

A MESSY CHURCH THEME PROGRAM – LENT EVENT SA

This resource provides a theme program that can be used in connection with the Lent Event program of Uniting World and the Uniting Church in South Australia.

Messy Church is for people of all ages, generally these people will not be regularly involved in another Christian worship community. Therefore it is important that the concepts presented are fairly general.

Most Messy Church sessions are comprised of four elements:

3:30-4:00 Arrive, drinks, board games, chat

4:00-5:00 Crafts/Activities

5:00-5:15 Celebration

5:15-5:45 Meal

This resource does not tell you why or how to do Messy Church. That information is available in other resources. Contact Uniting Church SA Children & Family Ministry Team on children@sa.uca.org.au for further information about Messy Church.



THE GOOD LIFE

AIM

To help people think about what the good life is — for themselves and for others.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Just before he began his journey to Jerusalem and his death, Jesus said:

I am the Good Shepherd. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of. The Good Shepherd puts the sheep before himself, sacrifices himself if necessary. (John 10:10, 11, The Message)

ACTIVITIES

Set up as many of the ten suggested activity areas as you feel is appropriate to your situation. You will need a volunteer looking after each activity area, helping people to engage in the activity and, where possible, leading conversation to the 'talk about' topic.

Participating families can choose the activities they want to engage with.

Lent journey	Forty marbles	Forty something
Fingers and hands	Lent calendar	Carving from Kiribati
String bags from West Papua	String figures from Papua New Guinea	Beading from South Sudan
Millennium Development Goals	Globe search	

CELEBRATION

The entire group gathers for a brief celebration that focuses on Jesus, as the bringer of the good life, and our role in helping to bring that good life to others.

FOOD

Offer a simple meal that would be a treat (a part of 'the good life' in some parts of the world. For example: boiled rice with a thin 'soup' ladled over it. (Make the soup by slowly simmering finely chopped greens and other vegetables in water, possibly seasoned with a few stock cubes.)

Image Courtesy Uniting World



THE GOOD LIFE

(ACTIVITY CENTRES)

Lent journey

(adapted from Messy Church 2)

You will need: strips of paper, pens, stickers

Christians often compare life to a journey.

On a long strip of paper, draw a road that goes through lots of different sorts of landscapes — some pretty and sunny, some boggy and dangerous. Some suggestions might be mountains, desert, sandy beach, rocky cliffs, bush, desert, big city, small village, island, hill, farm . . .

This Lent, take 40 stickers home with you and every day, stick a sticker on the sort of landscape that the day has felt like to you. For example, on difficult days, you might stick the sticker on a mountain or a rocky cliff; on exciting days it might be like the seaside.

Pray for other people in your family as you find out where their sticker goes.

During this activity, talk about how Jesus is with us in all experiences and how the good life is knowing that Jesus is with us no matter what life is like.

Lent calendar

You will need: copies of the Lent calendar (attached) and coloured pencils.

Lent is the time Christians get ready for Easter. Easter is one day. It is also the start of a new way of living (for believers all over the world). Every Sunday is a 'little Easter' a day when Christians remember and celebrate God's victory — Jesus coming back to life.

Colour in the Easter block of the calendar in the happiest colour you find in the pencil pack. Colour each of the other Sundays of the calendar in the same colour, but lighter.

Colour the Good Friday block in the calendar in the saddest colour in the pencil pack.

Write in any special days for your family (eg. birthdays) that occur during Lent and colour them in the most appropriate colour.

During this activity, talk about the events of Good Friday and Easter. The good life can be hard and painful but the good life is with Jesus.

Forty marbles

You will need: several glass jars, one has 40 marbles in it, others have different numbers of marbles; small sticky notes.

If marbles are not safe due to the possible risk of small children swallowing them, use another small toy.

Lent is a period of forty days; let's get a feeling for the number forty.

All of these jars have marbles in them. One jar has forty marbles, some have less than forty; some have more than forty.

