

**The Kingdom of God: Good News for All**

mission action toolkit

introduction for church leaders

# what is this toolkit?

Our Diocesan Vision is centred around seeing The Kingdom of God coming in our churches and in our communities across our Diocese, because we believe that the Kingdom of God is Good News for all.

As we look for the coming of God’s Kingdom, we have three *Missional Aims*:

* To see **transformed lives**:
* through **growing church**
* and **building community**

## the five marks of mission

Woven into the first missional aim, and core to our mission, are the *Five Marks of Mission*. They have been developed by the Anglican Consultative Council since 1984[[1]](#footnote-1). They have won wide acceptance across the Christian Church as a practical and holistic definition for the Church’s engagement in the Mission of God in the world and have been adopted by the Church of England General Synod’s House of Bishops.

The *Five Marks of Mission* also form a central part of the national vision of the Church of England, which was launched at General Synod in 2021. For many in the Anglican Communion, they describe what it means for us to be Jesus-shaped missionary disciples – a concept that is that the heart of that national vision, as well as our Diocesan vision.

## getting involved

What do our Missional Aims mean for each local church? How can we get involved?

Of course, the transformation of lives comes only through a work of God’s Holy Spirit, but he calls us to cooperate in that work of transformation. We are all a part of fulfilling that call; we all have a part to play. So, this toolkit is designed to help you to engage with the Missional Aims of the Diocese as a part of its vision.

# using this toolkit

First things first. **Please don’t simply give the whole of this Toolkit to your church!** If you do so, they are very likely to be confused, overwhelmed and discouraged. The Toolkit is designed for leaders of churches (be they ordained or lay) to read, take apart, use and adapt. Use the bits that are helpful, at the time they are helpful, in the way they are helpful, for your church. You will probably need to adapt the material for use within your context.

**The first step is for you and other church leaders to read through this introduction thoroughly and carefully, before deciding together the best way to use the Toolkit.**

You are reading the full version of the toolkit Introduction, which gives you plenty of background and information about the process. If you need a shorter summary that you can easily share with your teams, groups and church community, you can use the *Quick Start Guide*, also available from the Diocesan website’s Vision Resources page.

The Mission Action Toolkit is based upon the principles and structures of *MAP for Derby Diocese*, the full version of which you can find on the Diocesan website[[2]](#footnote-2). However, the Toolkit is a more focused tool, offering a way to engage with the Missional Aims of the Diocese. The aim is to help every church to start working, together with the whole Diocese, toward those Missional Aims.

## a word on language

It is our hope that this Toolkit can be used by any church (or even group of churches), of whatever size, tradition, style, context or expression. We’ve tried to avoid using language or concepts that will only apply to a subset of churches, but inevitably, there may be language here which is awkward or unfamiliar for you. That’s okay; try not to get too hung up on the words. The Toolkit is available in Word format as well as PDF so that its resources can be edited. *We encourage you to do so.* You should feel free to adapt what’s here so that it works for you in the language that fits your context.

Notably though, when we use the word ‘church’ anywhere in this document (with a lower-case ‘c’), we mean any local expression of church or worshipping community, whether it’s a large town-centre civic church that’s been there for centuries, or a fresh expression of church that meets in a pub on a Thursday night.

# what is in this toolkit?

There are several parts to this toolkit. Whilst we do recommend that the leaders in the church start by looking carefully at the introduction before deciding how to proceed, the rest of the toolkit may be used in any way that suits the needs of the church best. The parts of the toolkit are:

* The **Quick Start Guide**, which gives an accessible and easy introduction and explanation of the toolkit. It’s designed for use in the whole church.
* This **Introduction**, which takes you through the background and process of using the Toolkit in the most detail. It’s designed for church leaders to use.
* The **Resource Sheets**, which are designed to help the church to explore the three Missional Aims together. They are not a course or series that must be worked through (although they could be used in that way) but can be used in all sorts of ways throughout the process.
* The **Missional Aims Summary**, which gives a one-page listing of the missional aims.
* The **Questionnaire**, which offers one way of discovering where the church is already engaging with the Missional Aims of the Diocese, and where it might need to focus more.
* The **Action Sheet**, which helps you to crystalise, communicate and review the plans you make.

