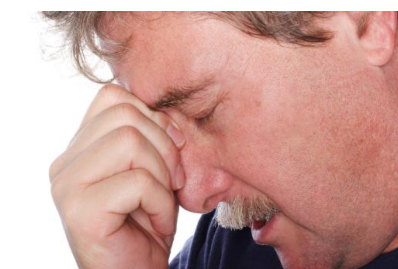


Lay Pastoral Assistant Training Course



Learning for Discipleship, Diocese of Salisbury
Email: parishsupport@salisbury.anglican.org
Web: www.salisbury.anglican.org
Tel: 01722 411922 Fax: 01722 411990

Diocesan Office, Church House, Crane Street, Salisbury, SP1 2QB

The Salisbury Diocesan Board of Finance is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, no. 17442

Registered charity no. 240833. Registered Office: Church House, Crane Street, Salisbury, SP1 2QB



We acknowledge with grateful thanks all who have contributed to the content and structure of this course booklet including the Diocesan LPA support group, Norma Fergusson, Janice Audibert, and Jennifer Cole (Diocese of Bath and Wells). Most of all we thank Jennifer Totney for coordinating the revision of the course and for writing much of the new material.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of The Learning for Discipleship Team. Within the UK, exceptions are allowed in respect of any fair dealing for the purpose of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, or in the case of reprographic reproduction in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction should be sent to the Learning for Discipleship Team.

First published 2014 and revised in March 2016 and January 2022

Images provided and purchased from CanStockPhoto.com where acknowledged and on the cover and index © Can Stock Photo Inc.

The NRSV Bible, also known as New Revised Standard Version is used for Bible references throughout this booklet



An Introduction by

**The Rt Revd Karen Gorham
Bishop of Sherborne,
Chair of the LPA Support Group**

The richness of the Church is the celebration and outworking of many gifts and ministries. We all need one another in order to live out our calling to be the Body of Christ and to make him known in our world today.

This course has been prepared to further equip those who wish to follow the call to service through ministry as a Lay Pastoral Assistant. Based on scripture it will, through prayer, practical action and reflection, enable those who will be LPAs to think and pray about how their ministry might be shaped to serve those we come into contact with and to express something of God's deep love for all people.

This course is offered with thanks to those who have prepared it, will tutor it, and those whose discipleship will be deepened by it.

'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'
Matthew 25:40

+ Karen

Bishop of Sherborne



Session	Title	Page
	CORE MODULES	
1	Who are we?	1
2	Who am I?	7
3	Journey of life	13
4	Learning to listen (or Developing listening skills 4a)	21
5	Engaging with families	27
6	Coming alongside those with acute and chronic illness	35
7	Valuing later life	43
8	Why and when we visit	49
	CHOOSE AT LEAST 2 OF THE FOLLOWING:	
3a	Our role at a time of loss	57
4a	Developing listening skills	67
5a	Nurturing the spirituality of children and young people	75
8a	Knowing our limits	83

Session

1

Who are we?

Welcome to the Lay Pastoral Assistant training course.

Opening Prayer

You may like to use the prayer of Teresa of Avila: read it slowly, with silence in between each line. As you think back to the introductory session, and the calling and gifts you explored, offer this time of formation and training to God.

Lord Jesus, teach us
that you have no body now on earth but ours;
No hands but ours;
No feet but ours;
Ours are the eyes through which your compassion must look out upon the world;
Ours are the feet with which you must go about doing good;
Ours are the hands with which you must bless men and women now;
For your name's sake. Amen.

Gathering

Introductions

Use a light-hearted icebreaker activity to get to know each other.

Confidentiality: It is important to set the boundaries and expectations of the group. You should share only what you feel comfortable talking about. The leader will help the group to formulate a contract of confidentiality at this point.

We have agreed:

Signed:

Date:

Why am I here?

In pairs, (preferably with someone you don't know well) take it in turns to talk for 3 minutes about what has brought you to the beginning of this LPA course, why you are here, what have been the key moments and people involved. Go back to the group prepared to share 2 brief points from what the other person has said.

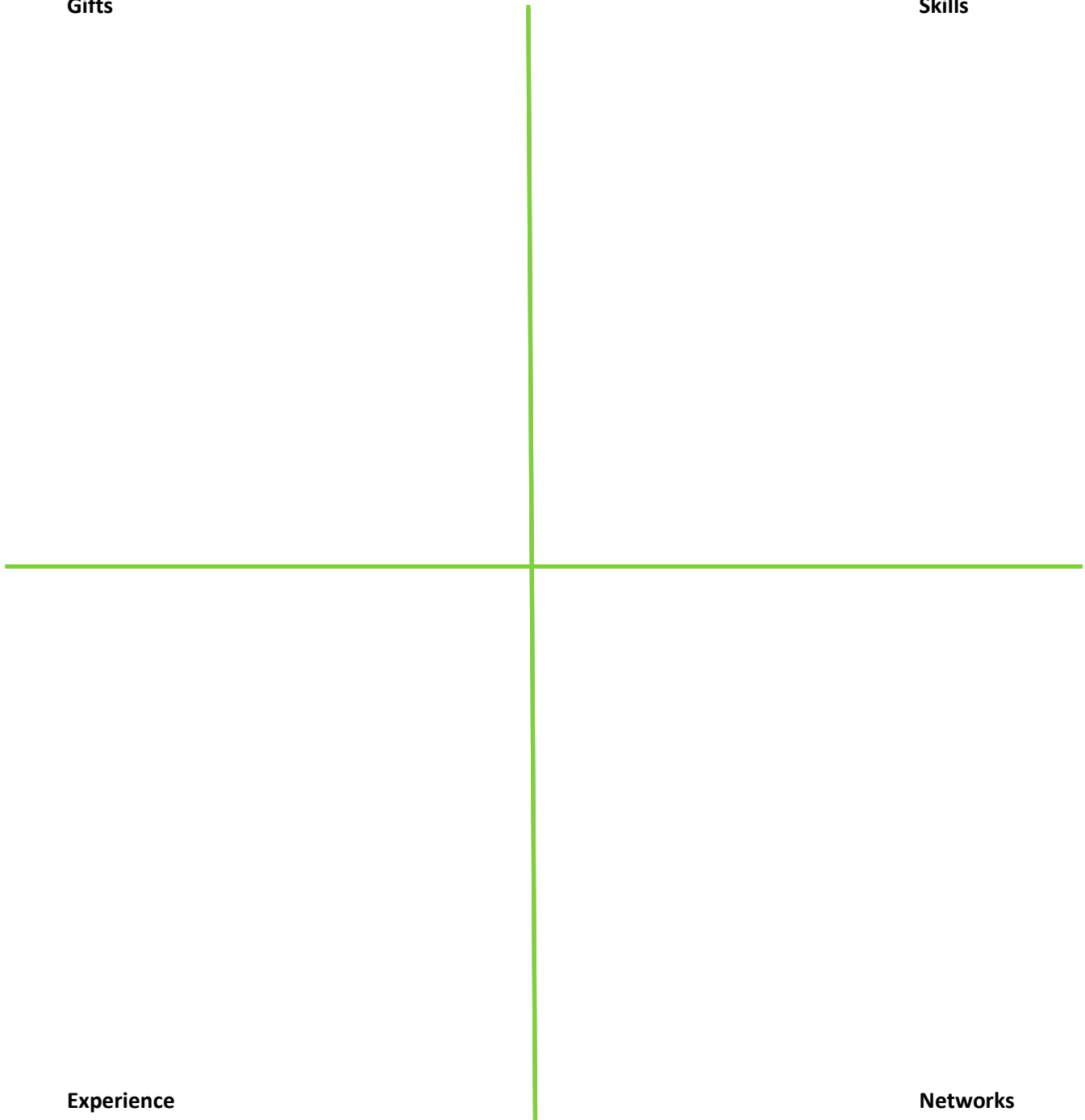
As we begin this course we do not only come as individuals. We come from parishes, benefices, ministry teams, deaneries, neighbourhoods and congregations. All of these are communities of which you are a part and this LPA training group will become a community in its own right. Which 'communities' have played a role in bringing you to this place today?

How green am I?

You may feel you come to potential LPA ministry and to this training course 'green', with little experience or skill, but you will be bringing a variety of gifts from your life experiences, work, and faith. Use this grid to reflect on what you bring to the formation process and to potential ministry.

Gifts

Skills



Experience

Networks

Share one aspect from each quarter with the group.

Who are we as a parish?

Matthew 25.31-40

‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

Who are the ‘least of these’ in your context?

[Light green response box with a hand holding a pen icon on the right side]

How are you serving Christ in responding to the needs of your parish?

[Light green response box with a hand holding a pen icon on the right side]

Explore the Parish Spotlight Data for your parish(es).

Does anything surprise you?

[Light green response box with a hand holding a pen icon on the right side]

Are there any gaps in your pastoral care provision?

[Light green response box with a hand holding a pen icon on the right side]

Are there steps you might take to explore these questions further (e.g. community audit or survey, responding to the needs of the community in a new way)?

[Light green response box with a hand holding a pen icon on the right side]

Working together

1 Corinthians 12.12-31

'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior members, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.'

How is Paul's image of the body reflected in your ministry context?

-
-
-



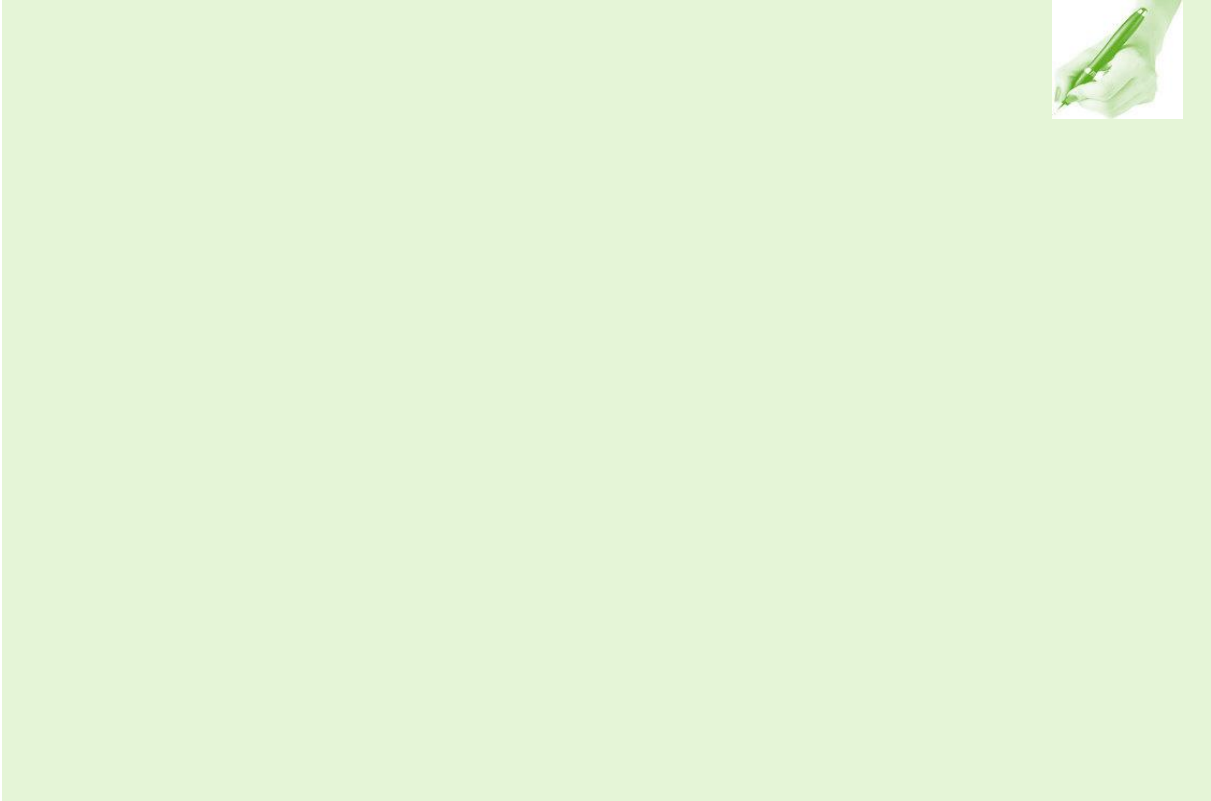
How would you describe your role in the 'body of Christ'?



