How do you start a Pilgrim group?

- Plan in advance, with prayer at the centre of your plans as you think about who you could invite and who would be open to taking part in a Pilgrim group.

- Think about how putting on a Pilgrim group can become a normal part of the annual cycle of parish life.

- Put the dates in the church diary in advance and sort out the practical questions of when and where you will meet. Make sure that the venue and the time are suitable for those whom you might invite.

- Decide who the leaders of the group or groups will be, ideally at least two people. Choose people who will be committed to working with the group through the “Follow” stage, and who will gather and lead the session, helping the group to become a community. You may want to think about someone who has some kind of theological training, such as a Reader or Licensed Lay Minister.

  ‘The material was laid out in such a way that a leader with very little experience of leading groups could lead and did not therefore become leader-centric.’

- Share the nature and purpose of the group with the whole church. If your church community understands what the group is for they are more likely to have the confidence to suggest it to family and friends.

- Use the free downloadable material on the Pilgrim website (www.pilgrimcourse.org) but back it up with a conversation and a personal invitation from someone in the church.

- When you’re inviting people to join the group, it might be helpful to emphasize that they don’t need to have a commitment to the Christian faith, or knowledge, that they will be able to ask questions, but they won’t be put on the spot or picked out in any way. They might also like to know who else has been invited.