

MOVING ON WITH MISSION



A Mission Action Planning Tool

THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON



MOVING ON WITH MISSION

This Diocesan Resource Booklet has been designed as a resource or a tool for you to use in your ministry units. It is centred around the findings of *From anecdote to evidence* (a Church of England publication focusing on Church growth), which identified 8 characteristics that are conducive to Church growth.

We hope that this booklet will help you to:

- Reflect on what God is currently doing amongst you so that you can celebrate, affirm and build on these ministries.
- Consider what new or different ministries God is calling you to do.
- Draw up an action plan which will help you to prioritize your time and resources. This will be as much about what you need to stop doing as it is about new ministry endeavors.
- Assess your plans if you already have a clear action plan.
- Identify where training and support are needed.

Bishop Sarah in her Synodical address encouraged us all, no challenged us all, to move into a new future, to embrace change and to be clear about where we were heading.

She said, “I have absolute confidence that together, trusting in God, we have the answers. If we are confident in God’s faithfulness, if we are prayerful, and open to listening to God, even when we are led into uncharted waters, if we are prepared to change and to make way, if we are generous, if we can accept that perhaps our way is not the only way or even the best way, then perhaps we can offer a space within which the church of the future can emerge and be nurtured”. It will be different, but if we are wise and generous, its Anglican DNA will be very evident”.

We hope that this resource will enable you to honestly and progressively explore, God being your helper, how to bear much fruit as you seek to: ***connect with the wider community, making meaningful and intentional connections so as to transform lives through faith in Jesus Christ.***

Gail
Ministry Development Officer.

To accomplish great things
We must not only act,
But also dream;
Not only plan,
But also believe.

What's in this Resource?

Contents	No.
Introduction – getting the best from this resource – Some helpful hints	3
Tool for a Focus Group	4
1. A place of Welcome and Belonging	6
2. A Place of Worship and Prayer	8
3. A Place of Nurture, Discipleship and Vocation	10
4. A Place with a Clear Mission and Purpose with Good Collaborative Leadership	12
5. A Place for Empowerment and Involvement of Lay People	14
6. A Base for Evangelism, Outreach and Numerical Growth	16
7. A Place of Serving and Transforming	18
8. A Place Actively Seeking to Engage with Children & Teenagers	20

Remember that “Change” and “Growth” do not happen overnight. This resource is not a quick fix. Rather it is a tool to assist you in planning for the future. Getting the best from this resource will take time and planning.

Set the date that you will undertake this process in the parish and advertise it well.

Include as many people as possible from your ministry unit in participating in the questionnaire.

The collating of the findings will be best carried out by a small working group from your parish leadership team, (LLM’s, Church Wardens, Parish Council and ministry group leaders).

Allocate a set time when this group will meet and work. This will ensure that those participating will know what they are committing too.

Familiarize the group with the document. Let them have a go at some of the questionnaires and invite feedback. At the back of this booklet you will find a summary questionnaire that is based around the 8 categories that we will be looking at in this Mission Resource. This document is a useful document in enabling your small group to familiarize themselves with the process before them.

And if you are uncomfortable leading your people through this process, then contact the MDO who will gladly assist you.

Remember the old Smart – Chart?

When you get to the planning and actions stage, avoid the risk of becoming too ambitious or general e.g. a statement like “We want young families in Church” sounds more like a hope than an action. If you want more young families in Church, then how will you do it? A new service? A different pattern of services? By being more Child Friendly?

The old SMART chart can assist you here:

Specific—something that you will definitely be able to say you have or haven’t done, e.g. starting a new service.

Measureable—something you can clearly gauge the success of, e.g. numbers coming to a service.

Achievable—something that is realistic rather than a pipe dream.

Relevant—something that is related to the section you are looking at.

Timed—something you have put a deadline on.

Mission Action Planning Tool—For use with a Focus Group

Whetting your appetite. The following questionnaire represents, in summary form, the 8 characteristics that are examined in this booklet. You may like to use this questionnaire as a starter so as to familiarize yourself with the categories looked at in this booklet.