Lay Pastoral Assistants are part of a team within the local church, the Deanery, and the Diocese; together we seek to share love of God with our communities. Paul's image of the body of Christ is a

helpful one to put alongside Teresa of Avila's prayer. We are the body of Christ on earth, but this is a ministry that we share as members of the Church, locally, and beyond.

Draw a diagram of the relationships in your local Church, looking at the different roles within it. e.g. Churchwardens, Vicar/Rector, Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM), Youth worker, LPAs, LWLs.



You might like to discuss this with your ministry team. Before you are commissioned you will draw up with your incumbent or supervisor a written understanding of your working pattern.

Prayer and Formation

As pastoral ministers it is vital that we develop and sustain our own prayer and spirituality. The first part of the Diocesan vision of Renewing Hope is 'Pray.' We cannot minister to others well if we are not rooted in the love of God ourselves. We cannot be Christ's body on earth if we are not walking daily with him. You may already have an established pattern of reading the Bible and praying on your own or with others or this may be fairly new to you. As you embark on this time of training and formation it is a good opportunity to review your current practice, try new things, and to develop habits that will sustain you in your ministry going forward.

Each session of the course includes at least one Bible passage as well as times for prayer as a group. These readings are a resource for you to reflect on following the session to explore in different ways.

At the end of each session, you will be asked to undertake a prayer or reflection activity drawing on the topics you have been exploring. This will help to embed both the issues you have been discussing, and a regular practice of prayer. You may find this fits alongside an existing pattern, or you may want to lay aside your current pattern for a time during the course. Do discuss this with the course leader or your incumbent or spiritual director if that is helpful.

There will be a space after each session for you to note down your experiences and reflections, or you may want to keep or continue a separate journal in which you reflect on the course, including responding to the sessions and the prayer focus between each session.

Closing Prayer

Spend some time in silence or open prayer offering your community to God.

Turn to face the doors:

To a troubled world

peace from Christ.

To a searching world

love from Christ.

To a waiting world

hope from Christ.

Prayer focus before next time: Prayerful attentiveness

You have been given an opportunity during this session to find out more about the communities you serve. Before the next session, for at least a week develop a habit of prayerful attentiveness. As you are going shopping, while you are at work, walking the dog, or driving around your community, ask God to help you look with his eyes. Pay attention to the people you meet or pass by, especially those you don't normally see; notice their expression, their body language, the situations they are dealing with. There is no need to make conversation, but try making eye contact, smiling or giving a simple greeting. See each one of them as a child of God.

At the end of each day spend some time offering to God all those people and situations you have noticed. Ramsay wrote of prayer as 'being with God with the people on our heart.'

At the end of the week write a short reflection on the experience. What have you discovered about God? What have you discovered about your community? What have you discovered about yourself?



Session
2**Who am I?****Prayer**

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
No hands but ours;
No feet but ours;
Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
Must look out upon the world;
Ours are the feet with which you
Must go about doing good;
Ours are the hands with which you
Must bless men and women now;
For your name's sake.
Amen.

Case Study


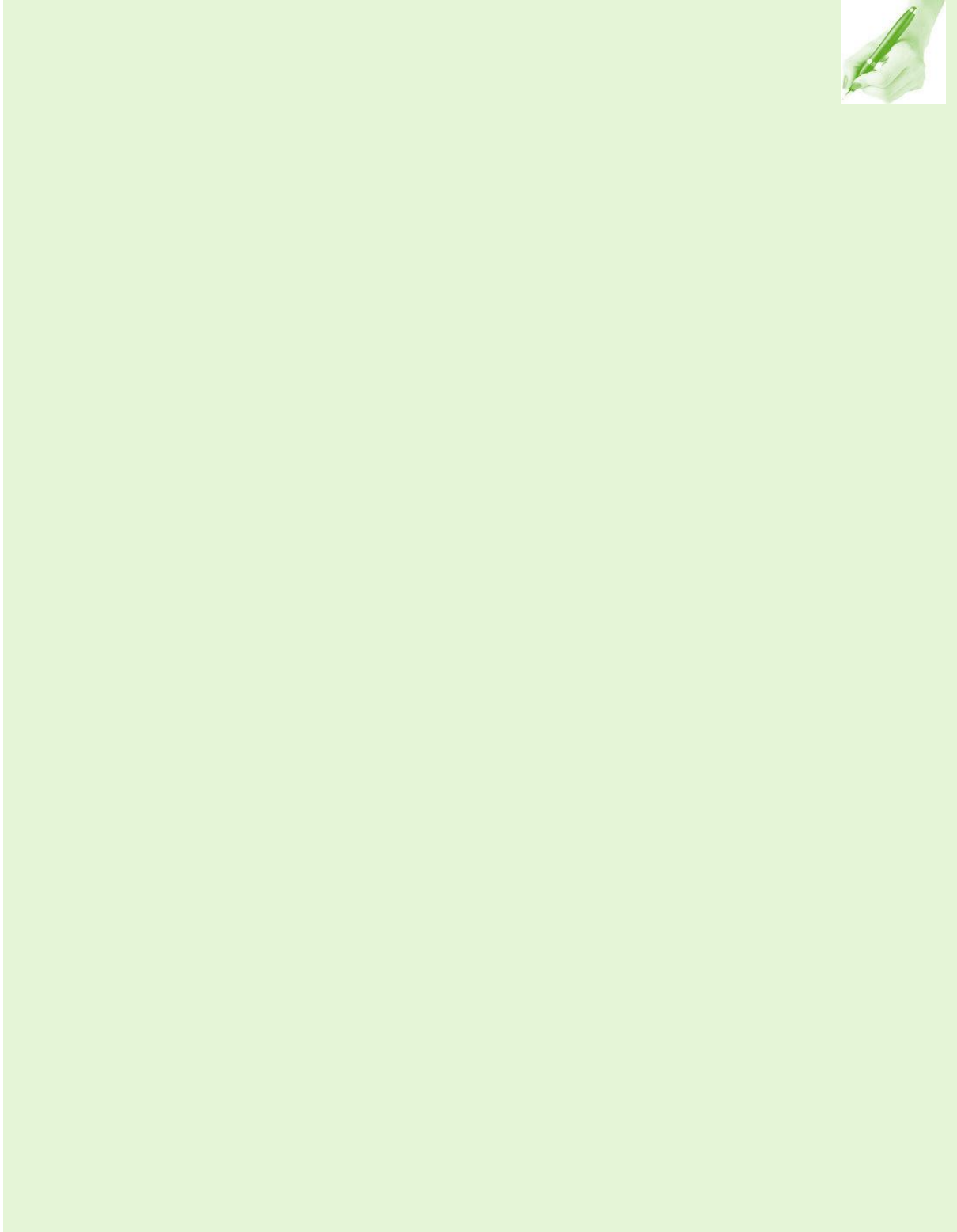
Mandy has been asked to visit Mrs Smith, whose husband died about a year ago. She is in her 80's and is feeling lonely. As Mandy listens to Mrs Smith's story, she speaks of the release death was for her husband, and how she misses him. She then mentions her son, and it becomes clear that he died aged 17 on holiday in France with friends in a swimming accident. Mandy suddenly feels overwhelmed by the story. 'How awful' she says, 'How could you live with that?' on the verge of tears. Mrs Smith seems taken aback by Mandy's reaction, and the visit soon comes to an end. Reflecting afterwards, Mandy realises that this story had reminded her of a friend from university who had been paralysed through a swimming accident, but they had lost touch soon afterwards.

- **What did Mandy learn from this encounter?**
- **Have you ever had a similar experience?**
- **What could Mandy do to prevent similar things happening again?**

Pastoral encounters can bring us face to face with incidents or issues in our own lives which we may or may not be aware of beforehand. It is important to spend some time honestly and prayerfully exploring our own stories and experiences so that we can be more prepared.

My time-line

Use this page (turn to landscape) to plot key events and stages in your life from your birth until now (e.g. starting school, moving house, new job, bereavement, marriage, birth of child, retirement etc).



Reflect on how each event made you feel. What were the high points and low points?

Share with your neighbour anything you feel comfortable saying about what strikes you from your timeline. What were the most significant events? How might your experiences affect your pastoral role? (This may be positive - experiences that give you insights into situations you will encounter - but be aware of the dangers in assuming others will respond in the same way as you. We will discuss this further later in the course.)

Spiritual time-line

Using a different colour, add your spiritual life to your time-line. When did you come to believe in God? How has your relationship with God changed through the experiences of your life? How would you describe your spiritual journey?

‘But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.’ *Isaiah 43.1*

Giving and receiving in ministry

Mark 14.3-9

‘While he [Jesus] was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, ‘Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.’ And they scolded her. But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.’

Throughout his earthly life Jesus was ministered to by others as well as offering ministry himself. It is an important model for all ministers to remember that we all need to be humble and open to receiving from others as well as giving of ourselves.

Identify one period on your timeline that was difficult or challenging. Reflect on who helped you during that time. What was helpful about their ministering to you?

How do others see us?

Although we are perhaps still getting to know each other, we will work in pairs to see how others perceive us, and whether we agree! Often first impressions turn out to be wrong and it is easy to misjudge a person on the first visit.

In pairs, take it in turns to describe to the other person



a) Two main strengths of your own personality (e.g. organised, sympathetic etc.)

1.....

2.....

b) one weakness

.....

c) one significant way in which you have grown in self-knowledge

.....

.....

Does your partner agree?

In the large group:

What is the importance of first impressions?



.....

.....

How can we be more aware of how people see us?

.....

.....

Personality type

Human beings differ from one another in ways that are consistent. Each of us has preferred ways of experiencing life and forming judgements.

Those preferences are not random or erratic, but stable over time. Your personality has not radically altered over your lifetime. Someone meeting you today for the first time since you were at school together would still recognise your personality. You will have aged and perhaps matured into a more rounded personality. Nevertheless characteristic qualities of individual human personality are clear and endure from earliest childhood.

There are different ways we can become more aware of who we are, to help us understand how we relate to other people, and why we act in certain ways, including personality type indicators such as Myers-Briggs and the Enneagram, and models of how we work with others such as Belbin. There are courses available through the Diocesan Continuing Ministerial Development programme. We encourage you to look at the range of courses on our website <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/>

Look at this website for more information about personality types:

<http://www.businessballs.com/personalitystylesmodels.htm>

How does God see us?