Write your name on a sticky note and put your name beside the jar you think has exactly forty marbles in it.

At the end of the session, reveal the forty-marble jar so people will know if their guess was correct. You might consider giving a marble as a prize to each person who guessed correctly.

During this activity, talk about: marbles are inexpensive, simple toys for us. They can be prized possessions for people who do not have as many material goods as we do. What are some other "simple, inexpensive" toys we enjoy? eg boxes, outdoors ... The good life is when we are content with simple things.

Fingers and hands

You will need: a map of the world.

There are Christians all over the world; they have hands they can use to help one another.

Four people (with forty fingers among them), look at a world map. They name and count forty different countries.

During this activity, talk about how we can use fingers and hands to help other people. The good life is helping other people.

Forty something

You will need: star stickers.

'Forty' will seem like an old age to some people; and quite young to others.

Give each person (or family) a star sticker. Suggest they circulate among the people at Messy Church and find someone who is 'forty something'.

When they find someone who admits to being 'forty something', they put a star sticker on the person's back and ask if there is something they have been waiting or hoping for, for forty years.

Alternatively ask what forty means to them. (The question is deliberately open-ended and ambiguous, letting people respond in their own way.)

During this activity, talk about Lent is a period of forty days (not years!) when people are waiting in hope and getting ready for, Easter. Praying, waiting and hoping can be part of the good life.

Beading from South Sudan

You will need: beads and string (make sure the beads are large enough for little hands and the string is stiff enough to allow for easy stringing of beads.

Also a computer or tablet with internet connection OR print off some coloured photos of these activities.

Beading is a traditional craft of South Sudan.

People make necklaces. Suggest that they use seven beads to represent the seven weeks of Lent.

Show a YouTube clip showing a beading project in South Sudan:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEACBeWviR4>

During this activity, talk about the midwife training project in South Sudan. Refer to Lent Event materials. The good life is helping mums and babies to be safe and healthy.

String Bags from West Papua

You will need: masking tape (or chalk if outside), string/net bags, either bags made in West Papua or Papua New Guinea or similar plastic bags available in local shops.

A collection of various things that might be carried in a string bag: some sweet potatoes and other firm vegetables, some books, plastic eating utensils, a baby doll and soft toy animals, books, towels, some clothing.

Also a computer or tablet with internet connection OR print off some coloured photos of these activities.

A string bag is a prized and very useful possession of women in West Papua.

Each person can select an item of their choice and put it in a string bag. They place the 'handle' of the bag across their forehead, with the bag itself hanging down their back. With the bag in place, they walk around a marked circuit. After completing one circuit, they may add something else to their bag and walk around again . . . and again.

Show a YouTube clip about the making and use of string bags in West Papua:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_wyEK2NVQ

During this activity, talk about the livelihood development project in West Papua. Refer to Lent Event materials. The good life is sharing with people so they can have what they need.

String figures in Papua New Guinea

You will need: lengths of string (about 90 cm)

Also a computer or tablet with internet connection OR print off instructions for these activities.

String figures are traditional games of the people in Papua New Guinea.

People use their string to make simple string figures.

Instructions for making the wink, the outrigger canoe and the yam thief can be found at <http://www.alysion.org/figures/introkids.htm>

During this activity, talk about the peace building and advocacy project in Papua New Guinea. Refer to Lent Event materials. The good life is sharing with people so they can have what they need.

Dancing in Kiribati

You will need: a computer or tablet with internet connection OR print off some coloured photos of the dance.

Kaimatoa is a traditional dance of Kiribati. It can be performed by men, women and children. It is more concerned with the movement of outstretched arms and bird-like movements of heads.

Show a YouTube clip, showing a Kaimatoa dance: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAMpWEPkwts>

Note: while the quality of this clip is not great, it is good enough to give a taste of the music and to show the dance moves.

People can copy the movement of the main dancers as they watch the clip.

