

A Voyage of Discovery presents findings from research into how Messy Church can best make disciples. An innovative 'journey of discovery' framework was created for articulating the concept of discipleship and used to explore six approaches to making and growing disciples – three focussed on work with families and three focused on developing the Messy Church team.

The six approaches to making and growing disciples in Messy Church are:

For families

- Messy basics (resourcing conversations about faith and being disciples)
- Social action (investing in social concerns as a Messy Church)
- Messy extras (creating informal/smaller gatherings)
- 'We have put Jesus into the middle so that rather than craft with a bit of Jesus, it has become more about Jesus with a bit of craft.'

For teams

- Maturing teams (resourcing the discipleship of the team)
- Peer mentoring (investing in leaders through 1-1 relationships)
- Young leaders (creating activities and support for younger leaders).

When...you're doing Messy Church and you've had it, you know, you're absolutely worn out and it's ten to six on a Sunday night and you're still clearing up glitter... you have to share that blessing of leadership... the joy that comes when someone comes back to say, "that was brill" or "I've still got glitter in the car two weeks later".

The insights generated from our research into the experiences of local leaders are particular to each context. However, there are plenty of gems uncovered so far. If we want Messy Churches to be churches that make disciples and grow deeper in discipleship, there are some clear actions to take:

- Be a community of reflective practice. Make space for reflection in every aspect of church
- Value quality, not just quantity. Value the significance of the small and the single
- Journey together. We found there's something profound and effective about togetherness
- More than anything, decide to be disciples and to make disciples.

A Voyage of Discovery makes fascinating, challenging and inspiring reading for anyone with an interest in deepening discipleship, but it is aimed particularly at Messy Church leaders, church leaders and members of leadership teams and PCCs, and those in strategic regional and national positions across the denominations. The full report is available to download along with a range of resources for [deepening discipleship in Messy](#)

Churches:

- Download A Voyage of Discovery: Deepening discipleship in Messy Churches and beyond

A webinar looking at the research – and how this can enable Messy Churches to refocus after lockdown – is being hosted by the E&D team on May 24th at 1.30pm.

The research was undertaken in the dioceses of Bristol, Durham and Hereford and brought together a total of 24 Messy Churches to take part, of which 21 completed the research. The research was commissioned to develop the positive findings of an earlier 2019 report, Playfully Serious, which established Messy Church's effectiveness in making disciples of Jesus. The Evangelism and Discipleship team worked together with CARU and the Messy Church team at BRF to develop the methodology, based on the Participatory Action Research model, carry out the research, report on the findings and develop new strands of resourcing.



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