



Outdoor Suggestions for March's Messy Church Session: Celebrating small

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:

- The social action idea on p. 29
- Activity 2: weave a nest
- Activity 7: build a treehouse
- Activity 10: nest the birds

You may also have planted seeds or bulbs last month and need to inspect them.

2 Birdspotting

Challenge families to spot and identify the birds that use your outside area as a home – either provide birdbooks or suggest an online bird identifier like [this one](#) from the RSPB. Talk about what other small things find a safe home in this space. What makes it safe or dangerous for them?

3 Mega-nest

Provide grasses, reeds, branches, leaves and mosses – basically any sort of natural materials around you – and invite families to build a huge nest that they can actually fit in as a family. Or you could make one altogether for the whole group. Talk about how amazing birds are to be able to build such brilliant nests without being taught; and talk about how it feels to be inside the nest and what feeling safe feels like.

4 Observation and imagination

Provide clipboards and drawing materials and invite people to look very carefully at the way a plant, bush or tree in your garden or churchyard grows from a seed or sucker under the ground. Can they look carefully and draw the part of the plant they can see, but also draw from imagination the part under the ground? Let this be a quiet, meditative activity for those who want it to be. Talk about the amazing way tiny seeds grow into huge trees, plants and bushes. You could also talk about what helps good things grow in your life, community and world.

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 on p. 32 of *Get Messy!* will work well outdoors.

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.*)