



Bristol Diocesan Growth Programme

“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”
St Paul, 1 Cor 3:6

When Jesus described the “kingdom of God”, the stories he used showed it to be a kingdom that grows. It is clear that God calls us to be fruitful as well as faithful (John 15). St Paul stresses that it is God that gives growth. But for God to play his part, we must play ours with purposeful effort and activity.

The Growth Programme aims to give direction to that effort and activity in the Diocese and the communities that make it up. The Growth Programme takes a holistic approach to growth and therefore has four key components:

- growing in COMMITMENT
- growing in PARTNERSHIP
- growing in INFLUENCE
- growing in NUMBERS

For more about the Growth Programme, please visit:
www.bristol.anglican.org/resources/growth

Growing in Commitment is about loving God more and loving each other more. The way to commitment is to take discipleship – our undertaking to follow Jesus – seriously and this will inevitably involve getting out of our comfort zones as individuals and communities.

- Committing to prayer and spiritual disciplines
- Corporate worship where people can engage with God
- Delivering high quality learning
- Developing small groups
- Focusing on pastoral care
- Releasing spiritual gifts
- Encouraging generosity

Growing in Partnership is about looking for opportunities to work with others, both within the Church and beyond it.

- Other local Anglican churches
- Local churches from other denominations
- Diocesan link with the Province of Uganda
- Other parts of the global church
- With those who share our aspirations on issues such as education, health, poverty, world development, the environment, social justice
- Sharing resources and people
- Doing things together that we are unable to do on our own
- Learning from each other
- Using the Board of Education and ISR

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Growing in Influence is about engaging with people where they are, living with integrity and speaking prophetically into the world around us.

- Living in a way that those around us respect
- Listening to what is going on in our communities and culture
- Leading on issues such as the environment, poverty, social justice, consumerism and family life
- Practising what we preach
- Developing coherent strategies for communication
- Taking advantage of new technology

Growing in Numbers is about bringing others into relationship with Christ and His people by encouraging people to believe in Him and belong in His Church. To do this, we'll need to re-connect with those who used to belong to the Church and connect with those who have never been a part of it.

- Encouraging experiences of being welcomed and belonging
- Rethinking our programmes to be more user-friendly
- Thinking about our worship and activities in terms of accessibility
- Starting a fresh expression of church
- Focusing on children and young people
- Making best use of process evangelism courses
- Understanding that, wherever we are, we are sent to be witnesses to Christ

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Although all parts of the Diocese have been asked to embrace the Growth Programme, it is particularly hoped that every parish, benefice or partnership will develop their own, locally shaped plan for growth.

As well as picking up on all four components of the Growth Programme in formulating their plans, each parish, benefice or partnership will need to shape their plan in line with their cultural context, their theological tradition, their available resources and Deanery strategies.

When entering into a planning process, you may want to think about these things:

- Root your planning in prayer
- Plan with a smaller group (PCC or leadership team) but gain ownership more widely
- Have a time-frame, whether it is year by year or over a longer period
- Think about how you can measure the impact of your plans
- Planning will probably mean refocusing your activity and may require you to stop doing some things.

The Parish Development Team is here to advise and support you in this process. Please contact George Rendell on 0117 906 0100, george.rendell@bristoldiocese.org if you would like to take up the offer of consultancy.

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