During this activity, talk about the partnering women for change project in Kiribati. Refer to Lent Event materials. The good life is helping women (who are often disadvantaged) have more opportunities in their communities.

Millennium Development Goals

You will need: Laminated sets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cards plus sheets of the cards for people to take home. (patterns attached)

Lay out the cards with the Millennium Goals logos showing. Talk about what the logo might have to do with the good life for people at Messy Church.

Show the Millennium Goal related to each logo and talk about what it might mean for someone living in poverty.

Play the card game as for 'Memory'. Lay out all the cards, face down. Each player turns over two cards. If they match, the person keeps the cards. If they do not match, return them to their place face down.

During this activity, talk about Millennium Goals for eradicating extreme poverty. The good life is sharing so that all people can have safe and healthy lives.

Search the globe

You will need: a globe of the world. Firmly attach one end of the string to Adelaide, or to your home town. Stretch the string to Jerusalem. Mark the string with the distance from Adelaide to Jerusalem.

Divide the distance from Adelaide to Jerusalem into eight equal segments.

It is approximately 8000 miles (13000 km) from Jerusalem to Adelaide. That's how far away we are from the place where Jesus lived, died and lived again.

Use the string to locate and calculate the distance from Adelaide to our four Lent Event partner churches:

South Sudan (in Africa)

West Papua, Papua New Guinea and Kiribati (in the South Pacific).

Which location is nearest to us?

Which location is furthest from us?

Which two are closest to one another?

For the mathematicians: If each segment of the string represents about 13000 kilometres and an aircraft cruises at about 900 kilometres per hour; how long would it take to fly to each location?

During this activity, talk about the Act, Reflect, Connect approach to the Lent Event. Refer to Lent Event materials. The good life is praying for, learning about and sharing with communities so that all people can be healthy.

THE GOOD LIFE

(CELEBRATION TIME)

Countdown

Using amplification if necessary, begin counting at 40. By the time you get to '1 — celebrate!', everyone should be assembled in the area you have designated for the celebration.

Music (optional)

Sing one or two easy to sing/easy to remember songs. If possible use songs that people are familiar with and songs that also reflect the theme.

Display the words of any songs you want people to sing.

- If you're happy and you know it . . .
- The Best book to read is the Bible (Colin Buchanan in *Follow the Saviour*)
- My Best friend (Have you heard of the one called Saviour?) (Houston and Sampson, Hillsong)

Activities Review

Ask: What activities and crafts did you just make?

Affirm answers, ask if others did that too and state key purpose, where appropriate and the link to the good life. This can be done in any order and you do not have to cover them all. Here is a list of the activities and their purpose. You could put up posters for each of the "The good life is..." sentences.

The good life is....

- Lent Journey – drew a road through different landscapes.
The good life is knowing that Jesus is with us no matter what life is like.
- Forty marbles – chose the jar with 40 marbles (announce winners, give prizes).
Marbles are simple toys. What other toys did you brainstorm that are simple and inexpensive that you like to play with?
The good life is when we are content with simple things.
- Forty something – found someone in the room in their 40s. Ask who has a star on their back from being identified as being in their 40s? Who found out what people think 40 means?
Lent is a time of 40 days (not years) when we wait in hope and get ready for Easter.
Waiting and hoping can be part of the good life.
- Fingers and hands – Who counted 40 countries on the world map? What are some of the ways we can use our hands to help other people?
Let's encourage one another to use our hands to help people.
The good life is helping other people.
- Lent Calendar – colour in a calendar identifying Easter, Sundays, Good Friday and other special family events.
Lent is the time we get ready for Easter. Good Friday is the day when we remember that Jesus died. Easter Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus coming back to life!
The good life can be hard and painful but the good life is with Jesus.
- Beading from South Sudan – made necklaces. Discussed the midwife training project in South Sudan.
Highlight this project helps women to have babies safely and cares for the mums and babies.
The good life is helping mums and babies to be safe and healthy.
- String bags from West Papua – put some items in a string bag, place handle around their forehead and walk around a circuit. Discussed the livelihood development project in West Papua. What items did you put in your bag? How did it feel? What would it look like to do your shopping like that?
Highlight this project which helps families earn an income so they can afford basic

supplies, like food, and save for the future too.

