

# CONVERSATION PROMPTS WORKBOOK

Helping congregations navigate the  
Minster Community formation process



Diocese of  
**Leicester**  
Shaped by God

***Eternal God,***

*You call your people to fullness of life in you  
and promise to be with us  
in all the changing scenes of life:  
may we be shaped by you in our lives  
and communities to refresh the Church,  
transform the world, and build the kingdom,  
as with thanksgiving for the past,  
we step out in hope and trust into your future;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

***Amen***

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# Introduction

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for, and navigate your way through, the Minster Community formation process. We are asking you, as a parish or fresh expression of Church, to complete one set of '*Conversation Prompts*' to help with exploring the creation of a Minster Community. You will use these prompts in conversations with other churches.

This is a snapshot in time. We hope that you will revisit these and that they will be useful in your ongoing life as a church and as a living Minster Community.

**If you have any questions about the Conversation Prompts please contact your facilitator.**

This booklet will give you an explanation and help you fill in your Conversation Prompts...

# An explanation

Each Conversation Prompt covers an aspect of church life, for example *'People and Ministry'*. They offer you an opportunity for self-description, rather than being judgemental. They are here to help.

In the formation of Minster Community, we will reflect prayerfully upon our Conversation Prompts as churches and as a group. There will be an invitation to ask questions and have conversations to discern where God might be leading us, and to notice things we have not seen before. We will be looking for patterns, similarities, differences, gaps and areas of opportunity when we reflect on these together.

There is nothing new about this; churches have been working together and in conversation with each other since New Testament times!

Here are some guidelines that would be helpful to bear in mind:

- The Conversation Prompts need to be completed by a wide range of people in conversation and honest reflection, and not just by one person. We suggest at PCC level as a minimum.
- The Conversation Prompt may highlight gaps – either in knowledge, experience, or activity. That's to be expected.
- Please fill this in to the best of your understanding.
- We have provided a set of descriptors for each aspect of church life as a guide. It is important that these descriptors are used to ensure consistency. They can be found on pages 8–18.

The Parish Transition & Ministry Development team (PTMD) can provide support to help you fill in your Prompts.

# How to fill in your Conversation Prompts

There are 9 Conversation Prompts – all of which are detailed on the following pages.

Each individual Prompt has a scale of 0–7, where 0 is low and 7 is high.

There are **descriptors** for each Prompt; they describe what a '2' would look like, what a '4' would look like and what a '7' would look like. They are to help you work out where you are on the scale from 0–7.

There will be information that you may already have to hand that you can use to inform your preparation, such as your Finance Returns and Statistics for Mission – see appendix A.

## **YOUR WELLBEING**

We need to pay attention to our wellbeing – as individuals, diocesan staff and local churches.

Think of your mobile phone. You can't have a good conversation when your battery is flat, or you have too many apps running in the background.

What is your 'wellbeing battery' showing?

Is there anything you need to stop doing to enable your conversation?

# Conversation Prompts summary

The Conversation Prompts consist of 9 aspects reflecting church life, giving an overall picture of each church or fresh expression of Church.

## VISION & MISSION

<b>Discipleship &amp; Mission</b>	What is your approach to Everyday Faith, our 3 Key Questions and our diocesan priorities (New, Eco, Reconciling, Intercultural, Intergenerational communities).
<b>Growing Faith &amp; Schools</b>	What is your approach to developing faith across and between generations, through church, schools and households?
<b>Pioneering/ New Community</b>	What is your approach to identifying and responding to opportunities to create new ways of being church?

## EXISTING ASSETS

<b>Finance &amp; Generosity</b>	How healthy are your finances, and your approach to your finances and giving?
<b>Church Buildings</b>	How do you understand the role of the Church Building and its physical condition?
<b>People &amp; Ministry</b>	How do you understand yourselves and those who minister amongst you?

## CONTEXT

<b>Geography</b>	How well do you understand your context and what is your approach to engaging with it?
<b>Engagement</b>	How keen are you to engage? How realistic is this?
<b>Safeguarding</b>	How well do you integrate safeguarding into your church life?