1. *We give a really warm welcome in our church and people want to come back.*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Completely disagree

Fully agree

2. *The worship in our church is attractive, inspiring and inclusive.*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

3. *Our church is a place where everyone grows and matures as a disciple of Jesus.*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

4. *Our church is well led, enabling people to identify and grow their God-given gifts and talents.*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

5. *Our church is a place where people grow their gifts and flourish and vocations are nurtured.*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

6. *Our church is committed to growth.*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

7. *Our church makes a difference to our local community & at least one other community beyond.*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

8. *Our church is good at making children and young families feel welcome.*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Completely disagree

Fully agree

Key Actions

Please copy down here the key actions you identified under the different sections of this Mission Action Planning Tool.

1.		2.	
3.		4.	
5.		6.	
7.		8.	

1. A Place of Welcome and Belonging

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)

In the evidence From Anecdote to Evidence, many churches attribute growth to a welcoming atmosphere- 'belonging and caring'.

It is often said that people who attend a service of worship will decide within minutes whether or not they will come back. This is much more than a handshake on the door or a quick "hello" at the end of the service, before we go off to talk to our friends. A cross look or "excuse me, you're sitting in my seat" translates to "go away, you're not welcome here". Welcome and hospitality are not the jobs of a few people on the welcome team. They are the job of the whole church family.

Questionnaire on Welcoming and Hospitality

1. Does our welcome and hospitality help people to quickly feel comfortable and encourage them to come back?	YES	NO
2. Do we have an attractive welcome pack/welcome literature?	YES	NO
3. When new people come to worship do we let them sit alone?	YES	NO
4. To what extent do we play our part in welcoming people and in helping them to feel that they belong?	SOME DO	MANY DO
5. Do we build good relationships with baptismal families and stay in contact with them afterwards?	YES	NO
6. Do we help newer people find their way around church and know what various activities are going on?	YES	NO
7. Do our church members use every opportunity to invite family and friends along?	YES	NO
8. Do we notice if people stop coming and follow this up?	YES	NO

Action

What is one thing we could do over the next 12 months to make our church a place of greater welcome and belonging?

--

Has this questionnaire suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we welcome and help people feel they belong?

YES

NO

Is there any assistance that you will need to help you live into the project that you are committing to for the next 12 months?

--

2. A Place of Worship and Prayer

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him... They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"(Luke24:30-32)

One of the loveliest little stories that I remember my Grandmother telling me was that: "when she went to Church on a Sunday morning during the War and the depression years, she felt as though she was stepping into a different place from the world that existed around her day to day. It would appear that my Grandmother was transported to something beyond, and transformed because of it. I hold fast to that kind of worship experience.

Worship opens our eyes and our hearts to the kind of encounter with God that changes our perspective then changes our lives. Parish worship then, needs to offer EVERYONE in our community an open and accessible route to such an encounter. The act of worship then results in transformation and its focus therefore should always be more mission shaped than simply for the sake of "proper" church worship.

Being intentional in your chosen style of worship is another factor linked to growing churches noted in From Anecdote to Evidence. "Style of worship and where a church places itself in terms of its theological tradition appear to have no significant link with growth, so long as there is consistency and clarity and the chosen style and tradition are whole heartedly adopted."⁴

Questionnaire on: A Place of Worship and Prayer

1 Does our regular worship have the potential to draw EVERYONE (church and un-churched) into the presence of God?

YES

NO

2. Is our liturgy accessible and easy to follow for most people? Does it "draw in" and engage those who may have never worshipped in a church before?

YES

NO

3 Is our worship child friendly with appropriate safeguarding in place?

YES

NO

4. Do we review the pattern and delivery of our worship on a regular basis to keep it fresh and transformational?

YES

NO

5. Does prayer, actually communicating with God, play a central part in the life of the church and in our worship?

YES

NO

6. Is our worship creative and relevant to the community in which we live? (Do we offer Fresh Expressions of Worship as well as the traditional patterns of worship?)

YES

NO

7. In general do we challenge and equip people to make regular time for personal prayer and Bible reading?

YES

NO

Action

What do we need to do over the next 12 months to further develop our regular worship and prayer life so that it becomes transformational?

--

Has our discussion suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we worship and pray?

YES

NO

Having looked at the area of *A Place of Worship* can you commit to addressing one area in the next 12 months?

Is there anything that you need to assist you in living into this commitment?

3. A place of Nurture, Discipleship and Vocation

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matt28:19)

Christian growth and maturity don't just happen. Nurture and discipleship are core challenges for any church in every generation. The findings of From Anecdote to Evidence revealed that churches that said they offered encouragement and support through specific discipleship courses ("preparing members to be a Christian witness in their daily lives") showed growth. Our day to day life and witness is central to our vocation. Christianity isn't just about church. Similarly vocation is not just about serving the church; it is about the church equipping its members to be disciples in the world.

