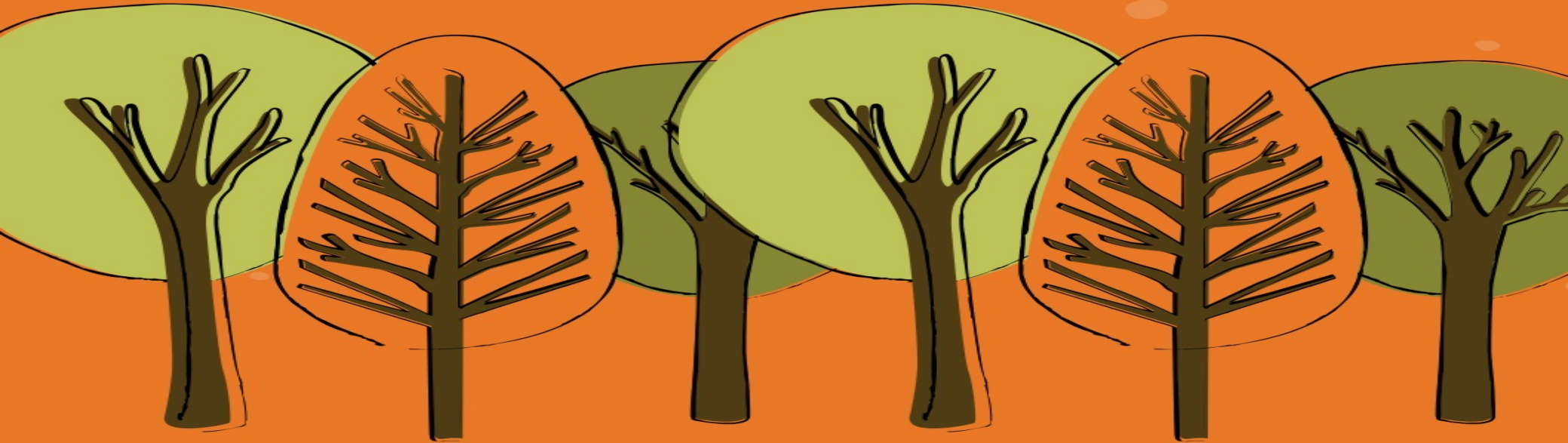




# AUTUMN ADVENTURES



Discovering faith, friendship and fun outdoors

Lucie Hutson





## WHAT IS MUDDY CHURCH?

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Muddy Church has been running for over five years, but the truth is the idea goes back to the very beginning. Genesis 3 tells us about a God who walked in the garden with Adam and Eve. God went looking for them. This shares with us the idea of God beyond the walls of a church and enjoying creation, the variety, the space, the places around and most importantly enjoying the company of people. God wasn't limited to a building or a set space but was wandering in the garden, the sense of an intimate relationship of chatting and sharing about life is evident.

Muddy Church is not against church buildings, these are wonderful and offer sacred shelter for many but equally in our desire for set meetings and forming spaces we have moved inside and sometimes forgotten about the world outside. For hundreds of years there has been Celtic spirituality that sought to continue and connect with the natural and some of Muddy Church draws on these ideas. Often these practices were developed around the monastic buildings - for us, that may be utilising the church garden or car park. The idea behind Muddy Church is about connecting with your community - both the geographical and people and looking for the gifts within. You may have a wonderful space outside your church building, for others you may have no church building but a patch of scrubland in the middle of the city, it may be a park or a school field. These are all gifts to us, spaces for redemption, for connecting and for celebration.

There is also a desire to help people find the patterns and rhythms of life that nourish their very souls and beings and through that to find peace within their lives, there is much research that supports the concept of the outdoors helping us to flourish. The idea of Muddy Church is not just to get outside, not to replicate what you do inside but in the outdoors. Muddy Church is about connecting with the space around us, to notice what is there - the big things such as the ever-revolving sky through to the smallest ant or mustard seed. As we notice these things it connects us to the place but also opens wondering at how amazing the universe is and through that draws us into questions and connections to the Creator. Through the activities and resources, we design, it is essential that paces are slowed, freedom is given, and the world is noticed.

Back in Genesis 3 we see the God who came looking. God cared enough not just to stay a distant power source but to be a friend who walked alongside and was concerned, upset, even disappointed. Muddy Church was set up with a missional heart, to care for all and to share a God who still comes looking for us. In concern God called out, in the upset God showed compassion and, in the disappointment, God did not give up but began the greatest salvation plan ever. This is the God we share with people from all walks of life and so as we begin Muddy Church, we don't pretend to be perfect, but we share in the wondering of questions we may never answer. Muddy Church is a safe space for talking about life, asking those things that are on our mind and most importantly listening. Everyone offers wisdom, from the youngest to the oldest, we believe that everyone can hear God and reflect on God and so it is vital that respect is given and that structures aren't based around an all-knowing leader. We use the phrase - 'wondering and wandering together' and this sums up what we aim for the time, to be open to considering any questions, to share in them and to be on a journey, physically and spiritually, together.

**Then the man and his wife  
heard the sound of  
the LORD God as he was  
walking in the garden in the  
cool of the day, and they  
hid from the LORD God among  
the trees of the garden. But  
the LORD God called to the  
man, "Where are you?"**  
Genesis 3:8,9



### Weather

Cold weather and snow offer lots of fun as does sunshine and heat but being prepared is essential. Some people fear the effects of the weather on activities and there are some safety considerations to be had, depending on your setting. We always advise people to dress appropriately for the weather - that may mean being ready for the rain or bringing a sunhat. Generally, sessions are only 1-2 hours long and so the effects of getting wet or cold will not be significant for most people. However, you should be aware of increased risk of slipping or lack of accessibility for rain drenched land if there is not a solid pathway. The other consideration is branches or items falling or blowing in the wind, you may need to change or adjust the location. We do know some groups who run a 'Welly Bank' where outgrown Wellington (Rain) boots are available and helps cut down waste and cost.

### Intergenerational



Muddy Church is intergenerational - that does not only mean that it is designed for all ages to be present but for all ages to engage equally. This is where listening and valuing are important, even things such as tone of voice and use of words is essential to consider. The sense of community is important and within that it is not hierarchical but allowing for all to interact, to lead, to speak and to set the pace. All the activities have been thought through and created to enable people to interact but will need you to consider the particularly needs represented in your community, some may not enjoy crafts, some may have limited mobility, some may love wondering and discussion. Think carefully about your community and any adjustments you may need to make - this could be accessibility, sensory requirements, materials as well as content.

This book is produced as part of the resources and ideas around Muddy Church. This is an organization of groups, churches and communities looking for ways to connect with God, each other and the spaces they live in. Muddy Church is based on the concept of 'wondering and wandering' and you can find out more about it and a whole range of free resources at [www.muddychurch.co.uk](http://www.muddychurch.co.uk)

## In this pack...

There are a variety of resources within this pack that are designed to offer you adaptability for your setting. For some people the resources will be useful within a faith-based setting, some resources within this pack have an essence of connecting with God but do not mention Christian concepts explicitly. These are for use in multi-faith settings or within schools, as well as being appropriate to develop a faith-based session.

### Main Sheet

This can be the focus of your session and offers a theme, some information and some wondering. You may want to have this in a set place on display for people to look at as they begin the session. This sheet is designed as a trail, simply position the sheets around a location – it might be in a window, on a lamppost, on fences or safely to a tree. If you are using public spaces such as a park please make sure you have permission. Give people advice on where the locations are if the route is not obvious, such as a simple map and ensure people understand they are welcome to read and engage in as many as they want and that it is not a race. Each of the sheets can be used at once as part of a trail around a location as they are connected. This is printed on a single side so that you could remove the page from the book for display if you wanted to.

### Four parts

If you are using the resource as a session, there is a four-part sheet which can be used as a trail around a location. The four parts can be displayed as Pausing Posts offering a space to stop, reflect or join in an action. Again, this is printed on a single side so that it can be removed for use.

### Scavenger Hunt






This pack also contains four scavenger hunts on the themes. These are simple so that everyone can join in. Scavenger hunts are great for ice breakers, time fillers or as a main activity. These offer the engagement with nature through finding or hearing things as well as the sensation of holding or touching items. Lots of people love some competition and so the scavenger hunt can offer that but also can bring together small groups of people if there are people who don't know each other that well. There is a larger Autumn Challenge sheet that can be used throughout the season for fun, linking on social media or free family fun.

