?



The Lord's Prayer dance

Activity

The Lord's Prayer is known around the world and said in many different languages. Play the YouTube video of Arul, introducing how to dance the Lord's Prayer in an Indian style. Follow her dance lesson and see if you can copy her moves. You might like to then use the dance during the celebration.

Alternatively, who in your Messy Church can say the Lord's Prayer in another language? Get them to teach others or create a large poster with the prayer written in different languages.

Talk About

Talk about how God loves diversity, and he loves to hear our prayers in our heart language. Dance is also a form of language. What other forms/languages can you use to pray? Can you learn the BSL signs for this prayer?



Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly

Activity

Blindfold a person, perhaps spin them and stand them at start. Ask them to get to the finish without any guidance. They are likely to struggle. See if anyone can help this blindfolded person. If so, how? Let them guide them/speak to them/walk alongside to help reach the finish.

Talk About

Talk about how it felt to be blindfolded. People new to the church/community will find life harder due to obstacles in the way. Read Micah 6:8. How might God ask that we help this blindfolded person? (Walk beside them mercifully, justly remove obstacles, carefully guide them, reassure them). Do you notice anyone in your school or local community facing obstacles? Share how you might help them? What could you do to help as a family? As a Messy Church? What does God require of you?



A great multitude

Activity

Use playdough (or Lego) to make 'little people' to represent themselves and a friend from another ethnic background. Place them in the sand tray, filling it with as many people (all ethnicities and abilities, e.g. a blind person with guiding stick or someone in a wheelchair). Leave this on display for the other congregations at your church to see.

Alternatively, make a giant collage of people of different races and abilities to go with the Bible verse.

Talk About

Talk about how God's kingdom includes every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the lamb – read Revelation 7:9–10. In heaven, we will all be united together in our worship of God. How can we reflect God's heavenly kingdom here on earth? In our community? In our church? In our friendship group? Do we intentionally welcome and embrace diversity?



The Lord's house

Activity

Buy an item from the shop. What was your experience with the shopkeeper? Then enter the 'prayer den' and write or draw a prayer of thanksgiving, a prayer to say sorry or a prayer of need to God. Here are some topics to you might like to pray about: friendships, racial justice, the climate crisis, forgiveness, schools and students, refugees, conflicts, for situations that don't seem fair, etc. What was the difference between the two places?

Talk About

Talk about how Jesus challenged the corruption in the temple. Read Mark 11:15–17. It had become a political and economic powerhouse, making a few people wealthy and not a religious space that gave voice to the voiceless. Is there anyone voiceless at your Messy Church? In your local community? What does racial justice look like in Messy Church? In your local community? How could you or your Messy Church be antiracist?



Vine and branches

Activity

Cut around the box template (alternatively use a pillow box) and decorate it with images of branches, a tree, a heart, fruits such as grapes, eco-glitter, etc. Then glue the other flaps together, but before you stick the last (top) flap with a sticker, add some raisins inside. This box is to give to someone else, as a sign of love and friendship.

Talk About

Talk about how the Bible says the family of God is like a vine, with Christians connected to Jesus and each other like branches, showing love to each other. Read John 15:4 and 12. Think of somebody different to you at school or in your neighbourhood. Who could you give the box to as a sign of friendship? Pray for God to give you the name of someone you could give this gift to and ask for the Holy Spirit to give you courage to pass the gift on.



We are all one

Activity

On the large piece of card or brown wrapping paper, draw around a child and cut it out – now you have the body of Christ (the church). Read together the Bible passage (Corinthians 12:12–31). Invite people to draw on the outline or add Post-it notes or stick-on items (e.g. cotton wool balls or wool for hair). As they do this, ask the question: which part of the body of this Messy Church do you feel you are or could be?

Talk About

Talk about how everyone has a part to play in the body of Christ (the church). We have different roles to play. In 1 Corinthians 12:12–31, evangelists, prophets, apostles, teachers and pastors are all mentioned. What other roles are there in Messy Church? Which part will you play? Which parts of the body of Christ might be missing at this Messy Church?