The good life is sharing with people so they can have what they need.

- String figures in Papua New Guinea – use string around fingers to make different shapes. Discussed the peace building and advocacy project in Papua New Guinea. What shapes did you make?
Highlight this project helps communities to work for peace and to keep their homes safe. The good life is sharing with people so they can have what they need.
- Dancing in Kiribati – watched a traditional dance of Kiribati and had a go at doing it. Discussed the Partnering Women for Change project in Kiribati. Anyone like to show us the dance?
Highlighting this project helps women to work for change so they can find work, stay safe and be involved in leadership.
The good life is helping women to have more opportunities in their communities.
- Millennium Development Goals – played “Memory” using cards with the Millennium Development Goals and logos on them. What are some of the Millennium Development Goals?
God wants us to help others to have safe and healthy lives – no matter where they live. The good life is sharing so that all people can have safe and healthy lives.
- Search the globe – measure the distance from Adelaide to Jerusalem and then to the locations of the 4 projects: South Sudan, West Papua, Papua New Guinea and Kiribati. Did you find all the places? Which was the most difficult to find?
The Lent Event project helps churches and people to pray for and support these communities so that they can live healthy lives.
The good life is praying for and helping communities to be healthy.

The Good Life summary (keep this short, it is not a time to preach but to introduce the story)

The good life – there's lots to it. Yet it's also very simple. The good life is with Jesus. The good life is about being healthy – in our homes and in every community. Jesus cared for people who were sick, left-out or ignored.

Jesus said: I am the Good Shepherd. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of. The Good Shepherd puts the sheep before himself, sacrifices himself if necessary. (John 10:10, 11, The Message)

Story

Pre-arrange for someone, ie a team member, child or family to share a personal story in less than 5 minutes (and be very strict on time) about either:

- when they were sick, left-out or ignored and how Jesus cared for them
- when Jesus prompted them to help someone who was sick, left-out or ignored

Ask the person to consider what visuals could be used, either photos on PowerPoint or a simple object or two that they hold and show.

Also consider if their story is appropriate to have participation from others. A simple example is: I had become very sick (*can you all cough and look sick*).

Someone from church visited me and prayed for me (*can you put your hand on the shoulder of the person next to you*). They prayed that I would get better quickly, that I would sleep well and that I would know that Jesus was looking after me.

After they left, I felt really safe and peaceful. I fell asleep and slept all night (*can you look asleep*). I hadn't done this for over a week because I'd been so sick.

The next morning when I woke up I felt much better and on the next day I was back at work (*let's all jump up, give someone a high 5 and a smile!*).

Prayer response

Let's pray for people and communities so that we can all know the good life.

Hand out star stickers. Invite people to place a sticker on a world map for a community they want to pray will experience the good life with Jesus.


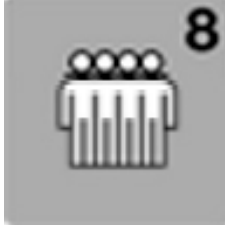
LENT 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			5 MARCH Ash Wednesday	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1 APRIL	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 Good Friday	19
20 Easter						

Jesus came so we can have real and eternal life,
more and better life than we ever dreamed of.
(adapted from John 10:10, *The Message*)

MILLENNIAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

A BETTER LIFE FOR EVERYONE

			
1. End extreme hunger	2. Universal primary education	3. Gender equality and empower women	4. Reduce child mortality
			
5. Improve maternal health	6. Fight HIV AIDS, Malaria and other preventable diseases	7. Environmental sustainability	8. Global partnership for development