Questionnaire on: Nurture, Discipleship and Vocation

1. Do we regularly see people coming to faith in our church?	YES	NO
2. Do we have effective ways of helping people mature in the faith and in their spirituality?	YES	NO
<hr/>		
3. Do we offer any Discipleship courses in our church? E.g. Pilgrim	YES	NO
➤ Do we offer a variety of Bible Studies?	YES	NO
➤ Do we assist and nurture people in their faith?	YES	NO
4. Do we help people talk about & live out their faith day by day, beyond the life of the Church?	YES	NO
<hr/>		
5. Do we actively seek to identify and encourage people who God may be calling into lay or ordained ministry?	YES	NO

Action

Can you identify just one thing that you could work on over the next 12 months to assist people mature in their faith and their sense of vocation?

--

Has the questionnaire suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we help people move on in their Christian faith?

YES

NO

What do you need to assist you in living out your commitment during the next 12 months?

--

4. A Place with a Clear Mission and Purpose and Good Collaborative Leadership

It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this is what I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me. (Col1:28-29)

“The calling of the ordained is not to do the work of ministry for the church but to enable and lead the ministry and mission of the whole church.”⁶

In: From Anecdote to Evidence the leadership qualities that stood out as being significant in relation to growth included:

Having a vision for growth and doing NEW things to make it happen

Motivating others

Ability to train people for ministry and mission

Having the ability to engage with outsiders and newcomers

Questionnaire on: A Place with a Clear Mission & purpose & Good Collaborative Leadership

1. Are we committed to growing collaborative/shared ministry and leadership?	YES	NO
2. Do we have a clear vision and purpose, one that that is understood and owned by members of the church?	YES	NO
3. Is our church intentional in setting clear goals that move our vision forward?	YES	NO
4. Are we prepared to welcome and embrace change if change is required to make our vision a reality?	YES	NO
5. Are we able to work across parish boundaries to share resources and giftedness? (Including ecumenical activities and activities that include community agencies?)	YES	NO
6. Are we able to assess whether or not our assets are being used for Mission or Ministry?	YES	NO
Are we able to take appropriate action to ensure that they are?		
7. Is teaching on stewardship and Christian giving done annually? ⁷	YES	NO
8. Is there time allocated to prayer and discernment in the forming of your budget for the following year?	YES	NO

Action

Can you commit to just one thing over the next 12 months to help develop and empower collaborative/shared ministry and leadership?

Has this questionnaire highlighted a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we share and empower people in leadership?

YES

NO

5. A Place where the Lay people are empowered and involved.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.(1Cor12:4-6)

St Ignatius said, "The glory of God is a person who is fully alive. God not only calls God's people, he also blesses us with gifts and abilities, which are not restricted or constrained by age, gender or ordination."

God's gifts are to be used in God's services in our church certainly, but also in our places of work, our home and our leisure.

In: Anecdote to Evidence, research shows that lay involvement and good quality lay leadership is linked to growth. The results also show that a church is most likely to decline if the numbers of lay volunteers is limited.

Questionnaire on: The empowering and involvement of the Lay people.

1. Do we encourage all our people to discern their gifts (spiritual and practical) and to have confidence in using them in the service of the Kingdom?	YES	NO
2. Do we have a clear plan in place to make and grow disciples?	YES	NO
3. Do we have an on-going network of small groups to support lay people in their discipleship?	YES	NO
4. Do we encourage lay people to be actively involved in mission, ministry and leadership?	YES	NO
5. Do we regularly rotate volunteer service among a larger number of people?	YES	NO
6. Do we help our volunteers and lay leaders to get the appropriate level of training and support if they require it?	YES	NO
7. Do we support Christian discipleship in the world of work, including for those in our church with leadership responsibilities outside the church?	YES	NO

Action

Can you commit to one thing in the training of Lay people during the next 12 months?

--

Do we need to review how we are exercising the involvement of Lay people in our parish and equipping them for ministry?

YES

NO

Is there any support that we need in attending to this goal?

--

6. A Base for Evangelism, Outreach and Numerical Growth

...praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day to day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts2:47)

Being intentional in prioritizing growth is another common feature identified in churches that are growing numerically and in spiritual depth. (From Anecdote to Evidence) Both go hand in hand. Just as growth in nature is a sign of health and vitality, so we welcome every sign of spiritual and numerical growth in the life of the church. If it is to happen, we have to be intentional about it.

