



Authorised Mess — JOB

Your details

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Church: St James', Devizes

Bible book	Job
Theme of session	Life is messy
Notes	Looking at the story of Job to help us understand that sometimes, even when it's not our fault, life gets very badly messy. It's OK to question God about this and even get cross with him—because throughout it all, God is holding us close, right in the middle of the pain and hurt. (We didn't talk about the end of the story where Job is restored, because we didn't want to give the impression that when our lives are messy God always sorts it out and makes it all brilliant again. We wanted the focus to be very real—we all at times get into all sorts of messes and need to know God is in it with us.)

Session details

Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Younger participants	Playdough	Make playdough, coloured with black food colouring. Add glitter and stars.	Playdough, black food colouring, glitter, star confetti.	Talk about great creation images (Job 38:31–41).
Older participants	Glass painting	Using paper templates, paint designs on to glass.	Glass paints, outliner, photocopied templates.	Talk about creation theme in Job.



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All ages	Furry beasties	Make all sorts of animals.	Cardboard tubes, fur fabric, paper faces, pipe cleaners, glue, scissors.	Creation theme in Job, especially lions (38:39); ravens (38:41); goats and deer (39:1); donkeys (39:5); wild ox (39:9); ostrich (39:13–18); horses (39:19–25); hawks and eagles (39:26–30); hippos (40:1); monster -crocodile (41:1–34).
All ages	Crocodile peg	Paint the clothes peg (white for the teeth and green for the body). Once the paint has dried, stick on a pair of eyes. Cut out a spiny ridge from the craft foam and glue to the clothes peg to complete Leviathan!	Wooden clothes pegs, green and white paint, green craft foam, glue, googly eyes, scissors.	The crocodile-monster (Leviathan) is mentioned in Job 41:1–34.
Girls	Friendship bracelet	Thread the beads to make a friendship bracelet.	Different threads, selection of beads.	Job had some good friends who stuck by him (Job 2:11–13).



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Boys	Shoebox planetarium	<p>Cut a window in the end of a shoebox. Cut a piece of card a bit bigger than this window. Stick photocopies of the constellations to the card. Push through each star with a small screwdriver or bradawl. Place a torch raised on a yoghurt bottle on the bottom of the box so that in the dark the light shines through the holes and the constellation is projected on to a wall.</p>	<p>Shoeboxes, card, photocopies of constellations, sharp small screwdrivers/bradawls, small yoghurt bottles, tape, scissors, glue, torch.</p>	<p>Talk about creation theme in Job (Job 38:31–33).</p>



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Opens up great art	Tepee	Using an elastic band, bind four straight twigs together and set out so that the twigs are equally spaced in a square (you may need playdough to hold them together). Measure the triangle made on each side and cut out a tent cover from wallpaper to fit around the tepee. Decorate it on the white side; stick the long sides together; cut off the top; then pop over the frame. Tape the twigs to each corner on the inside.	Straight twigs, elastic bands, wallpaper, scissors, pens, tape, playdough, rulers, pencils.	Make a tent a bit like the one Job lived in.
Quiet	Nightscape	Create a night scene on the black paper using the gold/silver paint, paper, stars and sequins.	Black paper, gold/silver paint, PVA with glitter mixed in, stars, large round sequins (for planets), glue, holographic paper, scissors, paint brushes.	Talk about creation theme in Job.



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Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Really messy	First aid station	Create fake wounds/bruises/nasty boils with the face paints. Bandage each other up, including a sling.	Bandages, slings, face paints, sponges, brushes, bowl of water, paper towels.	Job suffered horrible afflictions (Job 2:4–10).
Really messy	Cornflour goo	Mix cornflour and water in deep baking trays, add colour (food colouring/powder paint) and play in this fascinating texture.	Cornflour, water, colouring, baking trays, paper towels.	To reflect the fact that life is messy, and sometimes it seems we are unable to hold things all together (Job 31:35–40).

Celebration suggestion

Song: 'Father God I wonder'.

Props: a table to display the crafts that people have made; a big cross leaning up against the table (or altar).

Have two people leading the worship, sitting at the front in full view (on a chair with a picture of Mr Messy on it): one leader needs to be bright and upbeat, and welcoming, while the other needs to be obviously cross and sulking. Happy leader welcomes everyone and invites the children to bring up examples of what they've made today. Then Happy leader notices Cross leader and suggests a song to cheer him/her up ('Father God I wonder'). Show Mr Messy on the screen and explain we're thinking about when things get messy.

Cross leader is still cross and explains about all the things that have gone wrong today. Happy leader says that reminds him/her of a story in the Bible—Job, whose life was really messy. Give a quick recap of the story:

- ✿ one day Job found himself covered with boils and sores, itchy and miserable;
- ✿ then robbers stole all his cattle;



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✿ then some of the people he loved died and he was really sad.

Cross leader identifies with Job, commenting he must have been really cross with God. Happy leader says Job was cross: he shouted at and questioned God, and probably stamped his feet. He was angry but he didn't blame God. His life was still a mess, but somehow he knew God was with him in the mess and loved him.

Cross leader asks if God made everything OK. Happy leader explains, no, not exactly. Job's life was still messy and painful but it felt as if God's love was bigger than the mess, as if God was holding him close.

Cross leader wants to know if that can be the same for us. Happy leader explains that God knows the things that make us angry and upset, and make life difficult. It's OK to shout at God and stamp our feet and let him feel the pain of our hurt.

When we look at the cross, which was a really messy and painful place for Jesus, the crossbars remind us of Jesus' arms stretched out towards us in love, and Jesus getting stuck into our mess.

End by inviting people to take a streamer (one of those party ones which keeps curled up and gets tangled up in itself) and to think about the things that make our lives messy and hurtful. Then get them to come and throw the streamer towards the cross, where Jesus shares our mess.

Finish with song, then grace.

Meal suggestion

✿ Spaghetti bolognese—encourage everyone to slurp it up messily!

Faith in Homes suggestion

- ✿ Sort out a little mess together: unravel necklaces in a jewellery box, or threads in a sewing box, or sort nuts, screws and nails in a tool box.
- ✿ Talk about a mess in your family life and how you feel about it.
- ✿ Treat yourselves to a nice reward for sorting the mess.

Primary School RE idea

Use for a topic on suffering, mystery or big questions. Also, creation, and awe and wonder.