Luke 15. 11-24

‘Jesus continued: There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’” So he got up and went to his father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.’

- **What was the younger son's story of his life?**
- **How was the father's story about his son different?**
- **How would God tell the story of your life?**

Conclusion

What are three things that you will want to be aware of about yourself in your pastoral role? This could be about time, about issues or situations that you would struggle to deal with, or about a weakness that could get in the way.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Closing Reflection

'O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away....

For it is you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully image. Wonderful are your works, that I know very well.'

Psalm 139. 1-2, 13-14

Reflect on these words in silence, or to music, offering to God all you have thought and felt and said in this session.

Prayer focus before next time: Praying a Psalm

We have concluded with some verses for Psalm 139. As you reflect on who you are before God, take this Psalm and read it at least once every day for one week.

- Before you read, sit still and open your heart and mind. Ask God to help you listen to what he is saying to you.
- Read the psalm slowly and meditatively to yourself. Perhaps try saying it out loud.
- Let the words and images speak to you. Pause and reflect on those which strike you.
- At the end of the week reflect and note down what you have heard God saying, especially anything new or surprising.

Session 3

Journey of life

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
 No hands but ours;
 No feet but ours;
 Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
 Must look out upon the world;
 Ours are the feet with which you
 Must go about doing good;
 Ours are the hands with which you
 Must bless men and women now;
 For your name's sake.
 Amen.

Case Study

Luke 2.41-52



'Now every year his [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.'

- Who do you relate to most in this gospel passage?
- How do the different characters respond to the change in their relationships?
- What would your response be to this family as an LPA?

Change

Watch an extract from the film 'Up' which shows Ellie and Carl's relationship through time

- **What are the changes that Ellie and Carl each have to face in their lives?**
- **What things stay the same?**
- **How do they deal with them?**

Change is an inevitable part of life. Think back to your life-time from session 2.

- **Can you identify the key changes in your own life?**
- **What other changes might people face?**

One way of looking at changes in life is to classify them into three headings, attachment, separation, and loss.

'Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.' John 12.24

Jesus' words reflect the story of our own individual growth and development and our handling of change. The experience of loss, as we let go one stage of existence for another, is inevitable. The baby leaves the warmth and security of the womb for independent life outside; the toddler is left at the play group to fend for himself; the adolescent battles against parental boundaries, seeking to establish his own identity; the young person negotiates personal and work relationships in building a home and a career; and the older adult discovers that loss of one kind or another is increasingly part of everyday life.

This separation from something or someone to whom we have been attached, can be frightening and painful. It involves change and change is something most of us resist. But negotiating change - recognising and struggling with all the difficulty of loss and separation - and finding from within that experience of new life and growth, is an integral part of life. It requires courage and it is not always easy.

Some people for one reason or another, though no fault of their own, get stuck and are unable to move on. Those who do not grow up experiencing love and security, or who suffer multiple losses, will feel at some level that the world is a frightening place and that life and people are not to be trusted. They no longer feel in control; loss and the feelings around it are hardly bearable and there is a tendency to resolve not to risk getting close to people or dependent on things and places again. Some will become cynical or despairing and lose all sense of promise and adventure in life. Change is seen as something to be avoided, and they settle for the status quo. It is when loss and change are thrust upon them that a crisis may occur and help be needed.

Other people in life negotiate change more easily. They arrive, through personality and experience, at a certain detachment. Many people, some from a religious perspective and others not, acknowledge that there is gain to be had after they have worked through the pain of loss. Some would describe their experiences of loss and change as mini-deaths and find in them a preparation for the final letting go of their own death.

Look back at your time-line from last week. Identify points of attachment, separation and loss.

- **How did you respond to these?**
- **Were they times of crisis or times of growth?**

As LPAs we need some understanding of the nature and pattern of loss and change and above all, an awareness of our capacity to handle them in our own lives.

One human instinct is to see change as always negative: 'change and decay in all around I see', but we can also take a positive view: 'a change is as good as a rest.' Times of change can be times of growth both spiritually and personally.

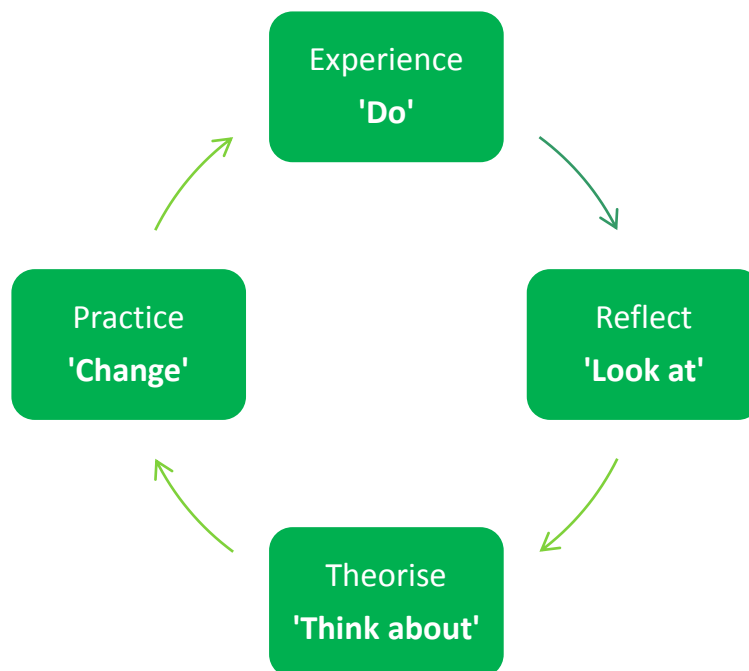
Models for reflecting on the journey of life

There are a number of models and approaches that can help us when reflecting with others on the changes and growth we experience through life. Below are two of these: the *Pastoral Cycle* which is based on a theory of how we learn; and Fowler's *Stages of Faith* which focuses on spiritual development. Your leader will help you to choose one of these to explore in the session, and to work on the other for yourself.

Model one - Pastoral Cycle

The Pastoral Cycle sets out in the form of a diagram one way of understanding how we deal with the experiences of everyday life.

The cycle may begin at any point: new experience; thought and reflection; new ways of thinking; changes in the way things are done.



For example, in the gospel passage we began with, Mary and Joseph had the **experience** of losing Jesus in Jerusalem and finding him in the temple. If we were to imagine one outcome of this story: They might **reflect** on their feelings of fear and frustration at losing him, their relief at finding him again, their inability to understand his answer. As they travelled home they might have **theorised** about Jesus' need for more independence to study and discuss the things of God. When they returned to Nazareth perhaps they **changed** their **practice** to allow Jesus time to spend with the local Rabbi, reading the scriptures and discussing his heavenly Father. In turn this would lead to new **experiences** and the cycle would continue.

Case studies

Using the following case studies, apply the pastoral cycle to these situations. What might it look like for these people?

Case Study 1 - Helen



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / bds

Helen has a three-month-old baby called Jack. Her friends keep telling her how fortunate she is and how she should make the most of this very special time in her life. Yet Helen does not feel like that. Before she had Jack, Helen had a responsible job in the City of London where she was responsible for the personnel of an international banking corporation. People were always seeking Helen's advice and she enjoyed working with the variety of different situations which every day brought. Now Helen feels that she has no-one to talk to. Her husband David has been sent abroad by his company to Hong Kong and will not be back for another six months. Although they talk daily on the phone, Helen feels that she cannot admit to David how she really feels as it would only worry him. She feels lonely and is struggling with the boredom of the daily routine of looking after a small baby. Friends have suggested that she goes along to the church Mother and Toddler Group but Helen feels like a fish out of water as all the other mothers seem to be coping so well and enjoying life. She herself feels, however, that she is not coping, either with Jack or with her changed lifestyle. Some mornings she feels like pulling the duvet over her head and staying in bed. She probably would if Jack did not cry so much when he wanted feeding.

- Helen's **experience**:
- Helen's **reflection**:
- How could Helen '**think differently**' here?
- What could Helen **change**?
- Could this lead to new **experience**?



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / photoaraphv33

Case Study 2 - Henry

Henry was made redundant six months ago. At first he hadn't minded. He had received a good redundancy payment and he and his wife Irene had spent some of it on going on a cruise - something that they had always wanted to do. Now, however, they were back in Britain. Irene had taken up her normal routine with the Women's Institute and Meals on Wheels. But Henry had nothing to do. He had weeded the garden until it looked like something out of a Homes and Gardens magazine. He had driven Irene to her Meals on Wheels a few times. Yet he was bored and frustrated. When he met his former work colleagues for a drink at the Dog and Gun, which he did most weeks, they all seemed to be coping much better than Henry was.

Ian and his wife Davina seemed to be finding new hobbies together, and were rarely out of one another's company. Phil had found a part-time job in the local convenience store. Everything in their lives was much rosier than in Henry's life (or that's how it seemed to him). Henry really didn't know what to do. Every time he met his friends he felt depressed and got irritable with Irene afterwards. Perhaps he felt he should stop seeing them. But then what else did he have to look forward to? Henry was terrified that he would soon resemble the vegetables on his allotment but he didn't know what to do.

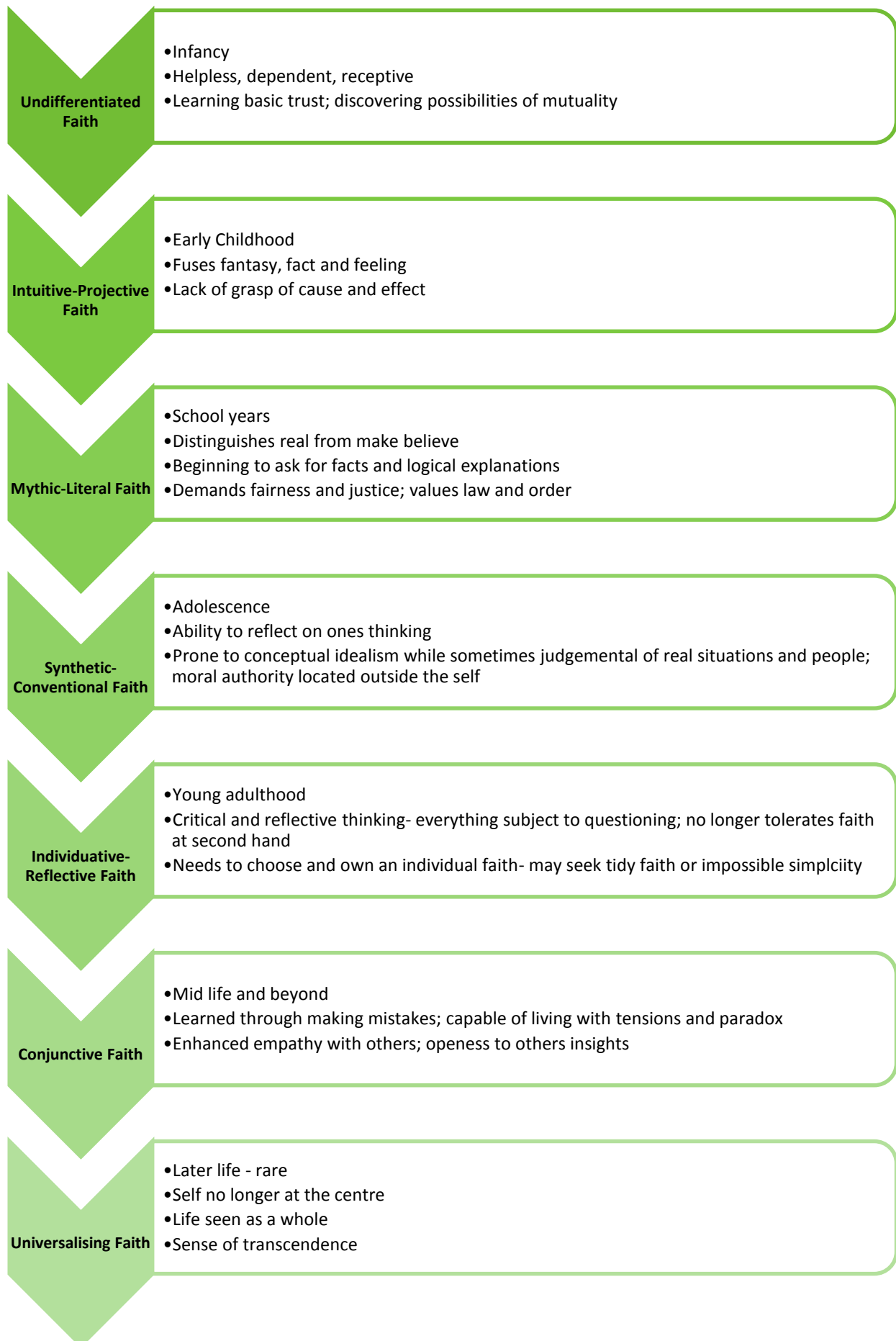
- Henry's experience:
- Henry's reflection:
- How could Henry 'think differently' here?
- What could Henry change?
- Could this lead to new experience?