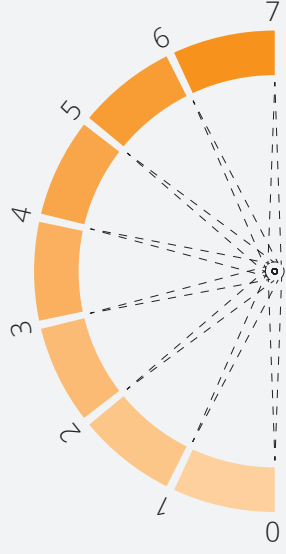


Conversation prompt for:

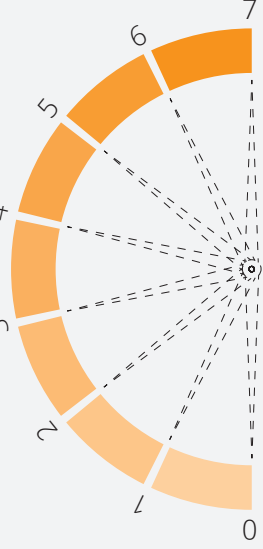
Date:

Wellbeing (battery life)

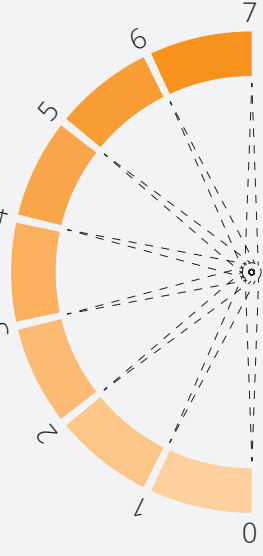
**VISION & MISSION**



**Discipleship & Mission**

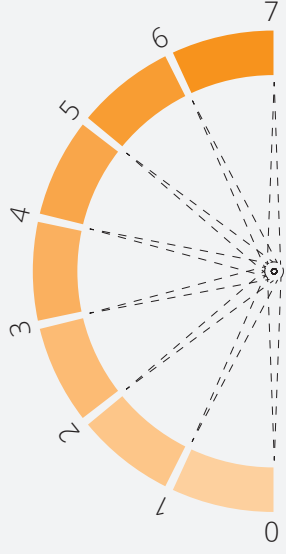


**Growing Faith & Schools**

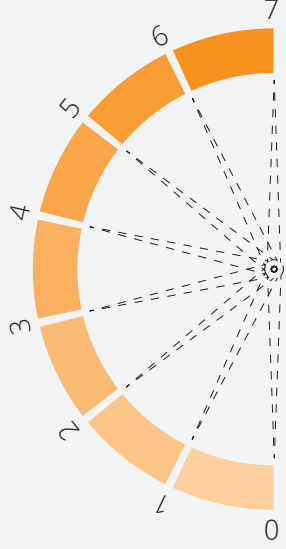


**Pioneering/New Community**

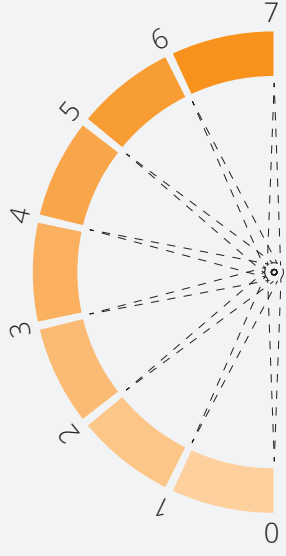
**EXISTING ASSETS**



**Finance & Generosity**

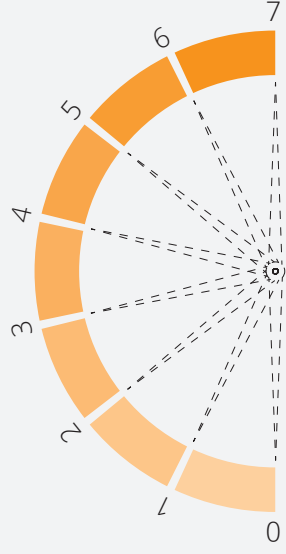


**Church Buildings**

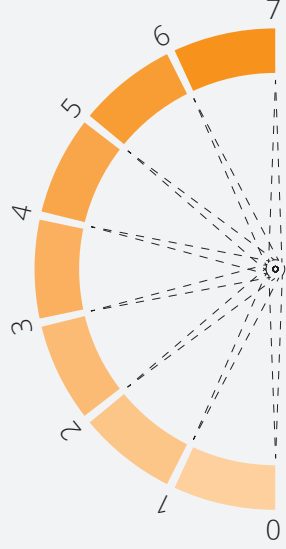


**People & Ministry**

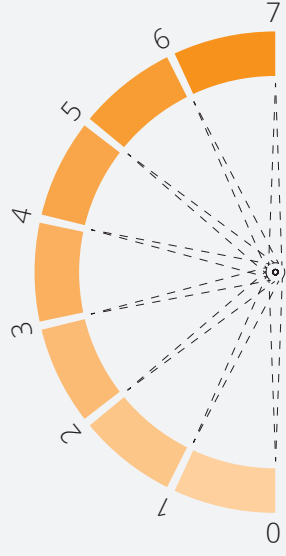
**CONTEXT**



**Geography**



**Engagement**



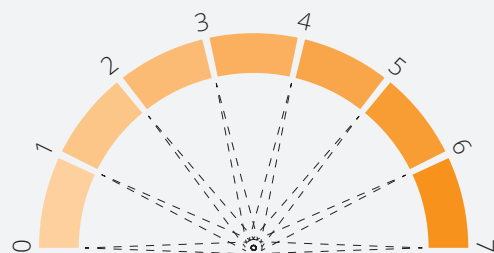
**Safeguarding**

# Conversation Prompts descriptors

## DISCIPLESHIP AND MISSION

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
We have little awareness beyond the ministry team of the 3 Key Questions for Everyday Faith.	We engage with the 3 Key Questions throughout the church and have some balance across the 3 questions.	We share the 3 Key Questions across our church community, and regularly use them as a 'test' for decisions.
We enjoy Sunday worship but it has little impact on our life through the week.	Our regular worship helps us to live out our faith through the week.	We enable whole-life discipleship and seek to develop our everyday faith.
We mainly focus on keeping things as they are and have little desire to develop in any way.	We aspire to grow and are actively seeking ways in which we can do this.	We have a track record of enabling growth and of attempting new engagement.
We are unable to identify opportunities for mission, and are a bit freaked out by it really.	We regularly identify missional opportunities and long to be able to respond more fully.	We actively reflect on who we are and what we do to respond to missional opportunities that come our way and seek ways we can engage with others.
