

MAXIMISING THE MESS OF YOUR



HOW DO WE ENCOURAGE DISCIPLESHIP?

Jesus said,
‘... go and make disciples of all nations...’
Matthew 28:18–19, NIV

- **Be ready** for the long haul—**making disciples can be a long, slow process**. It’s more like parenting a child than microwaving a ready meal.
- Remember, **we’re all in the process of becoming disciples**: none of us are finished, complete and perfect. We’re all work in progress. We are disciples and we’re becoming disciples.
- Hospitality means that we come close to Christ through the outsider, the stranger, someone who is different from us: expect to grow as a disciple when you **open your door to those who are different from you**.
- **Relationship and friendship are at the heart of discipleship**. Make time for friendship rather than programmes.
- Discipleship is an ‘us’ thing, not primarily a ‘me’ thing. **Try to grow disciples together**, not in isolation.
- **Keep the generations together** to learn from and with each other. Resist the temptation to split according to age.
- Remember that many Messy people are **starting from a very different place** from those who have been part of a traditional church much of their lives.
- Simply **doing Messy Church better** is a valid way of making disciples.
- **Work out what grows disciples in your church** tradition and bring it (possibly reinvented) into Messy Church. Holy Communion might be an example of this.
- The need for a big team is an opportunity to make disciples. **Inviting people to join the team** means that they will inevitably spend more time with scripture, with Christians, in prayer and in a position of ownership, belonging and offering.
- **Take risks with unlikely people** on the team (but make sure your safeguarding structures are robust and effective).
- **Help everybody to belong**. This is a good way to help people believe, behave and bless in turn.



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- **Honour and value every form of learning:** the way your team lives out its faith in front of guests; intentional apprenticing, mentoring or coaching of people as well as formal and academic learning.
- Give families the tools and confidence to **disciple each other as a family in the home:** don't try to hold on to power by initiating everything yourself.
- Expect God to play his part. **Notice Him at work in small things**, not just in the big 'requests for baptism' or 'conversion moments', exciting though these are.
- **Doing what you do with purpose and intention** is likely to have better results than simply meandering on aimlessly month by month: at the very least you will notice the transformation in people, not just take it for granted.
- Enjoy the discipleship of **finding Immanuel in the everyday**, messy world that is family life: God with us where we are, not just in tidy churches.
- Be aware of the rhythms of life and **combine the monthly rhythm with occasional 'festival' rhythms** when you do something liminal, edgy, risky, out of the ordinary.

