

Vic: Chris Barnett
chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au

NSW/ACT: Judyth Roberts
judythr@nsw.uca.org.au

Tas: James Oakley
kids_families@riverlinks.net.au

SA & NT: Melissa Neumann
mneumann@sa.uca.org.au

WA: Brenton Prigge
brenton.prigge@wa.uca.org.au

QLD: Sue Taylor
taylor.susanne.coral@bigpond.com



Welcome to the latest Australian Messy Church newsletter!

A highlight, for many, of the current term has been the visit to Australia by Lucy Moore. Lucy visited Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland and there was much joy, laughter and encouragement wherever she visited. Partly as a consequence of Lucy's visit, and partly as a result of the momentum around Messy Church generally, there are now more than 100 registered Messy Church expressions in Australia.

Thanks for the valuable part you are playing in the on-going Messy Church story in Australia.

Yours Faithfully,

Chris

Some Snippets

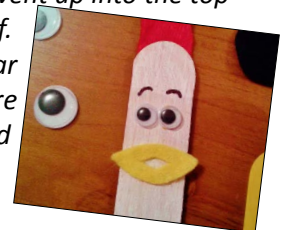
Over 120 people headed to Dapto Messy Church for an afternoon of Christmas fun. Due to the extreme heat outside, our wonderful team rushed to cram all of our messy activities in our air-conditioned hall! A wide range of activities were on offer including badge making, mini wooden mangers, melting snowman cookies, crackers, wreaths and of course chocolate donkey poo! Our photo booth was a big hit, with families enjoying the Nativity costumes and props. During our Celebration time we sang carols, watched some videos and learned about the story of the first Christmas. Our time together finished with a festive feast in the hall with meat, bread and salad, fruit platters and lots of yummy treats for dessert!

David, Dapto (New South Wales)



We had a great Messy Christmas at Sandringham Uniting. The children arrived early and dressed as characters from the Christmas story. In the Celebration time, after a call to worship, opening prayer and song, we played pass the Christmas parcel (every layer in the wrapping related to the Christmas story - eg star, angel, gold). Later the children handed out a star to every person present, and while the children either drew or wrote their prayer on their star, adults were invited to write a prayer on the star, too. The stars were gathered up, attached to a very long string, and then the ends of this long string were hauled up so that the stars went up into the top of the worship space, just below the roof. We had a Hindu family come (their 3 year old comes to our Playgroup) and we were very surprised at how much they enjoyed what we did. However, because India is such a multi-faith country, many Indians are used to joining in festivals for other religions. We look forward to seeing them again at other events.

Eileen, Sandringham (Victoria)



Our first pilot attempt and what a great success it was. We reached a few families that we had lost over the recent years and we ran the theme of Lent. Our shared meal went really well also and everyone concerned enjoyed the evening very much.

Andrew, Holland Park (Queensland)

We had a really great Messy Church year, with really strong numbers, new families nearly every time and a core group of "repeaters" that is growing by leaps and bounds. What I found to be a double blessing is how Messy Church energized the congregation and the positive impact it had not only on the attendees but on the volunteers as well.

Kathryn, Bendigo (Victoria)

A Word from the UK...

May your year continue to be a Messy and blessed one! A round up of a few of the many Messy things to give thanks for:

- Over 1600 Messy Churches registered compared with 1000 last January; 50 Regional Coordinators in place
- 100+ registered Messy Churches in Australia.
- Messy Church in 14 countries with one starting this month (many valsignelser (blessings) to the first Swedish team!)
- *Making Disciples in Messy Church*, *Messy Celebrations* and *Messy Theology* are all books to look forward to this year, as well as *Get Messy!*, the new magazine.



Messy Church Values –

Being Christ-centred

Continuing with our gentle ponderings of the core values of Messy Church (creativity, hospitality, being all age, celebration and being Christ-centred), let's remind ourselves of the core value of 'being Christ-centred'.

When I look at the enormous network that is Messy Church, I often think of the Psalmist's words: Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain (Psalm 127:1, TNIV). This is very mysterious, perhaps especially to Messy Church teams who put in so much hard graft themselves - cooking, washing up, serving, cutting out, sweeping up, peeling nameless horrors off the ceiling and floor: it feels as if we ourselves are doing an awful lot to 'build the house' and that it isn't going to be built at all unless we contribute our elbow grease to it.

But the mystery (and annoying thing and huge relief all at the same time) is that we could do all that work and do it brilliantly but it would STILL be a waste of time, fruitless, rootless and heartless unless Christ is the reason for doing it, the means of doing it and his glory the outcome of doing it. We might have an outwardly successful Messy Church but be relying totally on our own efforts rather than giving the invisible breath of God space to change people's lives on a cosmic level.

It's not rocket science, but here's the start of a checklist for your team. You will be able to think of many more - do send them our way for the blog to lucy.moore@brf.org.uk

- Pray together.
- Work out how every theme can introduce Jesus, however gently.
- Make sure the activities and celebration point towards the Bible story or theme.
- Make sure the team know the Bible theme or story.
- Remember Jesus' attitudes to children, to outsiders, to his friends in every conversation or interaction we are given at Messy Church, with families, team and newcomers.
- Make space for families to encounter Christ, not just to hear about him.
- Deliberately look for the Spirit of God already at work in the people who come and be ready to love the spark of Christ alive in them, whoever they are.
- Remember people will learn much more from what you do than from what you say: be sensitive about when to talk about Christ and when to let the activities, ambiance and environment do the speaking.
- As you reflect on your Messy Church session, ask each other where you saw Christ at work. Invite Christ to be at the centre of your life, day, workplace, crisis, relationship, activity, moment.

- Lucy Moore

Some New Resources

March Messy Enews is out now.

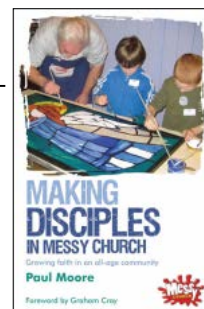
Free subscription is here: <http://www.messychurch.org.uk/4333> . It is so easy!

There's a new **Get Messy! Magazine Facebook** page for you to 'Like': <http://www.facebook.com/MessyChurchMag?fref=ts>

Discipleship

Paul Moore's book *Making Disciples in Messy Church* is out next month and can be pre-ordered.

This is going to be a thought-provoking read for any Messy Church leader and for people involved in other forms of church too.



Get Messy!

So exciting! Read all about the new magazine and order a copy or subscribe on BRFOonline. Such a bargain! So many sessions! And a Facebook page to go with it: Messy Church Mag



Australian Roundtable

As part of Lucy's visit, a group of 15 people representing each state and territory gathered in Adelaide for the inaugural Australian Messy Church Roundtable. Stories were shared, ideas were generated and relational connections were made that will facilitate the "scaffolding" of Messy Church in Australia. For more information on the outcomes for your particular state or territory, please contact the person listed at the start of this Newsletter.