Make a percussion instrument

Activity

Using the items provided, make a percussion instrument, such as a drum or something from another culture to play in the celebration. For example, you could make a lyre (type of harp) that David played in the Old Testament psalms.

Talk About

Talk about how the church is global. The style of sung worship differs around the world and yet we are all part of Christ's kingdom.



March



Leafy butterflies and insects

Activity

You will need four leaves and a forked twig. Lay them out on the table or the ground in the shape of a butterfly, then tie the leaves on with the twine or raffia. Add a little dab of glue to secure them if desired. Place a conifer cone at the point of the twig where the fork begins, for the head. You can tie on or use glue depending on your patience or level of ability.

Talk About

Talk about how a butterfly comes out of a cocoon when it has changed. What is your favourite kind of butterfly? Have you ever seen a butterfly come out of a cocoon? What do you think it has to do with Jesus?



Now you see me, now you don't

Activity

Play a game of hide-and-seek. Everyone hides and they are found one by one. As they are found, have them go back to base. After everyone is found, have the finder count again for twice as long. The hiders will use the supplies or the environment around them to camouflage themselves so it's harder to find them the second time around. After counting, the finder will look again. Play several rounds so that a few have turns searching.

Talk About

Talk about how it can be difficult to find something when we aren't sure exactly what we are looking for. Have you ever lost something? What and for how long was it lost? If you found it, how did you find it?



Cross card

Activity

Cut the cross template out and fold on the dotted lines to make a folding card. Fold up from the bottom towards the centre twice and then fold the three upper squares inward to make a square. Colour and decorate each square of the cross either with the story or with things you like or know about Jesus. As you fold the cross after you have decorated, give thanks for the life of Jesus.

Talk About

Talk about how Jesus had an amazing life, but his overcoming of death was beyond amazing. What other amazing things can you think of that Jesus did? What is your favourite Jesus story?



Empty tomb build

Activity

Put up the tent or set up the round table. Cover the tent/table with paper, tablecloths, sheets, etc. to resemble a cave. Cut out the piece of cardboard in a circle shape to cover the door of the tent, so it can be 'rolled away'. You can use several smaller pieces taped together to make one larger piece. Go in the tent and experience what it's like. Practise rolling the stone back and forth over the entrance of the tent for fun.

Talk About

Talk about how people were buried in Jesus' time. How are they buried now? The door of the tomb was actually made of stone – how hard do you think it would have been to get it open?



Your eyes can fool you

Activity

Using the dowels or pencils as handles, hold the mirrors slightly to one side, by grasping a dowel in each hand. Looking into one side of the mirror, slightly twist the hand holding the other side of the mirror. It might feel or look strange. What happened? When you look into the mirror and see the reflection of the opposite hand, your mind interprets the reflection as your left hand, the one that's moving. When the hand in the mirror doesn't move, however, the mind gets confused! When the brain sees something that doesn't make any sense, it interprets it the best way it can and fills in the blanks with details that are sometimes less than accurate.

Talk About

Talk about how when the women went to the tomb, they were probably confused and sad. When they saw the two bright figures, how do you think their brains reacted to this? How would you have reacted? Have you ever seen something that your brain was confused by?



Clothespin tomb craft

Activity

Cut the grey card into a rough round shape about 5 cm in diameter or use the stone-shaped template to cut the shape. Cut the brown card in the shape of a 'U' about 6 cm in diameter or use the tent-shaped template to cut the piece. Glue the U-shaped piece of brown card to the back side of the clothes pin – only on the lower half of the clip. Cut the purple card into a 2.5 cm square. Write 'He is risen' on two lines, leaving room on either side to glue to the back of the brown card – or use the template pattern with words printed on it. Cut it into two pieces with a wavy cut. Then glue the top piece of the grey card on to the top of the clothespin and the bottom piece on to the bottom. Turn the clothespin over and glue the 'He is risen' paper on to the back of the tomb piece so that the words can be viewed when you squeeze the clothespin.

Talk About

Talk about how the resurrection, like this little message, was a surprise to the women at the tomb. How would you have felt if you came prepared to face a terrible situation and all of sudden you felt happy? Have you ever had to change your mind from sad to happy? Was it easy? Confusing?



