



Photo Credit: Keith Blundy

Growing Vocations Everywhere

A good practice guide

2018

Five steps for growing vocations in your diocese

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body - whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

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Foreword



Bishop Andrew

Chair of Ordained Vocations Working Group

At 9.30am on November 10th 2018, I am due to take a walk on Tynemouth Sands, east of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Because it was on that date one hundred years' ago, the day before the Armistice was signed, that a 32-year-old man called Alec was pacing the beach near his home and received what he later described as a 'Divine order' to give up his work as a pharmacist in Newcastle, to train to be a doctor and to offer himself to the Church Missionary Society.

Despite various setbacks along the way, including an initial rejection by the Church Missionary Society on the grounds of Alec's health, he followed the call through and ended up in charge of a hospital in Kunming, South West China, before moving to the East End of London and steering the Mildmay Mission Hospital through the Blitz and beyond.

Dr Alec was my grandfather, and he and my grandmother Dr Mary have always been role models to me in my own path of Christian discipleship.

Not everyone receives a 'Divine order' while pacing a beach in the north-east of England! Within the pages of the Bible itself there are many and various ways in which men, women, young people and children are called, with differing levels of human intervention along the way.

But the fact that God calls **all** of the baptised to use their best gifts in His service is one of the great truths of the Christian faith, giving a shape and purpose to our daily living and enabling us to bear 'fruit that will last'.

That's why I, for one, am hugely inspired to learn of exciting vocations initiatives across the country, and am privileged to be chairing the Ordained Vocations Working Group at quite such a fascinating time.

I pray that this latest Good Practice Guide might take that vision one step further, as together we seek to encourage and release the next generation of clergy, and to develop more widely a healthy culture of vocation in churches, schools and chaplaincies across the land.

Introduction



Catherine Nancekievill
Head of Vocation and Discipleship

We believe all Christians are called to serve God with their given gifts and talents, so it's the task of every minister to help identify and nurture the vocation of each member of the Church.

For some, this will be a specific calling to ministry, whether lay or ordained.

Through the Renewal and Reform programme, the whole Church has been striving to grow vocations to ministry.

Over the past two years the number selected to train for ordination has increased by over 22%, with a 55% increase in young people, and women now accounting for just over half of new ordinands. It is a wonderful sign that the seeds of growth we have all prayed for and worked towards are bearing fruit.

This good practice guide covers three major initiatives to grow vocations, all flowing from ideas sourced from dioceses.

We asked dioceses what one thing would make the most difference in fostering a culture of vocation. The answer: personal conversations. The Great Vocations Conversation is our challenge to all the Church's ministers to commit to having at least one conversation a month about

vocation with someone different from themselves.

We asked dioceses what one thing we could do nationally to support what is happening locally. The answer: putting dioceses in contact with those engaging with national advertising. Our online sign up feature allows us to turn the interest shown in this content into relationships with explorers.

We asked dioceses how we could best support the Ministry Experience Scheme. The answer: better coordination of recruitment, funding and quality assurance. Appointing a Development Manager has enabled the scheme to grow dramatically.

Underpinning all our work is the opportunity to reach out to those who have been historically underrepresented, whether because of gender, class, or ethnicity.

Part four of this guide brings together good practice from Vocations Champions across the country on how to be deliberately inclusive in our work.

By continuing to share examples of what works, we're confident that together we'll be able to support more Christians to discover God's call upon their lives, and empower them to have the confidence and ability to answer it.

A culture of vocation

Tip One: Challenge your ministers, lay and ordained, to commit to having one conversation a month about vocation with someone different from themselves.

We can all play a unique part in building the Kingdom of God, dedicating our gifts as a living sacrifice. Vocational living means responding to God with our whole selves.

Others are often much better at seeing our gifts than we are, so it's no surprise that personal conversations are among the best ways of uncovering vocation.

The Church is praying for more people to come forward for ordained ministry, but conversations needn't be about ordination alone. Begin by getting people thinking about their vocation, then walk with them as they discern where this leads. We must challenge ourselves to see people as God does: as individual, exceptional and full of potential.

