

Messy Matters NZ

Issue 7

February 2014

Jonah's Journey

Hi Wonderful Messy Folk,
God bless you! This month, we started our Messy year with the story of Jonah, looking at his journey from hearing God's voice, to running to 'not-Nineveh', being in the storm, the fish's belly, turning to God in desperate prayer and being spat out on dry land. We then joined Jonah as he talked to the people of Nineveh, giving them God's message.

As our response time, we thought about where we are in our own life journey. Are we trying to ride out a storm? Are we sitting in a stinky, slimy fish belly? Are we running from God or have we just been spat out on dry land, ready to do God's will? We each chose a sticker and on a large banner of Jonah's journey, we placed our sticker on

the picture we felt represented our space now. We were then able to give our journeys to God in prayer.

As we start this new year, I invite you to take a moment to pray about where you and your team are in your Messy journey. You might feel like you've come through a stormy time and are now confident that you're doing what God's called you to do. Or maybe you're in the fish's belly, crying out to God for help. You might be listening and responding to God's call, or maybe you're needing to let go of certain ideas, plans or assumptions so that God can move you on to something better.

Whatever it is, wherever you are, you can rest assured knowing that we have a God who speaks to us, delivers us, leads and guides us and never fails!

Happy Mess!

Love and smiles *Julie x*



Lucy Moore in NZ - Save the dates

We are thrilled to have Lucy Moore (from the UK), founder of Messy Church visiting us in New Zealand in August. We are in the process of confirming venues but for now get these dates in your diaries and if you wish to express your interest in attending please email admin@strandz.org.nz. Registration Forms will be available in March on the StraNdZ website www.strandz.org.nz followed by Programme details which will be available in April.

Christchurch

Friday 1st August 7.00pm - 9.30pm: **'Messy Church: what's it all about'**

Saturday & Sunday 2nd & 3rd August 9.30am - 4.30pm: **'Going Deeper'** to include a hands on **Messy Church**

Nelson

Wednesday 6th August—All details TBC

Wellington

Friday 8th August 7.00pm - 9.30pm: **'Messy Church: what's it all about'**

Saturday & Sunday 9th & 10th August 9.30am - 4.30pm: **'Going Deeper'** to include a hands on **Messy Church**

Auckland

Thursday 14th August 7.00pm—9.30pm: **'Messy Church: what's it all about'**

Friday 15th August 9.00am—3.00pm: **'Going Deeper in a day!'**

The evening sessions in each location are standalone events.

Conference participants are welcome to attend evening sessions at no extra charge.

messychurch@strandz.org.nz



Messy Matters NZ

Issue 7

February 2014

Messy Church - Is it an expression of church that connects for the 21st Century or little more than fun, glue and glitter?

Written by Rev'd Debbie Smith, St Aidan's Remuera

I often hear people talking about the decline in church attendance and the urgent need to do something, but what? It's vital that we embrace the difficult questions, yet it's easy to become discouraged. We need to face up to the reality that the way we currently do things at church by and large doesn't connect with the younger generations and respond creatively to the challenge. Broad statements and pipe dreams won't get us very far. Wishful thinking isn't vision. We need to look at how we operate.

It is important that we honour and respect traditional forms of worship. However in connecting with younger generations we need to consider new ways of doing things, not merely for the sake of it, but in order to connect. The choice isn't either new forms of worship or staying with what is familiar, effective mission involves embracing both. In exploring new forms we may take encouragement from an off the shelf programme, or look to what other church groups are doing. Yet, there are no quick fixes! What works in one place and context may well not work in another. Building the Kingdom of God and growing disciples takes time. Surprisingly our starting point isn't the church but has to be listening to God and to our communities in order to begin to connect faith to daily life.

Through my work experience I recognise that people are more open to God than perhaps we realise, they're open spiritually, searching for the meaning of life. However, when it comes to church they are more hesitant. For many, church doesn't connect. Yet, the good news of the Gospel is as relevant as ever. Jesus left us with one command - go and make disciples.

To engage actively with different ways of doing church to serve our changing culture is a challenge. We need to sharpen our thinking about mission and be more adventurous; ready to take risks. It takes courage to step out and embrace new ways of doing things.

Messy Church enables you to make a start. It builds confidence and helps to renew vision and energy for mission. It is not a 'how to' programme, or the latest trend. It begins with

invitation and necessitates listening to the needs of others to develop Messy Church relevant to the context.

Messy Church is much more than fun, glue and glitter. It involves people of all ages in a relaxed setting, learning about the good news of Jesus. It isn't a stepping stone into traditional church as we know it; rather it is church in its own right; meeting around the risen Lord. Messy Church considers the needs, learning style, temperament and spirituality of everyone, including the youngest. Jesus is introduced through stories, prayer, worship, creativity, friendship and hospitality.

All-age worship can often be a one-way flow, because as adults we assume we have the answers and children need to learn from us. Messy Church turns that on its head by encouraging children's spirituality. It is an enriching experience to learn from children and allow opportunities for them to minister. What Messy Church seeks to 'be' and 'do' springs from a desire to encourage faith development across the generations, where all can encounter God, in a relaxed atmosphere.

At St Aidan's in Auckland we have held three Messy Church events. Our Christmas Eve event combined an impromptu nativity with Christingle. It was a wonderful occasion with some 120+ attending, 60 were children, many from the community and Mainly Music families.

In leading Messy Church I am committed to exploring and pushing the boundaries of what it means to be church. It is my heart to encourage and support others in daring to be radical, to minister on the edge, as Jesus did; to ask difficult questions and to face challenging issues of developing church in the 21st century. Messy Church isn't claiming to have it all sorted.

We have much to discover and we don't want to limit God. It has potential for growth. If we are committed to mission and communicating the Gospel in ways that connect, we have to grasp this challenge, move out of our comfort zone and be prepared for God to surprise us!



messychurch@strandz.org.nz