Easter grass sensory table

Activity

Fill the tub with Easter grass and as you do, layer the magnetic letters throughout the grass. Using the magnet, fish out the letters. For reading ages and up, unscramble the message, while younger ages can just fish the letters out of the paper.

Talk About

Talk about if you have trouble finding Jesus in our world sometimes. Where do you look? What draws you to Jesus?



Things change paint craft

Activity

Drop blobs of paint on the canvas/paper in any pattern you wish. Take a comb and drag through the paint, wiping the comb off occasionally if it gets too full of paint. Watch the art change as you comb through it. Put aside and let it dry.

Talk About

Talk about how something small can change our world a lot. What has changed for you over the last year? Two years? How do you think the life of the disciples changed after hearing the news that Jesus was alive again?



Beautiful butterfly snack

Activity

Cut each bagel in half width wise, then put one side away. Then cut the half in half again height wise. Flip the two edges round edges into the centre to appear like butterfly wings. Poke pretzel sticks into the top of each half to create antennae. Decorate bagels with cream cheese, by placing cream cheese and food colouring in a sandwich bag and squishing together to distribute the colour. Cut off the corner of the bag and squeeze the cream cheese out on to the bagel. Sprinkle the top with coloured sugar or sprinkles.

Talk About

Talk about how butterflies are symbols of new life. How has being a part of Messy Church given you new life? Is there someone you want to share that with?



Pass the word

Activity

Put together a team. Each person in the team holds a tube to make a ball tunnel. You could stipulate that there must be at least one drop in elevation and one turn to make the tunnel challenging, but you can make it as long and as complicated as possible. Send the balls through in order to spell out 'Jesus is alive' to the last person. If the ball falls out of the tunnel or something gets stuck, start again. Now try it while singing, 'Jesus loves me' or while saying the Lord's Prayer. See if you can make it through the tunnel without getting stuck or dropping any balls.

Talk About

Talk about it being hard to tell the story of Jesus to people who are not familiar with it. It's a story that's hard to believe. How can you make it easier? Even when it's hard, what makes you want to try?



April



Challenging lollies

Activity

Choose a lolly and count the stripes on the stick. Check the activity chart to find your challenge, complete it and win your lolly.

Talk About

Talk about what you were asked to do. Did you find it easy or challenging? Sometimes the tasks are fun and we really enjoy doing them, but sometimes they are more of a challenge. Peter's discipleship journey had some fun times and quite a few challenges. What do you think kept him going?



Feed the sheep

Activity

Stack the boxes one on top of the other on a wall or table. Stand behind the marker and throw the balls into the mouths of the sheep. Add up your score and see if you can better it next time.

Talk About

Talk about Peter's task to 'feed my sheep'. What do you think Jesus meant? How can we do this today?



Who does what?

Activity

Look at the jobs on the chart. Find someone who is a plumber or a baker, etc. and write their name in the box. Some people may have done this job in the past or decided this is what they would like to do when they grow up. Each box needs to have a different name in it.

Talk About

Talk about the different jobs Peter did – a fisherman, a follower, a learner, a storyteller, a prisoner. What do you think he thought about all of his different jobs? What different jobs have you had so far?



Peter's discipleship story box

Activity

Lay out all of the items on the tray and give a few minutes for them to be memorised. Cover up the items and secretly remove one of them. Reveal the tray and ask which one is missing. Ask what that item represented in Peter's life.

Talk About

Talk about all of the things that happened to Peter, who was one of Jesus' disciples. Can you put the items in order to tell Peter's discipleship story?



Discipleship diary

Activity

Take three or four sheets of coloured paper and use the zig zag scissors to cut around the edge. Punch a hole in the paper and in the two sheets of card or foam. Thread the string or ribbon through the holes to make a book. Put the 'Discipleship Diary' sticker on the front cover and one of the other stickers in the middle of each page (or write these in yourself).

Talk About

Talk about what we do today to be Jesus' disciples. What things can we do as a family to put in our diary?



Magazine cross

Activity

Cut out a cross shape from the card for each person. Take a strip of magazine and roll it up into a swirl. Glue the swirl on to the card and repeat with lots of swirls until you have a cross shape. Leave to dry.