To release the gifts of all God's people, it is vital to talk about vocation with people who have historically been excluded, people who may be different to yourself.

The Great Vocations Conversation challenges us to commit to having at least

one conversation a month, about vocation, with someone different from ourselves.

Starting a conversation could be as simple as a chat over tea or coffee about someone's passions and gifts, or it could involve deeper questions of service, flourishing and witness.

Encourage your ministers to take up the challenge and they will be joining many others in helping the light of Christ in every believer to shine in the world.

A great way to take part is by signing up through the CofE website. Everyone who joins in this way is supported through our monthly devotional.

This collection of Bible studies, reflections, prayers and talking points, has been prepared jointly by Bishop Andrew Watson and Revd Magdalen Smith. A hardcopy is also available to order from *chpublishing*.

We hope this resource will be beneficial for those taking part, inspiring preaching ideas, Bible studies and, of course, conversations.

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

Revelation 7:9



THE GREAT VOCATIONS CONVERSATION

Encourage your lay and ordained ministers
to join the Great Vocations Conversation

[churchofengland.org/
greatvocationsconversation](http://churchofengland.org/greatvocationsconversation)

Our monthly Great Vocations Conversation devotional is sent directly from us by email, covering twelve encounters from both old and new testaments including:

1. **Samuel and David**
Seeing as God sees
2. **David and Saul**
Made to measure ministry
3. **Elijah and Elisha**
Passing on the baton
4. **Mordecai and Esther**
In the right place at the right time
5. **Elizabeth and Mary**
Confirming God's call
6. **Jesus and the Father**
Starting with prayer
7. **Jesus and the seventy**
Taking risks
8. **Jesus and the twelve**
Called and commissioned
9. **Ananias and Saul**
Opening eyes
10. **Barnabas and Saul**
Spotting the talent
11. **Paul and the Corinthians**
Expecting the unexpected
12. **Paul and the Ephesians**
Equipping the Saints

Making connections

Tip Two: Take advantage of our national advertising, by building relationships with explorers who sign up through our website.

In its first hundred days, our vocations homepage on the new Church of England website was viewed over 17,000 times, with over 54,000 views across all our vocations web content in this period.

Such a level of interest is far greater than we imagined, so we want to make the most of it to build real connections with people.

We recently launched an **online sign up feature**, promoted by our national advertising and media campaigns, through which Christians exploring a vocation to ministry can register their interest.

We send them a monthly devotional, with reflections, prayers and information to support their discernment.

When signing up, recipients confirm they are happy for their information to be shared

with their diocese, so we'd encourage you to make use of this.

Let us know who in your vocations team is best placed to receive this data. We will send you details of explorers who have signed up from your diocese, thereby allowing you to follow up personally.

For those coming forward, its important that they have open access to a vocations adviser, and that information is free from jargon.

Be careful not to assume what stage people are at in their journey, but be clear about what the discernment process involves.

Having a group explorers can join to explore vocation together with peers has been found to be especially effective.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Matthew 5:14-15

Three ways to take advantage of our national advertising:

1. **Share stories:** We're always on the lookout for good content to showcase the wonderful diversity of ministers and ministries.

Send us high quality photos of your lay and ordained ministers, ordinands and explorers, with a good quote to match, to ministry@churchofengland.org. We can use it nationally to encourage others to consider what God is calling them to.

2. **Follow up:** Explorers registering their interest through the Church of England website confirm they are happy for their information to be shared with their diocese.

Let us know who in your vocations team is best placed to receive this data so you can get in touch with these explorers personally.

3. **Order resources:** Our new print resources on churchprinthub.org and chpublishing.co.uk aim to bust the many myths around ministry which discourage people from coming forward.

We're continually looking to improve the resources we offer, so if you've got an idea for a booklet or flyer you'd like to see to help people explore a vocation to ministry do let us know!

Exploring calling

Tip Three: Grow the Ministry Experience Scheme as an opportunity for young people to test their vocation.