It is important to remember that the pastoral cycle is a 'model' which gives one way we might respond to a situation. The cycle might begin at any stage. Each stage will take different lengths of time, and may come in a different order. It is not helpful to impose this cycle in an artificial way on an encounter or situation, and you certainly wouldn't want to use these terms when talking to people. It is a pattern that you might like to bear in mind when dealing with situations of change which may help people with changes in their lives.

Model two - Stages of Faith Another way of thinking about the journey of life is in relation to the development of our faith. James Fowler (1981) in his book *Stages of Faith* identified a pattern based on stages of life. This can be helpful in understanding where people are coming from, as well as being aware of our own faith development.

Looking at the diagram on the opposite page,

- **Can you identify these stages in your own life?**
- **Where would you place yourself now?**
- **What might be the particular concerns or needs of people at each stage?**



Questions and comments

Following this session, make sure you give some time to reflecting on your own experiences of change and the different stages in your life, perhaps using the pastoral cycle. Are there other methods or strategies that you use to help you respond to change? As you reflect, hold the joys and sorrows of those times before God, and pray for those dealing with change at the moment.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, lord of time,
hold us in your eternity.
 Jesus, image of God,
travel with us the life of faith.
 Jesus, friend of sinners,
heal the brokenness of our world.
 Jesus, lord of tomorrow,
draw us into your future. Amen.

Prayer focus before next time: Theological Reflection

Following this session, give some time to reflecting on your experiences of change and the different stages in your life, or a group to which you belong, using the pastoral cycle. Choose one experience of change, ideally one that is still having an impact now, or that you feel is unresolved.

Slowly and prayerfully work through the four stages of the pastoral cycle:

Experience: Describe what happened as objectively as possible, and your reaction to it.

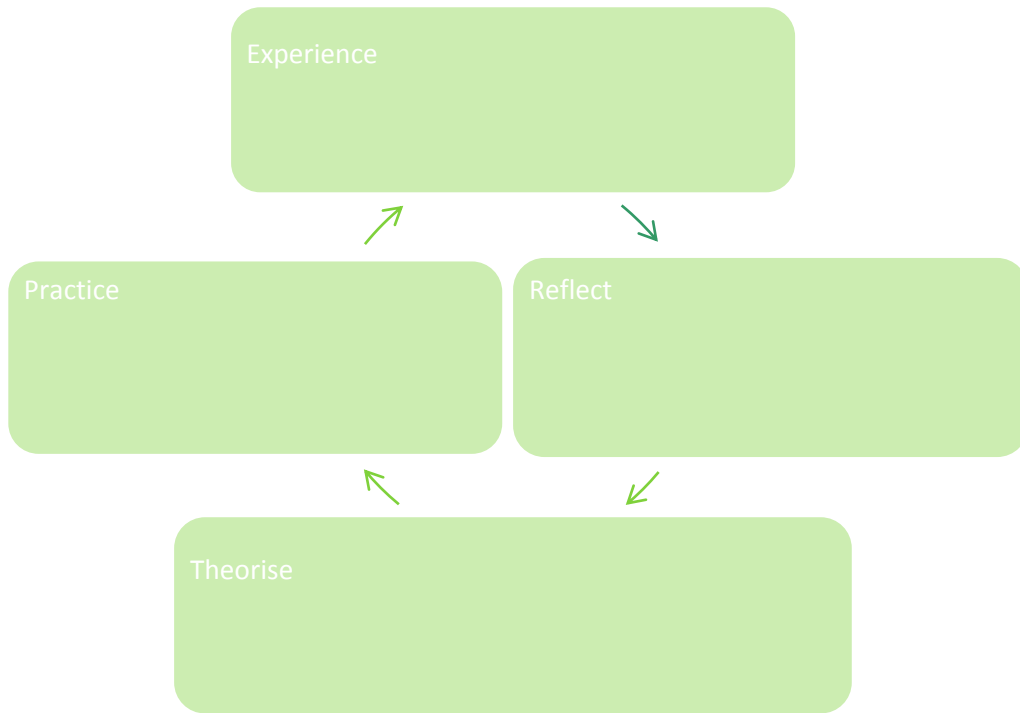
Reflect: 'Look' more deeply at the experience. Explore what might be behind your reaction. What role did other people play?

Theorise: What resources from the Bible or Christian tradition (hymns, poems, prayers etc) might you use to explore this further? Where is God in this situation?

Change: How might this make you think differently? What therefore might you do differently?

As you reflect, hold the joys and sorrows of those times before God, and pray for those dealing with change at the moment.





Learning to listen

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
 No hands but ours;
 No feet but ours;
 Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
 must look out upon the world;
 Ours are the feet with which you
 must go about doing good;
 Ours are the hands with which you
 must bless men and women now;
 For your name's sake.
 Amen.

Case Study

The third [visitor] skilfully deflates his weakly smiling victim
 By telling him
 How the lobelias are doing,
 How many kittens the cat had,
 How the slate came off the scullery roof,
 And how no one has visited the patient for a fortnight
 Because everybody
 Had colds and feared to bring the jumpy germ
 Into hospital.
 The patient's eyes
 Ice over.
 He is uninterested
 In lobelias, the cat, the slate, the germ.
 Flat on his back, drip-fed, his face
 The shade of a newly dug-up Pharaoh,
 Wearing his skeleton outside his skin,
 Yet his wits as bright as a lighted candle,
 He is concerned only with the here, and now,
 And requires to speak
 Of nothing but his present predicament.
 It is not permitted.

(from 'Ten Types of Hospital Visitor' by Charles Causley)

- **What does the visitor do wrong?**
- **What would a good listener do in this situation?**
- **How could the visitor have worked this out?**

Listening skills

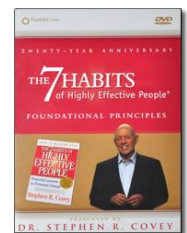


'The first service one owes to others in fellowship consists of listening to them. Just as the love of God begins with listening to his word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them.' Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Bonhoeffer's words remind us that listening to one another begins with listening to God. You are invited to spend 3 minutes now, simply quietly listening. Be aware of the sounds in the room, the sounds coming in from outside, and put them aside. Be aware of your thoughts, register them, and put them aside.

- **Discuss how it felt to spend that time in silence. How easy was it to tune out sounds?**

Listening is at the heart of pastoral care. Teresa of Avila's prayer doesn't speak about the 'ears' of Christ, but to truly listen to people is one of the greatest gifts we can offer. Stephen Covey writes: 'If I were to summarise in one sentence the single most important principle in the field of interpersonal relations, it would be this: **Seek first to understand, and then to be understood.**'



Listening Exercises

Please note:

- **Sharing with one another will be an important part of this session, but you must decide how much or how little to share. No one is under any pressure to say more than they feel comfortable with.**
- **Whatever is said within the group sessions is to be treated in accordance with your group's confidentiality agreement (see p.1)**
- **Remember! Listening is an important way of valuing other people and understanding them.**

Listening exercise 1

Divide into pairs.

One person in each pair tells the other person about something which has happened during the last week.

The 'listener' does their best to ignore them and communicates non-verbally in attention and lack of interest.

The pairs now change roles.

Come back together to discuss:

- **How did it feel not to be listened to?**
- **How hard was it to keep speaking?**
- **How easy or hard was it to really ignore someone?**

Listening exercise 2

One person in each pair tells the other person about 'a happy day'.

The listener is not allowed to interrupt but shows that they are giving their full attention by their facial expression and body language.

The pairs now change roles.

Come back together to discuss:

- **How did it feel to be listened to with attention?**
- **How easy or hard is it to give encouragement to someone without using words?**

What kind of listener am I?

Juggler: distracted, trying to do several things at once, and missing subtleties

Pretender: doesn't want to know (perhaps for good reasons) but is trying not to upset you

Hurry Up-er: tries to get the person who wants to talk to them to 'get on with it' – they may even try to finish a sentence or fill in a word in their impatience to move things along

Rehearser: starts listening but switches off because they are thinking about what to say in response

Fixer: feels they must give a solution, perhaps before they have heard what the problem really is

(See Acorn Foundation 'Just Listen' course)

- **Which of these do you most relate to?**
- **Do you find yourself adopting types of listening in different circumstances and different people?**
- **What techniques could you use to avoid these characteristics?**

Good listening

The Acorn Foundation (an organisation focused on Christian healing and listening) encourages 'YOU-focused' listening. For more information see www.acornchristian.org.

1. **ME-focused listening:** one-sided, listening to get information for myself
2. **WE-focused listening:** everyday conversation; mutual exchange of information and feelings
3. **YOU-focused listening:** for when someone really needs to talk about something which is troubling them. We put our own needs aside to give them the time and space they need

What characterises good listening?

Not judgemental: In a pastoral context of you-focused listening, you are not there to criticise or comment. You are offering by your presence an opportunity for someone to be heard. If they feel you might be judging them, they may not say what they need to say.

Not directive: In an interview situation for example, you might use leading questions to get the information you want. In contrast, during a pastoral encounter, open questions help people think for themselves. E.g. Not 'That must have been shocking' or 'You must have thought God had abandoned you' but 'How did that make you feel?' 'Where do you think God is in this situation?'

Hard work! You need to prepare well, and be self aware when you are listening to someone. You also need to make sure you look after yourself (we will look at this more in later sessions).

'When I ask you to listen and you start giving me advice, you have not done what I asked. When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings. When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problems, you have failed me.'