The Harvest Trail is not printed single sided as the second side is designed for reflection or activity ideas and so if you were displaying the trail you would only need the first side. This was designed around the RE Curriculum in schools and so has less explicit Christian references but we hope you agree this still offers wonderful Spiritual reflection and connection.



### Mindfulness

Mindfulness has become more popular over recent years and within Muddy Church it is about stilling ourselves to take time to connect. Mindfulness is not about emptying your mind but about pausing to be aware of yourself and the space around you. Withdrawing and finding his self was often part of Jesus' practices (Luke 5:16, Matthew 14:23) as a point of refocussing, renewing and refreshing but mainly reconnecting with His father. Matthew 18:20 also shares another principle seen throughout the Bible, the ever-present God. As we take time to raise our awareness of presence rather than schedule it often is a key time for being aware of God around and within us. For some people this practice is not just a break within busy-ness but also offers a time of seeking peace within situations.

<b>WELCOME</b> It is important for people to be welcomed, to be invited in and involved. Don't worry that everyone already knows everything, this sets part of the pattern.	<p>As we have talked about Muddy Church is not set around programmes and schedules and so this resource offers a range of ideas for your community.</p> <p>You can pick whatever 'ingredients' would work for your group. Some may love crafts, others would hate it. Some may need a game whilst others would enjoy the bible and space around this. It is not designed to use everything – pick and mix is always the best!</p> <p>There is a 'Take Away' sheet for most of the sessions that can be used afterwards at home or during the week for reflection.</p> <p>The Welcome is important, you may do it in any way but always ensure you invite people into the space. Offering people the opportunity to say their name gives them the first part of having a voice and then makes it easier to talk or ask questions later.</p> <p>Whatever you choose to use make sure you leave lots of space for play, reflection and silence.</p>
 <b>ACTION</b> Games or activities for movement and kinaesthetic engagement.	
 <b>MINDFULNESS</b> Space for pausing, reflecting and developing patterns of stillness.	
 <b>CONNECT</b> Opportunities to connect to nature around us.	
 <b>MAKE IT</b> Craft activities based on the theme and to develop thinking around it.	
 <b>BIBLE</b> Reflections on the theme from the bible.	



## For Schools and Teachers.

The outdoors is not limited to play times or sports events but each space around the school campus offers learning and development opportunities for children. The idea of outdoor spaces and nature connection is not new within education and has been explored in many settings including Montessori, Waldorf and Froebel. We believe that outdoor learning offers opportunities to strengthen the formal curriculum and offer development opportunities for children of all ages, whilst increasing engagement in environmental concern.

Muddy Church has been developed around studies that encourage opportunities for 'wondering' and developing questioning. The idea of offering spaces for children has been found to increase their sense of self-confidence, enquiry and problem solving. There have also been fascinating findings about the opportunity to connect with nature helping children feel a greater sense of belonging to the place that they are in. Alongside the wondering the opportunity to have freedom to play is not only one of the United Nations articles in the Convention of Rights of a Child, but also part of our desire to offer safe spaces, outside. Sadly, many areas have seen a decrease in availability for outdoor play such as playgrounds where parents feel able to let their children explore, park land and natural spaces as areas have been developed. Within Muddy Church is the belief that development comes from Asset Based recognition and noticing the opportunities and strengths within our environments in order to maximise the potential for children.

Muddy Church is based on connecting with nature, getting outside, being together, exploration and creativity. We believe these are all important for mental, physical and emotional well-being and as such offer important opportunities to the community. The activities and resources are all designed to be adaptable, to use and utilise as is appropriate for individual groups and come with an explicitly Christian emphasis in some areas whilst others have been (or could be) adapted to be suitable for multi-faith settings.

If the school desired the resources could be used within the RE curriculum offering creative and engaging sessions for both Key Stage 1 and 2 and is easily adaptable, such as thinking about Beliefs and Meanings – 'Is anything ever eternal?' We would be happy to talk to someone and help connect the sessions within your curriculum if this would be helpful.

The sessions are designed to be simple to replicate – picking out your ingredients and leaving plenty of space for play and individual exploration. The materials required are minimal and so, offer very little cost implications to schools. The sessions also offer space for engagement outdoors, either within the school day or as extended hours, which is particularly helpful for some children but also offers greater freedom within any Covid limitations.

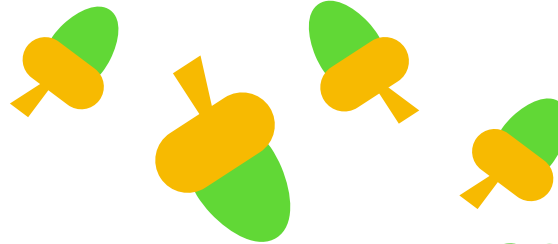
All Muddy Church resources are designed with accessibility in mind and so images are balanced with simplistic, open words to offer engagement for all levels of literacy, including EYFS and children who do not have English as their first language. Each has been developed through child-based research and many of these resources come from children's suggestions, wondering or ideas. We also have had many groups who have said how helpful the resources are for children with additional learning requirements and the use of outdoor spaces have been beneficial to behaviour, learning, attitude and focus.

The name Muddy Church is available to use freely (sharing ownership with the wider community) as is the logo. However, you are welcome to use these resources utilising another name that is more appropriate to you and to adapt them to suit your own requirements. We only ask that you respect ownership and do not try to sell them or the adaptation of them. Further resources and information are all available freely from the website [www.muddychurch.co.uk](http://www.muddychurch.co.uk).

# Get ready

All around the world is getting ready  
for change.

I wonder if you can see things around that  
are getting ready or going to change?



Can you spot any acorns or nuts?

Did you know?

Squirrels have their own kind of harvest where they store up food for the winter (caching). They can bury and hide up to 3000 nuts around the woodland but their brains actually grow by 15% during this season which helps them remember where they are and find them again!





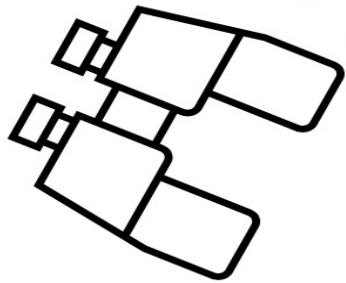
Let's Go!

Are you ready for an  
adventure?

What are you looking  
forward to?



What can you find that  
is changing?



Can you see things that  
are hiding?










Can you see hiding  
places?

Hidden

I wonder





<p><b>WELCOME</b> Are we ready...</p> <p> Review rules and boundaries, introduce each other</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p> In teams or individually collect items that are RED, YELLOW or GREEN Place these into a hoop or into piles spaced around the area.</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p>Has anyone found any acorns or seeds - you might need to look up and down!</p> <p></p>
<p> <b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Traffic light game using the piles of items. Call out red, yellow or green and players have to respond with the right action.</p> <p>RED = stop YELLOW = walk GREEN = run</p>	<p> <b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Hide and seek</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Squirrels get ready for winter by hiding their acorns, burying them in the ground or holes in trees so that when they are hungry they can find them for a feast!</p> <p></p> <p>1. FIND ITEMS THAT ARE HIDDEN 2. FIND PICTURES OF HIDDEN SQUIRRELS</p>
<p> <b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p>The Acorn Tree</p> <p>Hold an acorn in your hand. Close your eyes. I wonder where this acorn came from, where was the tree, what was it like, did it reach up high to the sky or was it broken or just a new tree?</p> <p>Cover the acorn with your other hand and imagine where you might like to bury the acorn. What places do you like or enjoy, where is special for you?</p> <p>Slowly count to ten and imagine your acorn growing – how does it grow, how tall is it, how strong is it, what happens when the wind blows?</p>	<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p>What is Hidden?</p> <p>Place your feet on the floor.... What do you feel? Place your hands on the floor... what do you feel?</p> <p>As you touch the ground can you feel what is beneath? Are their clues to what is underneath? How might it feel (cold/hot/wet/dry/dirty/refreshing) Put your hand on your heart – can you feel it beating? Have you ever seen your heart? Sometimes we can hear it, sometimes we can see it but often it is there, keeping us alive.</p> <p></p> <p>Lots of things are hidden, that we cannot see. We can feel they are there, we can hear or sometimes smell them, but we cannot see them. Invisible is not unbelievable.</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p>Collect 10-15 items from around the area and place them onto the ground or on a tray.</p> <p>After one minute cover them and then count down out loud from 30.</p> <p>See how many of the items you can remember.</p> <p>Imagine what it is like for squirrels who hide thousands of acorns around the place!</p> <p></p>

### MAKE IT



Seed bombs - using mud (you may need to add water) mix in some seeds and form a ball. Leave this to dry slightly.

