



Godsend App

C. Love

9 Innovate

Some might be tempted to see Messy Church as the easy, safe, tried-and-tested option for a new worshipping community. And, like any approach, it can certainly be done as an easy option, in a cosy way, avoiding risk, communicating a fluffy set of nice stories and mistaking the tried-and-tested nature of the approach for a set of ruts for your wagon wheels to settle into quickly and never leave. But what a wasted opportunity!

A reflective approach will go some way towards keeping your Messy wagon rolling in a godly direction, sturdy enough to trundle off-piste when needed, rather than mindlessly maintaining an easy predictable track. The 2020 Deepening Discipleship pilot demonstrated across a number of Messy Churches in different contexts that simply making time to reflect on where the team saw God at work in the last Messy Church can make an enormous difference to the attitude of the team and the direction of travel of the Messy Church. Transformation is built into the rhythm and routine of the team.

Another tool tested out in the same pilot is accompaniment or accountability – having someone sympathetic to check in on you and ask the right questions helps to keep up the innovation in the midst of the busyness of the mechanics of running such a complex fresh expression. If no one is available within your local church community, the [Alongsiders Support team](#) is available to offer missional coaching to any Messy Church.

A useful touchstone for deciding whether you're still a Messy Church, when you've innovated your way into something that looks very different, is, 'Does it have the five Messy Church values or being Christ-centred, hospitable, creative, for all ages and celebration?' If so, it's probably still part of the same movement. If it's excellent, but in a way that doesn't include these values, you will probably want to avoid confusion by calling it something unrelated to 'Messy Church'.