The Ministry Experience Scheme provides a wonderful opportunity to form young Christians for service in the world.

Through absorption into the life of a community of Christians, habits of prayer and through generous service, young adults can hear God's call, develop their God-given talents and see how they are being called to give themselves as a gift.

The Ministry Experience Scheme is a welcoming community. We have a near 50:50 gender balance, and an above average proportion of people with disabilities (27% compared to a national average of 18%).

The proportion of participants of Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic heritage (BAME) almost doubled between 2016 and 2017, now almost one in ten of all participants and progressing well towards our 15% target.

Unprecedented numbers of young people

have expressed interest, demonstrating the appetite out there.

To achieve this, we've been advertising nationally and enthusiastically promoting it as part of good practice for dioceses.

Young people are able to express interest via the CofE website, through which your diocesan scheme coordinator will be notified. This means your diocesan scheme benefits directly from our national publicity. We have also run bespoke adverts for individual diocesan schemes.

The Ministry Experience Scheme gives young people from all backgrounds the space and time away from the pressures of modern life to test God's calling on their lives. It offers the chance to experience practical ministry, enrich theological understanding and further personal development, all with ongoing support from peers and supervisors.

Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 1: 7-8



The Ministry Experience Scheme is a proven method of nurturing young vocations. Here are five reasons why we believe you should be involved:

1. It works: we have a track record of producing candidates who are recommended for ordination training or lay ministry.
2. It comes with a ready-made framework with national support for recruiting and running the scheme.
3. It has potential to find candidates from different backgrounds and age groups. With its wider reach it is more likely to encourage candidates from different social and economic backgrounds and of a more diverse ethnic heritage.
4. It is a brilliant offer for young people in a world concerned about the quality of internships.
5. It affirms and promotes all forms of ministry and Christian service.

To find out more about running the Ministry Experience Scheme in your diocese, get in touch via ministry@churchofengland.org

Inclusion for all

Tip Four: Foster diversity in all your vocations work, by being visible in more places and careful in the assumptions you make.

A flourishing culture of vocation means recognising the unique gifts of every member of the Body of Christ.

It means seeking to release those gifts, not trying to squeeze them into a narrow definition of what a minister might look like.

There remains a way to go, but as a Church we are steadily getting better at recognising the diversity of ministries and ministers in our vocations work.

“Ministers don’t look like me”. **We hear this far too often.** Whether its gender, age, ethnicity or educational background, it is harder for people to consider ministry without role models to follow.

Ordinands and new clergy are especially well placed to inspire, just like how new Christians often make the best evangelists. Inviting them to preach around your diocese

is an excellent strategy.

In recognising gifts, we need to be aware of our own unconscious bias, so we would encourage everyone working in vocations to be trained in this.

Think about the language being used and be careful to avoid jargon. Recognise that explorers have jobs, houses and family to worry about, and provide them with clarity on what the discernment process will involve. This helps widen the pool of people coming forward.

Mentoring is a proven means of fostering inclusion for underrepresented groups. We’ve built an **ordained vocations mentor directory** to help support historically underrepresented candidates in their discernment, which you can access through churchofengland.org/mentoring.

All of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

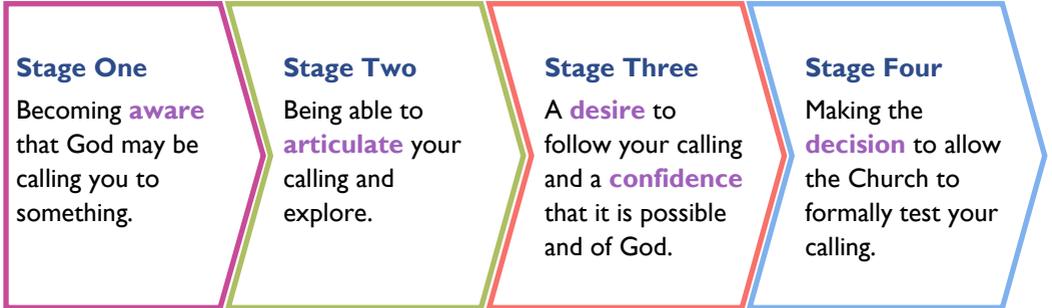
Galatians 3:27-29

Ten ways to foster diversity and inclusion in your vocations work:

1. **Be visible** through services, diocesan conferences and online so that people can see a greater diversity of ministers and be inspired by them.
2. **Tell stories** about the vocational journeys people have taken and the barriers they have overcome, so that others can follow their example.
3. **Amplify the voices** of ministers in your diocese who can act as role models to historically underrepresented groups.
4. **Network** with others working to increase diversity, to learn from each other and grow your list of people you can invite to preach.
5. **Connect** potential candidates with serving ministers like them, so that they can develop confidence by sharing experiences.
6. **Host workshops** on how specific areas of ministry can foster cultural diversity, such as weddings, baptisms and funerals.
7. **Celebrate diversity** by commemorating the achievements of Christians from historically underrepresented groups.
8. **Be passionate** about diversity and inclusion, so it does not recede to a tick box exercise.
9. **Strengthen relationships** with those responsible for diocesan strategy and finance, so diversity becomes everyone's responsibility.
10. **Value difference** and emphasise the unique offerings we each bring to the table.

The four stages of calling

Tip Five: We've found explorers tend to follow four important stages along their vocational journey. Use this checklist to tailor your vocations work to each stage.



I. Awareness

- Our Bishops preach about vocation at confirmations.
- Our clergy and lay ministers are trained to nurture vocations.
- We promote an early-stage, easy access, course at parish level exploring gifts God has given us.
- Role models for under-represented groups preach and/or preside in other parishes.
- Our curates, including pioneer curates, learn to nurture and encourage vocations as part of their training.
- We attend the largest careers fairs in the diocese with a stand about lay and ordained ministry.
- A vocations dimension is included in diocesan youth events and activities.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

John 15:16

2. Articulation

- Open access to vocations advisers is promoted regularly online, in parish magazines and in pewsheets.
- We run events about exploring vocation, including specific events for under-represented groups.
- Our vocations advisers and mentors represent a diverse range of backgrounds and ministries.
- We have vocations groups for explorers that are easily accessible to all.
- We regularly review where our explorers are coming from, actively learning from and celebrating good work.

3. Confidence and Desire

- Candidates exploring lay or ordained ministry at a more formal stage have someone to chat with who is not involved in making decisions about them.
- We run the Ministry Experience Scheme to enable young people to explore vocation with others through theology, experience and conversation.
- We have reviewed and publicise family friendly and equalities policies.
- We have reviewed our processes, forms, website, etc for unconscious bias.

4. Decision

- Our selection advisers represent a diversity of backgrounds and ministries.
- Our selection advisers have a clear idea of the wide variety of ministry in the future of the Church of England that represents our diocesan vision and receive periodic training on this.
- Our DDO, ADDOs mentors and vocations advisers have had unconscious bias training.
- We are using group work with candidates to improve collaborative skills.
- Candidates are given clear information about the discernment process and timescales.

Appendix A: Online explorer content

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND | A CHURCH NEAR YOU | THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY | THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
A CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN EVERY COMMUNITY

SEARCH THIS SITE

OUR FAITH | **LIFE EVENTS** | FAITH IN ACTION | PRAYER AND WORSHIP | ABOUT | MORE +

HOME | LIFE EVENTS | VOCATIONS

CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOCATIONS

What is God's plan for you?

scroll down

Keith Blundy

Vocation means what you are called by God to be and do.

For some, this is a specific calling to ministry. For others, it could mean serving God through faithful discipleship in everyday life.

Everyone has a vocation. Find yours.

Exploring a call to ministry or religious life?

[Register your interest](#)

Your diocese will send you regular info with prayers, stories and events.