When we plant it, we do not know what will happen – some may blossom, some may not, it may be different colours or textures than you expect.

### MAKE IT

Acorn painting - decorate the acorn using Sharpie pens. This can then be tied onto some braid to make a bracelet or a necklace.



### MAKE IT

If you are using a small treasure bag each person could decorate their own using fabric pens/Sharpies.

Place an acorn in it when complete.  
Collect bags in for next week.



### BIBLE (ECCLESIASTES)

**A Time for Everything** There was a king and God asked him what he would like, he could have anything. He didn't choose riches, or fast cars, he didn't choose beautiful women or fame. He asked for wisdom – that he would know the right things to do, that he would be able to help himself and others. He wrote about everything having a time – a time to laugh and a time to cry, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to be dance and a time to be still. The world reminds us of this wisdom. Life changes just like the seasons change. What happens around us alters all the time, in fact our world is always spinning and never even still. Change can sometimes be difficult, sometimes scary and sometimes exciting. There are things we are getting ready for, and we hope over the next weeks to have lots of fun and discover more about ourselves, each other and the world.



### BIBLE (Lamps and Oil)

Matthew 25:1-13 tells a story Jesus said about being ready and prepared. Have you ever needed to get ready for something, what did you do? How did you feel? Was it exciting, were you nervous, did you worry about anything you had forgotten?

Sometimes changes or new things can be exciting, I wonder if the trees worry about their leaves changing?





# Get ready!



Can you find some items that fit in the traffic lights?



What about a game of hide and seek?

What can  
you see  
that is red?

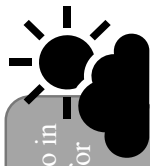
What can  
you see  
that is  
orange?

What can  
you see  
that is green?

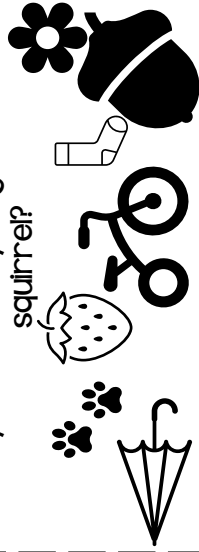
Can you find any items hidden outside?



What's the first thing you do in  
the morning to get ready for  
the day?



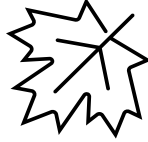
Is your memory as good as a  
squirrel?



Take a look at these 15 items and then look away  
for a minute and see how many you can remember!



Matthew 25:1-13 tells a story Jesus  
said about being ready and  
prepared. Have you ever needed to  
get ready for something, what did  
you do? How did you feel? Was it  
exciting, were you nervous, did you  
worry about anything you had  
forgotten?



Sometimes changes or new things  
can be exciting, I wonder if the trees  
worry about their leaves changing?

Did you know?

Squirrels hide their food all over  
the forest, it is called 'caching'.  
They can hide up to 3000 nuts!



Can you find 5  
acorns  
hidden on the  
page?





# move

Everything is moving, big creatures, tiny insects, even the earth we are standing on. Sometimes things twirl and others flutter, some creep and others stomp.

Due to breathing  
your ribs move about  
5 million times a year.

What is your favourite way to move?  
Can you see things moving in different ways?

I wonder how you feel when you  
move?

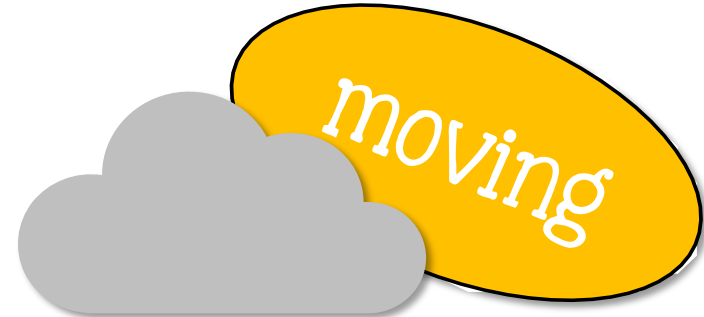




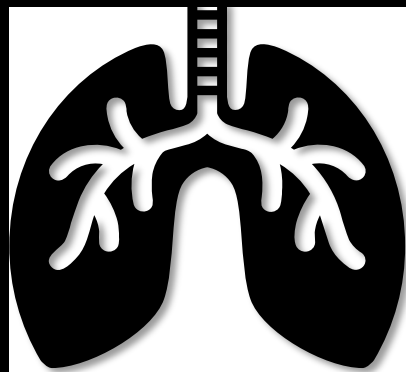
Let's Go!

Can you reach up  
high?

Can you touch the  
ground?



What can you find that  
is moving?



Can you see things  
that are breathing?

Can you see things  
that do not breathe?

breathe





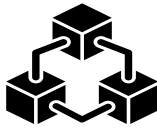



I wonder



If God is moving?

muddy  
church



<p><b>WELCOME</b></p> <p>Are we ready...</p> <p></p> <p>Review rules and boundaries, introduce each other</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p>Watch a plant/leaf moving (if there is no wind then blow on it).</p> <p></p> <p>How does it move? Can it go to another place or is it connected to where it is?</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p></p> <p>Can you find 5 things that are moving?</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p></p> <p>Move It like a ....</p> <p>Using items around you or that are appropriate for your setting call out things to move like – you could use a tree, a snail, a bird, a leaf</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Play tag</p> <p></p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Can you twirl around?</p> <p>Can you stand still?</p> <p>Can you touch the ground?</p> <p></p>
<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p></p> <p>Tap your fingers onto your thumbs one by one. Index finger, middle finger, ring finger, small (pinkie) finger. Then come back through them again. Repeat this seven times getting slower each time.</p> <p>Then lay your hands, palms upwards on top of your thighs. Count slowly down from 20, breathing in and out.</p>	<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p>Begin by feeling your toes, can you move them? Is anything stopping them from moving. Then can you twirl your feet from your ankles? Stand up and then bend your knees to touch the ground. Can your hands feel the floor? Tap your fingers onto the ground. Stand back up and reach up as high as you can.</p> <p>Our bodies are amazing, made up of different parts, moving, twisting, turning. In the same way the world is made of many different parts, not all the same but with jobs and things to do. The earth that holds the plants, the air that surrounds us, the clouds and rain that water the ground. Everything is needed, carefully balanced and in a special place. Just like you.</p> <p></p>	



### MAKE IT

#### Wind twirlers

Find a long stick.

From this attach 4 or 5 pieces of string to hang down and one to hang it up with.

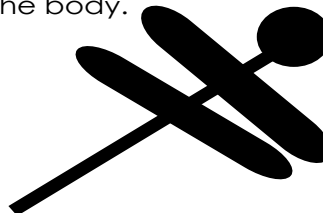
Find some items that you can tie on to the stick that will move in the wind. It may be different leaves or a feather or flower.

Tie this to a branch or even in a window to watch the items dancing in the wind.

### MAKE IT

Can you find leaves from a sycamore, ash, field or Norway maple tree? These are often called 'helicopter' wings or 'whirligigs' because of the way they spiral to the floor.

Great for making dragonfly creations, with a stick for the body.



### MAKE IT



Make a tower – from stones – take it apart before you leave.

Or if there is a log or a tree trunk you could invite people to add ribbons, paint or colours in a totem style.

### BIBLE (SAY TO THE MOUNTAIN MOVE)

The mustard seed is so small you can only just see it on the end of your finger. It grows quickly and the plants spread across areas as they grow into shrubs. When Jesus talked about mustard seeds people would be able to imagine it straight away, having seen the shrubs across fields and hillsides and tasted them within their food. I wonder if people's mouths began to water as they thought of their favourite food?

