

## **A Suggested Outline for a Paper on Messy Church for the PCC**

- Start with some hard facts about your neighbourhood taken perhaps from the most recent census eg:
  1. Local population figures
  2. Breakdown into age groups
  3. Social make-up of the parish / area
  4. Number of people from the parish / area belonging to local churches
  5. What percentage of the overall population this is
  6. Social make up and age groups of people who belong to your church
  7. Number of people belonging to churches who come from outside the parish / area
  8. Number of people (including children) whom you consider to be on the 'fringe of your church through church events, groups, friendships, local school etc.
- Describe from this analysis the group(s) of people in your parish / area you feel your church is not yet reaching that you hope to reach via Messy Church.
- If appropriate, quote your church's mission statement
- Describe what Messy Church is
- Cite local examples of Messy Churches, ideally with quotations from these churches' leaders. (You may find some on the Directory)
- Point out what aspects of Messy Church make it particularly suitable for your church, referring back to your mission statement.
- Cite the difficulties you foresee: eg lack of facilities, lack of team members, finding an appropriate time when the building you want to use is available
- Cite the strengths of your church as they are relevant to this: eg facilities, personpower, creative skills, hospitality, warmth of welcome, servant attitude, financial resources.
- Suggest a pilot of perhaps, six months before reviewing the situation. The average cost per monthly session is roughly £60 for an expected congregation of 50, and there will be initial start-up expenses like publicity and craft equipment, so six months' worth of monthly Messy Churches would need a budget of around £4-500, a team of 10-15 people and prayer support.

The document below may be useful. You might also show the 6 minute clip from the Fresh Expressions DVD.



**Messy Church** began in April 2004 in an Anglican church near Portsmouth. It is a church for families who find it hard to go to church on a Sunday, and a typical session would include an open welcome time, a creative 'messy' time, a celebration (worship) time and a shared meal. It meets once a month at a time most suitable for a local area, either after school or at the weekend.

Perhaps the most significant aspects are those of:

- welcoming the whole family together not just the children
- being a church not a club
- eating together

The session would typically run along these lines:

3.30 welcome

4.00 crafts

5.00 celebration

5.15 meal

The aims are:

- to provide an opportunity for people of all ages to worship together
- to help people of all ages feel they belong in church and to each other
- to help people have fun and be creative together
- to introduce Jesus through hospitality, friendship, stories and worship

The aim is however *not* to bring people to Sunday church, as the cultural gap between their lives and the Sunday service may be too large, and Sunday may not be a suitable time for families with other commitments. Messy Church is a church congregation in itself. Discipleship and growing in faith will, we hope, happen in a 'messy' context.

The concept has spread by means of the first Fresh Expressions DVD, *Messy Church* and *Messy Church 2* the books, the website and Messy Fiesta training days. There are currently about 65 Messy Churches listed on the website Directory and many more that are not listed. There are Messy Churches in several countries outside the UK.

[www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk)