



Diocese of Bristol

† TRANSFORMING CHURCH.  
TOGETHER.

# Transforming Church. Together:

A short course.

**OPENNESS  
GENEROSITY  
CREATIVITY  
BRAVERY**

## Booklet 3: Creativity

“Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is old and what is new” - Matthew 13:52



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# Introduction

This is the third of four booklets exploring the four values that have been discerned as part of the Transforming Church. Together process in the Diocese of Bristol.

This booklet explores the value of creativity and how we co-operate with the work of the Spirit.

## This session includes:

The Transforming Church. Together prayer to start the session.

An introduction to the value.

Opening questions for us individually and to discuss as a group.

Images to explore and reflect on the value.

Bible passages to be explored together on the value.

A prayer to finish the session.

Within this booklet is an opportunity to feedback to the Ministry Team and PCC your thoughts on the value of theme of creativity within the context of your church.

**This booklet is based on material provided by the Revd Dr Simon Taylor and the Revd Cheryl Hawkins.**

# **The Transforming Church. Together prayer**

**You may wish to light a candle and use this prayer at the start of this session.**

God of the Way, you call us to leave familiar places and to set out on new paths.

Enlarge our vision of your work in the communities we serve, speak to us through the people we encounter and open our hearts to the love.

Give us courage and boldness to engage together in this time of prayer and discernment, and by your Holy, life-giving, and creative Spirit, renew your church in prayer and service, and in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

# Space for notes



# Transforming Church. Together

## Housegroup Feedback Form - Creativity

### **STOP**

What gets in the way of achieving this value at our church?

### **START**

What should we start doing to show this value at our church?

### **CONTINUE**

What should we continue doing to show this value at our church?

What words would you use to describe the value of creativity in the context of our church?

# Creativity

## **We co-operate with the work of the Spirit.**

The sheer creativity of creation is immense – the Genesis creation stories emphasise the goodness of creation, the repeated refrain “and God saw that it was good” (Genesis Chapter 1). God’s methodical nature of His creative powers is seen in the starting of the basic elements of light and darkness and moving to the complexity of living creatures. There is utter spontaneity in the sheer gift of creation and yet there is ordered purpose in creation too.

Our own human creativity is not an explicitly Biblical concept – God alone is the creator. Yet, the creation of Adam, as God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Genesis 2:7) is literally a story of in-spiration. Adam is God-breathed, so all human beings are inspired. It is important to note that human creativity is itself created.

**We will be exploring these themes further, but before we do, spend a few minutes thinking about God’s creativity and how you see that creativity working in your own life.**



# Opening questions

**How have you been creative in the past week? In what ways, if any, did it transform you or your circumstances or those of others?**

**Where have you experienced the creativity in other people?**

**Can you give examples of when you have seen creativity in Church and where it helped transform the Church and/or the local community?**

**Share briefly what you are comfortable with in answering the above questions with the rest of the group.**

# Closing prayer

**Silently sit and hold before God who or what God has placed on your heart during the session.**

**We pray together:**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours

Now and for ever.

Amen.

O Holy Spirit, giver of light and life.

impart to us thoughts better than our own thoughts,

and prayers better than our own prayers,

and powers better than our own powers,

that we may spend and be spent

in the ways of love and goodness,

after the perfect image of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

**(Eric Milner-White and G W Briggs, Daily Prayer, 1941)**

## **The Spirit of God**

**Running through all of this is the Spirit of God. Eucharistic Prayer A asks God to “renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love and unites us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord”**

**It is the Spirit of God that moves on the waters at creation (Genesis 1:1)**

**It is the Spirit which is breathed into Adam (Genesis 2:7)**

### **And the Spirit that inspires:**

- all whose craft or art assist with the worship of God (Exodus 35:31)
- the Scriptures themselves (1 Timothy 3:16)
- our prayer (Romans 8:26-27)
- that gives us the words to speak (Mark 13:11)

It is in the power of the Spirit that God who created the world will sing through us, though we do not yet know the words of the tune.

**Read through the above brief Biblical references quietly to yourselves and quietly give thanks to God for the work of the Holy Spirit in your life.**

# Reflecting on images

Below and on the next page are some images on creativity, reflect quietly on them. Which one resonates with you the most and why? Does a different image come into your mind?

**If you feel comfortable in doing so,  
share with the rest of the group.**





## **Discussion questions**

- 1. How do we recognise the creative gifts of others in our Church Community as Moses did in Exodus 35:30-35?**
- 2. In what ways can such recognition and encouragement transform ourselves/local community for the better?**
- 3. How do we encourage an open invitation to such creativity?**

In the above we see a biblical witness of creativity which holds onto what has gone on before, without preventing change. Sam Wells in his book "Improvisation; The Drama of Christian Ethics (London:SPCK,2004)" talks of a community which "fits a new action or concept into a larger narrative, into the greater drama of what God is doing in the world" (p.13). We could call this "faithful creativity" which holds onto what we have been given, but which impels us to move forward in new directions.

## **Discussion questions: As a Church Community**

- 1. How well do we as a church community balance what we already have with moving forward in new directions? Can you think of any examples?**
- 2. Are we as a church bold or timid in moving forward in being creative?**



## **Take time:**

Before moving on to the next section, take a moment in prayer to lift before God your discussions. For the things you have found helpful, for the things you have found challenging.

## **Human creativity...**

Is not an explicitly Biblical concept – God alone is creator. It is important to remember that human creativity is itself created.

Human creativity is found in the Bible – the books of the Bible themselves offer an example of creativity, the language, imagery, poetry, and teaching are not only important to faith, but part of the body of human literature.

