



## New beginnings

By Iain Nash

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, 'If anyone belongs to Christ, then he is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new!' (ICB). How often do we feel like we need to press the reset button on our lives or in tricky situations? Things have not worked out the way we hoped, everything is a mess and if only I could go back and start again!

In this session, we will be discovering for ourselves that each one of us has an opportunity to start again when it comes to God through his grace, his forgiveness and his love.

### Activity time

If you can't get exactly these materials, just see what you can find around the house instead!

#### 1 Junk modelling



**You will need: recycled items from around your house; glue; scissors; sticky tape; hot glue gun (if you have one, to be used by an adult)**

Instead of throwing things away when they have finished, why not give them another chance by giving them a new purpose? This is your opportunity to be as creative as possible by making whatever you like. Ask your parents to share some of your creations on our Messy Church [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) pages.

**Talk about** how important recycling is. Instead of throwing away plastic and cardboard, we can recycle them so they can be turned into something new. This will help to save our planet as recycling reduces

the need for extracting, refining and processing raw materials, which create air and water pollution. Recycling also reduces greenhouse gas emissions, which helps to tackle climate change.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, 'We pray that God himself, the God of peace, will make you pure, belonging only to him. We pray that your whole self – spirit, soul and body – will be kept safe and be without wrong when our Lord Jesus Christ comes' (ICB). When we give our lives to God and put our trust in him, he promises to clean us up and give us fresh purpose by making us pure and whole again.

## 2 Thumbprint trees



**You will need: a printed image of a bare tree; green/yellow/orange paint**

My wife and I used this idea at our wedding to symbolise our new married life together by getting all our guests to put their thumbprint in some paint and press their thumb on to the end of a branch. They then wrote their name next to their thumbprint so we could see who celebrated our new start together with us. In the same way, press your thumb into the different colour paints and press your thumb on to the end of the branches. Watch your bare branches blossom and bloom into new life.

**Talk about** whether you have ever noticed that in the autumn season, the green trees lose all their leaves as they fall off on to the ground. You might have had great fun running through the leaves on the ground, crunching them under your feet. Although the trees look bare during the autumn and winter months, by the spring they have a new lease of life when new leaves and flowers bloom. Sometimes it might feel like we are vulnerable, tired and have lost all our life, energy and beauty. However, God 'came to give life – life in all its fullness' (John 10:10, ICB). Why not use today as an opportunity to start living life to the full again?

## 3 Handy butterflies



**You will need: coloured sugar paper or card; felt-tip pens; scissors; glue; different coloured tissue paper; pipe cleaners; googly eyes; sequins to decorate (optional)**

One of my son's favourite books is *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. In it, the caterpillar develops into a butterfly, displaying his beautiful multi-coloured wings. Draw around your hands on to coloured paper and cut them out. Stick them together into the shape of a butterfly. Decorate your butterfly with crunched-up tissue paper and sequins. Add googly eyes and two pipe cleaners for antennae.

**Talk about** how, at the start of each new year, we make promises to ourselves that we will change; we call these resolutions. It could be that we change what we eat for more healthier food or decide to reduce how much we eat. We might decide to do more exercise or spend less time looking at screens and get out in the fresh air. Whatever it is, it can be hard to keep these changes up. God loves us just the way we are, but he does not want to leave us that way. He wants us to be just like him, and one way we can grow in our lives is to read his word, the Bible. Matthew 4:4 says, 'A person does not live only by eating bread. But a person lives by everything the Lord says' (ICB). Why not start reading the Bible today, and let the words of God transform your life?

#### 4 Absolute beginners



**You will need: a big sheet of paper or card; Post-it notes or sticky notes (you can use different colour squares of paper and glue them on to your sheet); pens**

Whenever I start something new, I like to plan out the order in which I am going to do the task. One way I do this is by getting a big sheet of paper and a pad of Post-it/sticky notes and a pen. I then write down on the sticky notes all the tasks I must do to complete the job and stick them randomly on to the paper. Sometimes, and depending on the task, there will only be a handful of sticky notes on the paper. Other times, the paper is completely covered. Write down lots of new things you want to do this coming year. Why not push yourself out of your comfort zone and write down things you never thought you could do or achieve, and see at the end of the year whether you did them? Step out, be bold and ask God to give you the strength to get the job done.

**Talk about** how, 1 Corinthians 9:25 says, 'All those who compete in the games use strict training. They do this so that they can win a crown. That crown is an earthly thing that lasts only a short time. But our crown will continue forever' (ICB). The true beginning of a race is not when you are standing at the start line, but in the training before the race even begins. Usain Bolt trains hard to be the best sprinter, even before he stands in the starting blocks. Lewis Hamilton goes through meticulous planning and preparation with his team before he lines up on the starting grid in a Formula One race. We all must begin somewhere, and the best place to start is right at the beginning by working hard, learning from our mistakes and getting better and better each time. God does not seek perfection; he just wants us to work hard at loving him each day and he promises to be there, cheering us on and coaching us to win that eternal prize.

## Celebration

Why don't you explore all the Bible verses mentioned during the activity time? Read each one and chat about what they might mean to you and how they can remind you that we all have the opportunity to start again, to start right back at the beginning and have another go:

- [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) (The old has gone, the new has come)
- [1 Thessalonians 5:23](#) (Making us new, pure and whole again)
- [John 10:10](#) (Live life to the full)
- [Matthew 4:4](#) (Eating well by the word of God)
- [1 Corinthians 9:25](#) (Start training at the very beginning)

## Songs

Enjoy these songs together:

- 'Creator God' – Nick and Becky Drake
- 'Oh, happy day (The greatest day in history)' – Tim Hughes
- 'He has made me clean' – Duggie Dug Dug

## Chat and catch prayer

BRF's ministry Parenting for Faith has introduced a simple way we can communicate with God through prayer called 'Chat and Catch'. God loves it when we talk to him and he also wants to talk to us too. Let's spend some time now chatting with him and then waiting to hear what he might say back to us. You could chat to God about the following things:

- Tell God about a time something started badly but ended well.
- Tell God something you did that you didn't think you'd be able to do.
- Ask God if there is anything he would like you to do next year. Ask God, 'Why that thing, God?'

Now spend ten minutes quietly, or with some quiet music playing in the background. Have some pens to write down your thoughts if you want to.

You could finish with the [Lord's Prayer](#) and the [Messy Grace](#).

## Mealtime

As we are talking about new beginnings, why don't you try something new this mealtime by eating something you have never tried before?

When we try new things, as in the case with new foods, it can be scary at first; we have lots of questions, such as: what will it taste like? What if I don't like it? Will it be hot? Will it be cold? Will it be sweet or sour?

Be brave today and try something new. This might just be the beginning of a new discovery!

