



CHRIST-CENTRED ALL AGES CREATIVITY HOSPITALITY AND CELEBRATION

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### Matariki:

**Around the world Matariki is more commonly known as Pleiades.** The sighting of the Pleiades star cluster is visible from virtually every part of the world and many cultures watch for it and have their own traditions and customs around them.

**What the Bible says:**

*<sup>8</sup> The LORD made the stars, the Pleiades and Orion. He turns darkness into daylight and day into night. Amos 5:8 Good News Translation (GNT)*

The rising of Matariki in Aotearoa New Zealand signals the start of the Maori New Year and along with this are many traditions:

- A time to remember
- Celebration of crops harvested and collected for storehouses
- A time of singing, dancing and great feasting
- A time of reflection, hope, and celebration
- A time of planning and preparation

Matariki is the name of the star cluster (Pleiades), but I also the name of the main star in the cluster. Depending on what star is most visible in different parts of NZ has meant that some iwi celebrate Puanga as their New Year star.

As we embrace Matariki here in Aotearoa NZ at Messy Church, it is a time for us to remember, reflect and give thanks for the wonders of Gods creation and Gods love for us all. It is also a time to learn and celebrate Matariki traditions and give thanks for the opportunities to grow as people of many cultures and traditions in Aotearoa NZ.



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**What the Bible says:**

<sup>9</sup> God hung the stars in the sky—the Dipper, Orion, the Pleiades, and the stars of the south. **Job 9:9 Good News Translation (GNT)**

**Other scriptures:**

Psalm 136

**How does this session help people grow in Christ?**

Nehemiah 9:6

“You alone are the Lord. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve them all, and the angels of heaven worship you.”

The stars (Nga Whetu) remind us how amazing, wonderful and powerful God (Atua) is. This same God loves each of us more than we can ever imagine.

**Did you know?**



The meaning of ‘Matariki’ means ‘eyes of god’ (mata ariki) or ‘little eyes’ (mata riki)  
Stars are known as Nga Whetu  
God is known as Atua

## Activities

**Kete Kai**



Traditionally in New Zealand Matariki was a time to celebrate the harvest and the food gathered and stored in the patātaka or store houses. The stored food was shared among communities.

When advertising Messy Church invite people to bring along food that can be donated to local Food banks in our communities. Collect these in baskets or kete and remember to give thanks for these during the Celebration time.



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Create a large group card or poster from your Messy Church to be donated along with the food.

### Talk About:

**Jesus encourages us as Christians to give to those who are hungry and in need:**

“If you have two coats,” he replied, “**give one to the poor**. If you have extra food, **give it away to those who are hungry.**” Luke 3:11 Living Bible

### Star Biscuits



#### Equipment:

- pre-prepared biscuit mix or sheets of pastry
- star cutters and oven trays
- sprinkles or icing to decorate

Cut out and decorate star biscuits. Bake ready to share at the meal time.

### Talk About:

**What the Bible says:** He made the moon and stars to rule over the night. His faithful love continues forever. Psalm 136:9 New International Reader's Version

**Talk About:** How does it make you feel to know that God made the moon and the stars to rule over the night?

### Star Prayers



#### Equipment:

- Create a pin board to create a night sky and hang the stars and moon
- Cardboard stars
- Pins
- Pens

Directions: Write your name and prayers on the stars and attach them to the night sky.

### Talk Sheet:

Psalm 147:4

He decides how many **stars** there should be. He gives each one of them a name.

**Talk About:** just as God knows each of the stars by name, so He knows each of us by name.

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**Woven Stars** . It is traditional to weave ‘Harakeke whetu’ (a flax star) as part of the Matariki celebration. Start with paper stars and choose 4 different colours, choose one of these colours to think about how God your creator is woven into your life.

**You will need:** a selection of coloured A4 paper cut into strips. Scissors

Follow this link for instructions to make an 8 point Matariki Star

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZf5ewNd-q4>

### **Talk about:**

We can never count the number of stars as much as we may try. As we weave the stars today, reflect on how much you allow God to be woven into your life.

### **3. Star Gazing with Abram/ Abraham**

“The Lord took him (Abram) outside and said – ‘Look at the sky and try to count the stars; you will have as many descendants as that.’” Genesis 15:5

If it’s a fine night and dark where you are go outside and see how many stars you can count.

Alternatively make your own star gazing room and use this quiz.

You will need: Darkened room, chapel or gazebo. Cushions scattered on floor, cardboard stars, scriptures, string, torches, clipboards, quiz sheet and pens, dark cloth or black polythene for canopy.

Paste printed scriptures (enlarged font) onto stars, use string and safety pins to hang stars from canopy.

As people arrive hand out torches and clip boards with quiz sheet and pens. Encourage them to take their time answering the questions and reflecting on what God might be saying to them.

### **Scriptures to use:**

1. The Lord sees the good people. He listens to their prayers. Psalm 34:15
2. God has decided the number of the stars and calls each one by name. Psalm 147:4
3. “Look up to the skies. Who created all these stars?” Isaiah 40:26-29
4. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. Genesis 1:16



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5. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may be innocent and pure as God's perfect children, who live in a world of corrupt and sinful people. You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky... Philippians 2:14-15 (NIV)

6. "I am the Light of the world. So, if you follow me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness, for living light will flood your path." John 8:12

7. Friends, we know that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own.

1 Thessalonians 1:4 (GNT)

### Quiz Sheet Questions:

1. What does the Lord see? What does God listen to?
2. Fill in the gaps: G\_\_\_ has decided the number of \_\_\_\_\_ and calls them each by \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who do you think created all the stars?
4. As well as the stars, what were the 2 great lights God made?
5. What do we need to do so that we may become like children of God and shine like the stars?
6. What did Jesus say he was? Why should we follow Jesus?
7. Who does God love?

