



at St Andrews

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What a tremendous occasion the December Messy Church was, which included a messy Baptism and a Messy Christmas.

The children spent time in the Hall making Christmas cards, Christmas Tree decorations, a stable scene and signing a big card for baby Leo who was to be baptised. Everyone was welcomed, including the family of Leo, and soon we made our way into the Church for the Worship. Chris encouraged the children to display their things that they had made. We all sang songs relating to Christmas. Then Chris told the story of the first Christmas with lots (and lots) of help from the children.

The Baptism of Leo then took place and promises were made by the parents and the people. We had prayers, including prayers on the prayer request board, then we sang "Come and join the celebration" followed by the sharing of the Messy Church grace.

Everyone then went back into the Hall for a meal and a piece of Christening cake. A very good time was had by all.

The next Messy Church, which will include the making of the Christingles, is on Sunday, 29th January at 3 p.m.

Barbara/Kath/Eileen

Can you believe that Messy Church at St. Andrew's has been happening for two years. By the time you read this we will have started on our third year.

Each session has a theme running through it with related activities. This is followed by worship in the Church. We then return to the Hall for a meal.

This all could not happen without your prayers and your help. We have a team of committed people but we very much welcome the extra help we receive. We do not ask for your help every time, although that is always welcome. Do have a word with one of us.

Barbara/Kath/Eileen

Many thanks to all those gentlemen who parted with some precious shirts to help during the messy part of Messy Church last time. We are well stocked now but will ask when we need more.

We had our first outdoor activity in July with the painting of a large background for the story of the Good Samaritan which was told and later re-enacted in the Church during the worship time. This was all part of the theme "Love your neighbour".

A good time was had by all the families joining us for the afternoon. Even the helpers had fun!

Our next session is 18th September when we are looking at the theme "Love your world".

All are welcome to come along and join in the fun. We can guarantee that you will enjoy it, too.

Barbara/Kath/Eileen

Combining Mothering Sunday and Easter worked well for the Messy Church day held in March.

The children made cards for their Mums and Easter cards for their families and friends, as well as Easter gardens. They also coloured designs appropriate for Easter which they hung on a tree. You will have seen this tree in the Hall since that day. After all the craft activity we then went upstairs for the worship. The children arranged their Easter gardens around the Cross and then listened to the Easter story. We all joined in some songs and had a prayer.

Downstairs the food was being prepared and as we returned to the Hall the meal was served and enjoyed by all. Ten families enjoyed a good afternoon together learning about Jesus and what happened at the first Easter.

Dates for the next two sessions of Messy Church are 8th May and 10th July. It would be good if we could have some extra pairs of hands. If you are able to come along on a Sunday from time to time it would be helpful.

Barbara/Kath/Eileen

The Hall was buzzing with children, parents and helpers at the end of January when Messy Church used the Christingle as its theme.

Lanterns and stained glass windows were amongst the items made to emphasise light, along with the Christingles themselves.

The Worship this time was held upstairs and proved to be very successful. A story was told, the Christingles explained and songs were sung then we lit (very carefully) the Christingles, singing the Christingle song.

The families then made their way back into the hall for the meal, which was enjoyed by all.

Barbara, Kath and Eileen

There are well over 500 Messy Church groups up and down the country. Our Messy Church is going well with an event taking place every six to eight weeks. Over the sixteen months we have reached twenty families through contacts with our two Toddler groups, Tots at Ten and friends of friends who have heard of our venture and come along to see what it is all about.

We have covered stories like Joseph, Joshua, Abraham, Moses, Jesus the light of the world, Jesus as I am the true vine and of course, the Christmas story. This month we will be having a Christingle event at 3 p.m. on 30th January.

Activities include craft work, singing, worship, stories and of course a meal at the end of the afternoon.

Extra hands are always welcome. Do come along and join us and be part of this exciting new venture.

Barbara, Kath and Eileen

How did we celebrate one year of Messy Church? Well, we explored the well-known story of Joseph, thus completing our series of God's family — Joshua and Abraham being two of the other characters.

The hall was alive with families taking part in the craft activities — Joseph's plain coat was made into a coat of many colours, potato printing, dream pictures, sad/happy faces, small boxes decorated with a gift inside, decorated camels and a coat design collage.

Worship in the Church followed with an illustrated story of Joseph, some singing, a prayer and the Messy Church grace.

