

Session material: November



Go to messychurch.org.uk/getmessysept20 to download all templates at A4 size, including a session planning sheet



If you are using these sessions for a Messy Church at home, look out for this symbol! These are easier activities that can easily be adapted to the home.

Bible story

Matthew 5:14–16 (NIV)

‘You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.’

Pointers

Shining in the darkness is an important theme in the New Testament:

- John’s gospel speaks a great deal about light and begins by saying, ‘In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it’ (John 1:4–5).
- Jesus described himself as the light of the world: ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life’ (John 8:12).
- The New Testament also ends with Jesus being described as the Morning Star, the brightest star in the sky (Revelation 22:16).

In between these very important verses we find Jesus describing his followers as people who represent his light and who need to keep shining the light. In fact, he is even more specific than that, telling his followers, ‘You are the light of the world’ (Matthew 5:14). He gives a number of good examples of what you do and don’t do with light. Light should be seen and not hidden.

While Jesus is the light who shines into a dark world, he has passed on to us the responsibility of being his light, so that we become the light on his behalf. Paul takes up this same theme: ‘Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life’ (Philippians 2:14–16).

As we learn to live like Jesus and to grow in his likeness each day, we discover what it means to be lights in a dark world, bringing hope and purpose.

#discipleship: team

Messy health check

Is there any small thing you could do to cut down on the energy used for heating your building for Messy Church?

Messy team theme

- How do you shine your light where you are?
- How can you help your team members to shine their light for Jesus?
- Pray for each member of the team as they shine their light for Jesus at Messy Church.

How does this session help people grow in Christ?

We will discover that in order to show the light of Jesus, we need to live lives that will please him. This session is a great opportunity to encourage each other to shine for Jesus wherever we are, whether at school, at work, in the sporting club or at home.

As we discover that we are all stars for Jesus, we are learning that we are not alone and that Jesus is there to help us. It can also give us confidence, particularly if we feel that we are not very important, because Jesus has given us this special responsibility. Everything we do is to bring glory to God.

#discipleship: families

Mealtime card

- What is one way you can show kindness to another person?
- When do you find it hard to shine for Jesus?
- Today at Messy Church I learned...

Take-home idea

Send a text to someone who comes to Messy Church to encourage them to continue to shine like stars for Jesus where they are. You may like to ask how you can pray for them.

Question to start and end the session

So... Jesus wants us to shine like stars. What are some ways we can do this?

Shine like a star by Rob and Robyn Douglas

#discipleship: extra

Watch Messy Adventure: USA at youtu.be/sfKBxKK3oP0 – a whole hour all about this story with wonderful Messy things to see and do from Messy Churches across the USA.

Social action

What do you consider to be a 'dark' situation locally? How can your Messy Church community shine a light into it?

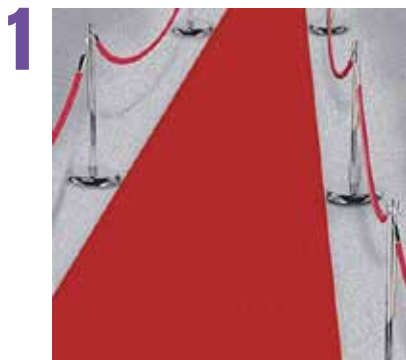
Activities

1. Red-carpet entrance

You will need: a long strip of red fabric; star-shaped name tags; pens; cameras (optional)

Treat everyone as a VIP! As they come in, give them a name tag on which they can write their name. Have a red carpet laid out, and even have your own 'press photographers' taking photos of people as they come in (ensure people that you have permission). If you have the equipment, you can then print the photos for people to take home afterwards or show on the screen as they have their meal.

Talk about how our theme today is that we are to be shining like stars for Jesus. Do you feel like a star yet?



2. Popcorn stand

You will need: popcorn in different flavours; a popcorn-making machine (or microwave); small bags

Have a popcorn machine (or microwave) near the entrance producing popcorn, so that people can smell popcorn as they enter the building. Ideally give people a bag of popcorn as they come in, or you can invite people to cook their own (supervised).

Talk about whether you have heard of the Hollywood Walk of Fame. We're building our own Walk of Fame tonight, so we need some popcorn to help us.

3. Photo booth

You will need: various costumes, props and wigs

Set up a photo booth near the entrance where people can dress up and take photos of themselves or their family on their own phones (or use a communal one). Be as creative as you can. People may put these photos on their own social media pages to help advertise Messy Church.

Talk about whether dressing up makes you feel special or important. Are you ready for our Walk of Fame?



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4. Messy Church Walk of Fame

You will need: A3 versions of printed template (download online); pens; felt-tip pens; crayons; other decorations such as glitter (optional); sticky tape

Give each person a copy of the A3 template. They can trace around their hand to make a handprint, write their name and the year and decorate the whole sheet with felt-tip pens, crayons and glitter (if you're game).

When they have finished their sheet, these will be placed on the floor to make up a Walk of Fame (like the Hollywood Walk of Fame). As they are laid out, walk around to see other people's. Use the Walk of Fame to lead people to where you will be holding your celebration time. You may want to tape the sheets to the floor to have them available for other people who come to your church to see in future, or you may simply place them on the floor, so they can be taken home at the end of the session.

Talk about how we are all stars, special in God's sight, and have been called to shine like stars in the sky as we share his love.

5. Watch the stars

You will need: a telescope; an outdoor space; images of galaxies and stars (optional)

Weather-permitting, set up a telescope so that people can look at the sky and see what they can see. Supervise this carefully so that no one damages their eyes by looking at the sun. If the weather is bad or you can't source a telescope, have photographs available of the sky and stars to look at and admire.

