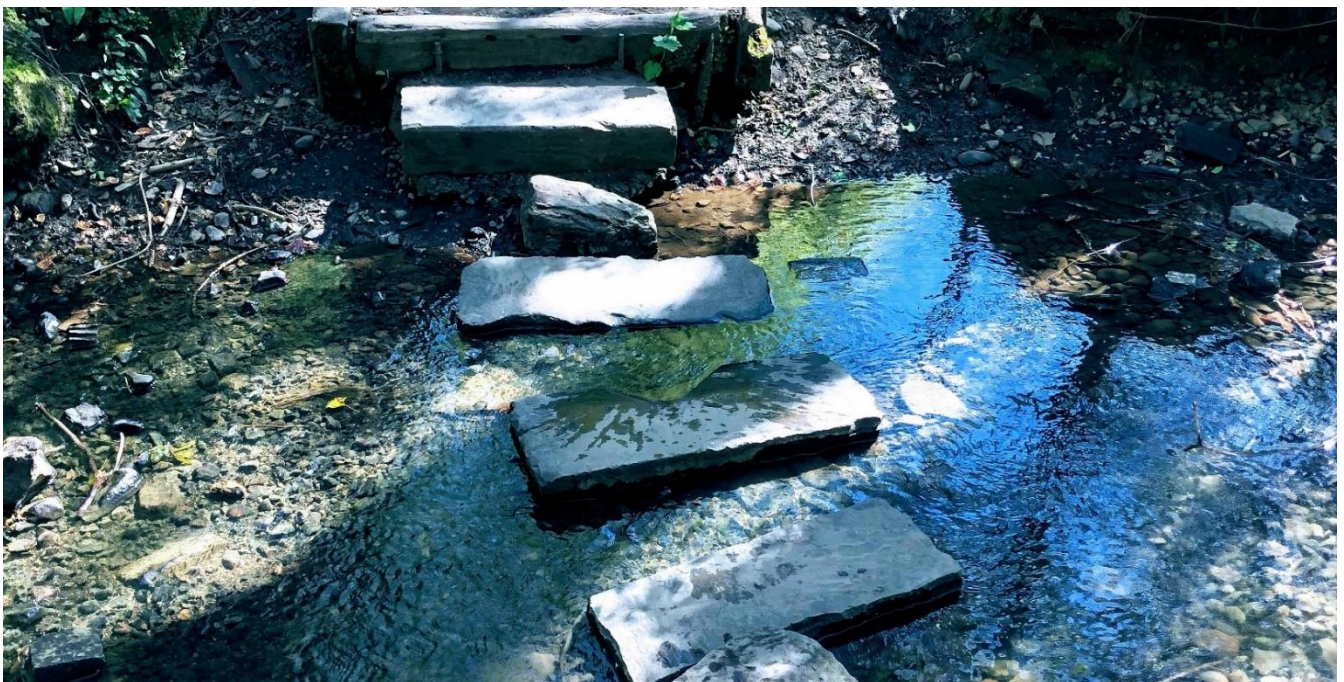


STEPPING STONES for GROWTH



Handbook

USING THIS HANDBOOK

- Each person doing Stepping Stones downloads and prints this Handbook (if no printer, ask a friend to print Handbook, or simply write any answers on a sheet of paper)
- Before watching videos, individually complete *Questions in Advance* on p3
- As you watch videos, follow pages for Videos 1-6 and write down answers when asked
- *Resources and Links* on p10
- Later, meet with others from your church and fill in *Questions After Event* on p11

THE SIX VIDEOS

MAIN PRESENTERS

- **Mike Starkey** – Head of Church Growth for Manchester Diocese, Author
 - **Eve Powers** – Digital Communications Officer for Manchester Diocese
 - **Andre Adefope** – Ordinand in Manchester Diocese, Author
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SUGGESTED TIMETABLE FOR A MORNING EVENT

Session A (10am – 11.15am)

Welcome & Instructions (2 min)

VIDEO 1: Hidden Leopards (7 mins)

BREAKOUT GROUP (10 mins)

VIDEO 2: The Journey (11 mins)

BREAKOUT GROUP (10 mins)

VIDEO 3: Contacts (16 mins)

BREAKOUT GROUP (10 mins)

Break (11.15-11.30am)

Session B (11.30am – 12.45pm)

VIDEO 4: Stepping Stones (17 mins)

BREAKOUT GROUP (10 mins)

VIDEO 5: Milestones (10 mins)

BREAKOUT GROUP (10 mins)

VIDEO 6: My Faith (8 mins)

OPEN DISCUSSION (15 mins)

QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE

*Take time to answer these questions in advance of your Stepping Stones event.
If you have time, discuss your answers with others from your church.*

1) Draw a timeline of your faith journey. Include key milestones and episodes.