A meal of jacket potatoes with beans, spaghetti and cheese greeted us as we returned to the hall for the final part of our afternoon. Many thanks for all those who are willing to come along and play their part either arranging the craft activities, organising the food and planning the whole event. We certainly needed all the helpers who came along. Any others who would be able to come from time to time would be more than welcome. Please contact Barbara, Kath or Eileen.

Eileen Robinson

The theme for the July event was Joshua - still following the sequence of "God's family, our family". There were a few less families this time with so many other commitments happening at the end of the school term. However, all had a very active and enjoyable afternoon.

A graffiti wall was produced by all and there were various individual craft activities as well, including musical instruments (yes, we did wonder why we had chosen that idea!) worship ribbons, stone painting, textured pictures and edible stones. The children had received bags on arrival which included a quiz about Joshua and the bag was able to carry some of the craft items home.

A worship time was had in the Church where the story of the walls of Jericho was enacted including a march round the Church - reinvented as the walls of the City. Songs, prayers and display of craft items were followed by the Messy Grace.

The meal back in the hall was chicken casserole, cakes and drinks.

The next Messy Church, when the theme will be Joseph, will be on 12th September and some extra help would be very welcome. Please speak to Barbara, Kath or Eileen if you want to know more.

Eileen Robinson

Messy Church 6 has happened and was as hectic and enjoyable as ever.

This time the theme was Moses.

The children (and the adults) learned about Moses' journey through to Egypt, with many hazards along the way including the parting of the Red Sea (blue sheets at the ready).

This took place in the Church as part of the worship with singing, a prayer, not to mention the Messy Grace.

Prior to the worship everyone was welcomed into the Hall where craft activities included writing our name in hieroglyphic, papyrus weaving, making flat bread, making frogs and pyramids.

The meal was sausage casserole followed by cakes (scrumptious) and drinks.

Several people were involved and fifteen families turned out for the afternoon. We are always glad of extra help either with the craft or the food or even just to go round and chat to the families.

This will assist, particularly, when helpers are not able to be with us for whatever reason.

Please let Barbara, Kath or Eileen know if you could offer to help from time to time.

The next Messy Church is Sunday, 18th July when the theme will be Joshua.

Future dates are September 12th, October 31st and December 12th.

Eileen Robinson

Messy Church is going really well.

We've held five up to now with around 60 people being involved each time, [including helpers] although last month we had 79 people here! Wow!

We have contact with about 20 families, some known to us, others we've had no previous contact with at all, which is fantastic...!

One dad turned up with his son and daughter for the very first one having seen the poster outside and thought he'd come and see what it's all about, he's only missed one or two since....

We follow the same format each time - we start at 3.00 p.m.ish with usually about 6 different tables of craft work which everyone, mums & dads included, are invited to go around and make as many crafts as they like.

The crafts follow the theme of the day - last time we learnt that we are all part of God's family, and we heard the story of Abraham & Sarah, so a lot of the crafts involved 'stars'.

At about 3.45, we go into church for our worship, while the hall is being cleared ready for us to come back in around 4.15 to share a meal and fellowship together.

Then eventually, they go home, the children fed and ready for bed, we finish clearing up, and we go home ready for bed!!

It is a wonderful opportunity for us to reach families who would not normally come to church on Sunday mornings. Things are different today than when we were children, there are more things for children to be doing on Sunday mornings.

These families seem happy to come on Sunday afternoons; it's a bit like going back to afternoon Sunday School.

We hope and pray that they will continue to come to hear of God's love for them, and we ask that you continue praying for this venture.

We have decided to continue on a bi-monthly basis [we haven't got the energy to do it every month,] and we have set the dates for the rest of this year.... May 9th, July 18th, September 12th, October 31st, and December 12th.

We have a great team of people, but we do need more people to join us.

We understand that you may not be able to help at each one, but the bigger the team, the less often we would need to call on you!

We need people who will help with the crafts, or to organise the food, or just help with serving it. It would be really good if you felt you could turn up about 5.00 p.m. just to help us clear away.... if you think you could help in any way, please have a word with me or Eileen.

Barbara Cory

Well the second of our Messy Church ventures has come and gone. This time the theme was "I am the good shepherd". This involved all areas of sheep related craft work, word searches, sheep badges, a walk round the Church finding the good grass and the water following the shepherd, Chris, and culminating in food - guess what? shepherd's pie.

A very big thank you to all who came along to help with the afternoon. We worked with twelve families, having at least two children each, so a busy afternoon.

December 13th at 3 p.m. is our next venture — Messy Christmas.