Jesus talked about believing in something to be able to do the impossible – sometimes we really, really believe something can happen and other times we may have doubt or questions. This example from Jesus was one that reminded people of the everyday miracle of this little seed and the difference it can make. I wonder if there are challenges, difficulties or impossibilities around you that you need to believe for?







How sloooooowly  
Can you move?

Look around and see how many things you can see moving.  
Tick the box for how many you can spot:

☐

1-3

☐

4-6

☐

7-10

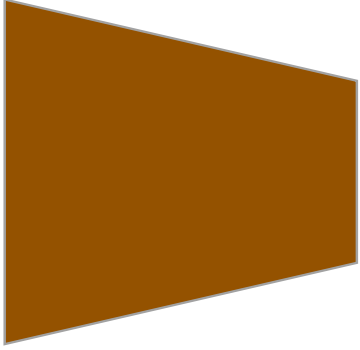
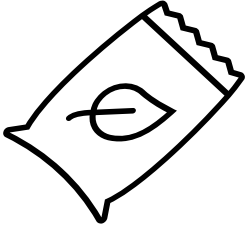
☐

10+

- • • • • Jesus talked about a tiny
- • • • • mustard seed, so small that if
- • • • • you had it on the end of your
- • • • • finger you would only just be able
- • • • • to see it. He said that if we have
- • • • • faith, even this tiny, we can say
- • • • • to a mountain "Move!" and it
- • • • • would do.
- • • • • I wonder how Jesus thought the
- • • • • mustard seed was like faith? I
- • • • • wonder what the mountain could
- • • • • be? I wonder what that might
- • • • • look like in your life?



Can you wiggle  
like a worm?



Have you ever planted a seed?  
What did it grow into?  
Did you see it move from a tiny seed to  
grow into something bigger?  
Can you draw what your seed  
might look like when it grows?

How quickly can you move?



Can you wiggle  
your ears?

# move

Can you feel yourself breathe?

Can you see anything else breathing?



Tree experts  
sometimes listen to  
trees to be able to  
know if they are ill,  
diseased or healthy.



# Listen.....

**Trees and plants are singing their own song.**

For hundreds of years writers have talked about the different sounds of trees - big leaves rustling, pine needles whistling, branches creaking.

Leaves on trees are said to rustle but on the ground  
some people say they crunch or crackle.  
What do you think they sound like?



I wonder if you can hear a song  
from the trees or leaves?



Let's Go!

Can you wiggle your ears?

Can you whistle or hum?

Listen



What can you find that makes a noise?

Can you hear any songs in nature?



singing



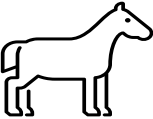




Can you hear silence?

I wonder

If God likes to sing?

muddy  
church



<p><b>WELCOME</b> Are we ready...? Review rules and boundaries, introduce each other</p> 	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p>  <p>Can you hear any birds or animals? What do you think they are saying?</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b> Wonky-Donkey One person sits with their back to the circle and/or closes their eyes and puts their hands over their ears.</p> 
<p><b>5</b> <b>CONNECT</b> Can you hear five different sounds?</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b> Tell a story and add in some sounds to be repeated - for example walking, clapping and animal noises.</p> <p>This is great for listening and bound to add some giggles!</p> 	<p>Someone is chosen and they say, 'Wonky Donkey'.</p> <p>The first person has three chances to guess who the wonky donkey is.</p> <p><b>CONNECT</b> Can you make a crunching sound? Can you make a crackle?</p>
<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p>  <p>Sit for a moment and listen. What do you hear? Can you hear sounds from machines? Can you hear sounds from nature? Can you hear sounds from yourself?</p> <p>All around us things are moving, turning, changing. Sometimes we need just to be still.</p> <p>As you sit in this moment, breathe out busy and breathe in stillness (nice deep breaths).</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b> <b>Whispered Names</b></p>  <p>One person stands a distance away from the circle.</p> <p>They should whisper one person's name. They should repeat this until the person hears and gently walks over to them.</p> <p>If all names are known repeat this until everyone is called over. Alternatively, once the group is about half then someone from the first circle can start whispering people back!</p>	<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p><i>Tap your toes on the floor... 1,2,3,4,5 Breathe out (repeat three times)</i></p>  <p><i>Tap your hands onto your knees... 1,2,3,4,5 Breathe out (repeat three times)</i></p> <p><i>Now listen to sounds around you, can you find a rhythm to tap or clap to?</i></p>



### MAKE IT Wind Chimes

Sounds in the garden or hanging from your window can be so relaxing.

Wind chimes can be made from anything – you could try making different sounds. Acorns, pinecones, twigs, feathers, leaves. Simply tie them onto a branch.

### MAKE IT Forest Band



See what things you can find to make a tune with or add some rhythm. There are so many natural elements – it could be as simple as tapping on a tree or building a xylophone from glass jars. Simply add different amounts of water or try adding soil, mud or stones.

### MAKE IT Shakers



If you have some tubes (such as Pringles packets) or longer glass jars add different small items to them to make shakers.

The great thing with the jar is you can see the items jiggling around.

You can try and make different noises such as rain shaker (small stones) or clunky sounds.

### BIBLE (DEUTERONOMY 6:4)

One of the oldest prayers, known as the Shema, has a simple phrase – “Hear o Israel, the Lord our God is one God.” It can be found in Deuteronomy but also Jesus reminds people of this important instruction. The idea not just to know something but to hear it said. This simple prayer is central to the Jewish and Christian faith, a reminder that God is ours and God is one. This prayer, or verse, is often prayed several times a day, a reminder of God's presence with us.

Are there things you hear that bring you comfort or help you to feel surrounded?





Have you got a favourite song? 🎵

# Listen

What can you hear?

Can you hear sounds outside?

Can you hear noises inside?

Can you hear yourself?

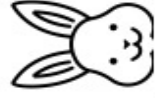
Scientists found that listening to sounds outside can help you be more relaxed and sleep better.

The bible is full of lots of different things making noise – trees clapping, donkeys talking, rocks shouting. When people ask Jesus to explain what he is saying he simply says “Let anyone with ears hear..” God speaks in lots of different ways and through everything.

Can you make the noises of the

things you see?

Maybe someone else can guess them.





# Amazing

Did you ever stop and think  
how amazing the world is?

Take a look and see some  
things that you think are  
wonderful.

*I wonder if you realise how  
wonderful you are?*



*Can you see  
fingerprints  
anywhere else than  
on your own finger?*



**Let's Go!**

Can you spin around?

Can you touch the ground?

What do you think is amazing?

**WOW!**

Is there anything you have never noticed before?

Can you see footprints?

**prints**












Can you see finger prints?

**I wonder**

If God is ever surprised?

**muddy**  
church



<p><b>WELCOME</b> Are we ready...</p> <p> Review rules and boundaries, introduce each other</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p> What is the most amazing thing you can see?</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p> Can you find 5 animals or creatures, but not people?</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b> I would like to be...</p> <p> Think of something you would like to be, but you can't say it – you can only act it out.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p> Perhaps you can find a big stick and have a limbo competition?</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Play follow the leader – take turns with different people at the front.</p> <p></p>
<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p> Look at your hands, can you see your fingerprints?</p> <p>Take one finger and trace around the outside of your hand, round from the little finger to the thumb. Repeat it but slower. Then as you go upwards breathe out, breathe in as you trace back down.</p> <p></p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p> If people don't mind getting a bit muddy play 'Marker'. Dip your thumb in some mud and see how many people you can tag.</p> <p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p> Can you find something that you think is special?</p>	<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p>Looking around what things can you see that look alike?</p> <p>Can you find a leaf and hold it in your hand, trace around it with your finger. Look at the lines, the shapes, the colours. The leaf may have fallen from the tree, it may have been surrounded by hundreds of others. But here it is, in your hand.</p> <p>Each leaf has grown and come on a journey to be here now. How long do you think the leaf was growing? Where on the tree might it have been?</p> <p></p>

### MAKE IT Portrait



Collect four sticks to make a frame or use a piece of paper.

Look around to see what you can find to make a portrait of yourself.



### MAKE IT Hand Print Banner

A chance to get muddy - find a large piece of plain fabric (or even an old bed sheet).

Get everyone to stick their hands in mud (you may need to add some water to make it runnier).

