

6 How to Start a Messy Church

Basically, listen to God. Listen to people outside church. And communicate with people in church. The rest is detail, but it may help to...

1. Pray.
2. Pray some more with other people.
3. Think imaginatively about your area and listen to people who don't go to church or who are on the edge of church to find out what the real needs are from their point of view. You will find helpful pointers to get you going with listening to your community on the Fresh Expressions www.sharetheguide.org website
4. Watch the first two tracks of Messy Church – the DVD and pass it around your possible core team or have a popcorn night and watch the two tracks together and discuss whether it will work for you.
5. Talk to your church leader and listen to them.
6. Visit a Messy Church near you and ask as many questions as they have patience to answer. Ask questions of the team, the congregation and the main leaders.
7. Pray some more and listen some more. The more sure you are that this is a calling from God, not a Flash in the Pan, the easier it will be later on when things get tough.
8. Talk to lots of people in your church (especially the unlikely people) to get them on your side and possibly prepared to pray / cook / be crafty / clean up and so on. Get everyone excited! Look for people on the edge who have never been asked to help before. Ask people to do discrete jobs rather than everything.
9. Plan a budget and investigate sources of funding.
10. Get the go-ahead from your church leadership team (this should also ensure you are insured under your church's policy). There is a suggested introductory session in *Messy Church – the DVD* to bring the idea to life and share the vision.
11. Write a clear list of aims and give them to your whole team.
12. Get everyone CRB cleared, clear about best practice as regards children and vulnerable adults, somebody qualified with Basic Food Hygiene, a First Aider and anything else your church requires you to have, qualifications-wise.
13. Get together a small planning team and get praying and plotting your first Messy Church in detail.

A new booklet is being produced called *Starting Your Messy Church* (due in January 2012), which incorporates these general ideas with other more detailed considerations, including:

- Values
- Starting strategies
- Key questions to ask ... and answer
- What to expect
- Organising your team
- Sustaining your Messy Church

