



Outdoor Suggestions for September's Messy Church Session: Share like sheep

By Jane Butler

Summer is coming and there are lots of opportunities to take your Messy Church outdoors! Here are some extra ideas to use alongside the sessions and inspiration in [Get Messy!](#) One or two activities may be all you need for an outside session.

You'll find the Messy Church Goes Wild logo [here](#) and risk assessment [here](#).

Activity time

1 Activities from Get Messy!

The following magazine activities will work well outside:

- Activity 5: sheep or goat – you could place the pictures around your outside space so that people have to find them as well as identify whether it's a sheep or a goat!
- Activity 9: a home for nature – rather than make individual homes to take away, work together to create a large bug hotel for your grounds and several bird boxes or hedgehog shelters.
- Activity 10: follow the leader wild walk

2 Paintbrushes to share

(taken from *Holy Habits in Messy Church* by Lucy Moore and Andrew Roberts)

You will need: strong twigs; natural objects, such as leaves, grass stems, flowers, feathers and lichen; string; scissors; paint; paper

What to do: make an interesting paintbrush to lend or give to someone older or younger than you who can't do this activity because they haven't got the time, skill or desire to do it. Take a small selection of natural objects and bind them tightly to one end of a twig using the string, to make a natural paintbrush. Experiment with different objects to see which makes the most effective paintbrush.

Talk about how hard it was to spend a while making this paintbrush with a lot of care, then giving it away to someone else. How did it feel? Would it have been any easier to give it away to Jesus himself?

3 Minute to win it, resource edition

(taken from *Get Messy!* January 2020)

You will need: buckets and items for throwing (e.g. ping pong balls, bean bags, tennis balls, etc.)

What to do: contestants should stand 6–8 feet apart. Have one contestant hold an empty bucket and the other contestant has a pile of balls. When they hear the word ‘go’, the contestant holding the balls will try to get them in the empty bucket being held by their partner. The only rule is that the person with the balls may only throw them IF they shout out a resource to share at the same time. For example, they may call out ‘feed the hungry’ then throw the ball. ‘Visit the sick’, throw; ‘volunteer’, throw; ‘donate clothing’, throw, etc. The person on the other end tries to catch as many of the balls as possible with their empty cup. The team with the most balls in the end wins.

If you don’t have enough buckets or things to throw into, have several teams taking part at the same time. You could have pairs race against the clock to get as many balls in the bucket in a minute as possible and create a leader board. Announce the winners as part of your celebration time.

Talk about ways to come up with fresh ideas on resources we can give.

4 Animal sorting

You will need: picnic mat or blanket; a variety of animals, including as many sheep as possible (these could be soft toys, plastic play sets from zoos or farms, etc.)

What to do: pile all the animals on a picnic mat or blanket, or create a farm scene. Ask people to separate out the sheep from the rest of the animals.

Talk about how Jesus talked about separating the sheep from the goats, the good from the bad. Why do you think Jesus told this story? Why did Jesus teach through stories?

5 Fire toasting

You will need: a small fire pit; a loaf of bread; toast toppings; picnic plates and knives for spreading; toasting forks.

What to do: please take extra care to risk assess and supervise this activity. Approach another person at Messy Church (perhaps someone you’ve not spoken to before or maybe someone there for the first time) and offer to make them some breakfast/ tea. Find out what their favourite topping is. Gently toast a piece of bread over the fire, add the topping and serve to your new friend.

Talk about how we feel when we share what we have with others. How do you think this makes God feel? Can you work together as a Messy Church to support those in need in your local community? You could arrange a collection of food for a local food bank, toiletries for a local shelter or clothing for a local hostel.

6 Serving God and others

Carry out a litter pick in your church grounds or maybe even around your local area. Please ensure you risk assess this activity.

Depending on the time of year, carry out some maintenance jobs in your grounds such as gathering autumn leaves.

Celebration

Gather together and open with a prayer. You could use this one from the Messy Adventures:

The group could use simple actions like [BSL ones](#) to go with their responses as they say them.

In faith: touch your forehead and bring the side of your hand down on to your other hand in a chopping action

And hope: cross your fingers on both hands

And love: cross your hands over your heart

Leader: We've come together on this patch of earth

All: *In faith and hope and love.*

Leader: We've come together under this sky

All: *In faith and hope and love.*

Leader: We've come together with the creatures we can see and those we can't

All: *In faith and hope and love.*

Leader: We've come together with the people we can see and those we can't

All: *In faith and hope and love.*

Leader: Creator God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, we've come together in your name

All: *In faith and hope and love. Amen*

Invite everyone to **share what they've enjoyed** about the activity/activities

The celebration (including the prayer) on p. 22 of *Get Messy!* will also work well outdoors.

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