We rarely have any outward focused mission.	We sometimes do outward focused mission, and are prepared to 'have a go'.	We have regular on-going innovative mission, and intentionally learn from our engagements.

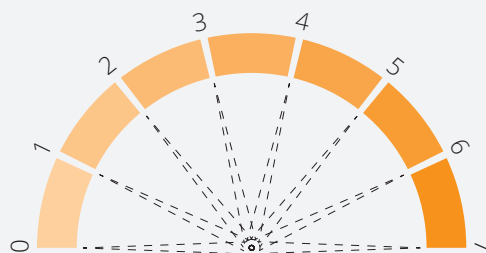
### NOTES



## GROWING FAITH AND SCHOOLS

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
We occasionally pray for children, young people, local schools and those who work with children and young people in our parish.	We pray, regularly, by name, for children, young people, local schools and those who work with children and young people in our parish.	We keep up-to-date with prayer needs for local children, young people and schools. We integrate these into our weekly rhythm of intercession.
We provide opportunities for children and young people to learn Bible stories and/or have play bags in church.	We have activities that enable children and young people to explore and develop their own faith.	Children and young people who attend church are fully engaged with planning, leading and participating in our worship and church life.
We rely on church and school to teach our children faith.	As a church, we encourage households to talk about their faith and pray together.	We resource church, households and schools to enable children, young people and adults to share and develop their faith throughout the week.
We deliver assemblies and ministers lead collective worship for school.	We involve pupils in the delivery of assemblies and collective worship	We work with pupils to plan, write and lead assemblies and collective worship in schools.
We have a limited relationship with local schools. We only connect with the school at festivals. We are not involved with school events and governance.	We have a good relationship with local schools. We connect regularly with the school throughout the year. We are involved with school events and governance.	We have a strong collaborative relationship with local school. Our partnership enables both to flourish. There are foundation governors, PTA members and parents in our congregation.

