



(Above left): Alan, Rachel and Katie Durham enjoy decorating mugs; (above right): The Hoare family make candle holders

Real messy time in our cathedral

AROUND 90 people of all ages enjoyed getting messy together in our cathedral last month - and it was all part of a Eucharist.

Visitors to the cathedral were surprised to find adults and children alike partaking in a host of craft activities as part of the 'Messy Church.' One visitor even asked when the service was due to start and was told by helpers that this was the service!

The craft activities helped to prepare for the celebration, and took place after an initial storytelling session by Lucy Moore from St Wilfrid's Church, Cowplain, who spearheads the Messy Church initiative for Bible Reading Fellowship.

Those present heard the story of the Last Supper with Lucy explaining what some of the food of the day would have tasted and smelt like, along with the symbolism. She then invited everyone to help prepare for the Eucharist celebration by taking part in numerous craft activities.

This included painting mugs, making bread, sewing a stole with bread and grapes, decorating paper plates, painting a grape vine, face painting, and making candle holders.

Participants also wrote prayers, which were placed into the large Nativity crib, and decorated a large cross with flowers, which was used to lead the group up to the font for the next part of the service. These items were then used as part of the Eucharist.

Canon Nick Ash, precentor of



Ninety people of all ages enjoyed the varied craft activities on offer at the Messy Church event in our cathedral

our cathedral and chairman of the Diocesan Liturgy and Worship Advisory Group, said, "This is the start of an initiative called Breaking Bread. We want to put on three things a year in the cathedral to look at different ways of celebrating the Eucharist. This one is great because it's hands on and people are getting their hands dirty. I hope that people from around the diocese will experience this and see that there are different ways of celebrating the Eucharist and be encouraged to try this in their own parishes."

Ten-year-old Polly Lorimer of St James' Church in Emsworth said, "I like the messy crafts" and 11 year-old Jessica Macfarlane of

St Peter's Church in Titchfield said: "I think it's really cool because it's messy."

One of the leaders, Jackie Tutt of Cowplain, where they hold a monthly after-school Messy Church event said: "The idea is to get the adults involved to get families together. I've seen that since we have started there are families coming along that wouldn't have come to church, but I think this is church for them."

Event co-ordinator Lucy, who is also the author of books *Messy Church* and *Messy Church 2*, added, "This is the first full-scale Messy Church we have held in the cathedral. It's very exciting. I think it's what church should be like: a

communion service together that's accessible for everyone. Messy Church is a service which is very flexible. There is an order in which mess can happen!

"I think God can use communion on lots of levels and people get different things out of it. At this style of service we are modelling Christianity to each other. I would like to encourage other dioceses to do their own Messy Church."

For further details visit www.messychurch.org.uk.

The next in the Breaking Bread series will be a Taizé-style Eucharist on May 16 and an ecological Eucharist is also being planned for October.

Course for singles in church is on offer

A THIRD of the congregation in our churches are likely to be single people.

That group is made up of the unmarried, divorced, separated and widowed.

Single people in church may face issues, including that of unwitting exclusion from many social events that attract families and couples. Those problems were outlined in the 'Big Issue' column of September's *Pompey Chimes*.

Two members of St Simon's Church in Southsea, Marcella Kirby and Gail Chipperfield, became aware of the amount of teaching, guidance and resources available to enrich and enhance marriage.

But they were surprised to discover how few contemporary resources are available for Christian singles.

That lack of resources challenged the pair to create a six-week course called 'Singles Seeking Answers' (SSA). It was piloted last year with a small group at St Simon's, and received well. A second course was held in January.

"We see it primarily as a way of exploring some of the issues specific to being single," said Gail. "It covers a range of topics from the positive aspects of singleness, through singles in the Church, to hopes and plans for the future."

"We are not experts. We're offering the product of their own experiences, reading and discussions with others."

"Singles Seeking Answers is intended to provide a relaxed and comfortable environment where people can explore their feelings about singleness, discover common ground and be affirmed."

The next course will begin on April 16 at a venue in Southsea. Gail and Marcella expect that most participants will be over 30, but there are no age limits.

Anyone who feels they could benefit may take part. It is free and is open to everyone in the diocese.

It runs for six consecutive Thursday evenings with a maximum of eight people. For more details, please contact Gail Chipperfield on 023-9264 1214.