Then add a handprint to the fabric - make sure you add the date for a memory.

### MAKE IT Bark Rubbing



Take some paper and crayons work well, but coloured pencils also work.

Hold the paper against the tree and then rub over the bark.

If you can try a few different trees and see how the patterns different. You could even label the tree pattern as part of your nature journal.

### BIBLE (Psalm 139)

Marvellous, wonderful, knitted together.... All descriptions from within this Psalm. David wrote this before the time of x-rays or scans that show us the insides of our body and yet he realised how amazing we all are. From your toes to your ankles, your knees and hips, up to your spine joining to your skull – knitted together, connected. With all these bones and joints, there is so much detail within each of us, right down to the very lines on our fingers (and tongues). We are made uniquely – what is especially special about you?



### BIBLE (Ephesians 2:10 – For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.)

In art galleries and museums there are special masterpieces – paintings, portraits, sculptures. People travel from all around the world to look at these amazing pieces of art. Beautifully crafted and created from someone's mind or observation. The bible talks about each of us being a masterpiece – one of those amazing pieces that are worth gazing on, looking at and feeling 'Wow!' Often we don't feel like that, but, we might look around and see some amazing things, things that are incredible, even if they are really simple. Have you ever noticed something that is amazing and wonderful?





I wonder what the most amazing thing near you is?

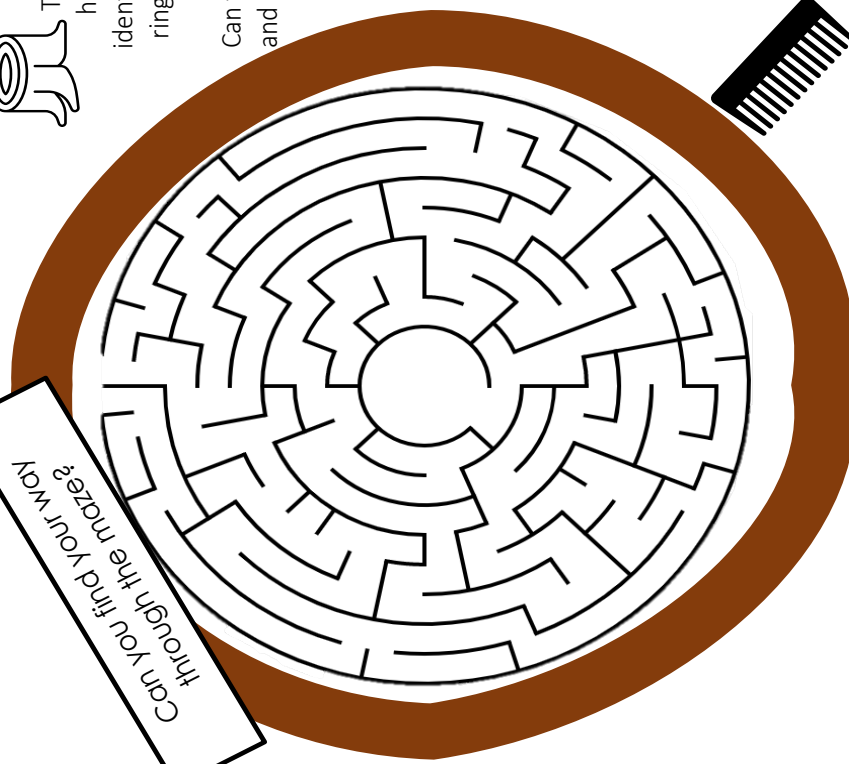
# Amazing



Trees have fingerprints as well as humans... their bark is unique and identifies them. Also inside the tree the rings show its age but also are unique.

Can you rub over a tree bark with paper and a crayon and see it's special marks?

The bible tells us in Psalm 139 that we are amazing and wonderful... knitted together. We look different, sound different even smell differently but God still thinks we are amazing. In fact He even knows how many hairs are on our head He cares that much.



Can you find your way through the maze?

When animals were created there must have been lots of fun - putting the long neck on the giraffe and the mask on the sloth and what about a duck-billed platypus?  
Can you draw a crazy animal?

Every single fingerprint is different - no-one has the same print, not even identical twins.  
Every person is unique.



At any time about  
67% of the earth is  
covered by cloud.

# Floating

**muddy**  
church

Clouds that float, moving through the sky, travelling around the world, drifting, forming - they are made up of millions of tons of water. Tiny water droplets joined together to make the clouds you see. Tons of water.

What other things can you see that join together to make something amazing?

I wonder if you can see shapes in the clouds?



Let's Go!

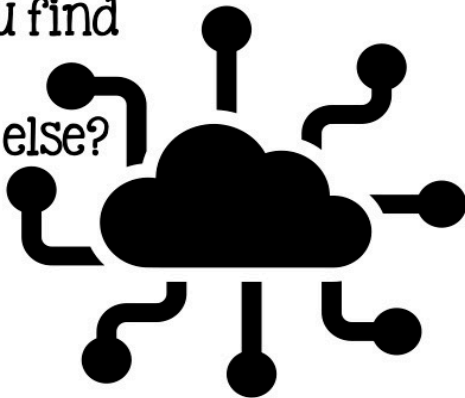
Can you reach up high?  
Can you jump up high?

floating!

What can you  
see floating?

What shapes can you  
see in the clouds?

What can you find  
connected  
to something else?



connected










Are you connected to anything?

I wonder

If God connected to  
this place?

**Muddy**  
Church



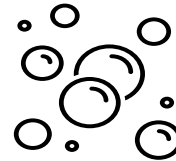
<p><b>WELCOME</b> Are we ready...</p> <p> Review rules and boundaries, introduce each other</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p> What things can you see that are connected together?</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p> Can you find 5 things that need water?</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b> <b>Keepy-Uppy</b></p> <p> Collect a leaf and then just through blowing or wafting your hands see who can keep it off the ground for the longest.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Make a stick maze... find some sticks and lay them on the floor to form your own maze. Can you get out?</p> <p></p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Play tag but when someone is caught, they have to join on until everyone is connected.</p> <p></p>
<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p> Close your eyes (if you can lie down).</p> <p>Imagine you are floating on a cloud, gently blowing in the wind, moving slowly. You settle into the soft cloud as it takes you high above the ground.</p> <p>What do you see? Where will you go? Can you float higher and can you feel the warm sun or the cool breeze?</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p>If there are some clouds in the sky play the simple game of what shapes you can see.</p> <p></p> <p><b>ACTION.</b></p> <p>Find me, keep me...</p> <p>This game can be developed to wherever you are and encourages connection. People are told they are free if they are... then add in things like touching green, holding a stone, on the grass... whatever works in your setting.</p>	<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p> All around us in the air things are floating - if you look carefully you may see some...</p> <p>Thistledown from the dandelion, a leaf, dust or even sand.</p> <p>Carried on the wind. Can you breathe out and imagine the air blowing tiny seeds away? Taking them to new places and adventures.</p> <p>Blow out again and help them to go high into the sky. Breathe in and think of the place you are in.</p>

## MAKE IT God's Eye



You will need two sticks and some wool or embroidery thread of different colours. Begin by tying the sticks together to make a cross shape. Then weave the thread onto the next stick, wrap around the stick. Working from the centre and travelling around the cross. After a few times you will see the pattern forming. When you want to swap colours. It can take a little while for some people to get into the activity but once the wrap and thread develops it creates a lovely rhythm for relaxing to.

## MAKE IT Bubbles



A simple but great recipe is:

2 cups Washing Up Liquid  
1 tsp Glycerine or Cooking Oil  
1 cup Water

Put the washing up liquid into a large jar and add a little water. Then add in the glycerine or cooking oil which stops bubbles popping so easily.

See what things you can make 'wands' from - it could be string, pipe cleaners, a sieve... experiment for lots of fun!

## MAKE IT Kite



There are lots of ways to make kites – you can take one sheet of paper, an old plastic bag, recycle some fabric or even use a bought one!

Add some sticks, string and decorations but most of all have fun.

That moment when you manage to get your kite to soar and float is just fantastic and maybe you could even plan a kite festival.