Talk About

Talk about how Jesus is always with us on our discipleship journey. He proved his love for us when he died on the cross. Look at how all the magazine swirls make up a special and unique cross, each one is different, yet made up of the same stuff – just like us!



Stormy seas

Activity

Make up the snow globe as per kit instructions or take the glass jar and almost fill with water. Add a few drops of baby oil and a sprinkle of glitter. Put some glue around the inside of the lid and screw it on to the jar with the fish or boat inside. Ensure the lid is tightly fixed and sealed. Turn it over and shake to see the storm.

Talk About

Talk about how the water in the jar makes a storm and then settles down. Sometimes Peter's life was a bit stormy when things didn't go very well. When do things feel stormy in our lives? What about things that seem to go very calmly?



Bead heart

Activity

Make a heart shape from a piece of wire, leaving some extra wire at the join to make a loop at the end. Thread the buttons or beads on to the heart shape until all the wire is covered. Use the extra wire at the join of the heart to make a loop so you can hang the heart on to some ribbon.

Talk About

Talk about love being a special thing. In today's reading Jesus asked Simon Peter if he loved him – to which he replied, 'Yes, you know I love you.' It is important to tell those people who are special to us that we love them. Sometimes we can do this by making something special to remind them. Who do you love who you could give this heart to?



Banana sheep biscuit

Activity

Cut the banana into slices and then cover the biscuit in the slices. Place a blackberry in the centre of the biscuit to be the sheep's head and place two icing eyes on top. Cut another blackberry into quarters and use two as ears, placing them one each side of the sheep's head and the other two as the sheep's feet. Cut the kiwi fruit up into small pieces and arrange at the bottom to represent grass. Make a 'fence' with the chocolate finger biscuits.

Talk About

Talk about how Jesus told Peter to 'feed my lambs' and to 'tend my sheep' – did he really mean actual sheep? Or did he mean people?



Sheep headband

Activity

Cut out the pattern for the sheep headband. Glue the cotton wool balls to the sheep's body and draw on some eyes and maybe a nose. Attach the two ends with the stapler or sticky tape so that it fits securely on your head.

Talk About

Talk about how sheep like to follow each other, maybe because it helps them feel like they belong, or feel more secure and happy. Jesus said we are to follow him – I wonder if this is to help us feel like we belong, feel more secure and happy. What do you think?



May



Pentecost leaf painting

Activity

Collect leaves from outdoors and arrange them in flame-shaped bunches. Paint the individual leaves yellow, red and orange. Glue these to the card or paper to represent the flames that appeared above the apostles' heads at Pentecost.

Talk About

Talk about the Holy Spirit being like flames of fire. What might that tell us about the work of God's Spirit?



Google translate

Activity

Work together as a group of young and old together to translate particular verses from Acts 2 into a variety of languages using a translation app. Write out the results on to paper in large letters which could be coloured and illustrated. Read out what each sentence sounds like to those who join the group, to see if they can guess what is being said. Retain these to be used as part of the celebration.

Talk About

Talk about what it must have sounded like on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were speaking in many different languages.



Ripples

Activity

What happened at Pentecost set off an ever-increasing ripple of gospel sharing around the Roman world. Have a go at lobbing small stones in the air so that they land in the centre of the pool, and then watch how the ripples spread outwards across the water surface. Try to count and record how many ripples there are, and how long it takes for each ripple to reach the edge of the pond or pool. Add a competition element to this by laying a web of concentric string circles over the surface and award points for where people land their stones.

Talk About

Talk about how the story of Jesus spread around the world. Pentecost was the birth of the worldwide church. Some might like to check which countries were represented among the crowds on that festival day (see Acts 2:9–11) and find them on a map.



Tell the story - a mime activity

Activity

Look through the seven key points of his message and challenge the group to try and share this story in sign language – turn each point into a mime. Let the ideas come from the group rather than the activity leader.

Talk About

Talk about what this message means for people today and which parts may be easier or harder to understand.



