



Messy wedding

Messy reflection

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'

'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from eighty to a hundred and twenty litres.

Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water'; so they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.'

They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, 'Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.'

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

John 2:1-11 (NIV)

Jesus was a wedding guest. He had recently been baptised by John the Baptist in the river Jordan and then spent 40 days in the wilderness. He had found Andrew, Simon, Philip and Nathanael as disciples and then proceeded to travel to Cana of Galilee for a wedding, where, unexpected even to him, he was to perform the first of his miracles.

Known as the sign of his glory, he turned water into wine. This miracle involves life, joy, celebration, good news and endless love. Mary, Jesus' mother, was also at the wedding. This occasion possibly marked a change in their relationship. Mary had faith in her son. Mary knew the wine had run out and, instead of asking for everyone's assistance and to give a hand to the problem, she quietly turned to Jesus and uttered a statement: 'They have no more wine.'

Jesus was not expecting this moment and yet, in the quietest and most non-theatrical way, he turned the water into wine, to save the embarrassment of the host family and prove his covenant on the sanctity of marriage. In everyday things, he revealed his glory. As this sign pointed to who Jesus really was, we now explore the story with all the wonder, anticipation, joy and celebration that weddings bring to each of us, whether as bride, bridegroom or guest. Disaster or triumph, God is our rescuer and brings eternal blessings.

Mealtime card

- When were you last at a celebration?
- Did anything go wrong at the celebration?
- What would you say to Jesus if he was seated next to you at a wedding reception?

Take-home idea

Choose your favourite drink for a family toast. Use your best drinking glasses and make a toast to everyone in your family, mentioning each person by name. Make it positive and fun with a loud shout!

Messy health check

Not everyone is experiencing 'happily ever after' in their marriage. How can you be available as a listener for someone?

How does this session help people grow in Christ?

The servants needed to obey Jesus before he turned the water into wine. How can we obey Jesus and listen to his commands?

Messy team theme

- Do we see our own Messy Church as an event?
- Can we be church and offer ourselves each month to whoever happens to come?
- Can our hospitality make a difference?

Question to start and end the session

So... why does this miracle change the relationship between Jesus and his mother?





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Extra resources

A Messy Church BRF Pinterest board has been created especially to accompany this session: pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/wedding-at-cana

Activities

1 Wedding hats

You will need: newspapers (check for any inappropriate photos); masking tape; decorations such as: tissue paper, feathers (Baker Ross – use BRF15 discount voucher code), pompoms, etc.; double-sided tape or glue; scissors

Create a hat from three sheets of newspaper (broadsheets create a larger hat) spread evenly over someone's head. Splay the edges, overlapping, to cover the circumference of the head. Press down on the head, moulding, creasing and scrunching the newspaper to make the head shape. Using masking tape, secure a head band around the crown of the head. Either remove the hat from the head or continue on the head and roll up the brim around the hat. Decorate.

Talk about how we join in with the celebration of a marriage by dressing up in garments that make us feel special on the day, whether as bride, bridegroom or guest. In Jesus' day, the bridegroom would have worn particularly splendid clothing. A hat is a popular wedding accessory. What would Jesus and other guests have worn at the wedding at Cana? The wedding may have lasted for a week! It would have involved Jesus travelling from Jordan with his new disciples and close family relatives. What would it have been like to join Jesus at the wedding?



2 Prayer heart

You will need: a heart template; paper; pencils; scissors; red crayons

Draw around the heart template on paper and cut out the shape. Write a prayer in the centre to express how you feel knowing that Jesus loves you. Decorate around your prayer. Take off your shoe and place the heart shape inside your shoe. Put your shoe back on your foot.

Talk about however we look on the outside, God knows us because of what we are on the inside, including our strengths and weaknesses. Jesus wasn't invited to the wedding because he was some kind of celebrity, but because he was celebrating the marriage of close friends or family. How close is your paper heart to you now? Trust in Jesus as Mary trusted that Jesus would fix the wedding wine problem.



3 Wine glass decorating

You will need: plastic wine glasses; glass paints (Baker Ross – use BRF15 discount voucher code); fine paint brushes; sequins; glue

Paint marriage symbols on the wine glasses (e.g. wedding rings, hearts, doves, love knots). Use the glass paint sparingly so that drips will not be formed. As the paint dries, you can double coat with paint for a stronger colour. Embellish with sequins. If you know of someone getting married, you may wish to paint their names.

Talk about the importance of wine at weddings in biblical times. Offering wine showed respect to the wedding guests.



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The wedding probably took place at the home of the bridegroom. It would have been an insult not to provide wine. Often, a wedding was held in the autumn season when the harvest was in, evenings were cooler and a whole village could attend. A considerable amount of wine would have been needed. After the best wine had been served, the cheaper wine was usually offered to the guests. How important is hospitality at Messy Church?