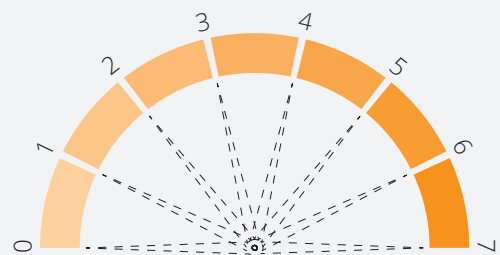
### NOTES



## NEW COMMUNITIES/PIONEERING

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
The majority of our time and energy is focused only on our congregation and those who regularly attend church services.	We make space and energy for new outward focused activities, often seeking to bridge gaps between church and community.	We intentionally prioritise the formation of new worshipping communities, even when not in a church building. We actively seek to connect with those in our parish who are not yet part of any Christian worshipping community.
We see the need to invest time, energy or money into pioneering or fresh expressions of church.	We understand that the formation of new worshipping communities is part of what it means to be church, but we are not always confident or sure how to do this.	We are willing to be changed by pioneering, planting or fresh expressions, and to 'give away' of ourselves to sustain new communities of faith.
If pioneering happens at all it is led by one or two people and is barely recognised by the church.	Pioneering activity is recognised and supported by the leadership/PCC but the wider congregation don't quite 'get it'.	We grow and release vocations that respond to emerging pioneering opportunities.
We exclusively focus upon our parish congregation.  Our church is a club.	We look beyond parish confines.  The church can host the community.	As church we are guest in the community and work in partnership wherever possible.

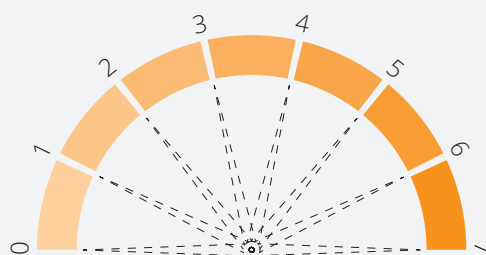
### NOTES



## FINANCE AND GENEROSITY

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
We don't talk about giving as a part of Christian life.	We talk about giving and teach about generosity once a year.	Generosity is integral to the church's life and understood as part of Christian discipleship.
Our individual giving is very low in relation to ability to give.	Our individual giving is generous enough but could be more.	Our individual giving is generous, realistic and is a priority in personal budgets.
When we talk about finances we don't think about our church vision.	The church vision and finances are connected.	The finances enable and support the vision and mission of the church.
There is no expectation in fresh expressions of Church to talk about money or giving. Leaders pay for consumables themselves.	Fresh expressions of Church encourage members to give financially and there is a way for them to do so.	Fresh expressions of Church are self-sustaining, including the cost of ministry, and contribute to the local church financially.
The church's Parish Contribution is disproportionately low in comparison to resources that we have.	The church's Parish Contribution is offered realistically and what is offered is actually given.	The church's Parish Contribution is offered realistically and takes into account the wider diocese and shared ministry.

