



## Outdoor Suggestions for April's Messy Church Session (Easter): The greatest love story ever told

You may want to take your Messy Church outdoors for a few months in these uncertain times. Here are some extra ideas you could use outside alongside the session ideas and inspiration in [Get Messy!](#) One activity may be all you need for a shorter (chillier) 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:

- #discipleship: extra on p. 34
- Activity 1: tent tomb
- Activity 2: crown of thorns made with suitable plants
- Activity 5: holy Week egg and spoon race
- Activity 7: Easter garden
- Activity 8: nail cross

#### 2 Egg hunt

You could use hollow plastic eggs and put small symbols from the Good Friday and Easter story in each one. Talk about the object from the story as each one is found, encouraging people to suggest what it is and how it relates to the story. They may suggest connections you hadn't thought of.

#### 3 Prayer stations

Set up four or five prayer stations around your space with some way of praying creatively at each one, perhaps around themes of forgiveness, reconciliation, hope, glory, eternal life or other Easter themes. You can search for wonderful ideas online (a search for images of 'Easter prayer stations outside' suggests plenty), or use some of these:

- Draw or write a prayer on ribbon or dried grass leaves and weave it into a string loom.
- Tie a ribbon or string onto a wooden cross covered with wire mesh.
- Use a hammer to nail prayers to a wooden cross.
- Use chalk to draw a large cross shape on the ground or on a wall and invite people to fill it with images of Good Friday or Easter.
- Give a small part of the story and access to art materials to each group or family and invite them to make a piece of art inspired by it, then walk around the story gallery to see what everyone else has created.

#### 4 Messy cross

Use the opportunity of being outside to be messy. Prepare a big clean sheet of paper or card (the bigger the better) with a cross shape taped across using removable tape, such as masking tape (check it will come off without ripping the backing paper). Ideally the cross shape will be invisible, as you're not trying to make people feel uncomfortable about walking on the cross. Invite people to walk in the mud and puddles, then walk all over the paper until it's covered with messiness. Then do a big reveal and peel off the cover to show the clean cross. Talk about the goodness of Jesus right in the middle of all the badness of the world and how what Jesus did on Good Friday and at Easter made it possible for people like us to be forgiven and washed clean of everything that keeps us apart from God.

### Celebration

Gather together in a socially-distanced but intimate-as-possible way 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*

The celebration story from p. 37 of *Get Messy!* will work well outside.

Finish with a **prayer** thanking God for [mention what you've learned together] and the Messy Grace or other prayer. Another suggestion from Messy Adventures, based on Philippians 2:15 and 4:8, is:

Wherever you go, walk lightly. *(Point out the way in front of you or in any direction.)*

Wherever you go, shine brightly. *(Raise your arms above your head like a star.)*

Wherever you go, hold tightly. *(Hold hands with people next to you, possible option here to hold a leaf or something – hold tightly to nature as well as people.)*

To everything true and pure and good, both daily and nightly. *(Shake hands on each beat.)*

In the name of Jesus Christ *(Let go of hands and touch each palm of your own hands.)*

Amen *(Punch the air.)*