



# Outdoor suggestions for August's Messy Church session: Forgiveness is a loving action

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 a risk assessment document [here](#).

## Activity time

### 1 Activities from Get Messy!

The following magazine activities will work well outside:

- Activity 4: instead of air-drying clay, collect a selection of natural materials from the outside space you are using. (Please don't pick wild or planted flowers from public gardens or parks and do not break bits off living plants.) Arrange them into a shape that reminds you of a time you have forgiven someone.
- Activity 5: heart-shaped bird feeder
- Activity 8: ziplock bag
- Activity 9: instead of a junk prison cell, can you build a den outside to look like a prison cell?

### 2 Disagreeing well

**You will need:** a bucket of water; large stones

**What to do:** take a stone and hold it in your hand. How does it feel? Talk about how forgiveness is hard. How heavy is your stone? Forgiveness lifts the weight of shame and guilt from the other person's shoulders and releases us from carrying the hurt. Put your stone in the 'well' as you think about a time when you've done something wrong and think about saying sorry. Think about those who you might need to forgive and start the process of forgiving them.

### 3 Washing away

**You will need:** pavement chalk or muddy water; paintbrushes or sticks; an area you can chalk or draw on (e.g. a pavement, carpark, wall, sandpit, muddy bank); buckets/jugs of water

**What to do:** write, draw or paint something to represent something you have done that you're not proud of and that might have hurt God, other people and yourself. Pray a short sorry prayer to God. Use the water to wash your chalk or mud words and pictures away as a sign of God's forgiveness.

### 4 Forgiveness game

**You will need:** a clear open space

**How to play:** this is an adaptation of the game 'Red light, green light'. One person, designated 'it', faces away from the rest of the group. The group lines up as far as they can get from the person who is 'it'. When 'it' yells 'forgiveness' all participants can move forward. As they move, they say, 'we forgive you'. This will help 'it' hear when participants get closer. The stoplight can turn around and yell, 'stop' anytime to stop the movement forward. The 'it' should wait until all others have stopped moving forward, then turn away from the group again, saying, 'forgiveness'. The first player to reach 'it', gets to be the next 'it'. Process the game after several times. Ask participants: when we play games, do we always forgive people who are the winners? What are some ways that our games can treat others fairly? Participants with accessibility issues can use whatever form of movement works best for them. When the age span is great, it helps to have the 'it' or a leader vary the movement actions forward. Skipping, hopping, jumping or galloping will all work.

## 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 onto 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 work well outdoors.

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