(Childhood) > > > (Now)

2) If a friend asked you to say in a short sentence, 'Why are you a Christian?' what would you say?

3) Think of a time you felt nervous about joining a group (eg Parkrun, language class, diet club, choir, sports team...).

What made you feel welcome and at ease?

Did anything make you feel unwelcome?

VIDEO 1: HIDDEN LEOPARDS

Q: Possible reasons church growth is hard:

- We're not really sure how to grow
- We're busy just keeping our church going
- Most of our members are hesitant about sharing their faith
- We tried a course/event once and it didn't really work
- People have more alternative activities on a Sunday
- People today are less interested in church
- Lots of people today are 'spiritual but not religious'

- Other.....

Key Quote: 'Traveller, there is no road; we make the road by walking.' (Antonio Machado, Spanish poet, 1912)

Key Idea: *Hidden Leopards* - unexpected signs of God already at work in my community or networks.

Key Quote: 'Mission is finding out what God is doing and joining in.' (Archbishop Rowan Williams, 2003)

Q: Hidden Leopards you've found in the past year eg:

- Unexpected people attending an online service.
- A friend asks why you go to church.
- Somebody unexpectedly asks you to pray for them.
- A family member is open to spiritual questions for the first time.

- Other.....

Key Stat: Percentage of UK adults who say they pray: 44% (Savanta ComRes poll, 2020)

Breakout Question (10 mins):

What 'Hidden Leopards' have I encountered in the past year?

VIDEO 2: THE JOURNEY

Key Stat: 76% of practising Christians say they found faith by the age of 18. (ComRes poll, 2017)

Key Quote: 'The normal route to faith for *adults* today is a journey. It's gradual. It normally takes a good five years or so. It's often messy, with lots of twists and turns. One thing that's key is personal relationships. The person knows somebody who has a faith, and they want to find out more.'

Q: Trust. An Ipsos Mori poll of 2019 asked which professions people trust most, and which they trust least. What do you think people said?

Most trusted professions?

1)

2)

Least trusted professions?

1)

2)

Key Quote: 'There is no fear in love... perfect love drives out fear.' (1 John 4:18)

Key Idea: *Stepping Stones for Growth* model:

1) A Search for Hidden Leopards. Focus on outsiders. Look and pray to see where God is at work.

2) A Journey. Coming to faith takes time. Journey with people and earn trust. Be intentional about:

- > **Contacts** (to build love and trust)
- > **Stepping Stones** (to help people progress)
- > **Milestones** (opportunities to find faith, go deeper in faith, apply faith)

Breakout Question (10 mins):

What helped you find faith?

VIDEO 3: CONTACTS

Key Idea: Seven Types of Contact

1) Life Events. The C of E meets 15 million people through Life Events each year (*Life Events*, Sandra Millar CHP 2018). In Manchester Diocese we meet 396,000 people a year: via 3,780 baptisms, 710 marriages, 3,270 funerals (*2018 Stats for Mission*).

Our Life Events:.....

2) Toddler Groups & Primary Schools. 74% of parents with children under 5 attended a church-run activity in the past year (*Talking Toddlers* report, Savanta Comres poll 2020). And 41% of churches in the Diocese run, host or support a toddler group. Manchester Diocese has 181 C of E Primary Schools, plus many contacts in other schools.

Our Toddler Groups/Primary Schools:.....

3) Social Action Projects. There are 900 social action projects in Manchester Diocese, an average of three per church.

Our Social Action Project/s:.....

4) Digital Presence. 34% of UK adults 18-34 watched or listened to a service in lockdown 2020 (Savanta ComRes poll for Tearfund 2020).

Our Digital Presence:.....

5) Seasonal Services. Christmas in Manchester Diocese: 70,100 people attend civic/school carol services; 55,700 attend congregational/community carol services; 33,700 attend our Christmas services (*2018 Stats for Mission*).

Our Seasonal Services:.....

6) High Schools & Youth Groups. Manchester Diocese has 13 C of E High Schools, plus many contacts in other schools. Two-thirds of our churches lead worship in a local school.

Our High Schools/Youth Groups:.....

7) Choir/Singing Group

2.14 million UK people sing, in 40,000 choirs/singing groups (*Big Choral Census*, 2017).

Our Choir/Singing Group/s:.....

Breakout Question (10 mins):

Which of our current Contacts could we engage with more?

VIDEO 4: STEPPING STONES

Key Idea: Seven Stepping Stones

1) Make The Link

Our options to make an activity more overtly Christian:.....

2) Hospitality

Our hospitality offering:.....

3) Chat Group

Our Chat Groups:.....

4) Activity Group

Our Activity Groups:.....

5) Life Help Group

Our Life Help Groups:.....

6) Enquirers'/Basics Course

Our Enquirers'/Basics Courses:.....

7) Offer to Pray

Our offers to pray:.....