Qr code

Description automatically generatedTo download the full Mission Action Toolkit, scan the QR Code below or go to:

<https://derby.anglican.org/map>

# how should we get started?

The Toolkit is based on *MAP for Derby Diocese*, so like the process from which it comes, there are five main stages in using it. How you complete each stage is very much up to you because every church is different. But for each stage, this introduction gives you some guidance to get you started and suggests how the Toolkit can help.

**Think of this Toolkit as a store cupboard of ingredients, rather than a finished dish.** You will need to choose the right ingredients, perhaps adapt the recipe, and then do the preparation and cooking. So, you are free to use the toolkit in any way that you wish, adapting it as seems best.

**2. REFLECT**

on how much the church is already contributing to each missional aim

**5. JOURNEY**

carry out the actions decided on, taking note of how God is working as you do so

**4. PREPARE**

to respond to the invitation to take part in the missional aims by deciding on some actions

**3. DISCERN**

which of the missional aims it might be right for the church to focus on right now

**1. EXPLORE**

the theology behind the missional aims and how churches can contribute to them

## step one: explore

Step one is about exploring the three Missional Aims together and learning what they mean for your church. How you do this will depend on the culture and patterns of your church, the type of community you serve and how familiar your church is with the concepts contained within the Missional Aims.

It is vitally important that you don’t skip over this step too quickly. It will help your church to understand why they should do this work, which will take energy and commitment from the whole church. Without this foundation, it is doubtful that people will own it or take part in it.

You can use the resource sheets to help you here. You might adapt them into a sermon series, use them for your newsletter or pew sheet, or as material for small groups. The important thing is to help everyone in the church to understand what each of the three Missional Aims might mean for them and why together they are important for our response to God’s call.

## step two: reflect

Having explored the Missional Aims, stage two is about discovering how much you are already doing and where God may be calling you to respond further.

There are different ways to do this, but the Toolkit contains some resources to help you. The *Questionnaire* is designed to be photocopied freely and handed out to everyone in the church, filled in and brought back to the PCC and church leaders. It is a simple, tick-box survey that takes minimal time to complete and doesn’t require any special knowledge.

Of course, you don’t need to use the Questionnaire in its current form… or at all! If people in your church aren’t good with surveys, then get creative! Here are some different ideas:

* Lead discussion groups, covering one Missional Aim in each, noting the responses and possibly getting people to offer a ‘score’ at the end of how well they think church is engaging with that aim. The Resource Sheets include some discussion questions to help you do this.
* Get people to draw or paint their picture of how the church is engaging with the Missional Aims and then talk about what they have produced, noting their responses.
* Put out three ‘graffiti boards’ (using big sheets of paper) in the church, with one Missional Aim written out at the top of each. Then provide pens and ask people to write their own responses to how the church is doing for the Missional Aim on each sheet.
* Transfer the questionnaire onto a free online survey tool such as Survey Monkey[[3]](#footnote-3), or use a poll in your church Facebook group, to put the questionnaire online.

Of course, you don’t have to just use one of these ideas. You could use the art idea for your children’s groups, discussion and online poll with the young people and the questionnaire for the adults in the church. You could use the questionnaire to get people thinking, and then lead into discussion groups. The questions in the Resource Sheets and the Questionnaire fit together to help you draw together the results, no matter how you collect the information.

Try and collect both qualitative (narrative) and quantitative (data) information. Both are important. The data will tell you *what* the picture is in summary and the narrative will tell you *why* the picture is like it is so that you can understand what’s behind that data.

### quick wins

As you gather data about the mission of your church, seen through the lens of the three Missional Aims, we want to encourage you to look for one or two ‘quick wins’. Although it’s important to do the work of listening and discernment well and not short circuit that work, there may nevertheless be some obvious and straightforward things that you can do straight away, whilst that listening and discernment happens.

Sometimes, going through a process like this can drain energy and momentum from a church because it looks like nothing’s happening. A quick win will help people to see differences being made early on. That may provide the encouragement needed to carry on when it gets difficult.

It may be as straightforward as doing something you already do in a different way, celebrating and being more intentional about a mission opportunity, or stopping something that you know is holding you back.

## step three: discern

After you’ve gathered some information from the church about where you are with each Missional Aim (and the different aspects of them), you can then spend some time in prayer and reflection, deciding where God might be calling you to particularly respond as a church. If that sounds a bit ‘mechanical’, think about the letters to the angels of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. Here, Jesus is saying, “This is what I love about you, but this is something about which I want to challenge you.”