Barbara/Kath/Eileen

I think it's fair to say that our first attempt at Messy Church was a great success. We had 48 adults and children as well as about a dozen helpers... fantastic!!

Our theme this time was 'Jesus said, "I am the true vine"

Thank you to all those who prayed for this venture and also to that brave band of helpers who came do the craft making, the chatting, and of course preparing the food. We all had a great time, didn't we?

What I thought was great, was the fact that we had decided that we needed to be there by 2.15pm to get everything prepared.

When Chris and I arrived just after that we found everyone else already there beavering away getting the crafts ready. There looked to be about a ton of jacket potatoes in the kitchen along with panfuls of beans and mountains of cheese as well as a vast quantity of delicious looking cakes for pud! What commitment!!

Who said, '*wasn't it noisy?*' But everyone seemed to be having such a good time making either hedgerow harvest displays or potato printing, interwoven vine branch bracelets, or very artistic vine bookmarks and there were some incredible characters made out of a variety of vegetables and fruit complete with wobbly eyes!

When it was time to go into church for a time of worship, we had a super display of all the crafts, an authentic vine complete with grapes (*courtesy of a Becketts Vineyard*) as a visual aid for Chris' talk, and we were thrilled that Paul Newman was able to lead our worship on the guitar.

Then we all said the 'Messy' grace together (*if you want to know what that is, you'll have to come to find out!*) before going back into the hall where the 'Messy' area had been transformed into a dining room.

And yes the jacket potatoes tasted as good as they looked, and the cakes soon disappeared, what a surprise!

Of course what this now means is that if they all really did enjoy themselves and they tell their friends about it, we could well be looking at an even greater number of folk turning up on November 15th WOW!!

So we will need an even larger army of helpers. So please, please consider prayerfully whether you are able to help in any way. It really is great fun and what is more important we are reaching out into our community with the gospel message: God loves each one of us and yes..... even Messy Church!!

Barbara Cory

Messy Church is coming to St Andrews, don't panic -it's not on Sunday mornings it will be on a Sunday afternoon between 3pm and 5pm!

We have already set the dates for the first two 'pilot' sessions, Sunday 13th September and Sunday 15th November. We have canvassed a number of the mums & dads with whom we have contact through Tots @ Ten and UFO's and there seems to be quite an interest, so we are very excited about this new venture.

What is Messy Church? you might be asking.

This is a quote from the book 'Messy Church'...

"It's 4.15 on a Thursday afternoon, the hall is buzzing with conversation. Around the table, adults and children burst into laughter as they wrestle with metallic tubing and googly eyes and their teenage helper's despair of ever creating the promised artefact. A toddler slaps green paint on to a huge sheet of card under the watchful eye of a granny, (not sure if they're related or not – it doesn't really matter). A 5yr old watches wide-eyed as an enthusiastic leader shows her how to bang in a nail. There's a delicious smell wafting out of the kitchen. The 10yr olds, intent on their glass painting, agree it must be jacket potatoes. The minister takes a photo of the surreal result of the junk modelling and two mums catch up on the gossip as they drink welcome cups of tea and slowly decorate gift bags while their children make something unidentifiable but very chocolatey upstairs. The cooks should be getting the plates stacked, but one of the mums needs to talk about her problems with her foster children. I would be panicking about the story for the celebration service later, but there's a huge collage of the Great Banquet to assemble before 5pm, the powder paint has proved a formidable weapon of mess creation in the hands of Jack, we've barely got started on the lettering and, whoops, someone's kicked over the glue pot... just another Messy Church!"

Get the picture? Messy Church is just that, messy but it's CHURCH!

But it will we pray, meet the needs of those families for whom Sunday at 10.30am just doesn't work! We hope that we can involve the whole family, mums, dads, children, even grandmas and grandpas...

Each session will end with a short act of worship so that everyone can experience the spiritual side of life, a space to meet with God through worship together. It's designed to give people the opportunity to worship, to make friends and to explore their creativity within a Christian framework.

It is our prayer that 'Messy Church' will be a place where all ages can grow in faith through a mixture of belonging and believing.

So what can you do...? Well first and foremost please pray for this exciting new venture! But also ask yourself, 'Is there some way I can play a part...?' We will need an army of helpers, cooks, craft leaders, those who will just come and chat with both children and adults.

If you feel that you can help in any way, you don't have to be at every session, remember 'many hands make light work!' please speak to either Chris or myself.

Barbara Cory