Quoted in St John's College, Nottingham: C7 – Pastoral Counselling

Jesus as a listener

Matthew 20. 29-34

'As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him [Jesus]. There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!' The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, 'Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!' Jesus stood still and called them, saying, 'What do you want me to do for you?' They said to him, 'Lord, let our eyes be opened.' Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.'

- What stands out for you about Jesus as a listener here?
- What does Jesus do to enable good listening?

Closing prayer

The Lord God almighty is our Father: **he loves us and tenderly cares for us.**

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour: **he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end.**

The Lord, the Holy Spirit, is among us: **he will lead us in God's holy way.**

To God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, **be praise and glory today and forever.**

Amen.

Note: It is important to emphasise that it has been impossible to do more than scratch the surface of effective listening and that to do it full justice a more in-depth course could be followed.

Prayer focus before next time: Silent meditation

As we discussed at the beginning of the session listening to others begins with listening to God. Silence can be difficult and unusual for us, but many Christians find silent prayer a vital part of their spiritual life. Try to find at least 15 minutes every day for silent prayer.

- Sit comfortably and still your mind. It may help to concentrate on your breathing
- Repeat a word or phrase such as 'maranatha' (which means Come Lord)
- Let go of all thoughts and imagination
- When distractions come acknowledge them and put them aside
- There is no specific outcome for this form of prayer - it is simply about being with God

You might like to look at this website for further suggestions and advice, but remember as all teachers of prayer say - there is no replacement for prayer, not even reading about prayer!

<http://www.christianmeditation.org.uk/how-to-meditate/how-to-meditate2>





Engaging with families

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
No hands but ours;
No feet but ours;
Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
must look out upon the world;
Ours are the feet with which you
must go about doing good;
Ours are the hands with which you
must bless men and women now;
For your name's sake.
Amen.

Case Study

Did you hear the one about the stepmother who was so adored by her stepchildren that they cried when they had to go home? Or was beseeched by her stepchildren to read them just one more bedtime story, or to let them help her choose an outfit for an evening out with their treasured father? Sounds implausible, doesn't it? Yet it seems the reputation of her equally far-fetched counterpart – the wicked stepmother, riddled with jealousy of her stepchildren and prone to committing vile acts upon them – remains strong.

Dr Martin naively told herself that her story would have the true fairytale ending when she agreed to marry her partner, Joel, who had two daughters, Alexandra and Katherine, then aged 15 and 11. 'I had my head placed firmly in the sand,' she says. 'I wanted this thing to work and I was going to ignore everything in order to make that happen. When friends warned me of the potential pitfalls or I came across a negative article, I just ignored it. I was nice, I was fun. Step-hell was for step monsters and I wasn't going there.'

The reality was somewhat different. It took years of trial and error to find some kind of balance and, even then, a supposedly joyous event such as shopping for a wedding dress or the birth of her two sons, Elliot and Lyle, could turn up the heat on the family melting pot and send emotions bubbling over. 'The truth is no one wants a stepmother and no one wants to be one either,' says Dr Martin. 'But there are ways to make it work.'

Alex Lloyd 'The myth of the wicked Stepmother' <http://tinyurl.com/pyel892> (accessed 21.06.13)



- **How do you respond to Dr Martin’s situation?**
- **What does it highlight about the challenges facing families today?**

Twenty-first Century Families

What are 3 important things you remember about your childhood and upbringing? (These could be positive, negative or neutral)

-
-
-



Do you think today’s children would have similar answers? What might the differences be? (e.g. family structures, discipline, risk taking)



In groups identify 5 key changes in society during the 20th century

1. What effect have these had on the family?
2. Can you identify these changes as positive or negative?

-
-
-
-
-



You might like to think about:



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / Jasty

Materialism: The 60's, 70's and 80's in particular were for many people increasingly prosperous. An increasing range of household goods made adults and young people alike vulnerable to advertising. This was also fuelled by new easily available *credit*. The first credit card was marketed on the slogan "Take the waiting out of wanting"! Many families borrow money to give their children what they see as a 'good' Christmas or to go on holiday. 'Loan sharks' and payday loan companies charge enormous interest rates to keep people in debt.

Sex and marriage: Up to the last war if a young person got pregnant either they married and were supported by the wider family or the baby was accepted into the family of the grandparents. Adoption was another common solution. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, sexual relationships became more common in the teenage years. Freely available contraceptives and availability of the 'morning after' pill led to tensions between patient confidentiality held by doctors, school nurses/ counsellors, and parents. The rate of teenage pregnancies in Britain is the highest in Europe. Social norms around marriage have shifted with divorce becoming more common and accepted. The laws regarding homosexuality have undergone vast changes in the last 50 years.

Patterns of work for men and women: Women today are able to work and develop their own careers. This has various implications.

- Two earners in the household
- Women having children at a later stage
- Men often take a more active role in bringing up children
- Shared parental responsibilities often relying on grandparents to help



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / Dukes

Technology: The development of communication through mobile phones, the internet and social media has changed the way many people interact. It has allowed greater communication over longer distances, while some argue social media diminishes the ability to maintain the quality of face to face relationships.

© Can Stock Photo Inc. / 72soul



Contemporary Culture

Each member of the group should bring at least one example of a comic, magazine or online content intended for children and young people.

- **What cultural messages are contained?**
- **How much advertising is there?**
- **What value basis does it have? Does it promote a particular view of life?**
- **Does it help parents in bringing up their children?**
- **What is your reaction? Do you approve or disapprove? Does it matter?**

Family structures

1 Samuel 1.1-8

'There was a certain man of Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. He had two wives; the name of one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Now this man used to go up year by year from his town to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. So it went on year after year; as often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah said to her, 'Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?'

We might not recognise precise details of this situation, but the human emotions are very clear.

- **What are the issues facing this family?**
- **How would you describe the emotions and feelings of :-**
a) Elkanah b) Hannah c) Peninnah d) Peninnah's children
- **What parallels can you think of in our society today?**

Howard Clinebell (Methodist minister and pastoral counsellor 1922-2005) defines family as "The social system of primary relationships from which individuals derive their major psychological and spiritual nurture".



There was a time when the 'Nuclear Family' (two parents and their children) was considered to be the most common family structure, with support from the 'extended family.' In some cultures, there is no such thing as the 'nuclear family' and the 'extended family' is the basic unit of the household. In contemporary society the pattern of family life is more varied and diverse

Lone Parent Family:

One adult is bringing up a child or children without a partner. This can include children visiting or staying (for a weekend or holiday) with one parent while living most of the time with the other parent.

Blended or Reconstituted Family:

When individuals remarry a new family unit is often created. One or both of the adults becomes a step parent through this new relationship. If both adults have previous relationships, the children of one reconstituted family can end up being parented by six people in three different households.

Families can also become 'reconstituted' when children are adopted, fostered or returned from care or when a child joins a family of relatives to be cared for by them.

Surrogate Families:

This can include child minders, nannies, au pairs, boarding school, commune or summer camps.

The term 'surrogate' is also used for someone who provides the biological means for reproduction who may not be an active parent e.g. a woman who has a child for a homosexual couple.

'Family, it seems, is no longer something we have, it is something we do.'

Geraldine Bedell **'We are family: One step beyond'** <http://tinyurl.com/o5y93t9>
(accessed 17.07.13) The Observer, Sunday 6 October 2002



How do you respond to this quotation and the implications of the diversity of family structures?

What qualities make a family life- giving?

Here are some suggestions:-

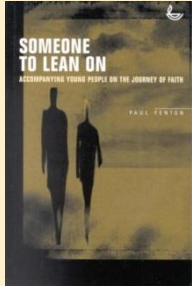
- **Stable relationships**
- **Nurturing for every family member**
- **Involving quality relationships beyond the immediate family circle**
- **Able to respond and deal with difficulties**
- **Founded on love that is not sentimental but cares enough to provide structure, boundaries and support.**

Do you agree?



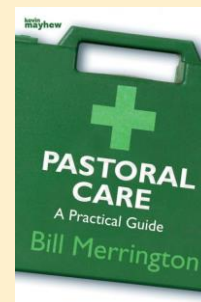
Encountering children and young people

Think about how and when as an LPA you might encounter children and young people. You might not be actively involved in 'children's work' but that doesn't mean you won't meet them as part of your pastoral ministry.



In 1996 the bottom fell out of my world. My parents were getting divorced, I was taking my A-levels and I had a major row with my boyfriend. Everything I touched seemed fated to fall apart. I spent more and more time with Hannah. I would drop in after school and have a cup of tea and a chat. It wasn't so much what she *did*, it was more who she *was*. If she hadn't given me that time and space I know my life would have fallen apart and I'd never be here at university studying Fenton (1998) *Someone to lean on: Accompanying young people on the journey of faith*, p.20 (ISBN-13:978-1859992098)

This was... my first ever experience of a pastoral visit. I was four years old when my grandmother became bedridden in our lounge. She was dying of cancer, having had both breasts removed. I have vivid memories of various events at that time, but one in particular stands out. It was when the local curate came to visit. He knelt down by the bedside to pray. As he did so, we noticed he had big holes in the soles of his shoes. In those days, being a curate meant that one lived little above the poverty line. My family seemed to be really uplifted by his visit.' Merrington (2012) *Pastoral Care* p.55



(ISBN 9781848675414)

- **How would you respond to a child present at a pastoral visit?**
- **How could children and young people be more included in pastoral care?**
- **What does your church do to support and encourage families? (e.g. marriage preparation)**
- **What more could you do?**

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

It is important to be aware of issues of safeguarding and confidentiality in this context. As an LPA you must attend Diocesan Safeguarding training. This will be discussed further in Session 8.

There are opportunities to explore working with children and young people further through the Diocesan Education Centre and Continuing Ministerial Development courses. The practicalities of what this means and how you will encounter young people as an LPA will depend on your parish context, and if this is an area you are interested in, you should discuss this with your incumbent or supervisor. (see Session 5a)

Closing Prayer

Father God, from whom every family
in earth and heaven is named,
we thank you for the rich variety
of the families you have created for us,
and for the relationships
which we see and enjoy within them.
Help us to respect and learn from each other,
that we may come to maturity
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Prayer focus before next time: Praying for a family

Ask a family if they would be happy for you to pray for them. Ask them some general questions about their family and what they would like you to pray for. If they are a person of faith, where do they see God in their family life? Try to talk to as many of the generations and different roles as you can.



Prayer requests or intentions:

Commit to praying for them regularly, perhaps for 2 weeks. Don't forget to go back and find out how things are going. (You may find they and you would like to continue this on a longer term basis).



Coming alongside those with acute and chronic illness

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
 No hands but ours;
 No feet but ours;
 Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
 must look out upon the world;
 Ours are the feet with which you
 must go about doing good;
 Ours are the hands with which you
 must bless men and women now;
 For your name's sake.
 Amen.

Case Study



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / racorn

Sue is in hospital for a hip replacement. She has been waiting for the operation for a long time. She has been getting around with her stick and had got used to the discomfort and pain. But now she has finally had the operation and is recovering on the ward.

Brian has had a series of falls recently and the last one has done some serious damage. He has been in and out of hospital many times as his Parkinsons has worsened, and now he is having his hip replaced.