### NOTES



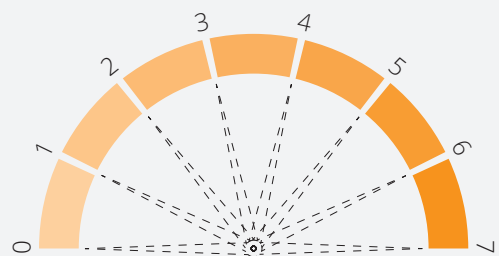
## CHURCH BUILDINGS

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
<p>The five yearly (Quinquennial) inspections are overdue.</p> <p>The PCC struggles to make sense of the report and tends to ignore it.</p> <p>There is limited understanding of the condition of the church building.</p> <p>Long standing backlog of repairs and a lack of capacity and confidence to begin to address these.</p> <p>No plan or lack of capacity to undertake routine maintenance.</p>	<p>The five yearly (Quinquennial) inspections are undertaken in the year they are due. The report is discussed and used.</p> <p>There is a good understanding of the condition of the church building.</p> <p>External funding sources for significant repairs have been identified or are being explored, and projects are undertaken where funding is available.</p> <p>Regular maintenance needs are known, understood and undertaken.</p>	<p>The five yearly (Quinquennial) inspections are undertaken in the year they are due.</p> <p>The PCC have a good understanding of the condition of the church building and are actively engaged in addressing the recommendations of the report in a timely fashion.</p> <p>External funding sources for significant repairs have been secured.</p> <p>Regular maintenance needs are known, understood and undertaken according to an agreed plan.</p>
<p>Church Building not used outside services and there is no church hall or centre.</p> <p>Church Community reluctant for the building to be used by the wider community.</p>	<p>Church Building used outside of services and is shared with the community OR a desire to adapt the church building to serve needs of the wider community OR has a hall or centre which is used by the community.</p>	<p>Church Building is well used by the wider community AND/OR the church hall/centre is well used by the community.</p>
<p>The Church Building is primarily felt as a burden, and there is anxiety about its future. Conversations about the Church Building are too difficult to begin.</p>	<p>The Church Building is a mixed blessing – its value is appreciated although it offers some challenges. Conversations about the Church Building are part of the normal life of the PCC but the potential of it has not yet been fully explored.</p>	<p>The Church Building is an important resource to enable flourishing of the local church and community. Conversations about the building result in action even though they may be challenging.</p>

## CHURCH BUILDINGS (continued)

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
We have not discussed our carbon footprint at PCC.	We have discussed our carbon footprint at PCC and are beginning to change in order to reduce our carbon footprint.	We regularly discuss our carbon footprint at PCC and have a planned route towards a net zero carbon footprint.
<p>The church is locked during the day and this decision is not reviewed.</p> <p>Information on the noticeboards is out of date.</p>	<p>The building is open outside services for community use and/or visitors/tourists/pilgrims OR the PCC regularly reviews whether the building can be open outside of services.</p> <p>Information on the noticeboards is up to date and in good condition.</p>	<p>The building is open and welcoming outside services. The PCC understands who visits and why they come. Thought has been given to how the Christian message is presented.</p> <p>Thought has been given to how the noticeboard represents the church to the community.</p>
There is no disabled access or provision, and this is not being actively considered.	The PCC has undertaken an access audit and is aware of what needs to be done.	The PCC has undertaken an access audit and are actively taking measures to ensure that the building is accessible. This will be regularly reviewed.

### NOTES



## PEOPLE & MINISTRY

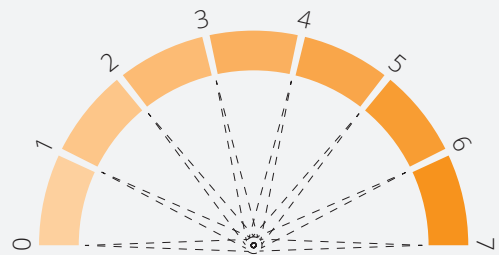
2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
Our church activity is dependent on one or two people.	We have an active and able ministry team.	We have a diverse team with understanding of mutuality of ministry and a mix of lay, ordained and licensed ministers.
Our leadership / PCC membership has remained the same for years.	We have some new and emerging leadership.	We pay attention to leadership development and fully develop potential leaders, regularly handing over roles to others.
We can't fill all our church officer roles (Churchwarden, PCC Secretary, PCC Treasurer).	We have enough people in all the church officer roles but we find it difficult to get new people involved.	We have a strong and flourishing church officer team, ability to cover absences and a succession plan moving forward.
We have a strained or difficult relationship with the diocese, and often choose not to engage.	We have a healthy relationship with the diocese and engage as needed.	We have a creative and honest relationship with our diocese and proactively engage.
We don't have enough people to get the job done.	We have <i>just</i> enough people to do what we are doing but have little time and energy to take on new things.	We have lots of able and passionate people who enable the church to respond to new opportunities with flexibility and generosity.
There is no expectation that God calls people from our community.	We talk about vocations into church ministry.	We recognise that everyone is called by God and promote vocations in all aspects of life.



## PEOPLE & MINISTRY (Continued)

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
We would struggle to make a list of those in our Worshipping Community.	We have a good knowledge of those in our Worshipping Community and would notice if someone was missing.	We have a good knowledge of those in our Worshipping Community and would notice if someone was missing. This data helps us to notice trends and opportunities and respond pastorally.