FINDING YOUR VOCATION



YOUR CALLING

Praying and searching



NO ORDINARY MINISTRY

Discover the variety of Church roles



THE MINISTRY EXPERIENCE SCHEME

Exploring calling for 18-30s



HAVING A MENTOR

Supporting inclusive discernment



EXPLORE FURTHER

Register your interest



PREPARING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY

Practical guidance on selection and training



The Great Vocations Conversation

Our challenge to the Church's ministers

TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE

Mythbusting ministry

SEVEN COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT LIFE IN MINISTRY



"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last."

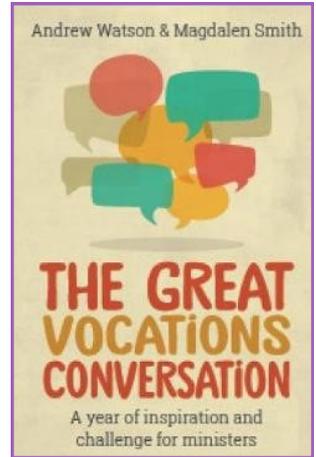
John 15:16

Appendix B: Printed Resources

Designed to help foster a culture of vocation, this monthly devotional for ministers is the perfect accompaniment to anyone wishing to learn more about how to discern vocation in others.

The Great Vocations Conversation is our challenge as a Church to all lay and ordained ministers to commit to having a conversation a month about vocation.

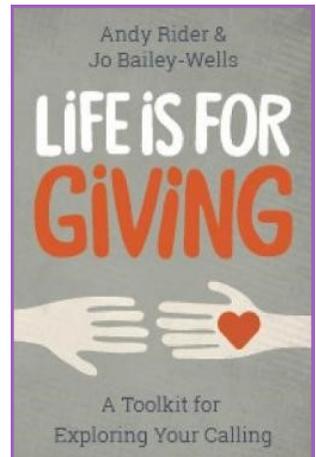
Available via Church House Publishing



Combining reflections, actions and prayer, our monthly devotional for Christians exploring a vocation to ministry is a wonderful way to introduce people to a journey of prayerful discernment.

As a toolkit for exploring calling, this booklet examines how our past shapes us, how to understand our identity in Christ, and how God speaks to us.

Available via Church House Publishing



Helpful web links

churchofengland.org/vocations (main page for explorers)

churchofengland.org/more/diocesan-resources/ministry-division (documents and forms)

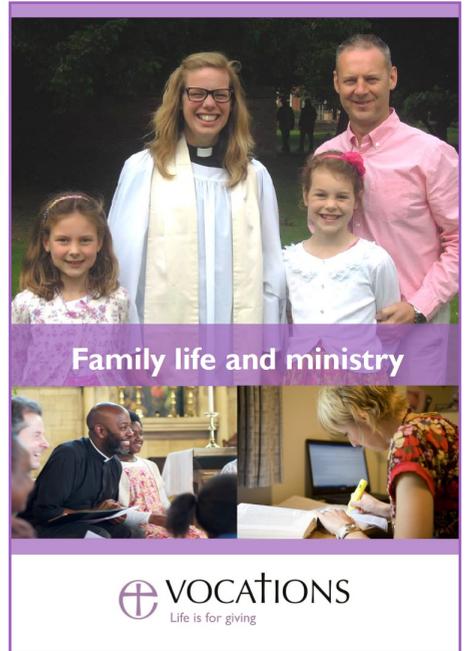
churchprinthub.org (order flyers and booklets)

chpublishing.co.uk (order booklets)

How do I be a faithful minister and a loving parent? Whilst the pressures of ministry are huge, there are many ways that the Church helps support ministers with families.

Our new *Family life and ministry* booklet provides reassurance through stories and practical information for anyone concerned about how to combine a flourishing family life with the demands of modern ministry.

Available via Church Print Hub



Our *Serve God, serve others* booklet provides a wonderful showcase of the diversity of ministries and ministers within the Church of England.

Available via Church Print Hub





THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Then he said to his disciples,
'The harvest is plentiful, but the
labourers are few; therefore ask the
Lord of the harvest to send out
labourers into his harvest.'



Renewal & Reform

Growing Vocations is a central pillar of the
Renewal and Reform programme for the Church of England.