Mary has had a riding accident and has some broken ribs. Her hip was fractured in several places and so she had an emergency operation in a matter of hours, and the hip was completely replaced. This is her first serious injury and her first stay in hospital.

- **What factors would you bear in mind as you enter the hospital to visit these people?**
- **What might be the same and what might be different?**
- **How might each of these people be responding to their operation?**

Listening to experience

Think back to an experience you have had of illness. In pairs take it in turns to describe the experience for 4 minutes. As you recount the incident, try to respond to these questions:

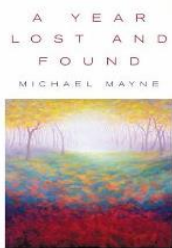
- **How did it feel when you were ill - what emotions did you experience?**
- **How did you respond to these feelings?**
- **What did others do that you found either helpful or unhelpful?**



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / Andres

In pairs again, discuss a time when someone close to you was ill. Again, explore

- **How did it feel when the person close to you was ill - what emotions did you experience?**
- **How did you respond to these feelings?**



In his book, *A year lost and found* (1987) Michael Mayne reflects on his experience of ME.

‘Having seen me in public some people assumed I was well again. That was an indication of problems to come: how you ease yourself infinitely slowly back into the life of the community, without raising expectations you cannot hope to meet. ‘How are you?’ – never the easiest of questions to answer - soon becomes by implication, at least in the sick person’s ears, ‘Why are you not better?’

What can you learn from your reflections and from Mayne’s experiences?

What are the things which you will endeavour to do, and what words or approaches will you avoid as an LPA?

Bible Study

Mark 10.46-52

‘They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Jesus stood still and said, ‘Call him here.’ And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘Take heart; get up, he is calling you.’ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man said to him, ‘My teacher, let me see again.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your faith has made you well.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.’



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / joerf3

John 5 2.-9

'Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.' Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.'

- **What assumptions do we make about people's responses to illness?**
- **What are the differences between Bartimaeus and the man at the pool in their attitude to their illness?**
- **How does Jesus respond to these two men?**
- **How might the experience of illness be different for someone with acute illness (e.g. in hospital for a broken leg) or chronic illness (e.g. diabetes, blindness) or a progressive illness (e.g. MS, Parkinsons)?**

What are the issues which people who are ill are concerned about?

- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Vulnerability
- ◆ Anger
- ◆ Guilt
- ◆ Pain
- ◆ Family worries
- ◆ Job worries
- ◆ Helplessness
- ◆ Being patronised
- ◆ Loss of control
- ◆ Loss of dignity
- ◆ Loss of identity
- ◆ Self-image
- ◆ Learned helplessness
- ◆ Practicalities e.g. using a phone if you are deaf!
- ◆ Being labelled!
- ◆ Transport
- ◆ Loss of sustaining community
- ◆ Isolation
- ◆ Powerlessness
- ◆ Fear of death
- ◆ Are you understood?
- ◆ Are you allowed to be yourself and express negative feelings?
- ◆ Sexuality
- ◆ Money worries
- ◆ Politics (most noticeably in area of disabilities)



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / soupstock

This is not meant to be a comprehensive list. Nor will all these issues be true in the case of every person you know who is sick or who has a disability. It is only intended as a guide to some of the issues which people may be facing.

Notice that many of these issues are ones which cause us concern at some time in our lives - whether we are feeling well at the time or not! However such things as pain and/or long term chronic illness can affect our ability to cope with certain issues which we might normally be able to deal with when we are feeling well.

- **What would you add to this list?**
- **What would the list look like for a carer of someone who is ill?**

As part of the CMD programme there are courses on 'Caring for the carers' and other aspects of visiting, including hospital visiting, which we will explore briefly now.

Being in hospital

In small groups discuss the experience of being in hospital, thinking particularly of the changes that happen to a person.

You might think about:

- **confined to one place, often to one room**
- **in a strange bed, harder than at home with sometimes difficulty in going to sleep**
- **are in pyjamas or nightie all day**
- **in the company of strangers for most of the time**
- **in a new routine with earlier mornings and nights**
- **without much privacy from nurses, doctors or other patients**
- **without much control over when things happen**
- **without immediate contact with day to day events at home or work: this all must be experience at second-hand through their visitors**
- **much more aware of their body functions (much ward conversation is about operations, bowels or stitches) and of the dependency of life upon a body that is wearing out**
- **Sometimes they are in the same room as someone who dies**
- **confronted by the suffering of other people in a very direct and immediate way.**
- **in a different dimension of time. It can pass very slowly**

What would you do when visiting someone in hospital to respond to these factors, or to help to mitigate them?

'We don't have to understand a person's illness to care for them. What we can do is to be human and share our common humanity with the patient. This simply means hearing a person's story. We can't assume that this has fully taken place in a hospital; patients tend to get asked questions rather than be given the freedom to just talk about what is on their mind. Jesus began with Legion by finding out his name. Our visit brings a touch of normality and continuity with the community, and that is so important to a person when they find themselves in a strange place.' Merrington (2012) p.64



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / Bialasiewicz

Mental illness

The following case studies from **‘Promoting Mental Health: A resources for spiritual and pastoral care’**. The Resource Pack can be downloaded from *mentality* at www.mentality.org.uk or from the Church of England website. Download link <http://tinyurl.com/pgqlkg8>



Case Study 1

Bill is in his fifties and works full-time in the financial sector. He commutes several hours each day to his workplace and in addition travels widely within the UK and abroad. A restructuring at work has meant that he works longer hours and often at weekends. He has begun to drink excessive amounts of alcohol and this has affected him and his family. His wife has spoken to someone at church about the impact on her and the children of her husband's behaviour. She has become increasingly anxious and sometimes frightened.

- Think about how your church community or the wider Christian community could provide support both in the short term and longer term
- Do you know where Bill could go for help if he is willing to accept it?
- How would you manage the visiting of (a) Bill and (b) his wife and children and (c) at what point would you consider visiting them as a family?

Case Study 2

Mrs Jones recently lost her husband and is caring for her elderly mother who lives with her and is suffering from the early stages of dementia. Mrs Jones used to play an active part in the community and attend church regularly but now rarely leaves her home except to do her shopping. Mrs Jones is becoming increasingly isolated and depressed.

- Think about the support that could be offered to Mrs Jones in looking after her mother
- How can Mrs Jones be enabled to return to church?
- What can the church offer Mrs Jones' mother?

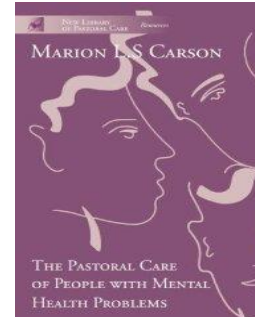
Case Study 3

Tim is in his early twenties and has been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder (previously known as manic depression). He experiences severe mood swings and his behaviour can be unpredictable. He has few friends and has been unable to hold down a job, having dropped out of college when his symptoms first started. The church has become an important focus for Tim and he is passionate in the way he worships and expresses his beliefs. However, his behaviour during services can be unsettling for others.

- Think about how to help members of the congregation to better understand Tim's mental health issues
- Consider whether it would be appropriate to discuss Tim's behaviour with him giving careful thought to how such a conversation might be viewed by Tim
- What practical help could be offered Tim to enable him to make friends and perhaps find a job that he would enjoy?

Further information on the support of those with mental health problems can also be found in **The Pastoral Care of People with Mental Health Problems** by **Marion L.S. Carson** and published by **New Library of Pastoral Care**.

This is only a very brief introduction to the issues around mental health. In most cases, it will be necessary to direct people on to professional support. These guidelines are offered to give you some awareness of the issues you might encounter. (See Session 8a.)



Spiritual Difficulties

'The question 'How are you?' is at root a metaphysical question, which is not sufficiently answered with clinical lists and data... but goes to the deepest part of ourselves as the complex and uniquely precious beings we are.' Mayne (1987) p.22

As LPAs you can play a valuable role in responding to the people you meet in a 'holistic' way, aware of the needs of body, mind and spirit. Spiritual difficulties may be completely separate from physical illness, but equally one may be a factor in the other. It is helpful to be aware of some of the signs, but as always be careful of jumping to conclusions. If you feel someone is in serious difficulty or danger, or is suffering from mental illness, you cannot respond to the issues yourself and will need to refer them on to professionals.

As Merrington comments in the earlier quotation, the best gift you can offer as a pastoral minister is to listen, and to offer that person to God in prayer. We will discuss further in Session 8 the considerations of when and how to pray with people.

Signs of Spiritual Pain/Suffering

Emotional

- Restlessness/agitation/anxiety
- Denial of illness or of reality of prognosis
- Anger
- Fear
- Powerlessness and loss of control
- Depression/flat affect mood
- Dreams or nightmares

Behavioural

- Refusal to take pain medication
- Power struggles with caregivers or family
- Puts self in unsafe care position
- Frantically seeks advice from everyone
- Active forms of self-harm
- Loss of independence
- Lack of engagement with activities that bring comfort or joy
- Withdrawal/Isolation
- Questions about 'why' or duration of dying process
- Statements about 'not wanting to be a burden'
- Metaphorical or symbolic language suggesting distress or unresolved concerns
- If history of religious practice/affiliation, refuses religious leader or stops practice

Physical

- Unrelieved pain
- Shortness of breath
- Sleeplessness

Other signs

- Conflict between the goals of palliation and religious beliefs
- Fixation on nutrition, herbal remedies, or miraculous cure

Wholeness and healing

This ministry is not something extraordinary, but a deepening and development of what is always at the centre of the Gospel.

'The Healing Ministry is Jesus' ministry entrusted to us, always to be exercised with reverence, love and compassion. The guiding principle is to recognise the presence of God in those receiving this ministry and honour his presence in them'

see <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/ministry/wholeness-healing>

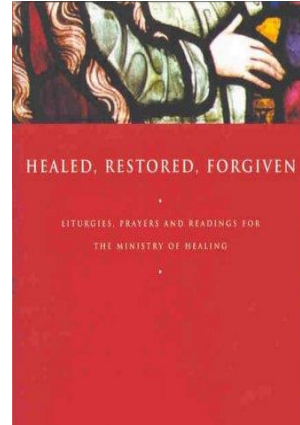
Di Beaumont, a LPA who is involved in wholeness and healing ministry writes, 'The way in which the healing ministry is undertaken may take many forms. Every Christian is called to pray. Asking for God's help for ourselves or others, asking for infilling with the Spirit, intercessions in Church or in private prayers are all part of the healing ministry in its widest meaning. When undertaking any form of pastoral work those in ministry touch upon wholeness and healing. It may be stating the obvious but when praying expect something to happen! God does not always answer our prayers in the way expected. It is suggested that perhaps the best way to pray is to bring the person/situation before God and leave them/it in His loving care, to do His will. This approach can bring astounding results.

However there is also a more formal aspect in the healing ministry. If your calling is to the wholeness and healing ministry then this needs careful discernment.'

For more information, speak to your incumbent, or look at the Diocesan website. Further reading: The Church of England report *A Time to Heal* (2000) Church House Publishing.