Breakout Question (10 mins):

What Stepping Stones could we introduce, to help people journey towards faith?

VIDEO 5: MILESTONES

Key Idea: Our language of *Journey* can overlook the importance of significant *Milestones*.

We need to offer opportunities to come to faith, go deeper in faith, and apply faith in new ways.

Key Quotes: 'Our lives are measured in moments, and defining moments are the ones that endure in our memories.'

'Defining moments shape our lives, but we don't have to wait for them to happen. We can be the authors of them.'

(*The Power of Moments*, Heath & Heath 2017, p5)

Key Quote: 'All too often, the reason people don't come to faith is that we don't invite them to come to faith! A local church can be like a would-be fiancé who talks a lot about marriage, but never actually pops the question.'

Key Idea: Different Churches, Different Types of Milestone

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.....
.....

Key Quote: 'When you commit to preach for life change, your preparation is not complete until you have answered two very important questions:

So what? and Now what?'

(Andy Stanley, in *Communicating for a Change*, Stanley and Jones 2006, p97)

Breakout Question (10 mins):

How do we currently invite people to take a step of faith?

VIDEO 6: MY FAITH

Key Quote: 'If we see church growth only as re-engineering the church, we'll be missing something essential: the personal dimension.'

If nobody in our church wants to talk about faith, or share their faith with friends, we're seriously stuck.'

Key Stat: If just one person in 50 invited a friend to a church event and they started attending regularly, this alone would reverse the decline in church numbers.

If two in 50 did that, we'd start growing.

(*General Synod report on Evangelism, 2019*)

Key Quote: 'A problem with the traditional *testimony* is that it imposes a shape on the story. Most people's journey doesn't easily fit a clear before-and-after. It's messier than that.'

Key Idea: Starting-Points for Talking About Faith

- *Faith Pictures:* Finding a simple image or word-picture that says something about my own journey of faith.
- *Why am I a Christian?* A short sentence that sums up honestly what my faith means to me.

Key Idea: Praying for Three People

1) Family

2) Friend

3) Other (*work, club, neighbour*)

Key Question: How can we encourage people in our church to talk naturally about their faith?

RESOURCES & LINKS

Church Growth

- *What Makes Churches Grow?* Bob Jackson (CHP 2015)
- *Pathway to Jesus*, Everts & Schaupp (IVP 2009)
- *Making New Disciples*, Ireland & Booker (SPCK 2015)
- *God's Belongers*, David Walker (BRF 2017)

Life Events and Growth

- *Life Events*, Sandra Millar (CHP 2018)
- *Life Events PCC Discussion Booklet* (free) <https://tinyurl.com/y5puwpp2>

Toddler Groups and Growth

- *It's Just the Toddler Group: Toddler Groups and Mission* (free booklet) <https://tinyurl.com/yywxue3w>

Online Services and Growth

- *Digital Church: Making Videos* (Eve Powers, for Manchester Diocese) <https://tinyurl.com/y5p5h2qx>
- *Everybody Welcome to the Future* (free booklet) <https://tinyurl.com/y3uzeogv>

The Value of Milestones

- *The Power of Moments*, Heath & Heath (Penguin 2017)
- *Communicating for a Change*, Stanley & Jones (Multnomah 2006)

Social Justice and Growth

- *From Foodbank to Faith* (story from Wythenshawe) <https://tinyurl.com/yy8gnl38>
- *A Bigger Difference* (Church Army report: social action and church growth in Liverpool) <https://tinyurl.com/y6y4k449>

Personal Faith Sharing

- *Faith Pictures* (free online course) <https://www.faithpictures.org>

Enquirers'/Basics Courses

- *Start!* (Search for: *Leading Your Church into Growth* > Start Course)
- *Alpha* <https://www.alpha.org>
- *Why on Earth...?* (free online course) <https://www.whyonearth.me>
- *Pilgrim* <https://www.pilgrimcourse.org>

Manchester Diocesan Advisers

- Church Growth: Mike Starkey
- Serving/Social Action: Alison Peacock
- Nurture/Discipleship: Simon Bessant
- Digital Church: Eve Powers
- Schools: Deborah Smith
- Children: Karen Beal
- Young People: Susie Mapledoram

QUESTIONS AFTER EVENT

After you have done Stepping Stones, discuss the following questions with others who have done the course from your local church/chaplaincy.

This can form the basis of a fresh growth strategy.

1) Main obstacles to growth in our church:

2) Contacts our church already has (eg Life Events, school, hall users):

3) Stepping Stones we have in place, to help people journey to faith (including new ones introduced since doing Stepping Stones):

4) Milestones we build in, to invite people to take a step of faith (including new ones introduced since doing Stepping Stones):

5) Telling my story. Ways we help church members tell the story of their own faith journey (including new approaches introduced since doing Stepping Stones):