



Approaches to discipleship

Maturing teams

Aim: For each member of the team to be walking confidently with Jesus as they lead the Messy Church, so that they are able to lead it more effectively and purposefully.

Make sure the Messy Church values of hospitality, celebration, Christ-centredness and creativity are involved in the way you set up and run these gatherings. (In other words, make sure it's full of food and fun!) If it can be made all age simply by holding it at a different time, do consider this. The below are suggestions, but feel free to come up with your own.

1 Reflective learning on an incident from your last Messy Church

Once a month, take time as a team to reflect on something that happened at the last Messy Church, using this set of questions to guide you through it.

Description – *from the people who observed it or were involved with the incident*

- What happened? Don't make judgements yet or try to draw conclusions; simply describe.
- What were the reactions and feelings of the people involved? Again, don't move on to analysing these yet.

Evaluation

- What was good or bad about the experience? Make value judgements.

Analysis – *everyone joins in*

- What was really going on?
- Where was Jesus in the situation?
- What biblical stories would you bring to bear on the situation?
- What new light do they shed on it?

Conclusions

- What can you take away from this as a team?
- What can you take away from this in your individual walk with Jesus?

Personal action plans

- What are you going to do differently in this type of situation next time?
- Are there any relationships that need healing?
- What will you hold in your prayers over the coming month?
- How will you hold each other to account to encourage one another to take these steps?

Use the Islands Map at the end of each session to talk about what treasure people have uncovered on the different islands. Encourage people to reflect and doodle in their Travel Journal at home and bring it to show the group if they want to next time.

2 Going deeper into the theme for the Messy Church session

Use the materials at the start of each session in the *Get Messy!* magazine as a group. Read the Bible story together, then use #discipleship:team – ‘Messy health check’ and ‘Messy team theme’. Discuss the questions. Write down what you agree you’ve learned together. Pray together

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3 Messy book club

Meet once a month. Select one of the ‘thinky books’ from the Messy Church range (i.e. one of *Messy Discipleship*, *Messy Church Theology*, *Being Messy Being Church*, *Messy Hospitality*, *Making Disciples in Messy Church*, *Messy Togetherness* – or indeed any book that you feel would be suitable). Give everyone a copy and invite them to read one chapter before you meet, then to come and discuss it at the meeting.

Use the Islands Map at the end of each session to talk about what treasure people have uncovered on the different islands. Encourage people to reflect and doodle in their Travel Journal at home and bring it to show the group if they want to next time.

4 Islands Map

Using the Islands Map, hold a team training session each month that ‘visits’ each island in turn. Record each time at the end what treasure each person found there. Examples are given below but these are not by any means exclusive.

- **Bible stories** – In the preceding month, invite everyone to read God’s Word for Messy People, one reading a day, perhaps as a family. Give everyone a sheet of paper and pen and ask them (in groups if you prefer) to do a lightning doodle of: their favourite story, a puzzling story, a challenging story and an idea they came across that was new to them. Then talk about each of these aspects, from the doodles. (Ask Lucy if you want a pack of these books at a reduced price.)
- **Generosity** – Read Mark 12:41–44 (the widow’s mite) together. Have lots of copper coins and put a pile in front of everyone. Put a tin or bottle or box in the centre. The challenge is to be the first to put all your coins into the container. As you put a coin in, you call out one ‘gift’ that someone in the team brings to Messy Church (e.g. ‘Freda brings the gift of washing up’). Only one person can put a coin in at a time and only one coin can be put in at a time! Ask if there’s anything on people’s hearts about generosity, giving or need that they’d like to talk about together. Thank God for the gifts represented by the coins.
- **Making life better for others** – Read Romans 12:1–3 and play with Playdough or air-drying clay and moulds. Talk about being moulded, shaped and conformed by the world around us: what that means for the team members here and what that means for families at Messy Church. Talk about how to make your Messy Church a gathering that transforms people, including you. Finish by reading the rest of Romans 12.
- **Justice** – Do a search for the word ‘justice’ in the Bible (use Bible Gateway, for example). What strikes you? Have a set of scales or balances to play with. Are there any imbalances or injustices at Messy Church that need addressing? Are there any local or global issues of justice you feel called to address as a church?
- **Caring for the earth** – Read Genesis 1 together. Make a big sketch of the different ‘zones’ of your Messy Church: welcome zone, activity zone, celebration zone and meal zone (represent them as big circles or rooms). Talk about each zone and what you do there that’s good for the planet or bad for the planet. Draw the good things in green and the bad things in orange. Is there more green or orange? Make a plan of action for changes that will make your zones greener. Talk about home solutions you’ve found as well and bring along products for others to see.
- **Meals** – Have a bring-and-share meal and include an agape meal within it, celebrating what Jesus did on the cross.
- **Play** – Make bread together, bake it and eat it. Share stories of what God has been doing in your life as you make it. Pray for each other.

- **Growing the church** – Read Acts 1:12–26. Talk about the state of your team at the moment. Use a set of Lego or Playmobil to create a model of your team. (Is it like a tug of war? A relay race team? A group of acrobats? A convalescent home? A boxing match?) Whether you're stretched or cosy, working well together or at loggerheads, would it help to make disciples if you invited more people to join? Dream dreams and talk about how in an ideal world, belonging to the team would mean each member is growing in their relationship with God – what would the ideal team be doing to grow as disciples? What's stopping you making that happen? Change your model to how you would like your team to be. Pray over that.
- **Worship** – In twos and threes, spend some time creating a prayer, poem, song, artwork or shaped silence that praises God for who he is and what he has done. Use the most recent Messy Church Bible story as the starting point. Come together and use these offerings to worship God together.
- **Togetherness** – Read 1 Corinthians 12 and take time to celebrate each other's gifts. Write your name on top of a piece of paper and pass it to the person on your right. They write something about what they appreciate about your gifts and yourself at the bottom of the paper, fold it over to cover it and pass it on round the circle, until everyone has their original piece of paper. Give everyone time to read them and ask if there is anything to share.
- **Prayer** – Have a supply of general crafty materials, candles, stones, water, sand and so on. In groups or pairs, use some of the materials to create a way of praying for one aspect of Messy Church – choose from: the families, the team, the wider church, people who are lonely and don't belong yet, people who are hungry, your wider community, the planet, the nation. Then bring the ideas into the bigger group and enjoy praying them together.
- **Family** – Invite a local expert (e.g. health visitor, teacher, nurse, childminder, worker for local family charity) to give you a short presentation on their view of local families' needs. Make a collage together showing your dream for local families. Pray together over this.
- **Nameless Islands** – What's missing in your walk with Jesus? What islands might these be?