Closing prayer

God, heal the dullness of our hearts,
that we may listen and hear,
look and indeed perceive.
Use your power to restore our world.
Let all people know your healing touch.
May the least and the greatest experience your healing.
Bless us always with someone to care.
Send us anew to proclaim your kingdom
with authority and power to heal.
Open our eyes and soften our hearts,
that understanding and healing will be ours.
Take away, God, our hardness of hearing,
our blindness that cannot see,
Gift us with listening, understanding hearts.
Let us turn to you and be healed. Amen.



Gunstone (2004) *Healed, restored, forgiven*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.

Prayer focus before next time: Praying with the Bible (1)

There are many ways of praying with the Bible. Ignatian spirituality (drawn from the work of Ignatius of Loyola) invites us to imagine ourselves into the Bible stories in order to encounter Jesus in a new way. We will use the story of the healing of Bartimaeus (Mark 10.46-52) as we continue to reflect on the experience of illness. You might like to try this several times, or use the same approach with another passage.

- First read the whole passage, then break it down into sections
- Vs 46 Imagine the scene a dusty road outside Jericho with a large crowd. Where are you in the scene - on the side of the road, in the middle of the crowd? Are you a disciple, a passer-by, a beggar like Bartimaeus? What can you see? What can you hear? What can you smell?
- Vs 47-48 You hear Bartimaeus calling out. What is your reaction? Do you tell him to be quiet? Are you intrigued or shocked or disinterested?
- Vs 49-50 What happens when Jesus stops? What do you think about his response? What impact does Bartimaeus movement have on the crowd?
- Vs 51 Did you hear Jesus' question? What did it make you think?
- Vs 52 How do you respond to Bartimaeus' healing? What do you think about him joining the crown of followers? What do you do now? Where are you in the scene?
- Imagine Jesus turns to you. What does he say to you? What do you say to him?

Session 7

Valuing later life

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
 No hands but ours;
 No feet but ours;
 Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
 must look out upon the world;
 Ours are the feet with which you
 must go about doing good;
 Ours are the hands with which you
 must bless men and women now;
 For your name's sake.
 Amen.

Case Study

Claire goes to visit Gladys who has had a fall recently. When she arrives, Claire doesn't ring the bell, but walks straight in, to save Gladys coming to the door. Gladys thinks she hears someone coming down the hall so calls out anxiously, 'Who's there?' and struggles to get up out of her chair. Claire waits until she reaches the lounge and sees where Gladys is to say, 'Hello Gladys, how are you? You must be really frustrated that you had a fall. Are you terribly bruised? Never mind, dear, a cup of tea will soon sort you out. You just sit there and I'll be back in a minute.' Gladys starts to say that she can make the tea, but Claire has already gone. She soon comes back with the tea, and starts to talk about what happened at church on Sunday, and some new people who had just moved to the area. Gladys tries to share her thoughts and experiences from arriving at the church a few years ago, but Claire has already moved on. 'I don't know why I am bothering you about all this, dear. How is your knitting going?' Gladys replies, 'Well I am rather worried about my arthritis - it is getting more and more difficult to use my hands.' 'That's all right' Claire replies, 'you've done your bit over the years - you can enjoy watching the television now.' Gladys was going to say that she has knitted a jumper for all her grandchildren, and she is worried that she won't be able to do it for the next one who is due in 3 months. Instead, she starts to ask Claire if she could help her put some new polish on her nails, but she says, 'I must be off now, I will see you again soon' and is gone.

- **What assumptions lie behind Claire's behaviour? Are they correct assumptions?**
- **What are Gladys' desires and concerns? How could Claire respond to these?**
- **What are the assumptions you bring to visiting older people?**

Attitudes to aging

Below are a number of words and phrases that are used to describe older people.

Elderly	Older person	Pensioner
Crone	Sage	Senior citizen
Golden oldie	Elder	Aged

- **What do they reveal about our attitudes?**
- **Are some more appropriate/inappropriate than others?**
- **What are your own feelings about getting older?**

Our media is full of discussion about the ‘burden’ of older people on health care, on the pension bill, on the care services especially in times of austerity. According to the Office of National Statistics, the population is projected to continue ageing with the median age of the population expected to rise from 39.7 years in 2010 to 42.2 years by 2035, and the population aged 80 and over is projected to grow from 2.9 million in 2010 to 5.9 million by 2035, doubling over 25 years. (2010 based National Population Projection reference volume; published March 2012 available online (<http://tinyurl.com/ozrnbq7>) It is tempting to objectify these figures, and even subconsciously to ‘blame’ older people for the growing problems. But if we stop and think about it, how old will we be in 25 years? If there is a problem, **we** are the problem and not someone else out there. It is not only important now to value those in later life, but will become increasingly important.

N.B. One of the big issues often associated with aging (although it is not limited to this) is dementia and the various associated conditions (e.g. Alzheimer’s). We encourage you to attend CMD courses which explore this area. Organisations such as the Alzheimer’s Society (www.alzheimers.org.uk) and the NHS website (www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia-guide/pages/about-dementia.aspx type link <http://tinyurl.com/nnfu8cy>) provide useful information.

Bible study

In groups of three or four look at one of the selections of verses below (making sure each of the selections is covered overall). These verses all relate to old age. As you read them reflect on the way these passages reflect the anxieties or frustrations of old age, and what they say about its blessings and rewards?

- ◆ *Examples of old people:* Abraham and Sarah, Genesis 17.15–19; Isaac Genesis 27; Eli, 1 Samuel 4.12–17; Elizabeth, Luke 1.5–7, 36–37; Simeon and Anna, Luke 2.25–38
- ◆ *Sayings about old age:* Psalm 71, Proverbs 17.6; 20.29; 22.6; 23.22, Ecclesiastes 11.8–12.8
- ◆ *Promises relating to old age or the old:* Job 5.26, Ps 92.12–14, Isaiah 46.3–4, Joel 2.28–29 (see also Acts 2.17), Zechariah 8.3–5.
- ◆ *Verses concerning 'elders' in the church:* 1 Peter 5.5, James 5.14, Revelation 4.4.

Come back together to share your reflections. How might these verses shape your approach when visiting the elderly?

'Past it'? Memories and gifts



'It has been said, 'God gave us memories that we might have roses in December. I am sure there is much in that, but roses often have thorns, and we can hurt ourselves if we do not handle them with care and love. The passing years have put their marks on us, made us what we are and each one of us has a wealth of experiences unique to us.' Margaret Cundiff in Albans (ed) (2003) *Old in years and young in soul*, Derby: Methodist homes for the aged.

One of the most important factors in engaging with older people, as with any 'group', is not to assume that everyone's reactions will be the same. What does it mean to be elderly? Age UK has volunteers helping the 'old people' who are well into their 80's themselves. Just as we all respond to the circumstances of our lives differently, so some people will welcome the time to rest and receive ministry from others, while some will want to keep active for as long as possible and resent being 'done to.' It is important to be open to the gifts, experience and stories that older people can bring, while respecting their decisions about what they offer. For example, Merrington (2012) reminds us that 'It can seem degrading to suggest that the elderly can pray because they can't do anything else.' Some people may offer the gift of prayer, but others may have many other skills and gifts to offer through teaching and inspiring others, through keeping skills active that they have known all their lives, or through learning new skills. For some retirement is a wonderful opportunity to develop new interests, or to devote time to family or hobbies they have always loved; for others it is a dreaded time of emptiness and disempowerment. We need to be aware of what is lost and what is gained for individuals going through these sorts of transitions.

In all of this, there can be a temptation to see only the 'old person' in front of us and to forget the many years of experiences and memories that make up the person. At times, all somebody needs to feel valued is to be allowed to tell their story.

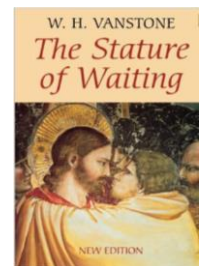
What do you think will be important gifts or memories for you in later life? What would help you to use and express these? What are the painful memories, and are there things that have helped you deal with these?

If you or someone you know has been through the experience of retirement, what were the losses experienced and what were the gains?

'Older and wiser' Spirituality of aging

'I pray by remembering. It is my experience that despite all the evidence to the contrary, in deep remembering there is hope. Deep remembering can be holy ground' Colin Semper in *Old in years and young in soul* (2003).

In *The Stature of Waiting* (1982), W.H. Vanstone discusses our preoccupation with keeping active, with being useful and contrasts this with Jesus' experience in the Passion of being 'handed over' and 'waiting, in the agony of expectancy for whatever it is that He is to receive.' He suggests that instead of seeing humanity as 'fellow-worker with God' this should be balanced by a sense of being a 'fellow-receiver'; that the image of God is seen in us as much in our passive lives as our active lives.



Are these helpful reflections for a spirituality of aging? What reflections would you add?

What prayers or ways of praying might be particularly helpful for those in later life?

End of life

End of life care: Extract 1

In writing about the tasks that are part of an older person's final years, Erik Erikson identifies two in particular which concern us here:

1. Putting one's past in order
2. Becoming reconciled to death

It is perhaps hard to imagine asking as direct a question as, 'What is it important for you to do before you die?'

Nevertheless it is helpful to think of ways of raising it, directly or indirectly. The ways in which it is answered will say a lot, both about the things that must be done as well as about those things someone wants to do. The importance of 'putting one's past in order' implies that we need to help residents to explore whether there are any emotional loose ends that need tying up. It might be as simple as saying 'thank you', 'I love you', or 'goodbye!' to a friend. It might go deeper and involve an attempt to put a wrong right. This can help people to let go of old hurts or regrets and help them to achieve a sense of peace.

If death is seen as part of life, then these final wishes are as much about the living that people have shared, and their relationships, as they are about the reality of dying. Some residents might want to leave written or recorded messages of courage, wisdom or love for their families and

friends, others might simply want to explore the options for their funeral and make detailed plans in advance.

The Final Lap Methodist Homes for the Aged

<http://www.mha.org.uk/getcomponent.aspx?c=Final Lap.pdf>

(Short link <http://tinyurl.com/onldpvy>)

Spiritual Growth at the End of Life: Extract 2

Personal growth and healing often occur at the end of life. Although a terminal illness may be perceived or experienced primarily as negative or devastating, for many persons it becomes an opportunity for personal growth and healing. In its Greek origin, the word 'crisis' includes a sense of possibility, connotes opportunity.

However, spiritual growth does not diminish suffering. Contrarily, that some healing happens does not diminish the very real suffering experienced both by the person who is terminally ill and by their family.

- What precipitates personal and spiritual growth at the end of life?
- As persons are less able to engage in life activities due to functional limitations, they have time for spiritual reflection and spiritual practice
- Dependency, loss, fear, and suffering lead many persons to turn to (or return to) their religious tradition for meaning, strength, and comfort
- Individual may take emotional and spiritual risks they would otherwise avoid
- Because family members will not have another opportunity with their loved one, they often seek healing, connection, and reconciliation
- Facing death evokes spiritual questions (about forgiveness, afterlife, the value of life itself) not normally asked in the course of daily living

http://www.endoflife.northwestern.edu/religion_spirituality/pain.cfm
(<http://tinyurl.com/yeotc7t>)

These two extracts deal with the practical and spiritual elements of the end of life.

- **How do you see the two being related?**
- **Is one more important than the other?**
- **In what ways might you be part of these processes?**
- **How would you support the person preparing for the end of their life, and their family?**

Closing Prayer



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / AnikaSalsera

God our Friend and protector,
as we go through life help us to offer a hand of love and friendship to all in need.