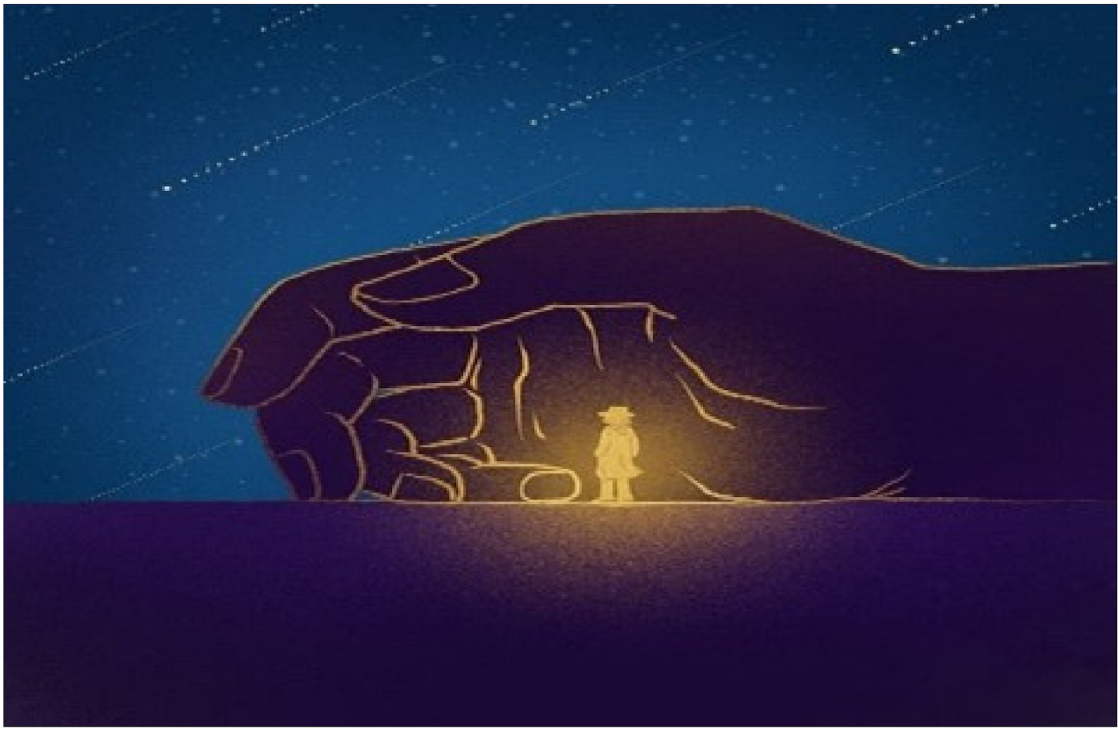
## **Look at the following passages:**

**Exodus 35:10 – the tent of meeting in which the people of Israel met with God in the wilderness was made by those who responded to Moses’ very open invitation. Moses also then called specifically skilled people – read Exodus (35: 30-35)**

**Music is part of the creativity to which the Bible bears witness:  
Genesis 4;21, I Samuel 15:17, Psalm 33:3.**

**I Chronicles 6:32 - musicians being set aside to lead the worship of God’s people in the house of the Lord.**

In the parables, we see Jesus as the master storyteller and throughout the Bible, biblical material is used and re-used to bring out fresh emphasis and insight – can you think of an example?



# Bible reading:

## God the Creator

**Read out loud Proverbs 8: 22-31 leaving a short time for silence afterwards.**

In Genesis we see the methodical nature of God's creation, the ordered and purposeful way in which God creates and the end of creation in rest (Genesis 2: 2-3). There is an utter spontaneity in the sheer gift of creation, and yet there is an ordered purpose to creation.

Later Jewish thought introduced the personified figure of the Wisdom of God to emphasise the sense of the purpose nature of creation. In Proverbs 8, Lady Wisdom speaks "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago..... when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race" (Proverbs 8: 22,29-31)

## Discussion questions

**1. How does reading Proverbs inform your understanding of God's created world?**

**2. We have talked about the methodical and purposeful nature of God's creation and yet the utter spontaneity in the sheer gift of it – how do we hold onto both the methodical and purposefulness of creativity without losing spontaneity in:**

- Our worship
- In our outreach
- In our own personal faith journeys
- In telling good news in our community

# **Creation and Diversity:**

## **The sheer abundance of created life**

**The intentional diversity that God has given us in creation is seemingly infinite, for example:**

The Garden of Eden in Genesis 2 is a place of abundance and richness, as evident in the marvellous scene when God brings each creature in turn before Adam to be named, and for Adam to discern which will be a partner (Genesis 2: 18-20).

When God answers Job he does so by asking Job about a long list of created things, from the seasons to the stars, from the weather to wildlife, and goes on to ask about the mythical creatures Behemoth and Leviathan (Job 38-41) showing a richness and diversity to creation.

Within the engagement the Church of England is currently doing, to look at identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, called Living in Love and Faith (LLF), it states that “in the story of salvation God brings about a glorious diversity in creation, a diversity that is reflected in humankind” (p.188). The implications of this diversity are, of course, contested. But in an accompanying video, Bishop Jo Bailey Wells speaks of the God who not only created night and day but also dusk and dawn. The intentional diversity that God has given us in creation is seemingly infinite.

## **Discussion questions**

- 1. How do we encourage diversity in creativity?**
- 2. Where do you see dusk and dawn in being creative – is being creative always clear?**
- 3. How can we engage creatively with those who hold different views to our own, both within our own church community and the wider community?**