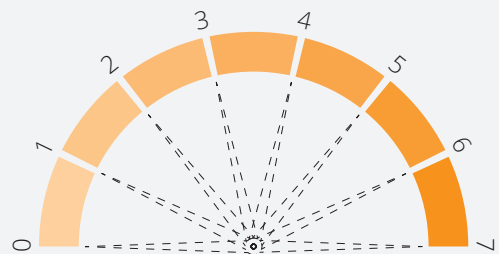
### NOTES



## GEOGRAPHY

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
We can describe the physical geography of our area.	We understand the impact of physical geography upon us and our communities.	We are making the most of the opportunities and challenges that our physical geography provides.
We have a basic understanding of our context, but is very church-centric. We tend to think that everyone outside our church is like the people in our congregations.	We have a working understanding of the demographics, diversity, social issues and local history of our area.	We have a deep understanding of the demographics, diversity, social issues and local history of our area. These inform the church's local engagement.
We invite people to our activities.	We run activities for the local community.	We work in partnership with other agencies in the community.
We can tell the story of our church.	We can tell the stories of our church and local community and have an awareness of how we are seen by our community.	We understand with insight the deeper implications of our church and community stories, and they inform our decisions.
Our church intercessions focus on our church and the world.	Our prayer life focuses on the church, the world and community.	Our prayer life focuses on the church, the world and regular prayers for our community based on relationships.

### NOTES



## ENGAGEMENT

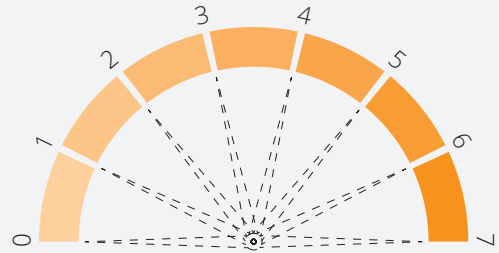
2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
Cost of change is too high for us (beyond financial) at this time.	Have grappled with the cost of involvement (beyond financial). We are neither overestimating or underestimating the challenges ahead for us.	Willing to accept the cost of change.
We see this simply as an organisational change programme.	We know that this is more than organisational change, we are praying for the process, but we are having to learn a lot about doing things this way.	We see this as a process of Christian Discernment – we feel God is leading this process and are ready to listen and follow God.
We see this simply as an organisational change programme.	We know that this is more than organisational change, we are praying for the process, but we are having to learn a lot about doing things this way.	We see this as a process of Christian Discernment – we feel God is leading this process and are ready to listen and follow God.
Nobody really understands the need for change.	The leadership understands the need for change.	Whole church understands the need for change.
We are not willing to work with people who are different from us. There are some boundaries that we don't think we could work across.	We are open to the challenges of working honestly across differences. It might not be easy, but we are willing to try.	We are willing to change our behaviours to enable all to flourish across difference.
We would rather just be told what was going to happen.	We want to be part of the conversation and decision making but have a limited capacity to engage.	We want to be fully involved in the conversation and decision making and feel energised by change.
We understand Minster Communities will be formed but we don't want it to change us at all.	We can see the benefit of working as a Minster Community but have questions about how this will work in practice.	We've been waiting for something like this for a while and are enthusiastic about playing our part in it.

Continued overleaf...

## ENGAGEMENT (Continued)

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
We are lamenting how past decisions have affected us and we are not ready to move on.	We recognise and understand we are a diocese and are willing to play our part.	We pray for and are willing to engage fully in diocesan life and the Shaped By God Together process and are ready to move forward.

### NOTES

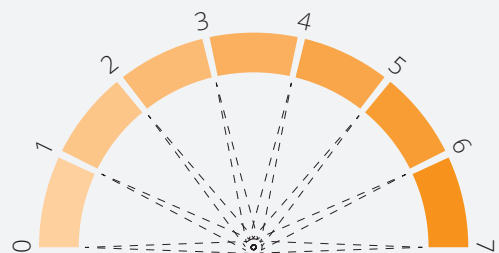


## SAFEGUARDING

There are Safeguarding Dashboards that you should already be using as a PCC. These provide Safeguarding coordinators with a checklist for their respective worship setting. That is where you have the detailed conversation around your own safeguarding provision and understanding. We are asking you to complete this section so that when Minster Communities are formed Safeguarding is integrated into the discussions.

2 looks like...	4 looks like...	7 looks like...
We have heard about the safeguarding dashboards, but have not looked at them yet.	We have begun to use the dashboards, but our data is either incomplete, or 3 months out of date.	We use the dashboards to actively monitor our safeguarding requirements, and our data is up to date.

