

USING *STEPPING STONES FOR GROWTH*

GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS

The Materials

Stepping Stones for Growth is the Diocese of Manchester's course in local church growth. It is free for use by groups and individuals in Manchester, across the Church of England, in other Anglican provinces, and in other denominations. Please acknowledge the Diocese of Manchester when using the course!

This guide includes suggestions for both in-person and online uses.

You only need two things to run Stepping Stones:

- **Handbook.** Downloadable from Manchester Diocese website:
<https://www.manchester.anglican.org/stepping-stones-for-growth/>
- **The six videos.** The videos are on the Manchester Diocese YouTube Channel. There are two video playlists: lo-res (to be played on Zoom) and hi-res (for use in church buildings, on big screens and for personal use).
 - **Lo-res:**
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0rX44ZU-F3Y29Jwc33sh8fvZe78iWeKM>
 - **Hi-res:**
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0rX44ZU-F3ZDkZ6SGcKsP7qj5LmY7V-B>

All Users

1) Leader. For any group use of Stepping Stones, first identify a group leader. The leader organises the group and the venue or online event, ensures members have a Handbook and plays the videos. The leader may act as host, explaining and introducing each part of the event and leading discussions.

2) One event, or six? The six videos may be used in a single event, with reflection and discussion between videos. Suggestions for timings are in Handbook. Alternatively, the videos may be used one at a time – eg one a week in an evening group. This will provide more time for discussion.

3) Handbook. Each user needs to download and print a copy of the Handbook, to write their own notes as each video plays. Alternatively, they can read an electronic download of Handbook and write answers on separate sheet of paper.

(NOTE: if another Diocese wishes to customise Handbook with own statistics, please contact Diocese of Manchester Comms team).

4) The six videos. These are available in two versions: hi-res and lo-res. Hi-res are better quality, so are suitable for individual and in-person church and group use. Hi-res means significantly bigger data files, so use only lo-res versions for Zoom, online services etc. Don't forget to test video playback beforehand.

5) Breakout Groups. The original Stepping Stones events were held via Zoom, and for large numbers, so the Handbook assumes Zoom Breakout Groups, of up to 6 people per group. For an in-person local church group this will obviously vary. In a small group, whole-group discussion is probably best.

Suggestions for Use

- **Individual use.** Download and print the Handbook. Watch each of the hi-res videos on YouTube, making notes in your Handbook as you go. Between videos, reflect on Breakout questions. Discuss later with others if possible.
- **Small group.** A church group may run Stepping Stones over six weeks, one video a week, or across a single morning/afternoon. The group leader ensures all members have downloaded and printed the Handbook. Together the group watches each of the videos on YouTube and discusses the Breakout questions.
- **Sunday services.** Plan a six-part Sunday sermon series on mission. Play each of the Stepping Stones videos in order in the sermon slot. Each lasts between 8 and 16 mins. You will need to print the relevant Handbook page for each person (single A4 sheet). Decide how you will deal with Breakout questions. Options include discussion after the service, and/or a short time to turn to others and discuss immediately after watching the video (either way, ensure visitors and those hesitant to speak don't feel excluded).
- **PCC/PCC sub-group.** Stepping Stones makes a useful discussion starter on outreach and can help shape a growth strategy for a local church. See Questions After Event for local churches on final page of Handbook.
- **Lent course.** Stepping Stones is ideal for use as a Lent course, across six weeks. Use one video per weekly session and discuss Breakout questions.
- **Across a deanery, mission community, local group of churches, ecumenical group.** Stepping Stones may be used across churches to discuss a joint approach to outreach.
- **Online services/groups/Zoom events.** Stepping Stones is entirely video-based, so is ideal for online use. Use only the lo-res videos; ensure all participants have downloaded Handbook; make arrangements for Breakout discussion, or find alternative way to discuss questions.