## BIBLE (As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is God's love for us - Psalm 103:11)

When we look up to the sky, we can only see a fraction of our atmosphere, beyond that are planets and galaxies going on further than anyone has been able to explore or discover. All the time new stars and galaxies are being discovered that make the earth just a tiny speck in this great big space. This Psalm tells us that God's love is as high as the heavens, further than you can see, further than you could walk, all filled to the brim with God's love for you. You may have heard the phrase "I love you to the moon and back", this verse is God's version of that – I love you further than you can see – and back!



# Floating

Some clouds can be so close to the ground they are like fog.

What can you see that is floating?  
Where is it going and where is it from?

Clouds can travel faster than 100 miles an hour.



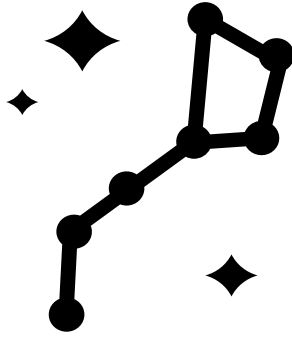
What can you see?

Studying clouds is called  
NEPHROLOGY

I wonder if you could float anywhere  
where would you go?

Can you lie really  
still and imagine  
you are floating?  
How does it feel?

Have you ever watched  
the stars at night?



Psalms 103:1 says "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great the Father's love for those who fear Him"  
Imagine as high as you can see, and then even further filled up with love just for you. The bible says that's what God's love is like.

**Muddy**  
Church



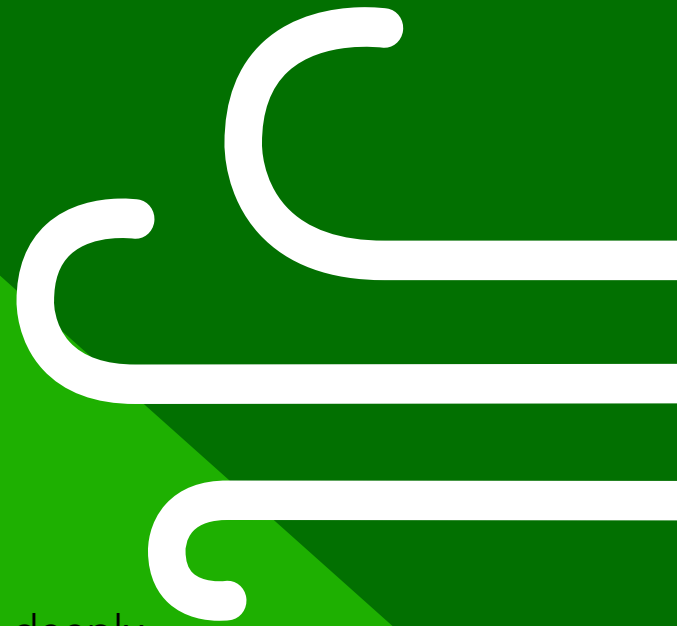
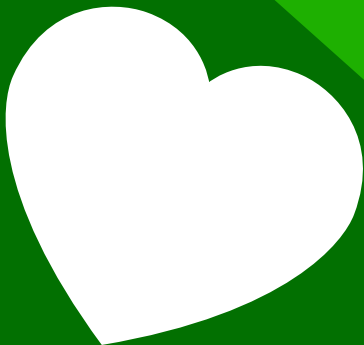
Listen to the world  
around you. Can you  
hear your breath slowly  
moving in and out....

# Still

Can you be still for a moment and breathe deeply.  
What can you smell?  
What can you hear?

Life can be full of things to do and places to go, lists or reminders. But can you be really still, without thinking about all of this other things but just enjoying this moment?

I wonder how being still makes you feel?





Let's Go!

Can you do a funny walk?



Can you smell anything nice?

How do you feel?

peace



Can you spot any doves?

still


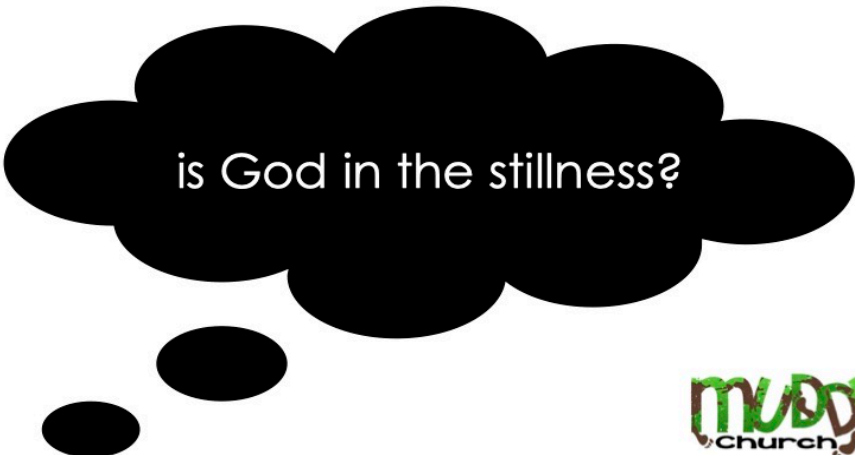
Can you be still and quiet?













Can you feel the stillness?

I wonder

is God in the stillness?





<p><b>WELCOME</b> Are we ready...</p> <p> Review rules and boundaries, introduce each other</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p> Can you see anything that is not moving?</p>	<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p> Can you hear 5 different sounds?</p>
<p><b>ACTION Statues</b></p> <p> When a word is said everyone must freeze. You could have a theme such as when a type of flower is named and say random other words as well.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Follow the rope... with a long rope or wool get everyone to hold on and travel around a route together.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>If you have a space you can lie down in, play sleeping lions. See who can lay still for the longest.</p> <p></p>
<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p> Close your eyes – what can you hear? What can you hear that is distant and what is close?</p> <p>As you take a deep breath in what can you smell? Are there any smells you recognise?</p> <p>What can you feel? (This could be with any part of your body).</p> <p></p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p> <b>Build a Den</b> It might be blankets or sticks and logs. It doesn't have to be fancy but there is something amazing about sitting inside a den you have made.</p> <p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p> Can you see anything breathing?</p>	<p><b>MINDFULNESS</b></p> <p>Hold a pebble/stone in your hand.</p> <p>How does it feel? Are there any bumps or cracks within it? Can it be broken?</p> <p>Stones are broken off over years, shaped by the area around them, the weather, footsteps and animals.</p> <p>Are there good things in your life that have been changed because of other people?</p> <p>Are there things that are special about you that are because of bumps or difficulties?</p> <p></p>

## MAKE IT

### Decorate a Pebble

Either using your mindfulness pebble or with another stone decorate it. This might be part of a joint activity or individually. You can take a theme or let people make whatever they want – it might be a word, a creature or a pattern.



## MAKE IT

### Thinking Stone

Using air-dry clay or mud (but it won't last) make a ball and then flatten it to give the round shape. Then add to it stones or whatever else someone wants. You may want to leave the items in or just have an imprint.

**This can be used afterwards and decorated if someone wants.**



## MAKE IT

### Tree Face

You need some sticky mud for this – not too hard, it has to be able to stick onto the tree. Some people prefer to use air-dry clay.



Then add some items you find to make the details such as eyes, mouth, teeth, hair. Your imagination is the limit!

## BIBLE (Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Psalm 62:5)

The bible talks a lot about stillness, rest and peace. The idea is not just about sitting somewhere, having a nap or not being noisy but about deeper feelings within us. The world can be a place of challenge – we see changes all around us, sometimes it can be unhappy or difficult and the bible talks to us about finding something to help us in these situations. This verse talks about the rest leading from hope and that is a sense God gives us, even in the darkest situations, even in the hardest moments, the sense and idea that God is with us and we are not alone.



**muddy**  
church

# Autumn Challenge List

- ☐ Fly a kite
- ☐ Find a twin conker
- ☐ Splash in a puddle
- ☐ Build a den
- ☐ Make a mud pie
- ☐ Star gaze
- ☐ Raindrop window race
- ☐ Jump in leaves
- ☐ Bob for an apple
- ☐ Spot wildlife from your window
- ☐ Eat soup
- ☐ Wear odd socks
- ☐ Find the biggest pinecone
- ☐ Feed the birds
- ☐ Help someone



Fly a kite

Find a twin conker



Splash in a puddle



Build a den



 Make a leaf crown

Make a mud pie



Star gaze

Raindrop window race



Jump in leaves



Bob for an apple 

  
Spot a squirrel

  
Drink hot chocolate outside

Find the biggest



pinecone



Go on a bat hunt

Find the largest leaf



Go for a sunset wander



Find an acorn



Go on a toadstool hunt



(don't eat them!)

