



Godsend App F. Church

16 Church?

While you consider the excellent suggestions in this unit, it's worth bearing in mind that both shallow and deep feature in the wonderful picture of the river flowing from the temple in Ezekiel 47. In Messy Church, we value the shallow and deliberately keep the shallow end of the pool open, so that people can continue to arrive and put a single toe in the water or splash around safely. We grow into the deep end, perhaps more slowly than other fresh expressions of church, because of this determination to value the newcomer's first tentative splashes as well as making space and opening new areas of the pool, river and then ocean for those who want to go 'deeper'.

As regards your relationship with the rest of your church community, the fact that the Messy Church network is well established means that your church may recognise Messy Church more readily than they would some other forms of pioneering church. At the same time, not everyone in the church understands what Messy Church is meant to be, so Messy leaders express frequent frustration with the lack of recognition of their ministry. The best advice is to connect with the likeminded 'tribe' of other Messy Church leaders who will understand and inspire you, be encouraged by your ideas and connect you with people who've walked a step ahead of you or who want to follow where you've macheted a path. And forget about needing recognition from other leaders in the church: God sees and that's all that matters.

The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF), the home of Messy Church, can point you to national and international resources for one-to-one help with starting up, or personalised missional coaching and more general online training through the 'Messy Masterclasses' as you develop your Messy ministry. There are also plenty of thought-provoking books on helpful aspects of being church and many opportunities to connect informally through Facebook Lives, online Messy Meet-ups and face-to-face conferences. You aren't alone!