4 Relay race

You will need: a large bucket of water; six smaller buckets, jars or water pots; plastic beakers, towels

Find six people to race against. On 'Go', fill a plastic beaker from the large bucket of water and travel/run to a smaller jar, pouring the water from the beaker into the smaller jar. Continue until a winner fills their jar to the top. 'So they filled them to the brim' (John 2:7, NIV).

Talk about how the wine ran out at the wedding of Cana. It would have been very embarrassing and shameful for the host family. Jesus told the servants to fill six jars with water, so they filled them to the top. Then Jesus asked them to take the water to the master, which they did. When the master tasted it, the water had become wine. The water became wine AFTER they had obeyed, not before. Do we obey Jesus?

5 Sugar art

You will need: small fairy cakes; fondant icing; butter cream; icing bag; flower plunger cutters (found at various craft shops)

Create mini wedding cupcakes by swirling butter icing on a fairy cake and topping with a fondant flower. There are lots of video tutorials on the internet to help with sugar art. Get creative! See pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/wedding-at-cana

Talk about the importance of food at weddings and what might have been offered at weddings in Jesus' time. Imagine baked sardines, endive salads, olives and clementines, dried apricots and pomegranates, stuffed grapevine leaves, roast duck with mulberries and horseradish, racks of lamb, mamool (fruity or nutty cookies), challah bread, platters of melon, raisins, dates and candied Jordan almonds. What would you choose for the centrepiece at a wedding feast?



6 Confetti cannon

You will need: balloons; leaves; craft punches (Baker Ross – use BRF15 discount voucher code); cardboard tube; wrapping paper; elastic bands or stapler; stickers; glue

Find video tutorials on our wedding at Cana Messy Church BRF Pinterest page pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/wedding-at-cana

Use a hole punch or craft punch on leaves to produce a handful of small eco-friendly confetti. Tie a knot in the end of a balloon. Cut off the other end of the balloon so it can be stretched over the end of a cardboard tube (approx. 10–15



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cms). Secure with a strong elastic band or stapler. Decorate the tube with wrapping paper or stickers. Place the confetti inside the tube, pull back the balloon and let go!

Talk about celebrations. When did you last celebrate and why? Was it joyful? What made it joyful? Mary was enjoying the wedding celebration, along with the other guests, but noticed the wine was running out. After telling Jesus, she watched him perform his first miracle. How did this place his stamp of approval on the marriage covenant? Jesus brings joy to all who believe in him. This ordinary setting became the showcase of his power.



7 Wine tasting

You will need: a selection of bottles of flavoured waters; beakers; paper; tape

Cover the bottle labels with paper (or peel them off). Make a note of the different flavoured waters. Invite all ages to a wine tasting experience. Pour some water into a beaker. First, swirl your water, fast or slow. Then agitate it – this adds the important oxygen and ‘opens up’ the water/wine. Now stick your nose into a beaker of flavoured water. Close your eyes. Breathe in deeply. What scents can you smell? (Your brain will only pick up scents that are in your memory!) Now sip your water/wine. Swish the water around your mouth. What does it taste like? Be confident in what you think. Try water from another bottle and repeat.

Talk about how, in the Bible, wine is associated with joy and glad tidings. As Jesus turned the water into wine at the wedding, his first miracle, we remember how Jesus pours out his love for each of us, forever and ever. How can we show joy about what Jesus offers us and how can we share that love?

8 Abundance

You will need: prints of wedding of Cana paintings (be careful of copyright); wallpaper lining; masking tape; paints; paint brushes; aprons; water; towels

Roll pieces of wallpaper lining up cupboard doors or walls and secure with masking tape. This will create a giant painting space where all ages (and heights!) can engage in painting at the same time. Tape a print-out of an old painting of the wedding of Cana. A suggestion is *The Wedding Feast at Cana* by Paolo Veronese, the largest painting in the Louvre. Invite everyone to paint the abundance of the feast, the food, clothing, wine and so on. The artist painted himself and other historical people into the painting. Invite everyone to paint themselves at the feast. What are they doing and what are they wearing?

Talk about how much food and wine there must have been at a wedding lasting quite a few days. Jesus has an abundance of grace, which is deep and enough for everyone. The water was turned into the very best wine.

9 Travelling water

You will need: two clear plastic containers or beakers; woolly yarn or string; red food colouring; tape; water; tray

Prepare a tray or table suitable for water spillages. Sometimes experiments don’t work the first time and that is okay. Find the video tutorial of this experiment on the wedding at Cana Messy Church BRF Pinterest Board: pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/wedding-at-cana

Soak a piece of woolly yarn, approximately 60 cm long, in water. Tape the ends of the woolly yarn inside each container/beaker. Add half a cup of water to one beaker and put six drops of red food colouring in the other beaker. Lift the water beaker higher, at around a 45 degree angle, tipping the water carefully so that it trickles down the yarn and into the beaker with food colouring. The yarn forms a channel for the water to flow down. The red food colouring colours the water as it pours in, turning the water into wine.