Find a



feather

Feed the birds



Create a wind chime



Forage for fruit



Make a leaf wreath



Make a rainbow of leaves

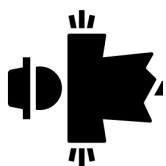


Read a book outside

Make a hedgehog house



Make a scarecrow



Take a crunchy leaf walk

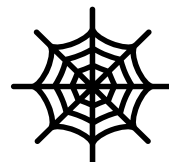


Eat soup

Create noughts & crosses with conkers and acorns



Hunt for cobwebs



**Autumn**  
**CHALLENGE** 



## Scavenger Hunt

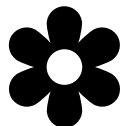
### Get Ready

Can you find?

○ Acorn



○ Squirrel



○ A flower



○ A yellow leaf

OA spider's web



### MOVE

Can you find?

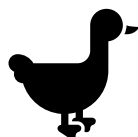
○ An ant



○ A snail



○ A bird



OA footprint



○ An animal print



### Listen

Can you hear?

○ A bird tweet



○ A bird singing



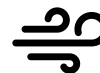
○ Footsteps



○ Water



○ The wind



### Floating

Can you find?

○ A feather



○ A seed



○ A bird flying

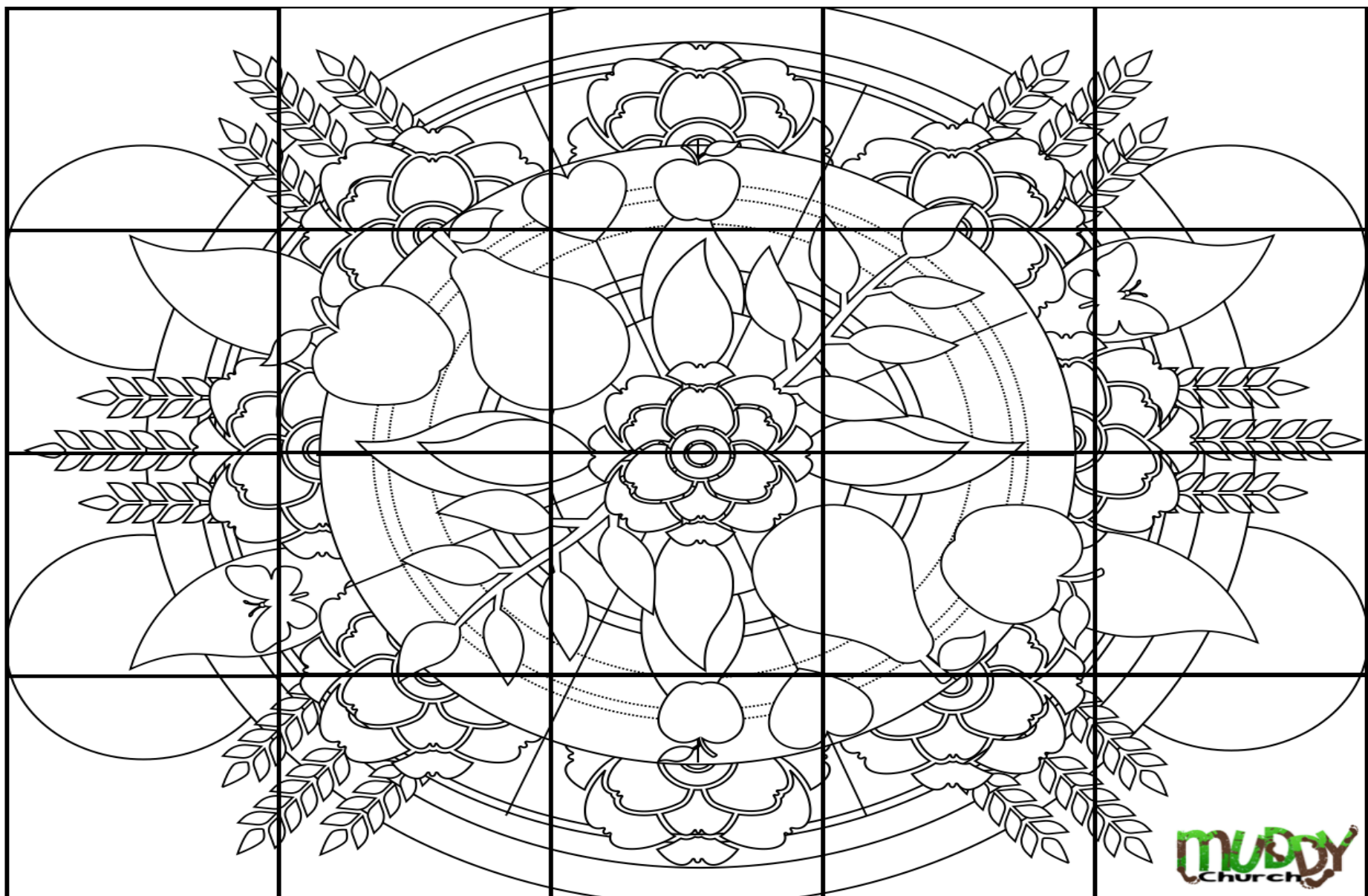


○ A maple seed (whirligig)



○ An insect flying





The logo for 'muddy church' is located to the left of the word 'Harvest'. It features the word 'muddy' in a green, textured font with a small brown boot print above the 'y', and the word 'church' in a smaller, black, sans-serif font below it.

# Harvest

This three part wondering set can be used as a trail, with the sheets placed around an area that allows space and reflection. They can also be used individually to reflect on aspects of Harvest. These are best used outdoors to offer a variety of things to see but the setting can be rural, open or urban.

I wonder which season you enjoy?

# Harvest

Methodist  
Church

How does change make you feel?

Harvest reminds us of different seasons and how things grow.

**I wonder if your  
life has seasons?**

Can you find things that change in the seasons?

I wonder if you could  
take one season away,  
what would happen?

Have a leaf fight!

# Harvest

You could collect items to  
make an autumn display

You could collect leaves and  
items to make self portraits of  
how you feel outside.

You can go on a colour hunt – in teams have  
one colour and find as many items or choose  
five colours (orange, yellow, red, green, brown,  
white) to find things individually.

Can you see nature sharing?



Can you see things being collected?



I wonder if you can see nature getting ready for winter?



Can you see food for animals, plants or insects?



Harvest is a time of traditionally gathering in crops that have grown ready for the winter.

**I wonder if you can see things that don't have enough food?**

Collecting and Sharing is designed to offer reflection on the importance of caring for each other and our world. It offers spaces for thinking about how we care for nature and what we can learn from seeing how nature cares for itself. It offers a link to a Harvest service or Foodbank appeal.



You could grow some grass, mustard or cress to consider what we need to do to care for plants and nature



You could collect items that are on the ground and bring them together to make a nature mandala or picture.

You can make simple bird feeders from hollowed out oranges or pinecones covered in lard or peanut butter and rolled in bird seed.

# Harvest

Harvest is a time of traditionally gathering in crops that have grown ready for the winter.

How do you show thankfulness?



Harvest reminds us of the things we have.

Can you hear  
anything that sounds  
happy?

What things are you grateful for?  
I wonder if  
you can see  
things that  
need more?

What can you see that is good?



Thinking about thankfulness is designed to offer reflection on what we have and through gratitude to think about how we can care for our world and each other. It offers space to think about others who don't have as much as us and through that perhaps to link to a Harvest service or Foodbank appeal.



