



Authorised Mess — ECCLESIASTES

Your details

Name: Peter Hayes with Gillian, Rachael, Brenda, Doreen, Jane, Pat, Sarah, Beryl, Bev (and possibly others) Church: United Baptist, Methodist and Anglican Churches in the area of Halwill, West Devon

Bible book	Ecclesiastes
Theme of session	To explore the times and seasons in life mainly using the well-known passage in Ecclesiastes 3.
Notes	We used the New Century or NIV translations; it would however be possible to use the Authorised Version.

Session details

Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Younger participants	To build and tear down	Dismantle a pre-built Lego or Duplo house, then make a new building from the bricks.	Lego or Duplo bricks or similar.	To explore the different feelings associated with breaking something and building something.
Older participants	Make a calendar	Make a calendar reflecting the four seasons.	Calendar pads (from Baker Ross or similar), card, ribbons.	Older participants might like to think about the seasons of life.
All ages	Junk or patchwork modelling	Set a challenge to make something from the 'junk'; or a patchwork or collage. Could be done as a group activity or individually with prizes for the best creation.	Loads of cereal packets, boxes, lids and so on. Collection of old material, threads and so on. Prizes.	There is a lot in Ecclesiastes 3 about tearing and mending, throwing away and gathering.



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Girls	Make a pin cushion	Make a pin cushion or similar out of the scrap pieces of material.	Pre-cut scraps of material, needles, wool, padding, pins.	A time to tear apart and a time to sew. It is satisfying making something.
Boys	Hide and seek	Hide some things in the churchyard, garden or a safe area of the car park. Everyone then goes looking. This could tie in with Easter and hiding eggs.	A safe area to hide things. Eggs or toys or something appropriate to look for.	Just fun really but also could talk about knowing something is hidden and the desire to look for it (Ecclesiastes 3:6).
Word-based	Prayer card	Fold the card in half and label the insides 'Hard times' and 'Good times'. Make notes under the headings (optional). Stick a prayer on the outside.	Card (A5 or A6), pens, glue, scissors. Printed prayers—bringing all our times to God.	This is a prayer activity and something to take away and use in the future to thank God for being with us all the time (Ecclesiastes 7:14). <i>Prosperity and adversity (AV).</i> <i>God gives good times and hard times (NCV).</i>
Food-based	Biscuits	Make a clock face out of icing on a biscuit—either analogue or digital.	Plain round or rectangular biscuits (such as Rich Tea or Nice), squeezey icing in tubes.	Ask people to think about a special time of day and put that time on their clock—tea time, bedtime, end of school.



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Opens up great art	The Persistence of Memory	Display a print of this picture and ask for comments.	A copy of Salvador Dali's painting The Persistence of Memory (see Internet).	The 'melting clocks' might encourage people to think about time.
Quiet	Special times	Make cards for someone who has had a baby, got married or lost a loved one.	Cards, pens, stickers.	A time to be born and a time to die; a time to be sad and a time to dance.
Really messy	Plant a bulb	Plant a bulb or 'plug' plant in a pot and take it home.	Plant pots, bulbs, compost, labels.	A time to plant... The joy of watching something grow over time and the need to wait.

Celebration suggestion

As people enter, you might like to play The Byrds song 'Turn, turn, turn' (to everything there is a season). You can find this on YouTube but watch the entire clip before you use it as some have images of war or nakedness not appropriate for showing to younger children.

Read Ecclesiastes 3 perhaps together or side to side (antiphonally!) You might have new creations to show or other things from an earlier session. The biscuit clock might raise a story—about home time and the family being together. We found people were not properly briefed and most of the clocks showed 6.20—that being the time they were doing this!

Have a number of different clocks, calendars and timers placed centrally. A sand egg timer would be good, even an Advent candle, and include a diary. You can talk about measuring time. Refer to God in Ecclesiastes 3:11: *He does everything just right and on time (NCV). Everything beautiful in his time (AV).*

Songs:

- ✿ 'God you're amazing!', Richard Swan, ©2003 Golden Pen Music.
- ✿ 'Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart', Graham Kendrick, ©1993 Make Way Music.



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Prayer: Nothing specific but possibility of putting our times in God's hands, or numbering our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

Meal suggestion

- ✿ Something with thyme (joke!).
- ✿ Clock biscuits (made in the activity).

Faith in Homes suggestion

In Advent: light an Advent candle before the evening meal.

Primary School RE idea

Ideas could be used when considering religious festivals or seasons.