



# How to ...

## Understand Fresh Expressions

Fresh Expressions seeks to transform communities and individuals through championing, resourcing and multiplying new ways of being church. We work with Christians from a broad range of denominations and traditions and the movement has resulted in thousands of new congregations being formed alongside more traditional churches.

### What is a Fresh Expression?

A fresh expression of church is a new gathering or network that engages mainly with people who have never been to church. There is no single model, but the emphasis is on starting something which is appropriate to its context, rather than cloning something that works elsewhere.

Fresh expressions of church are missional, contextual, formational and ecclesial. In other words, they:

- serve those outside the church;
- listen to people and enter their context;
- make discipleship a priority: journeying with people to Jesus;
- form church - they are not bridges to an existing church, but an expression of church for others in the midst of their lives.

Fresh expressions can be called missional communities, organic church, church plants, new monastic communities, congregations, gatherings, discipleship groups - almost anything! They come in many shapes and sizes, but always reflect their context.

Fresh expressions are not better than the existing church. They complement it and come to birth alongside it. Existing churches may connect with people on their fringe, while many fresh expressions serve people well beyond the fringe. Both types of church can affirm and support each other - what's known as the 'mixed economy' church.

For further information about what a Fresh Expression of church is, click here:

<https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/about/whatis>

### The 'Understanding Fresh Expressions' Guide

The online guide contains how-to-do-it advice on starting, developing and sustaining fresh expressions of church based on shared experiences. All the material is based on listening to hundreds of different stories on how fresh expressions begin and are sustained.

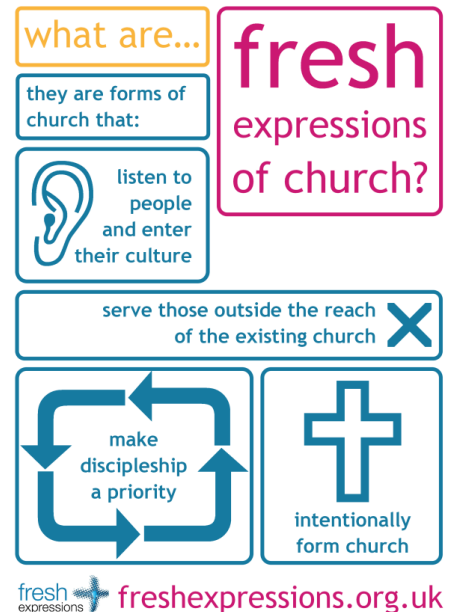
The guide consists of seven 3-minute guides and is available to view online or to download at:

<https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/guide/essential>

### 'Mission Shaped Intro' Course

*Rediscover mission and re-imagine church*

Our world and our lives change at an ever faster pace, but how does the church respond to this change? Are new ways of being church possible? If so, what might they look like?



'mission shaped intro' helps people to reconnect with the communities they are called to serve and to re-imagine the forms of church that are needed for the 21st century. It takes you on a creative and reflective journey looking at the need for new ways of being church.

The six sessions explore:

- *rediscovering mission*: the mission of God as the foundation for any expression of church;
- *changing world, changing church*: how we might respond to a world of change and uncertainty;
- *re-imagining church - community*: the need for fresh expressions of church to develop authentic community in a world shaped by consumerism and individualism;
- *re-imagining church - worship*: how fresh expressions of church are re-imagining worship;
- *discipleship and leadership*: how to enable healthy discipleship and leadership within fresh expressions of church;
- *where do we go from here?*: to provide space for you to consider your response to the course and offer options to what you might do next.

'msi' is ideal for those starting from scratch as well as those who have attended a vision day or who are thinking about joining the mission shaped ministry course.

The course is available as a free download from <https://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/msi>

## Exploring Further

If you would like to discuss Fresh Expressions of church in relation to your parish or context, please contact Chris Priddy, Head of Parish and External Relations; [chris.priddy@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:chris.priddy@bristoldiocese.org)

Chris can also put you in touch with people in the diocese who have been exploring and establishing new ways of gathering and networking as 'church' in a range of different contexts across the Diocese and who would be willing to share their stories and experiences with you.

Written by: Chris Priddy, Head of Parish and External Relations