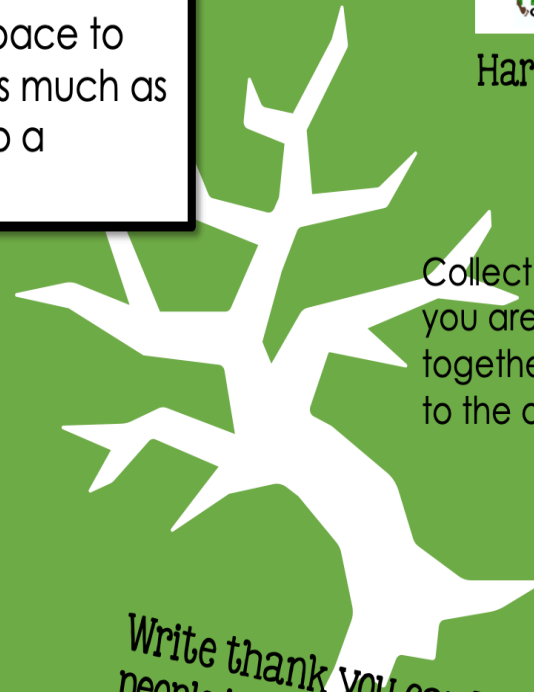
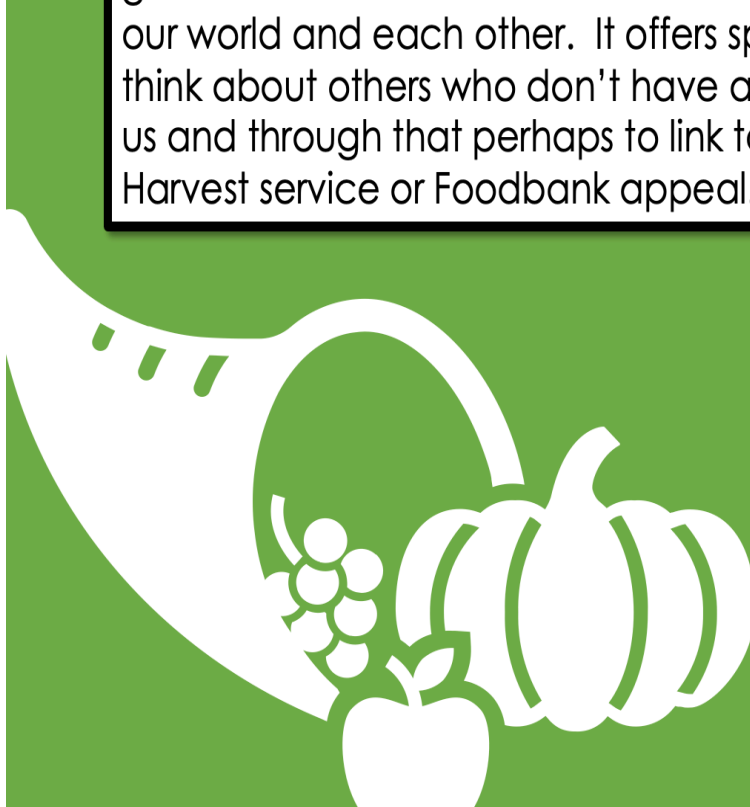
Harvest reminds us of the things we have.

Collect leaves and write on them things you are thankful for. String these together to make a banner or add them to the outline of a tree shape.

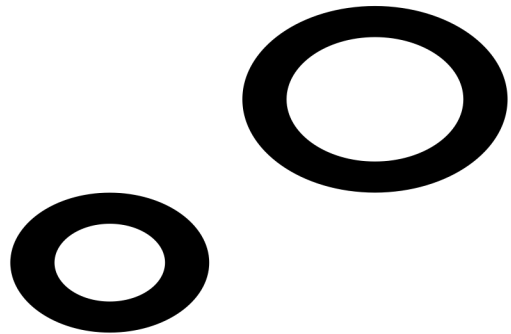
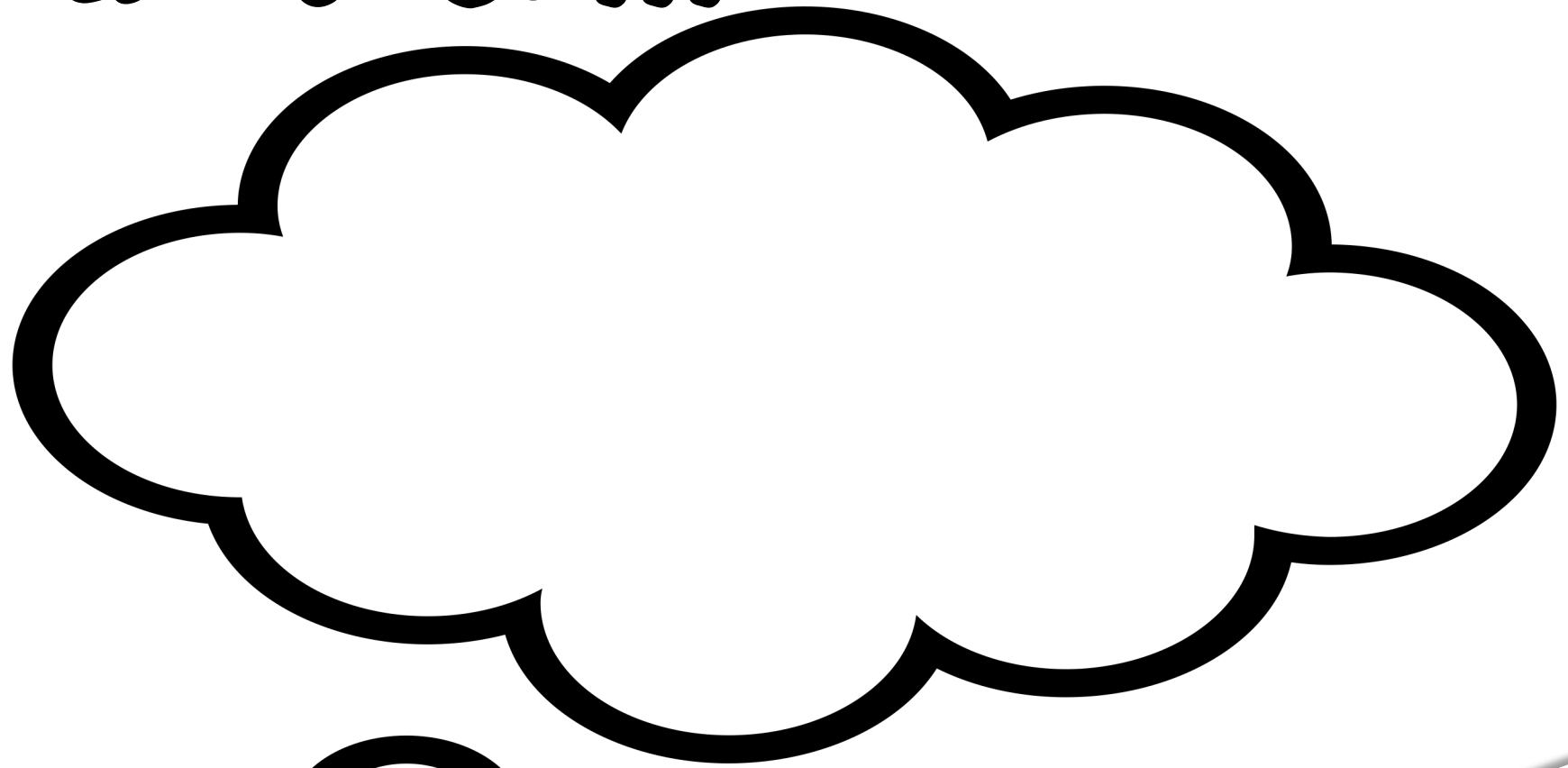
Write thank you cards to people in your community.

Create a Harvest Crown or Wreath from sticks, branches, leaves, acorns, pinecones.

Make a cup of plenty from an ice cream cone and fruit pieces. How does it taste? Where have all the fruits come from?



I wonder...





**Muddy Church encourages people to 'wander and wonder' in the local community to connect with God, nature and each other.**

**This book is designed to be used – remove the pages, adapt, take and remake in any way that is useful in your community. The book contains trails that can be followed, session ideas, crafts, reflection sheets suitable for all ages and settings with adaptable resources for use within schools.**

**For more resources and ideas please see [www.muddychurch.co.uk](http://www.muddychurch.co.uk)**

Lucie Hutson is a theological teacher and trainer offering fresh approaches to mission and working in the community. Lucie is the founder of Muddy Church.

Having lived in the UK and overseas Lucie understands the challenges of engaging diverse cultures and people together. Through her work and studies Lucie has explored creative intergenerational ideas that connect beyond church walls and bring acceptance, value and voice to individuals.