Paper windmills of light

Activity

Take your piece of paper and cut it into a perfect square. Divide the square on each side into seven vertical, equal bands and colour each one a different colour of the rainbow. Fold the paper diagonally so it turns into a triangle and crease it lightly. Repeat this for the opposite direction as well. You will then unfold and have a creased 'X' on the page. Cut along the creases about halfway to the middle of the paper. Be sure not to cut all the way. Bend one corner from each section into the middle. Make sure to bend and not fold. Once all four corners are in the middle, push a pin through them all into the pencil or dowelling, making sure the windmill blades can circulate freely. Blow into the windmill to watch the rainbow colours blend into white.

Talk About

Talk about the Holy Spirit being like the wind which brings the light of the gospel to the rainbow of nations on this earth, while still allowing the individual colours to exist in their uniqueness.



A world of prayer

Activity

Place the tea light on Jerusalem in the country of Israel. This is where Pentecost happened. From there, the good news about Jesus spread out into the whole world. Invite young and old to place prayer arrows on to the map, pointing at countries or cities they know where there are Christians. Pray briefly that they will continue to pass the message on to others. Include places with which your church has links and maybe also mission partners you support.

Talk About

Talk about the ways in which the story of Jesus has been passed on through written words, one-to-one conversations, social media and evangelists like Peter.



Around the fire

Activity

Light a fire pit or traditional outdoor fire, taking care to keep young children safe and keeping the fire well supervised. Watch the demonstration of different materials creating different sparks and flashes in the fire. Light the sparklers safely and spell different words of praise in the air imitating the words that were heard at Pentecost. Dispose of the sparklers safely in a sand bucket.

Talk About

Talk about the power of fire. In the Bible, God appeared in the fire on Mount Sinai, as a flaming angel to Gideon, at the burning bush to Moses and in a chariot of fire to Elijah. In the book of Revelation, Jesus is described as 'having eyes like flames of fire'.



The wonders of God

Activity

On the day of Pentecost the crowds heard the disciples 'declaring the wonders of God'. I wonder what sort of things they were saying. Pour out the Scrabble letters on to the table and divide them into smaller piles for each of the people in the group. Create a Scrabble crossword of as many words as you can that relate to the wonders of God.

Talk About

Talk about the words that are chosen and how they can help to point to the love and greatness of God.



Empowered

Activity

Find the correct batteries to make the various objects work again.

Talk About

Talk about how useless things become without the power to make them work. When the Spirit filled the disciples, suddenly they were given power to become like Jesus, to do the work of God and to represent him in the world.



Puzzled

Activity

At various points in today's story, the crowds are described as being, 'bewildered', 'amazed', 'perplexed' and 'puzzled'. In a pair or group, take two jigsaws. The pieces have been mixed randomly into the two boxes. Complete two jigsaws by negotiating appropriate transfers of pieces. It could become quite a bewildering and perplexing exercise!

Talk About

Talk about how the crowds felt that day and what they thought was going on before Peter spoke. Maybe even at Messy Church, some people can be puzzled as to what is going on, until someone helps them to understand!



June



Homemade cross

Activity

Make a cross out of sticks. For a bigger challenge, use clothes pegs and a glue gun. If you are near a beach, make a cross out of items found on the shore. You could try pushing shells into wet sand. Lego is another alternative.

Talk About

Talk about how some Christians live in countries where it is illegal to be a Christian. They cannot buy a cross, and it is dangerous to have one in the house. They might need to make a cross, use it in their worship and then take it apart again.



Encouragement wall

Activity

Write pieces of scripture up on a wall to encourage each other. Write some up as examples: John 16:33, Isaiah 41:10, Philippians 4:6–7. Add some smiley faces or other positive images. Some secret churches meet in toilets, so you could set this up in one of your toilets and stick them on the backs of toilet doors.

Talk About

Talk about how in many countries there are not enough Bibles to go around, so believers memorise bits of the Bible and whisper them to each other as encouragement. Can you remember any phrases? How about part of the Lord's Prayer or a song?



Watch a video

Activity

Sit and watch videos about persecuted Christians.

Talk About

Talk about the amazing charity Open Doors started by Brother Andrew, a very brave Christian from the Netherlands. He smuggled Bibles into countries where being a Christian was forbidden and Bibles were very hard to come by. Now it supports persecuted Christians all over the world and publishes a World Watch List of the most dangerous places in the world to be a Christian.



