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Running Messy Vintage in community settings

- Assemble a team of volunteers
- Find the right venue
- Spend time planning themes
- Plan refreshments and prepare materials
- Enjoy working alongside participants on the day
- Build relationships

Background

Messy Vintage was born out of a desire to offer an easily accessible style of worship to those who feel unable to engage with a more formal setting. It is a place where people of all ages, but particularly older people, can meet together for Christ-centred fun, fellowship and food. Spiritual needs are met alongside the opportunity to share in conversation over craft activities on a biblical theme. Hospitality and refreshments facilitate a sense of belonging to the Messy Vintage community.

1 Assemble a team of like-minded volunteers and identify how to meet costs

Prayer, of course, is the starting point. Gathering a team of like-minded people who are passionate

about bringing the gospel alive in this fun-filled way is important. Including those outside the church who have a real heart for drawing alongside older people and simply loving and valuing them can be really helpful too.

Financing for Messy Vintage also needs to be considered, whether as an outreach ministry of your church or through grants available for community projects from your local government. Maybe your team would be willing to fundraise.

2 Find the right venue

Another key element is to have a venue that is comfortable and accessible to all. It's important to have a place that has facilities suited to the needs of those attending and that feels warm and welcoming. The right venue may be your church, but Messy Vintage can be held anywhere – in a village hall, your local school, or any other suitable gathering place in your community.

3 Spend time as a team planning themes

Once you have a venue lined up and have gathered your team and ensured that everyone is DBS checked, the fun really starts as you begin planning your sessions together. The most common frequency of meeting as Messy Vintage is once a month for about an hour and half to two hours, but that may not be right for you and meeting together as a team is where decisions such as these are made. Planning biblical themes in advance can be advantageous to ensure that there is a link and flow throughout your annual programme. Invitations need to be given out in whatever form you decide upon. Music, be it live or otherwise, also needs to be organised, as does the provision of refreshments. The more involvement the team have, the better, so that not only will they know what is going on, but they will also understand their role and feel energised and excited. A joyous team makes for a great Messy Vintage!

4 Plan refreshments and prepare materials and a sample of the craft before each session

Having decided upon your theme, you need to ensure that all elements required for the craft activity are gathered. A general resource box is invaluable, but there are invariably extra things you need for each craft so be absolutely sure that everything is available on the day. Making up a sample craft will help ensure this is so and will also provide a visual aid for those gathered for the session; however, freestyling should never be discouraged – that's all part of the fun! Most of the crafts need some sort of preparation in advance, but this again is where the team comes in. So too in arranging refreshments, be that a cuppa and a biscuit, lunch or a sumptuous afternoon tea – it all needs to be meticulously planned.

5 Enjoy working alongside participants on the day itself

Finally, with planning and preparation done, the day arrives to enjoy the fruit of your labour and share it with everyone. Now comes the opportunity to lend a hand to those who may be struggling with the craft, an ear to those who need to share a story or concern and a smile as you witness craft activities, worship and fellowship come together as church – Messy Vintage style.

6 Build on relationships and being church family

There is nothing quite like being part of a church family. For some this will be a new experience while for others it may be a renewed and treasured way of life. Either way, it is important to keep building on relationships and letting people know that they are part of a family who care about them 24/7, not just on Messy Vintage days.

Further resources:

Messy Vintage: 52 sessions to share Christ-centred fun and fellowship with the older generation, by Katie Norman and Jill Phipps (BRF, 2021)

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