### NOTES



**In the light of the conversations you have had whist completing this workbook, how would you describe yourself as a congregation?**

# Appendix 1

## Resources that may help you to complete the Conversation Prompts

- Finance returns
- Statistics for Mission
- Quinquennial reports
- Maintenance plans
- APCM reports
- Resource Church regular reports
- Intercultural Worshipping Community regular reports
- Safeguarding Dashboards
- Existing partnership agreements or Memorandums of Understanding

# Appendix 2

## An example of a filled-out Conversation Prompt

Conversation prompt for:

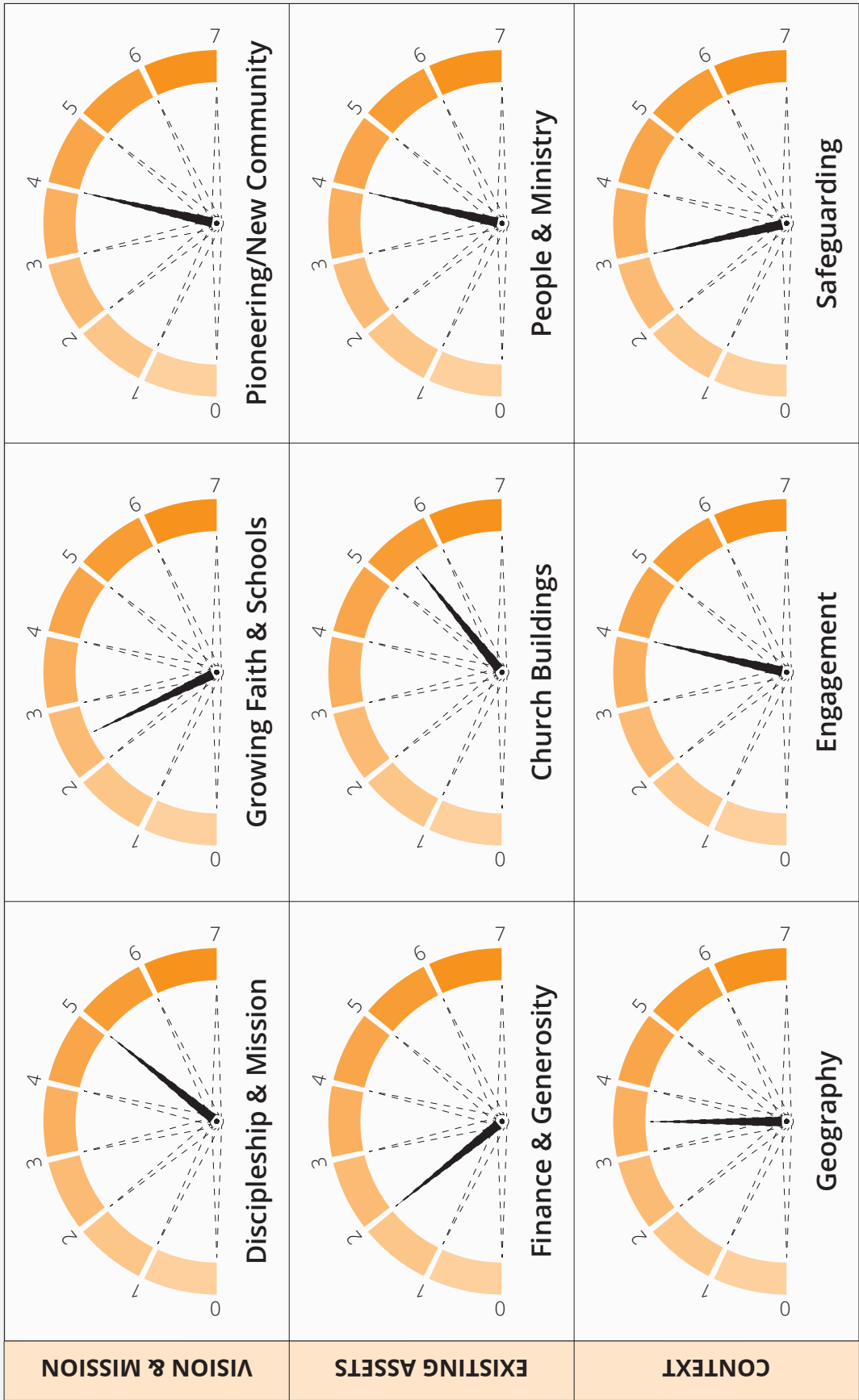
St Sunshiners, Evertown

Date:

1st April 2022

Wellbeing (battery life)

Ministry team feel about 60% recognise need to address, and RCL due to review current church activity priorities next month.



