



Leading your Church  
into Growth

# *Talking about the 'E' Word in a time of Lockdown*

7 steps, suggestions or the rainbow colours of  
evangelism.

Thousands of people are plugging into our on-line services. Some don't stay for long but many do and they are younger people (33% of under 50's according to some research).

In addition churches are visiting, delivering to and helping care for lots of people in their local communities.

Put these two pictures together and they form a great platform or context for evangelism. This is what Leading your Church into Growth thinks of as the church having great 'Presence' – lots of people in our communities see us as 'their' church. They respect and value us more than we realise.

Many of the people in this combined picture are in real need now and they are fearful of the future: not just about health but about family, relationships and employment.

If you are thinking about how we share the Good News with these folks, open-doorways for them into the family of the church and share the light and hope that Jesus can bring to our fears for the future then here are seven practical suggestions.

Clergy and laity are working very hard at the moment to the extent that some of you may think evangelism is the last thing you want to do. You may however find one or two smaller and do-able things on the list. Reading it may help you realise that you are already doing evangelism and that the tremendous work you are doing just needs to be slightly tweaked to enable you to gather a harvest.

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*'Don't you have a saying, "It's still four months until harvest"? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.'*

*John 4:35*

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## **Create a contact list.**

This list consists of all those people you are helping, visiting or giving food parcels to and all those attending your online services, etc.

Try to discover and build a list of such attenders, this is easiest if you are using Zoom or Facebook. Whatever system you are using simply say during one of your services that you will be sending out some information and news of future events and ask 'would they like to receive it?' In *Leading your Church into Growth* parlance you are gathering in the 'Presence' field.

If creating a big contact list is too much for you to handle at the moment then simply sit down at your desk and scribble out a personal list of contacts you are working with. These are the people you want to help in an evangelising way as your next step and they are also the ones you will want to invite to church when you re-open.



## **Pray for the people on your contact list.**

If you have got hundreds then pray for them as a whole. If you have got a smaller number then you can pray for them individually. Pray that God might open a door for them as they knock and open a door for the gospel mission as he did for Paul. I know of some clergy who have turned their daily walk into a prayer walk around their parish.

Pray for such people, not because you want to recruit them to your church but because you want your church, which is already showing such love to these folks, to be a gentle herald of Good News.

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*During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'*

*Acts 16: 9*

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### **Invite people on your contact list to something social.**

Think about inviting people to a more chatty, getting to know you gathering. Zoom coffee mornings and pub quizzes are great for this. You might also like to think of something for young families that includes a children's activity. This could be especially helpful for those who normally attend your parent and toddler group or Messy Church.



### **Why not make one of your Sundays an evangelistic guest service?**

Make this service accessible, user friendly and not too long, engaging and with a proclamation of the Good News that invites people to respond. You might like to include a testimony. Keep the intercessions a bit shorter than usual and make the proclamation very relevant to where people are at and their struggles with the future. (This is not preying on people's fears but offering them real hope and light in the darkness). Why don't you follow this service with a Zoom get together over coffee?

People can respond by simply saying, 'Yes, I would like to know more', receive a booklet, or find out about an enquirers group. They can do this by sending an email, responding on Facebook, ticking a box on your website or simply ringing someone up for a chat.

I have recently chatted to several clergy who have made simple Gospel message YouTube videos on their phone and sent them out to the local community - very do-able and very effective.



## **Encourage your congregation to invite people to your services.**

Your congregation could invite friends and family to tune into your on-line services. Some churches are finding this a rich time for those who used to be members to find their way back into the fold. So

encourage your people to include such 'fallen by the wayside people' in their inviting.

Leading your Church into Growth has an invitational strapline:

*'I'm going, it's going to be really good, would you like to come with me?'*

This can be adapted to:

*'I'm watching the service, it is really helpful, would you like to watch it with me?'*



**Organise an enquirers group.** With lots of people 'sampling' worship and daily prayers, has there ever been a better time to invite them to take the next step of finding out?

We have devised three ways of doing this using the Start course.

1. You can equip a single person to do their own online enquirers course.
2. You can set up a small virtual group.
3. You can simply send someone a Start booklet and then phone them to find out what they made of it.

Neil Short and Harry Steele have prepared 'Start' for individuals and for small groups. (You can find out more about these on our website <https://www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk/blog>).



**Go for a walk!** A simpler but very effective evangelistic task, especially for clergy, is to wander around the streets of your parish in a clerical collar offering a smile and a word of encouragement as you go. The collar offers visibility and the pause to chat creates relationship. I know of several vicars doing this. They are getting to know new people, knocking on a few windows to chat and scattering seeds in a very personal way. This may be a rather 'overlooked' work in these tech-rich days but it is a missionary ministry.

## Finally

Remember don't do too much but do do something. Don't do what someone in the next parish is doing. Just do what you can do. Try to see where God is already at work, where a few doors are opening, where people are responding to what you are already doing and then try to take some of them onto the next step of their journey.

We do all this not because evangelism is part of our job description, something that we ought to do, another thing that we are supposed to do. We share the Good News, or attempt to, because we love God and His church and because we want to serve our and His people.

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*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

*Matthew 9:36*

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*It is hoped this resource is useable and encouraging for hard working ministers at this time.*

*If you want to think a bit more deeply or see other examples that arise out of these seven steps please see the following resource on our website:*

**[Further resources to help you with evangelism during 'lockdown'](#)**

*This will be updated periodically and we shall let you know when we do so via our Movement email newsletter and our social media.*