

St Leonard's Church, Scawsby, in Doncaster launched 'Messy Church' before lockdown and within six months, a new church community was



80 percent of those attending, did not previously come to church on

Father David D'Silva, Priest-in-Charge at St Leonard's Scawsby (with St Luke's Scawthorpe) explained how the new church community was first started:

"With any new venture, what we try to do at St Leonard's, is to begin by creating a community.

"We brought a group of people together who didn't really know anything about church, and we created a place where people could feel accepted and loved.

"We stick to the Messy Church formula – gathering, activities, worship, and a meal – while still being firmly rooted within the Catholic tradition of the Church of England."

Father David explained that the existing Sunday congregation also played a crucial role in helping to form the new Messy Church community.

"We had people in the existing congregation who were able to help with Messy Church and who were also willing and able to be natural evangelisers for it.

"There are also five primary schools in the parish, who aren't church schools.

"We are blessed that so many took up the invitation, seeing new people come to discover Messy Church, has been really joyful."

Father David said the feedback has been very positive from those taking part and that there is an expressed desire for the Messy Church sessions to continue:

"Parents have told us that their children know Wednesday from the different days of the week, because Wednesday is Messy Church Day!

"We only do Messy Church during term-time, but the kids keep asking when it's coming back.

"It's been a real joy to see it start from nothing and then take on a life of its own," he reflected.

- The Messy Church movement was set up by the Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) 18 years ago, offering mainly families and children food, activities such as arts, crafts and sports and worship. The movement has spread across the world, with churches meeting on Saturdays and weekdays as well as Sundays.
- The [Church of England's Vision and Strategy for the 2020s](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/stories-and-features/how-messy-church-helped-start-new-worshipping-community) is helping us to be a Church which proclaims and lives out the Good News of Jesus Christ afresh in every generation.