



# Messy Church at home: May Down by the river

Original session by Rob and Robyn Douglas

How do people get to hear about Jesus?  
Sometimes the story of Jesus is shared in surprising ways!

## Activities

Try these activities and see if you can start guessing what might happen in our story today. If you can't get exactly these materials, just see what you can find around the house instead!

### 1 Chariot races



**You will need: large, medium and small boxes (sufficient for one box for every two or three people); glue sticks; masking tape; rope; coloured pens; crayons; PVA glue; paper plates; crepe paper or coloured paper**

Use the box to design and build a chariot. It needs to have wheels and a place to sit or stand, as well as a rope to pull the chariot. Decorate with various craft items. When the building is completed, organise chariot races. You could give out certificates or prizes for the best-designed chariot, the best-looking chariot, the fastest chariot, the most imaginative chariot, etc.

**Talk about** how you are working together to be creative. What would it have been like in Bible times to ride in a chariot?

## 2 Make a scroll



**You will need: large lolly sticks; paper; coloured pens**

Make a scroll out paper and large lolly sticks. Glue the sticks on to the top and bottom of the paper. Write on to the scroll the words of 1 Peter 3:15–16 (NLT): 'If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way.'

**Talk about** how people many years ago would read the Bible. Have you thought about how the Bible came to us? This verse helps us to remember how we can tell people about Jesus.

## 3 Cup chariot

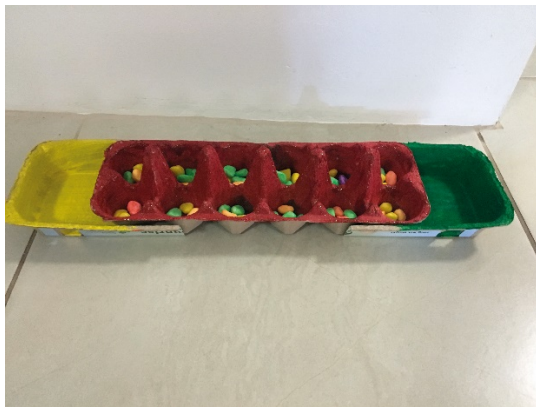


**You will need: paper cups; scissors; lolly sticks; cut-out wheels; split pins; coloured pens**

Cut out the back of the cup as shown in the photo. Make two slots to put the pop sticks in as the shaft, and use split pins to fix wheels to either side. Using coloured pens, you can colour and decorate your chariot.

**Talk about** how people used to travel in Bible times.

#### 4 Tegre board game



**You will need: cardboard egg cartons; yellow, red and green paint; paint brushes; scissors; glue or sticky tape; small seeds**

To make the game board, you need to paint the cardboard egg carton in the colours of the Ethiopian flag. Cut off the top of the carton and then cut the top in half. Fasten each half with glue or tape to the bottom of the egg carton so that you have a section on either side of the game board to collect the seeds from your opponent.

This is an Ethiopian game. Players sit facing each other in front of the egg carton (two rows of six holes). Start with four seeds in each hole. You each have six pits that are ‘yours’ and the hole to your right is where you’ll put the captured seeds (the hole to your partner’s right is theirs). The goal is to get as many seeds in your pit as possible. Each player starts by choosing a hole on his or her side and picking up all the seeds in that hole. Then moving in a counterclockwise direction, they deposit them one by one in the following holes (as if taking a lap around the holes). This player continues to pick up seeds and place them in holes until the last seed goes into the empty hole. When the last seed of the turn is placed in an empty hole there are three possibilities: 1. If the hole is on your opponent’s side, the turn is over 2. If the empty hole is on your side, and the opposite side empty, the turn is over 3. If the empty hole is on your side but the opposite cup has some seeds in it, you get to capture the seeds and place them to your pit (to the right). The whole game ends when one row is empty.

**Talk about** how important it is to understand other people’s cultures and traditions before talking to them about the gospel. You might like to make this together to play after your Messy Church at home

#### Celebration

1. **Sing** your favourite Messy Church song from YouTube,
2. **Work out where this story takes place.** [This website](#) has plenty of maps to enjoy. Find the road from Jerusalem to Gaza on one of the maps. That’s where today’s story takes place. Find Ethiopia too and talk about the sort of journey it would be 2,000 years ago to travel from Jerusalem to Ethiopia and back. And find Samaria. One person from the story was from Ethiopia. Another, Philip, one of Jesus’ followers, had been in Jerusalem but was now in Samaria – when suddenly something amazing happened to him!
3. One person can **read out the story** in [Acts 8:26–40](#) while others use the chariot and scroll that have been made to **act out the story**: you’ll need a Philip and a man from Ethiopia, but you could add an angel and a horse if you want to.

- Ask what everyone likes best about the story.
  - Ask if anyone has ever felt 'nudged' by the Holy Spirit to talk about Jesus.
  - Ask: if you could choose one person to talk to about Jesus, who would that person be?
4. **Prayer:** draw some rough coffee bean shapes on a piece of paper. Explain that one of the things Ethiopia is known for is its excellent coffee. Invite everyone to write the name of one person to whom they would love to talk about Jesus on one of the beans. Say: Jesus, help us always to be ready to explain our faith to other people, as you nudge us to. Amen
  5. Say the [Lord's Prayer](#) together, with or without actions.
  6. Say the [Messy Grace](#) if you usually do that at Messy Church.

## Mealttime

See if you can find an Ethiopian recipe to cook tonight, perhaps from [here](#) or [here](#).

Send us a photo of you all doing your Messy Church at home!

We miss you; we hope you're well and safe and we look forward to seeing you again.  
And until that day, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.