Hidden scripture

Activity

Cut out holes inside the book. Tuck your cross or scroll of scripture inside.

Talk About

Talk about how secret Christians have to find places to hide their scripture. Inside an old book on a bookshelf is a pretty good hiding place.



Decipher

Activity

Write coded messages on the walls. Give people a key card so they can decipher the messages. Tell them to keep the key card secret and not to show it to anyone. See if they can write a message in code to pass to someone else.

Talk About

Talk about how as a secret Christian you could use a code to send a message to a friend, as long as you had an agreed key.



Painted rocks

Activity

Decorate a stone and write short passages of scripture on the bottom. If you can't find large stones, you could simply paint a cross on a smaller one. This could also work well for smaller children.

Talk About

Talk about how having scripture in your house or on your possession can be very dangerous in countries where being a Christian is forbidden. With these rocks, they can be hidden in the garden and looked at when tending your garden.



Storytelling

Activity

Take turns trying to read from the Bible but replacing certain dangerous words: God (Dad), Jesus (Jo), disciples (friends), angel (light), Lord (Jo), Christ (Jo) and baptised (washed). You could use the story of the shepherds at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:8–20), Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:13) or Jesus walking on water (Matthew 14:22–33). For more knowledgeable Christians, you could just ask them to recount the story, instead of reading it.

Give people a penalty of a sticker on their forehead for every forbidden word they say.

Talk About

Talk about how as a secret Christian you never know who could be listening. Some words will give away that you are a Christian, so you have to be careful.



Fish food

Activity

Make a fish out of food. Use cucumber for the scales and be creative with what you have!

Talk About

Talk about how early followers of Jesus used a secret symbol of a fish. Why? Several of the disciples were fishermen, Jesus talked about becoming 'fishers of men' and told lots of stories about fish. Also, the Greek letters for 'fish', pronounced 'ICK-THOOS' became an acronym: 'Jesus Christ God's Son Saviour'.



Dirty job

Activity

Can you clean the wellingtons with this little brush?

Talk About

Talk about how in some countries like Pakistan, Christians get all the really dirty jobs as they are looked down upon. As you clean, pray that God will draw close to men, women and children who are suffering persecution for their faith.



Bible smuggling

Activity

One person has three minutes to hide as many Bibles as possible inside the car. Then get them to say Brother Andrew's prayer: 'Lord, in my luggage I have scripture that I want to take to your children across the border. When you were on earth, you made blind eyes see. Now I pray you make seeing eyes blind.' Finally, a second person is blindfolded and has three minutes to find them.

Talk About

Talk about how Brother Andrew smuggled hundreds of Bibles inside his blue Volkswagen Beetle, into countries where owning a Bible was illegal. He prayed the prayer above. In all his years of smuggling he was never caught, and the prayer is still prayed by Open Doors staff today.



July



Obstacle course

Activity

See how quickly you can complete the obstacle course. Then try again but this time with the weighted rucksack. How does this affect your time?

Talk About

Talk about how different challenges in life can feel like a weight on our back affecting everything we do. Take a minute to talk to God about something that is weighing you down at the moment.



Map of faith

Activity

Using the different materials, create a map to show points on the discipleship journey. You might want to make high and low points and areas that are rough and areas that are smooth.

Talk About

Talk about what has helped you to navigate the different points on your own journey. Look at the map you have created and think back to the times it represents.



Edible medals - taste of success

Activity

Melt the chocolate in a bowl. Dip the fruit slices in and then allow them to dry on a plate. Use the writing icing to write on a number 1.

Talk About

Talk about what it feels like to taste success. Would it be good if you succeeded at everything all of the time? We all need to acknowledge when we have moments of success. How do you like to celebrate good moments?



Cloud of witnesses mural

Activity

Draw pictures of those who support you. Cut them out and glue them on to the long piece of paper.

Talk About

Talk about how we all need support on our faith journey.
Who are the people who have helped you on your journey?
How have they helped you? How could you help other people?



Outdoor scavenged Olympic rings

Activity

Use the scavenged material to create the Olympic rings.