Questionnaire on: Evangelism, Outreach and Numerical Growth

1. Are we involved in our Diocesan Mission Statement which is based around Evangelism?	YES	NO
2. Do we assist and support church members in inviting others to church?	YES	NO
3. Do we make the most of major festivals, school services, civic services and local events in our desire to connect with the wider community?	YES	NO
4. Do we build on-going relationships with baptismal families, couples coming for marriage, and coming to Church through our funeral ministry?	YES	NO
5. Do we have any specific plans to connect with and reach-out to people as yet untouched by the church? Do we support Come to Church, or Back to Church Sunday?	YES	NO
6. Have we given any thought to starting a new way of Being or Doing Church for those people who would not readily join our existing congregations?	YES	NO

Action

What one thing could you embrace over the next 12 months to grow the Church family?

What resources or support do you need to assist you in *living into* your goal?

YES

NO

7. A Place of Serving and Transformation

You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts1:8b) You are the salt of the earth...(Matt5:13)

As Jesus ascended to heaven he promised his disciples they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses. Their witness would begin where they were in Jerusalem and would ripple out through Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Our mission begins in our local community—but it cannot finish here.

In From Anecdote to Evidence, growing churches were often actively engaged with those who might not go to church or are outside the existing community. “Looking outward is central to mission and many growing churches are those who engage with their local community, some providing social services (including financial counselling, and shelter for the homeless) along with some environmental projects. These were shown to have a positive impact on growth.”

These findings are encouraging to us as we seek to build meaningful and intentional connections with our community, SO AS TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

Questionnaire on: A Place of Serving and Transforming.

1. Does our community know that we are here?	YES	NO
2. Do we have a good reputation as a faith community?		
3. Does our parish look for initiatives for Anglicare to support?	YES	NO
4. Do we allow times to listen to the particular issues that grieve our individual church members about the world in which they live?	YES	NO
5. Are we involved with initiatives that make our community a better place to be?	YES	NO
6. Are we sufficiently involved with our local school(s), public and private?	YES	NO
7. Do we actively support any Christian agencies or mission partnerships?	YES	NO
8. In general do we challenge and equip people to be witnesses to Jesus where God has called them to be and to bring the gospel to those who have never heard it before?	YES	NO

Action

Is there one thing that you would like to attend to in the next 12 months?

What assistance do you need into *living into* this goal?

8. A Place Actively Seeking to Engage with Children and Young Families

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these."(Mark10:13–14)

Sometimes our churches can be very difficult and inaccessible places for children, teenagers and their families. We have to address this if the church is going to replace the existing generations of churchgoers. In From Anecdote to Evidence we are informed that, "there is an URGENT need to focus on children, young people and their parents and a challenge to identify how the church can best invest in people, programmes and strategies which will encourage young people actively to continue exploring faith." Churches that offer programmes for children and teenagers are most likely to grow.

Questionnaire on: Seeking to engage with children and young families.

1. If we have children in our church, are we doing any of the following things to keep them in, to their teens and young adulthood?		
a. Worship services designed for youth or children (and at a time that is suitable to young children?)	YES	NO
buyout programmes	YES	NO
c. Camps and retreats	YES	NO
d. Do we have a dedicated paid or voluntary youth/children's worker?	YES	NO
2. Do we provide events in our Parish Calendar for children and teenagers?		
YES	NO	
3. Do we seek ways to connect with the local school either private or public?		
YES	NO	
4. Have you considered sponsoring a child in music or the arts? E.g. Poetry about God.		
YES	NO	

5. If we don't have children in our church are we trying to attract young families to church by...

A. Having all-age/family services, perhaps once a month?

YES

NO

Holding special child focused services to attract families who wouldn't normally come to church? (e.g. MessyChurch)

YES

NO

c. Making children and families feel welcome in the main service? (e.g. Children's corner/playbags – space that isn't used as a dumping ground)

YES

NO

6. Do we visit or connect with the children's ward in the local hospital? (or other such places).

YES

NO

7. Are we building good links with our Anglican Schools so that connections made there are built upon in our ministry units can thrive?

YES

NO

Action

Is there one thing that we would like to attend to over the next 12 months so as to build upon our connections with young families?

Has the questionnaire suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we engage with children and young families?

YES

NO