



Authorised Mess — PROVERBS

Your details

Name: Janet Tredrea

Church: Truro Methodist Church

Bible book	Proverbs
Theme of session	Advice for life so we may be wise rather than foolish. Proverbs are short sayings that focus on using common sense and good judgement when dealing with life, the world and the way that God works. Many are easy to remember because they sum up, in a few words, important points of wisdom.
Notes	I prepared this to be used as an outdoor Messy Church in a shopping area on a Saturday morning as part of a larger all-day Biblefresh festival.

Session details

Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Younger participants	Crown fit for a king	Make a simple paper crown as opulent as possible with gold paper and self-adhesive jewels to represent the enormous wealth of King Solomon.	Collage materials, self-adhesive jewels, gold paper, crown template, glue, scissors, sticky tape.	The Book of Proverbs is attributed to King Solomon. Tell the story of how he chose wisdom over wealth (2 Chronicles 1:7–12). We are told in I Kings 4:32 that Solomon 'spoke' 3000 proverbs.



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Older participants	Wisdom cube	<p>Draw out the cube on the card and cut it out. Decorate and then write one of the following questions on each of the six faces of the cube:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is it right?- Is it helpful?- Is it good?- Will it make God happy?- Will I feel good about my decision tomorrow?- What will my family/friends say? <p>Fold and tape along the edges to form a cube with the words on the outside.</p>	Net of a cube (available from the Internet), A4 card, scissors, felt tip pens, sticky tape.	<p>Explain that God gave us the instructions in Proverbs to keep us safe and help us to lead a good life. We read in Proverbs 2:12 what wisdom does.</p> <p>When we don't know what to do in life, we can use the questions on the faces to help us think before we act. That's wisdom.</p>



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All ages	Making ants	Make an ant by cutting out and/or gluing the following parts together: Firstly, the middle body (a large circle), the back end (a large pear shape) and the head (a large teardrop shape). Then, add the eyes (small circles of a contrasting colour) to the head. Next, glue the legs to the body (six paper strips or chenille wire). Finally, glue the antennae to the head (two paper strips or chenille wires).	Cut-out parts to make the ant and/or template of ant; black, brown and red construction paper, card or funky foam; chenille wires, glue, scissors.	Talk about how marvellously God's tiniest, intricate creatures are made and how they have a busy world of their own (Proverbs 6:6–8). No time for laziness there!
Girls	Friendship bracelet	Plait the threads together with or without attaching beads to make a bracelet. Let all who participate be imaginative.	Wool, cottons, embroidery threads, beads, scissors.	God blesses us with friendships (Proverbs 17:17). Talk about the value of friends and how we can be a good friend to others.



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Boys	Strong tower	Affix a cone to one end of a kitchen roll tube. Cover the join with a strip of paper one side of which has been 'castellated' and stands up around the cone to give a 'balcony' effect. Paint all surfaces grey and then draw some narrow windows. Cut the corrugated card into a door shape and affix.	Kitchen roll inner tubes, cones of card with the same diameter as the tubes, small pieces of corrugated card, strips of paper/card, felt tip pens, scissors, sticky tape, grey ready-made paint.	In theory, a strong tower is a very safe place to be, and we can't be in a safer place than with God (Proverbs 18:10).
Word-based	Secret writing	Dip a cotton bud into the lemon juice and then use it to write a secret message on a piece of paper. Pass the message to a friend and tell them to hold it up to the light when it's dry. The lemon juice turns brown and the message appears.	White paper(fairly thin), cotton buds, freshly squeezed lemon juice.	Proverbs 25:9.



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Food-based	Crunchy honey balls	Roll very small balls of marzipan/icing in the palm of the hand, spear on the end of a cocktail stick, dip in honey and coat with finely crushed cornflakes. Make a quantity and 'serve' in a paper bun case.	Ready-made fondant icing or marzipan, runny honey, finely crushed cornflakes, cocktail sticks, paper bun cases. (Marzipan is best for this but use the fondant icing for those with an allergy.)	Talk about the health-giving attributes of honey (Proverbs 24:13) and how these have been known for centuries (see the Internet for details). Wise people look after their bodies and health.
Opens up great art	Origami opening mouth	Make the snapping mouth as per the origami instructions. Colour the inside of the mouth red or pink, and add a tongue and teeth if you like. Write a message, taken from Proverbs 10, in the mouth.	Construction paper, scissors, felt tip pens. Origami instructions to make a snapping mouth can be found on the Internet, for example at: http://www.aflnc.org/projects/?p=337 .	There are several references in Proverbs about watching what we say. Talk about what good can be done with kind words and what damage can be done by a fool (see Proverbs 10).



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Quiet	Grey-haired wisdom	Draw faces and add grey hairstyles to the paper plates. (Hint: If you knit up some wool and then rip it, it goes curly.)	Paper plates, collage materials, felt tip pens, grey wool (different shades and textures), glue, scissors.	Talk about older people and the contribution they make to our lives with their accumulated wisdom (Proverbs 16:31).
Really messy	Care for animals	Lay the template on the paper or card and sponge paint all around the edge of it. Lift the template carefully and write on the 'blank' animal that appears 'A good person takes care of their animals'.	Templates of domestic animals, paper or card, paints, pieces of sponge.	There are lots of instructions in the Bible urging us to look after and love our neighbours but there are few about respect for animals. This verse is very clear about our responsibilities (Proverbs 12:10).

Celebration suggestion

Talk about the qualities of being wise and foolish. Ask for suggestions of proverbs in use today that offer good, wise advice—for example, Many hands make light work... A stitch in time saves nine... A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush... and so on.

Look at some of the shorter pieces of advice Jesus gave, as in the Sermon on the Mount, for example. Now enact dramatically the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders—this can be found in *Say It Act It!* by Michael Catchpool and Pat Lunt (Kevin Mayhew, 1999). True wisdom is found in following the teachings of Jesus and incorporating them into our lives.



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Song ideas

- ✿ 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower'.
- ✿ 'The wise man built his house upon the sand'.
- ✿ 'God be in my head'.
- ✿ 'May the mind of Christ my Saviour'.

Meal suggestion

- ✿ Selection of healthy salads, as 'wise people' know it is prudent to look after themselves.
- ✿ Similarly, a selection of fruits, or crunchy honey balls (made in the activity).

Faith in Homes suggestion

- ✿ In a week, count how many times any member of the family uses a proverb in their dialogue, thus raising the awareness of their use.
- ✿ At family mealtime, discuss anecdotes from the day of examples of 'wise' and 'foolish'—this could also be recorded as a type of 'star chart'.
- ✿ The wisdom cube could also be brought into use throughout the week, by all family members.