Talk About

Talk about how part of the meaning behind the Olympic symbol is the coming together of nations from across the world. How does our stewardship of the environment impact nations all over the world?



Keeping in shape

Activity

Complete the physical challenges. For example, how many bean bags can you throw in the bucket? How many star jumps can you do in a minute? How long can you stand on one leg? Can you skip non-stop for 30 seconds? You could suggest new challenges for each other!

Talk About

Talk about how today's Bible passage focuses on perseverance. Olympians and Paralympians show real perseverance in preparing for the games. They train for years! How can we persevere in keeping our faith in Jesus? Should we be training for our spiritual life? What 'exercises' might help?



Training plan

Activity

Either as an individual or a household group, make a calendar covering the time from this session to your next Messy Church service. You can divide the time into days or weeks. You might want to add in specific times to talk to God as a family.

Talk About

Talk about how in the same way as Olympians and Paralympians training, we too are encouraged to keep 'fit' to follow Jesus. How can we do that? Spend time chatting to people around the table about what exercises you can do to keep your relationship with Jesus healthy and put these ideas on to your calendar to create a training plan.



Olympic prayers

Activity

Lay the five hula hoops on the floor in the shape of the Olympic rings. Write or draw a prayer on a tag and tie it to one of the rings.

Talk About

Talk about how the Olympic values are respect, excellence, friendship, courage, determination, inspiration and equality. How do these values relate to our lives as followers of Jesus? How can these values inspire your prayers today?



Torch relay

Activity

Take your stick and secure whatever you're using to attach items to your stick at the bottom. Wind the string around your stick (not too tight) and secure it again at the top. You're ready to set off on your journey! If you have access to some outside space, why not take a walk around it with your stick and attach items you find (leaves, flowers, feathers, etc.) to your stick by tucking them inside the wraps of string. Alternatively, use your journey stick on your way home from Messy Church or on a walk during the month in between.

Talk About

Talk about how the Olympic torch relay first appeared at the Berlin Summer Olympics in 1936. It is lit in Olympia, Greece, and is carried, as a relay, to the host city. It provides a link between the ancient and modern games, and its journey is intended to transmit a message of peace and friendship along its route. As you walk with your journey stick, pause as you collect an item and pray for peace and friendship in the parts of God's world where there is none.



Prayer relay

Activity

Take the empty tube and decorate the outside by covering it in wrapping paper or using a piece of plain paper and writing or drawing on it. Write or draw any prayer requests you may have on a sheet of paper and pop it inside the tube (you could have multiple requests on a single piece you roll up inside).

Talk About

Talk about how today's Bible reading mentions a 'cloud of witnesses' supporting us, and praying for one another is just one way to do that. Do you find it easier to pray for someone else rather than yourself? How can we pray for one another? What happens when we pray for others?



August



Creation mural

Activity

Collect the natural materials that you want to use. Fix the Hessian or burlap to the table and then draw in pencil or tailors chalk the outline of what you want to make. Stick pieces of creation and recycled materials on to the fabric to complete the inspirational work of art.

Talk About

Talk about how all these wonderful things from creation and things that have been recycled come together to make a reminder of how wonderful God and creation really is. Whoever makes creation like the creation we live in, is someone that we can truly believe in and follow.



Paul's boating travels

Activity

Make a cardboard boat that you can stand in. Use large pieces to make the bow, stern, port and starboard sides of your 'boat', using sticky tape to join it together. You could 'weave' together long strips of cardboard to make sides or shelters from the wind and sun for the passengers. You could use some of the tubes to make 'navigation' lights.

Talk About

Talk about how people across the regions where Paul travelled (most often by boat) did not take notice of God, even though they were in the middle of a wonderful creation. The rest of Paul's letter tells them the good news of Jesus and how through Jesus all the sins of the past were washed away. This is what God does for us when we say sorry to those we hurt and we receive forgiveness and make a new start. How does it feel when someone says sorry for hurting you? And how does it feel to say sorry when you hurt people and they forgive you? Forgiving others and receiving forgiveness is what we pray every time we pray the Lord's Prayer.