Talk about how amazing God's creation is and how wonderful the stars are. Did you know that God thinks you are more amazing than the stars?



6. Make a camera

You will need: different sized boxes; sticky tape; masking tape; scissors; plastic cups or cylinders; cardboard; coloured paper; pens

Make a camera using the equipment supplied. Let people design their own shape and size, but you may like to suggest that they cover a box in masking tape, using a plastic cup for the lens and coloured paper for decoration. They can use this on the Walk of Fame for pretend play.

Talk about how, when the flash on the camera goes off, it creates a bright light. Are we bright lights for Jesus that just come and go, or do we shine all the time?



7. The star in the apple

You will need: apples; knives; chopping boards

Under supervision, allow each person to cut an apple in half, to discover the star the inside. Encourage the element of surprise as they discover the star. Chop the apples up to eat when you are done, to avoid food waste.

Talk about how, whenever you have an apple at home, you can look for the star and remember that you are a bright star for Jesus.

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Shine like a star by Rob and Robyn Douglas



8. Shine for Jesus

You will need: glow sticks; cut-out star shapes in cardboard (download online); felt-tip pens; crayons; coloured pencils; sticky tape

Colour in your star and write on it, 'Shine for Jesus'. Stick a glow stick on the back. When you snap the glow stick it will shine. You can use this during the celebration time.

Talk about how we can shine for Jesus – not just once, like the glow stick, but throughout our lives – because the Holy Spirit is with us.

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9. Star dress-up

You will need: a selection of starry dress-up clothes for children and adults (try to get these in bright colours like yellow or with starry designs); star-shaped glasses; star stickers or badges

You may have dressed up in posh clothes when you arrived, but now it's time to dress up as a star!

Talk about whether the different types of dress-up clothes make you feel different. Which did you prefer? Jesus thinks we are all special – we don't need to pretend to be anything, as he values us as we are.



10. Playdough

You will need: playdough (preferably yellow or orange); glitter; plastic stars; star cutters; rolling pins

Enjoy playing with the playdough. How many different star shapes can you make?

Talk about how God makes each of us with much more care than we do when we are playing with the playdough. But he sees us all as stars – even if we are lumpy and misshapen!

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Shine like a star by Rob and Robyn Douglas

Celebration

The story is best told in a dark place. Plan ahead how you can make the room darker, either by turning off the lights or putting something over the windows if it is daytime.

One day Jesus was sitting on the side of a mountain. A lot of people were gathered around him. His disciples were there, as well as some people who just wanted to find out what Jesus had to say. They had been there all day, and it was starting to get dark. Jesus had been telling the people many important things. We often call this the sermon on the mount.

It was starting to get dark, so let's turn the lights off so we can imagine what it would have been like if it was the end of the day and the sun was just going down. Are we all ready to turn the lights off? *(Make sure everyone is prepared so that no one is scared.)*

As they sat there on the side of the mountain, they could see the nearby city in the distance, and all the lights of the city were starting to go on. Jesus pointed to the lights and said when the lights of the city are on at night, you can't hide them.

Some of the people in the group may have had lamps or some sort of light, and he pointed to them and said, in the same way, to be able to see those lights they need to be shining. You wouldn't hide them, would you?

Then Jesus said something very important. He said: 'In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.' *(If you've got a screen put these words up on the screen, or have them written out on a large piece of card.)*

Tonight we have been talking about stars. If you go outside on a very dark night when there are no clouds and look up at the sky, you may see the stars shining like very bright pinpricks of light in the dark sky.

There's another verse in the Bible that says that if we follow God's word, we will be like stars in the sky. We can be like stars or like lights shining in a dark place when we do what God wants us to do and live our lives in a way that is like Jesus.

On one occasion Jesus said he was the light of the world, so when we act as light, we are helping people to know what Jesus is like. What are some of the ways we can be like lights, so that people know what Jesus is like? *(Give people a chance to suggest ways they can be like Jesus – being kind, caring for one another, telling people about Jesus, helping people in need, etc. Suggest some ways you can be the light if there aren't sufficient ideas forthcoming from the group.)*

How many of you have got phones here? We normally ask you to put your phones away at church, but tonight I want you to take out your phones and turn on the lights, put them up in the air and let's see how much light there is. *(For those people who don't have phones, hand out glow sticks.)* Wave the lights around and look at how much light there is. In a moment we're going to sing a song about being stars, and I'll get you to wave your phones and glow sticks in the air while we sing.

You see, if there was just one light it wouldn't be very bright, but if we all shine our lights together it makes a big difference. Jesus said that he was the light of the world, but he has also given us the job of being lights. When we do what Jesus wants and follow him, everyone will know that we are friends of Jesus.

Prayer

Whenever the prayer refers to light, use sign language to show the light: hold your strong hand near your face and flick your hands like a star or light going on. Give people a chance to practise this before the prayer starts.

As we leave this place, we go in your light. As we begin a new week, we go in your light. As we encounter new experiences, we go in your light. As we meet old friends and new, may we be your light. Everything we do in the week ahead, may we be your light. Amen

Song suggestions

'Stars' – Paul Marino and Jeremy Johnson (*Galactic Starveyors*)

'You are a star' – Fischy Music

Meal suggestion

Hot dogs, potato chips, ice cream. These are things you may eat as you go down Hollywood Boulevard. If you can, make a hot dog stand to distribute your meal. You may like to add some healthy garden salads to balance things out!