Talk about the servants who obeyed Jesus and filled the six large ceremonial water pots with water, then drew some out for the host to drink. How would you have felt if Jesus had asked you to take the water over to the host for tasting?



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They knew that Jesus had turned the water into wine, but not until after they had obeyed Jesus. Jesus didn't even touch the water! Imagine the suspense between the time the host drinks the water and the time that he declares it to be the best wine ever.



10 Never-ending card

You will need: squares of strong paper approximately 21x21 cms but any size will do; 16 small paper heart shapes or four larger paper heart shapes per card; scissors; glue

Find the video tutorial of the never-ending card on our wedding at Cana Messy Church BRF Pinterest board: [pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/wedding-at-cana](https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/wedding-at-cana)

Fold and cut out the middle section of the squares as instructed, then refold and tuck in the bottom right hand corner. Practise turning the card over and over. Add the hearts to mark the centres of each fold. This is such fun! There are lots more options on the internet if you want to try something different.

Talk about the endless love of a husband and wife. God also loves us unconditionally. He sustains love with us when the going gets tough and loves us at our best and our worst. His love has no earthly match but 'his love endures forever' (Psalm 136:2, NIV).



Extra activity idea

You will need: henna design colouring pages; pictures of weddings from around the world; lists of traditions and rituals. See www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/wedding-at-cana

Colour some henna design sheets. Look at the other provided images and stories as you do so for inspiration. For example, darker colours are more popular with Indian brides as they believe this means that they will have a happier marriage.

Talk about the different colours and styles of wedding dresses, the food that would be offered and the music played.

Celebration

You will need: a newspaper hat from activity 1; decorated wine glasses from activity 3

A toast!

I have family in Australia. They love proposing toasts. They toast at the drop of a hat. At birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, to the cooks, to the taxi driver, to the window cleaner! Everyone! Let's celebrate together and every time I say '**wedding**', can you raise your glass and shout, 'A toast!'

I am going to a **wedding**! (*Put on the newspaper hat*) My family and friends will be there too. I am so excited! Have you ever been to a **wedding**? What did you wear? Where was it? In a church? In a hotel? What did you see? Have you ever been to a **wedding** when something has gone wrong? I love watching the video clips on the TV that show things going wrong at **weddings**. But what does it feel like when something really does go wrong?

Jesus went to a **wedding**. We don't know who was getting married, but we think it may have been a member of his family. His mother, Mary, was there as well as some of his friends. They were all dressed up and looking forward to celebrating for quite a few days. That's how **weddings** were done in Jesus' time. The whole village was there! There was lots of food and wine and dancing. The village was rockin'! Jesus was telling stories at the tables, there was joy and laughter and everyone was happy.



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But a disaster was looming and Mary knew it. Mary was co-hostess and worried that the wine was running out. That would bring shame on the **wedding's** hosts. Mary told Jesus, 'They have no more wine.' What was Jesus going to do about it? Would he rally the guests round and get help? Would he check all of the clay pots for more wine? No. He told his mother he was not ready yet. Not ready to show his powers. Not ready to save the day. Yet, surprised that he was now called to do something, he heard his mother tell the servants to do whatever Jesus told them.

Six stone ceremonial water jars were nearby. Jesus told the servants to fill them with water. They obeyed him and filled them to the brim. Then, Jesus told them to draw some of the water out and take it to the master of the banquet. This could have been the bridegroom or his father. When the host tasted the water, it tasted of wine and not just any wine... but the best! The **wedding** was saved!

This was Jesus' first miracle. It is believed he performed over 30 miracles in his lifetime. When things were going wrong for people, he turned disaster into something better, something better than we could ever imagine. And when he was being crucified on the cross, and we thought that this was the very worst disaster... God performed his miracles. There were three hours of darkness that covered the whole land. The veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom – and it was 60 feet long! There was a mighty earthquake. But the greatest miracle of all was when Jesus rose from the dead, forgiving us of our sins.

The miracle in today's **wedding** story was unexpected for Jesus. He showed his power and revealed his glory. His disciples saw this and believed in him. Let's raise our glasses and make a toast to Jesus: (*Shout*) **TO JESUS!**

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you take everyday events, like **weddings**, and show us how honour, respect and being the good neighbour can make a difference. Help us to be there for others in their more difficult situations, and we pray that they experience the joy and celebration of you, Jesus Christ, who untangles life's knots and dilemmas. Raise your glass and shout: Amen!

Song suggestions

'You are an inspiration' – Fischy Music

'Come on and celebrate' – Dave Bankhead and Trish Morgan (ThankYou Music)

'He's simply the best' – Mark Bradford (One Way UK)

Meal suggestion

High tea with mini wedding cupcakes