**Talk about:** Were you surprised to learn that God had decided the number of stars and knows them all by name? Just as God knows the stars by name so he knows us each by name.

### Shooting Stars

If you could send a message around the world on a shooting star, what would it say?

You will need: Pencils, Felt Tip Pens, Paper straws, Paper, scissors, coloured post it notes (5cmx5cm or 2"x2")

**Star launchers:** Use paper straws or make your own using 6cmx20cm paper strips. Roll up length wise around a thick pencil. Tape edges. Wrap a bit of tape around bottom edge so it doesn't get soggy when blowing through it.

Make your Shooting stars using paper strips 12cmx6 cm. Write lengthwise the message you would like to send e.g. 'You are loved by God'. Decorate with stars. Add wings, using small post it notes, fold along sticky edge and stick to rocket.



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Tape a 'cap' to the rocket. Use a lid about 5.5cm or 2.25 inches in diameter, draw a circle on paper, cut out. Mark a dot in the centre, rule a line from centre to edge and cut. Slide edges to form a cone shape, tape edges and tape to rocket.

Now shoot your star by inserting in your straw and blowing through it. See how high it will go, be careful not to aim at people.

**Talk about:** What special messages do you think Jesus would want us to send to people today?

## Celebration

Matariki is a time to Celebrate:

Give thanks for the food/kai collected in the baskets/kete.

**"Look up to the skies. Who created all these stars?"**

Isaiah 40:26-29 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

**Note:** Story is Taken from Dazzling Disciple Session – adapt as required.

Do you ever look up into the stars and think about what an amazing God we have to make stars so bright?

What is so amazing about stars?

They dazzle and twinkle in the dark night, they give light to the dark, they help people to find their way just like the Wise Men Searching for baby Jesus. A long time ago, long before Jesus was born, God said to Abram: "Look at the sky and try to count the stars; you will have as many descendants as that." (Genesis 15:5) Even though Abram and his wife Sarai were old God promised them as many children, great grandchildren, great, great, great, great grandchildren as the stars in the sky. And God wants all of those children to be his disciples! People who are followers of God. That means we have some work to do!

Can you dazzle like a star? I'm sure as one of Gods children you can – whatever your age! Think about how you can be a dazzling disciple, showing love and care to your family, friends and neighbours. Sometimes to be a dazzling disciple it's not about what you say, but what you do, how you behave, how you show kindness and love to others. Can you shine bright like a star so people can see God's love shining from you?

In the Bible it talks about the new believers meeting together daily, learning, eating, praying and praising God together. (Acts 2: 42-47). A bit like we do at Messy Church. Maybe you



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can think of people who would like to become new believers and invite them to Messy Church next time. Let's take time to pray together for places and people all over the world.

Other ideas: Cloaks, Harvest, Poi, make Kete. Check out Pinterest for more Matariki ideas.

### **Creation Song (baby shark)**

On day one do do do do do do do  
God made light do do do do do do do  
Day and night do do do do do do do  
Day and night

On day two do do do do do do do  
God split sky do do do do do do do  
From the earth do do do do do do do  
Sky and earth

On day three do do do do do do do  
God made land do do do do do do do  
And the seas do do do do do do do  
And the plants

On day four do do do do do do do  
God made sun do do do do do do do  
Stars and moon do do do do do do do  
In the sky

On day five do do do do do do do  
God made fish do do do do do do do  
And the birds do do do do do do do  
Fish and birds

On day six do do do do do do do  
God made animals do do do do do do do  
People too do do do do do do do



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Adam and Eve

On day seven do do do do do do do  
God had rest do do do do do do do  
Watched it all do do do do do do do  
It was great!

## Psalm 136

<sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.

*His love endures forever.*

<sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the God of gods.

*His love endures forever.*

<sup>3</sup> Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

*His love endures forever.*

<sup>4</sup> to him who alone does great wonders,

*His love endures forever.*

<sup>5</sup> who by his understanding made the heavens,

*His love endures forever.*

<sup>6</sup> who spread out the earth upon the waters,

*His love endures forever.*

<sup>7</sup> who made the great lights—

*His love endures forever.*

<sup>8</sup> the sun to govern the day,

*His love endures forever.*

<sup>9</sup> the moon and stars to govern the night;

*His love endures forever.*

**Here are a few extra activities from Richard:**

**Find the message in the stars. [Treasure hunt]**

Have 10 or so cardboard stars each with a word on and hide them around one of your buildings. The words could be a bible reading or some words pertaining to Matariki. Participants would need a pen, and paper on a clipboard.

**Word find:** make your own word find, I use the one at [www.puzzle-maker.com/WS/](http://www.puzzle-maker.com/WS/) and put in my own words on whatever theme. This appeals to adults as well as children.



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### **A 'Balloon Rocket'**

Previously I have stretched and attached two strings horizontally between two points. In a search engine put 'Balloon rocket on string' and you will see the idea. It is fun to have two so it can be competitive between parties.

Alternatively, you may be able to attach two strings to points on the ceiling and see if their 'rockets' can reach the ceiling/stars!

### **Shooting Stars**

Make some stars out of strong cardboard. [Circles 15cm radius then cut stars] Use soft drink cans or skittles in stacks of 5 on a horizontal board in front of a plastic[!] sheet and have participants throw their stars and see if they can knock down the 'cosmic debris'.