



# How to ...

## .....Become a Vicar

### **How to become a vicar**

A vicar will have responded to God's call to be ordained as a deacon and then a priest in the Church of England. They will be called to lead people in their worship of God and in mission to the world. The Church of England seeks to help people carefully discern if God is calling them to the ordained ministry. They will be guided in this by local and national advisers and will need the support of the Bishop. They will also study theology before ordination. After ordination they will receive further training in ministry under the supervision of an experienced vicar before they can apply for a post as a vicar.

### **Could this be me?**

God calls and equips all sorts of people for this ministry. However there are some key qualities which the Church looks for particularly:

A Love for God; A Call to Ministry; A Love for People; Wisdom; Fruitfulness; Potential

In discerning if someone is called to ordained ministry, each of these qualities is explored in the context of a person's relationship with Christ, the church, the world and themselves.

### **What do I do first?**

Talk to your vicar and others in ministry and read about being in ordained ministry. You might also want to work with a spiritual director for your own support and your vicar may recommend some reading about being a priest. You will normally have worshipped, and been involved in an Anglican church for at least two years before your vicar puts you in touch with the Adviser for Vocations and Ordinands who oversees the discernment process. The Adviser may refer you to a vocation chaplain to help you explore your sense of call to ordained ministry.

### **Who decides if I am suitable for ordained ministry?**

When you are ready, you would meet with the Adviser for Vocations and Ordinands or an assistant (ADDO) who will work with you on the qualities outlined above. This is a deep and probing process that takes time and may involve reading, writing and short placements in different churches. If the adviser thinks you are ready you would attend a stage 1 panel on zoom at national level and receive some feedback. Following this panel and some further work with your ADDO, you would write about how you meet the qualities for selection and references are obtained. If / when you are ready you would prepare for a diocesan interview and a diocesan discernment day with local advisers who offer you further advice. You would also attend a psychological assessment. With the benefit of all this advice, the bishop decides whether to send you to the final stage 2 national panel and the advisers there will recommend to the bishop whether you can proceed to theological training.

### **What training will I need?**

If you are recommended for training and the bishop agrees, you would normally study theology for two or three years alongside learning in a ministerial context. The Adviser for Vocations and Ordinands will work with you and your training institution to determine the nature and shape of that training and the support offered by the diocese. If you successfully complete the training and are deemed suitable, the bishop will ordain you as a deacon, and if appropriate later as a priest, and you will receive further training under the supervision of an experienced vicar.

### **A Process for those exploring an ordained vocation.**

This following chart sets out a process for those wishing to pursue a call to ordained ministry. The journey from first contacting the Adviser for Vocations and Ordinands to a stage 2 panel usually takes 1-2 years but everyone's vocation journey is different and some may need much longer. Whilst we are delighted when someone is exploring a call to ordained ministry and wish to fully support them in that process, please be aware that there is no guarantee at any stage of process that someone will be ordained, or that they will be able to take up a curacy post in Bristol diocese, or indeed any diocese. The discernment process is only ever a recommendation to proceed to the next stage and the Bishop has the ultimate decision about who is ordained and where they will be licensed to serve.

