

**Messy Church Afternoon
URC Brixham
15 September 07**

What can we learn from the parable of the Lost Son?

Challenges from the Lost Son for Messy Church

We need to accept people as they are, not expecting them to behave as we do or to conform to what we expect. The Father let the boy behave as he wanted and find his own way home.

We can expect to move out of our comfort zone, just as the Father did (twice).

We need to copy the Father in his persistent love and care for his children.

We need to discern when it is right to stop or to change what we're doing in Messy Church.

Encouragements from the Lost Son for Messy Church

The story is about party and Messy Church is all about celebration.

It's a way for people to come back to church, to Jesus, just as the boy came back to his Dad.

Spirituality

How does what we do in Messy church affirm people's spirituality?

Spirituality is about **being aware of yourself and the world around you:**

- Appreciating beauty – art, music – **creativity in crafts – worship involves singing**
- Awareness of the natural world – **craft materials are sometimes part of the natural world**
- Awareness of yourself in time and space – **candle corner gives a quiet space**
- An openness to learning new skills – **changing crafts all the time (and the catering team learning!)**
- An ability to reflect – **prayerful thinking**

Spirituality is about the **'wow' factor**

- Awe and wonder – **the worship, the Narnia Day**
- Mystery - **candle corner**
- Imagination - **crafts, doing it their way, different from school**
- Creativity - **ditto**
- Surprise – **worship isn't what parents expect (perhaps)**
- Questioning - **candle corner; need to encourage questions**

Spirituality is about **values and beliefs – the big questions**

- How I relate to other people and to the world – **the emphasis on there being more than one way of doing something and that *your* way matters**
- What is ultimate goodness? – **the Story of the Bourbon! ‘You have one as well.’**
- Why do I matter?
- Why do others matter?
- What is being a human all about?
- What is the meaning of life?
- **In general, it’s about being on the ball and grasping the moment**
- **Allowing people a quiet moment**
- **Story of lighting a candle and blowing it out straight away – ‘That’s what we do with people’s spirituality when we don’t listen to them.’**

Spirituality is about **emotions**

- How do I feel? – **need not to be too busy to reflect on emotions / what families are saying; feeling of fulfillment from team members that gifts are being used and seeing others use theirs; dance feels ‘satisfying’**
- How do others feel? – **emotions of people in the story can be explored through the craft as well**
- There’s more to me than just a body – **song words – going home – eg God’s love – ‘he holds us in his hands’ – an awareness of God; candles lead to prayer and meditation**

Outreach is all about helping people to BELONG, BELIEVE AND BEHAVE (to feel this is their church, their God, that they are welcome; to help them know what the stories and tenets of faith are; to help them live out their lives to God’s glory and so that they’re living life to the full).

How can we help *families BELONG, BELIEVE AND BEHAVE* in the PUBLICITY AND WELCOME?

More men visible at the welcome desk

Banner should be outside for several days each month and should be big bold and cheerful

The door should be open throughout – needs a person on the door throughout

At the entrance we need friendly people with good memory for names – more than one person as there’s a lot to do

Someone to show new people around

Make sure coffee teas etc. are available

Make sure activities are readily available

How can we help *families BELONG, BELIEVE AND BEHAVE* in the CRAFT?

Make the crafts appropriate and make the space and environment appropriate for families

Have comfy seats for adults

Decorate the room? (Needs work party)

Have music?

Crafts need to be appropriate for adults and children – perhaps two levels of the same craft

Crafts which need to be done by whole family, promoted in advance

Involve the adults in serving

Don’t have an ‘us and them’ mindset, accept offers of help

Identify gifts in adults we don’t know, through publicity?