Sensory prayer boxes

Activity

Reminder: DO NOT collect things that are wet or alive or smelly. Collect things from outside that make you wonder about God or remind you of God or someone you love.

When all the things are collected, come back inside and take turns taking an object from your prayer box and giving thanks to God with words or a drawing or song.

Talk About

Talk about how you felt as you went and collected your list of materials to go in your sensory prayer box. What surprised you about the things you found and collected? Was anything missing from the list? Talk about where you feel inspired to pray and how easy it is to pray. Do you have a favourite place to pray or any special prayers you love to say?



Creative dance/movement

Activity

Come and learn the choreography for the song!

‘Ohana’ is the Hawaiian word for family, and Marty Haugen’s song speaks of all creation being one family and how all creation sings in praise of God. The song also reminds us that we are part of God’s creation and we are part of one great music that worships God. It is a brilliant song for reminding people of all ages that each of us can play our part in praising God and following Jesus.

Talk About

Talk about the wonder of the message in the lyrics.



Sand sculpting

Activity

Read the Bible verse aloud and think about what images come to mind. Take note of those first thoughts or inspirations, then create these in the sandpit with your hands.

Talk About

Talk about why you have chosen to create the shapes you are making, how they inspire you or make you wonder about God or care for creation or follow Jesus. Wonder with each other; share stories of where you have seen the things you have made and how they made you feel. You may like to pray with everyone – thanking God for imagination, for creation and for the chance to be creative together.



Ice cream in a bag

Activity

Place the milk (or cream), sugar and vanilla into the 1-litre ziplock bag and combine the ingredients. Be sure to zip up the bag securely. You may like to 'double bag' by putting the first bag inside a second and zipping that securely also. Take the 4-litre ziplock bag and add ice. Spoon in the salt over the top of the ice. Place the medium bag of ingredients inside the larger zip lock bag and zip up securely. Shake and massage the bag wearing gloves or covered with a tea towel for five to ten minutes until the mixture becomes the consistency of ice cream. Once ready, remove the medium bag and wipe clean of salt and water. Snip a corner of the bag and squeeze out ice cream into a bowl or cone and enjoy! Add toppings if using.

Talk About

Talk about why this creates ice cream. When salt is added, it lowers the freezing point of the ice. So it takes more energy to be absorbed from the surrounding environment for the ice to melt. This effectively makes the ice colder than it normally is and freezes the ice cream mixture more efficiently. Larger crystals of salt, like rock salt or ice cream salt, take more time to dissolve in the water around the ice and allow for even more cooling of the ice cream. Knowing God changes who we are as people, just as the ice cream ingredients change when they come into contact with the ice that is below freezing point. How do you think God wants you to change as a result of knowing Jesus?



Make a 'lim-pet'

Activity

Take a shell (or other natural item) and stick on some eyes and decorate to make your own special 'lim-pet'.

Talk About

Talk about how limpets are special animals that live in shells who can stick to a rock through all kinds of storms. Your pet is a part of God's natural environment that will remind you not to be afraid! When you know God, Jesus will 'stick with you'... no matter what!



Seascape collage

Activity

Make a large collage of the sea using whatever paint, coloured paper and art materials you have. Add the netted bags as fishing nets.

Either use the origami paper to make paper boats, or simply cut out boat and fish shapes.

Talk About

Talk about how many of Jesus' early followers were fishermen. He met them on the shores of Galilee. I wonder what they knew of God from the local environment. I wonder how they responded when Jesus suggested they could 'fish for people'! Pray for your local environment, and for people you know who do not yet know Jesus.



Make a sailing boat

Activity

To make a sailboat, join three or more corks together with elastic bands. Make a sail with foam and attach to the cork boat using the skewer. Have a sailing race on the water!

Talk About

Talk about how travelling on the sea or a lake by sailboat was a regular way to get from place to place in Paul's time. It was one of the ways people came to know about the world that God has made, but it could be a scary or dangerous way to travel. Have you ever been on the sea in a sailboat? Was it a fun or scary experience?



Sensory play: playdough

Activity

Make either sea creatures or other elements of God's world, depending on your local environment.

Talk About

Talk about when we see God's world, we can know what God is like. What do you think God is like?