Think of this prayer and reflection, using the information you’ve gathered, as a period of listening to the voice of Jesus as you ask him,

* What do you want to give thanks for in our church?
* What do you want to challenge in our church?

You could even use these questions as you spend time doing this, as well as looking at the information you’ve gathered through the survey and in other ways. The idea is to find just one or two aspects of each Missional Aim on which it might be good to focus. However, don’t forget to celebrate together and give thanks for the areas in which you’re already responding well!

### celebrate what is already happening

As God challenges you, it will be easy for people to feel like they’re ‘not good enough’ or that what is already happening isn’t recognised. The challenge is important, but we also need to acknowledge that we are not starting from scratch; God is already at work in the church and has been for some time! Take time to celebrate the good things that God is already doing in and through the church.

## step four: prepare

Now that you’ve identified the areas on which you want to focus, stage four is about working out exactly what you need to do to respond to the ongoing challenge of the Missional Aims. Talk together about what you need to achieve and what steps you will need to take to get there. The questions in the Resource Sheets should help you and the actions should get you started.

The actions in the Resource Sheets are designed to be simple and straightforward, not requiring large amounts of time, special skills or resources. Every church should be able to have a go with at least some of them. Of course, they’re only suggestions; you don’t have to use them. We encourage you to come up with your own actions, using what’s there to spark ideas and fire imaginations. The actions you need to carry out will be different from those of another church, so you will need to decide for yourselves the best steps to take. You can adapt what is there to meet your needs. However, we hope the suggested actions will trigger your imagination. The Discipleship, Mission and Ministry Team are also there to help. Our contact details are at the end of this Introduction.

Remember also, that what you plan doesn’t have to be about doing more things or starting new initiatives. It might be about changing the way you do things, changing attitudes or behaviours or even stopping some things. You don’t need large programmes that take lots of time, effort and money. The best actions are often simple and straightforward. Once you have worked out the actions you need to take, fill out the *Action Sheet* that is included as a part of the Toolkit and is the basis for the next stage.

That action sheet encourages you to ensure that every action is **SMART**:

* **Specific** – that you know clearly what it is that you are called to do.
* **Measurable** – that you know when you have achieved what is needed.
* **Achievable** – that, with the help and resources of God and each other, you can do it.
* **Relevant** – that doing it will have a real impact on God’s Mission.
* **Timely** – that you have set a time by which you believe you can do it.

## step five: journey

Next, the bit that’s easy to say and a harder to do – to start work on the actions you’ve identified. As you do, there are some things to remember:

* Keep praying – make sure you are continually seeking God for his strength, power and wisdom about the way forward. We need God’s Holy Spirit for our plans to succeed.
* Keep everyone involved – it’s not just the job of a few busy people (or the busy vicar) and involving people will make sure they know they’re important and valued and that this work belongs to them.
* Keep talking – make sure you keep everyone informed about how the work is going and why it’s happening, through sermons, noticeboards, pew sheets, emails, Facebook… however you normally communicate.
* Keep reviewing – talk about the work you’re doing when you meet as a PCC or leadership team, and don’t be afraid to change your actions if they’re not working in the way you expected.

As you journey, it’s important that the PCC or leadership team are regularly checking to see how things are going. Use the *Action Sheet* each time you meet to check back against the plans that you’ve made and, if things aren’t going as you expected, see if you need to change tack or do something to get things back on track. Of course, it may be that the actions need to change; don’t be a slave to the plans you made, but rather continue to listen to the prompting of God’s Holy Spirit. Sometimes God might ask us to change direction and we need to always be open to that possibility.

### step five… and a bit

### do it again

Yes, we cheated… but it’s not really a stage. It’s to go back to the beginning. Well, not quite to the beginning. Now that you’ve travelled a little, you can go back and listen to Jesus speak to the angel of your church once again. What is he saying to you now? Are there different areas for which you can give thanks, or in which God is challenging you?

## where can I get help?

If you would like further help or guidance in using the *Mission Action Toolkit* or Mission Action Planning for Derby Diocese (on which this toolkit is based), or any aspect of mission, then please contact:

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**e** [jason.kennedy@derby.anglican.org](mailto:jason.kennedy@derby.anglican.org)

He will also be able to signpost you toward support and advice from any member of the Discipleship Mission and Ministry Team.

1. <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://derby.anglican.org/en/our-mission/mission-action-plans-map.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)