# Appendix 3

## The Kingdom of God, Three Key Questions, Diocesan Priorities

### WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE 'KINGDOM OF GOD'?

*"Shaped By God Together, we seek the growth of God's Kingdom in..."*

For individual prayer and discussion at PCCs and in small groups

The Kingdom of God is a place where...

- there is faith in Jesus
- we find simplicity of a child and delight in purity of heart
- those who suffer find comfort
- where there is joy in loving God and loving your neighbour
- is a place of honest and truth
- is a place of hope and peace
- where there is joy in others' achievements
- where injustice is spoken against and challenged

It is a society where God rules, Jesus is honoured and the spirit is active. It is a place where death is overcome, diseases are cured, evil spirits are overcome and where people find a home and shelter in difficult times.

The Kingdom of God cannot simply be found in the church. It is our job as Christians to reveal the Kingdom all around us, not just in obvious places but in those places you may not expect to find it.

*"The idea of the 'Kingdom of God' reflects God's ideal for human life in the world – a vision of life lived in the way God intended for human beings. In anticipation of a future heavenly Kingdom, Christians seek to live this attractive life as in God's kingdom on earth, following Jesus' example inspired and empowered by God's Spirit."*

**Understanding Christianity (RE Today curriculum)**



The Bible does not give a single definition of the Kingdom Of God, it often speaks of the Kingdom as being 'like' something. Jesus' parables frequently teach us about God's Kingdom. For example:

- the character of the King - God's love for the undeserving (lost sheep Matt 18:10-14, father with two sons Luke 15 :11-32)
- our response to the King - Repentance of younger child; prayers of the tax collector; the son who didn't want to work in the vineyard but then does (Matt 21:28-31)
- the community of the King - forgiving and merciful, the role model of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- the Kingdom to come - often by depicting Jesus returning as the heavenly, supernatural son of man – parable of corn and weeds (Matt 13:24-30), parable of sheep and goats (Matt 25:31-46), parable of great feast (Luke 14:15-24).

## THREE KEY QUESTIONS

For individual prayer and discussion at PCCs and in small groups

1. How are you growing, and enabling others to grow in the depth of their discipleship?
2. How are you enabling growth in the numbers of disciples of Jesus?
3. How are you serving your community, and enabling others to love and serve those around them?

The answers to these questions should naturally lead to both gratitude for what God is already doing, and discernment about how God is leading us in the future. This discernment will in turn result in an action plan which will shape the use of the resources God has entrusted to us e.g. our own time, money, buildings etc. Such plans will need regular reviewing and updating. God's Spirit will move in surprising ways and we must always be ready to respond ("walk in step with the Spirit" Gal 5:25), but good planning is essential to good stewardship.

You can download a copy of the Three Key Questions leaflet from here:

[tinyurl.com/three-key-questions](https://tinyurl.com/three-key-questions)

## DIOCESAN PRIORITIES

These are the strategic priorities for the diocese in our common life together. They arise out of our diocesan response to the 3 Key Questions (depth of discipleship, numbers of disciples, loving service of the world). Not every church community or school will embody all five of these priorities, but every church is being asked to consider how they are paying attention to them as they 'seek the Kingdom of God' in their 'Everyday Faith'. Each community will have a particular gift which may focus on one or more of the priorities e.g. a village church which feels called to focus on eco-community, or a city church which feels called to focus on interfaith work as part of our reconciling community priority – and each church will do this as part of a wider network, with partnership or gift-exchange an essential element of this way of working.

The Priorities are: New Communities, Intergenerational Communities, Intercultural Communities, Reconciling Communities, Eco Communities.

More details about each can be found on the diocesan website here:

[tinyurl.com/strategic-priorities](https://tinyurl.com/strategic-priorities)





Diocese of  
**Leicester**  
Shaped by God