As our lives develop, like the seasons -
spring when we blossom in our own ways,
summer when we are full of the joys of young life,
autumn when we hope to pass on the wisdom we have learnt,
winter when we need the comfort of your presence at the closing of our days -may we remember to thank you for all your many blessings throughout our lives.

Thanks be to God, Amen.

(Margaret Reeves in *Old in years and young in soul*)

Prayer focus before next time: Praying with the Bible (2)

Another approach to praying with the Bible comes from the Benedictine monastic tradition and is known as *lectio divina* (holy reading). This involves reading slowly and listening for a word or phrase that strikes you, then using that phrase to lead you into prayer. There are four stages, (Reading; Meditation; Prayer; Contemplation) each accompanied by a slow, careful reading of the passage. Scripture is God's 'living word' and is one of the ways we can hear God speaking to us. You are encouraged not to worry about doing a 'bible study' of the whole reading, but to listen to what God is saying to you *this time* through Scripture.

- Read Luke 2.25-38 ideally out loud slowly
- Notice a word or phrase which stands out for you
- Read the passage again
- Meditate on the phrase. What questions does it raise? Why has it struck you?
- Read the passage again
- What prayer would you offer in response to this phrase?
- Read the passage again
- Let your phrase and prayer lead you into contemplation, resting in God's presence



Why and when we visit

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
 No hands but ours;
 No feet but ours;
 Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
 must look out upon the world;
 Ours are the feet with which you
 must go about doing good;
 Ours are the hands with which you
 must bless men and women now;
 For your name's sake.
 Amen.

Case Study

Luke 10.1-11 (See also Mark 6.6b-15; Matthew 10.5-14; Luke 9.1-6)

'After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you.' Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'

What can we learn from this passage as LPAs? (Remember Jesus was sending out disciples, and not specifically LPAs.) What are the points of connection? What are the parts that are irrelevant or inappropriate?

The disciples were '**appointed**' and '**sent ahead of Jesus.**' They were not going out in their own right, but as part of the 'mission' of Jesus (the Latin root of 'mission' means 'to send'). When an LPA visits, it is as part of the ministry of the church, and sent as a disciple of Jesus. How does this affect how your approach a visit?

Jesus sent the disciples out **'in pairs.'** As an LPA will you visit on your own or with someone else? What are the advantages and disadvantages? When might you not visit on your own?

'Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals': The disciples went out in a position of weakness, suggesting an attitude of humility. In what sense as an LPA do you come carrying nothing? What are the dangers of thinking that you come bringing the 'answers' or a solution, or even bringing God?

Jesus' words remind the disciples that the presence and peace of God goes ahead of them. **'If anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person.'** Have you experienced this sense of God at work in a situation before you arrive?

If a place is not welcoming to the disciples, they are to **'Wipe off the dust in protest.'** How do you respond to this as an LPA? Are there times when we have to acknowledge that our ministry is not welcomed or helpful? When do we need to be realistic about moving on?

Regardless of the response to the disciples they still proclaim, **'The Kingdom of God has come near.'** This is the core of the mission of Christ, expressed not as a future hope but as a present reality. What does the Kingdom of God mean to you? When you visit, how is the Kingdom of God made more visible; how are people opened up to feel that it is close to them?

The practicalities of visiting: When, Why, How and What Next

When do we visit?



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / Bialasiewicz

When might a visit be necessary? What might initiate it?

Throw out ideas in your group. How does it happen in your context? What situations are involved?

In practical terms, there are several ways a visit might happen.

- **Somebody might ask for a visit themselves**

Do you have a system in your church or benefice for people to request a visit through a named person, or with a card in church?

- **Somebody might ask for a visit on behalf of a friend, relative or neighbour**

Are there any issues involved in responding to this?

- **The incumbent or another member of the ministry team might ask you to visit someone**

Do you know what the procedure and expectations are in this situation?

Once you have received a request, how do you arrange the visit?

It is good practice to make contact with the person as soon as possible after you receive the information, even if you can't visit them straightaway. In most cases, the best way is to make a phone call to discuss when is convenient for you to come. Bear in mind the different patterns and commitments people will have. In some cases (especially hospital visiting and visiting somebody in a care home) you may not be able to contact the person directly, but will need to make appropriate arrangements with the place they are staying. For some people, talking on the phone is very difficult due to deafness, or mobility, and it may be easier to 'drop in' even if that is to arrange another time.

Why?

It is important to be aware of the different expectations and assumptions behind a visit, and to have your own ethical framework in place.

Mrs Jones spoke to the vicar on Sunday and asked whether someone could come and see her before she goes into hospital for a major operation next week. The vicar told her that one of the LPAs would be in touch. Having received a form via email from the vicar with the details, you ring Mrs Jones to arrange a time.

What is your sense of why you are there: To assist the vicar? To offer a listening ear? To pray for strength and peace? To bring healing? To show the love and care of God? To show the support of the church?

Why does Mrs Jones think you are there: To pray for her and lay hands on her? To give comfort and strength before she faces the operation? To find someone to give her a lift to the hospital? To talk about her sister who died after a similar operation five years ago? To have a chat and a cup of tea (the vicar must be coming later in the week to say some prayers)?

Why does the church and/or the incumbent think you are there?

How

Discuss how you feel when people say to you 'I know how you feel'.

There is an important difference between 'sympathy' and 'empathy'

Sympathy means feeling the same feelings as another person but it has come to mean 'feel sorry for' for someone.

Empathy means identifying oneself with the feelings of another and seeking to understand them. The word has come to be used in the sense of 'feeling alongside' another person.

In visiting we need to feel both sympathy and empathy but need to avoid the kind of feeling sorry for someone which makes them the object of pity and diminishes them. It is in situations like this that it is easy to say 'I know how you feel'.

Empathy can remind us of how important the feelings of another person are and how we must respect them.

When we say 'I know how you feel' we can often be paying more attention to our own experience and feelings than those of the person we are visiting.

How you might express your understanding of another person's situation without saying 'I know how you feel'?

What about prayer and spirituality?

'Should we always pray in a pastoral situation? The answer has to be yes. However, that doesn't mean it has to be an open prayer that another person hears or participates in. We shouldn't carry out any ministry in God's name without soaking it in prayer before, during and after the encounter. Otherwise we are simply doing social work (good though that might be).' Merrington (2012) p.72

What factors might influence how and when you pray out loud?

It is always good to ask whether someone would like you to pray. You need to be aware of your own preferences and what you are comfortable with. Usually short prayers are most appropriate. It is good practice to ask what people would like you to pray for, but you can also bear in mind the conversation you have had with them. You might like to have a collection of prayers that you like to use to take with you, or you may prefer to use extemporaneous prayer. Don't forget that some people may like to say a prayer out loud themselves, or may like to join in a familiar prayer such as the Lord's Prayer.

It is helpful to remember that as pastoral ministers we are not 'bringing' God into the situation. God is always ahead of us and is in every situation. At times we can help to make his presence more visible or to draw out its significance. But we must be careful not to think we know all the answers. We can see something of this even in the ministry of Jesus in his encounter with the Syrophenician woman.

Mark 7.24-30

'From there he [Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.'



In commenting on this passage Nico ter Linden writes, 'Jesus uses the metaphor as a weapon to ward off the woman. Now she beats him at his own game. In theological disputes he won't give way, but this woman from the pagans surprises him and he confesses himself beaten. As if he was only now beginning to understand his own gospel properly, now that he's told it by another.' Ter Linden (1999) *The story goes Mark's story and Matthew's story*

It is too easy, and very dangerous, for us to assume that as the person offering the ministry of the church we have all the answers, that we have the monopoly on understanding God and how he is at work in the world. Ter Linden reminds us that sometimes it takes someone from outside to help us look anew and see new truths about God.

Ending

Finally, you need to be aware of when and how to end a visit. How easy do you find it to manage time on a visit? What do you do if it is difficult to get away?

Some techniques to bear in mind:

1. **Make it clear when you arrive how long you can stay. Is this a quick visit to check up on someone? Is this a visit when you can stay for a cup of tea and a chat? Is this a visit to discuss a particular issue. It might help to give a specific time limit, or to say that you need to leave by a certain time. It is better to establish this at the beginning than to rush away at the end. If there is something difficult that someone wants to say, they might put it off, and if you leave before expected they may not have the chance to say it at all**
2. **When the visit does need to end, and it is clear there is more to say, then make an appointment to continue the conversation. This shows that you value the issue enough to make time for it**
3. **Think about what markers you use to signal a visit is coming to an end. You could ask, 'Is there anything else you would like to say today?' Often offering to pray is a good way of pausing, gathering up all that has been said and thought, and marking an ending**
4. **Remember that some issues will not be able to be worked through in one visit, and you need to establish a longer term pattern of visiting. Conversely, be aware of when the need for visits has come to an end. Some pastoral relationships will be ongoing, but some are for a season. Here too, you need to signal a clear ending (at the same time, showing that if support is needed again it will be there)**

What next?

Reflection and record keeping

You will need to decide what is the most helpful way for you to keep records of your visits, to help with reflection and supervision. For many some form of journal is helpful to record what happened during a visit, and especially to process difficult visits. It is best to make notes about the visit as soon afterwards as possible, and to record the exact words used where possible. With an ongoing pastoral relationship these sorts of notes can help you reflect on how the situation is changing and developing over time.

Confidentiality and Safeguarding

In keeping notes and a journal, especially those which you are sharing with others you need to be aware of confidentiality and data protection issues. Records should not contain details of individuals without their consent, and information should not be passed to a third party without their permission. You can keep personal notes in a coded form so that others can't identify it.

You need to be clear with people about what you can and can't keep confidential. In most ministry teams there is a system of 'collegial confidentiality' to enable support and supervision. Do not promise to keep something confidential if you can't honour that promise.

It can be easy to 'accidentally' break confidentiality outside the supervision context, especially with members of the community who are known by many people. Remember that even the fact that you have made a visit is confidential, and people may not want others to know. In casual conversation it is **not** appropriate to mention a visit or anything that happened or was discussed.

In certain circumstances, namely safeguarding issues concerning children, you have a legal responsibility to report. As an LPA you must attend a Diocesan Safeguarding course which will discuss these issues in more details. There may be other times when your safety or the safety of others is at risk that you will need to share details with a supervisor and external services such as the police. (<http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/parishes/safeguarding>)(<http://tinyurl.com/ow5b98b>)

Follow up

It may be that you or another member of the ministry team need to follow up a visit. Be clear with the person what information you will pass on to anyone else, and what the next steps in the relationship will be.

Be aware that as an LPA you cannot solve every issue and you may need to refer on to specialist organisations. You need to obtain the person's permission to pass on any details, and it may be most appropriate to encourage them to make the contact themselves.

Don't forget that whatever happens there is absolutely no restriction on offering the person you have visited in prayer to God!

Closing prayer

God of power,
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to serve and worship you
now and always. Amen.

Prayer focus before next time: Praying with others

If praying with others out loud in an informal context is not part of your regular practice, see if there is a prayer group in your parish that you could join. Or see if there are others from your course group, or from your church who would be happy to meet to pray for each other and for wider needs. It is through practising praying for others that we can become more confident.

If this is not possible, or is something you are already very comfortable with (remembering that we can always grow and develop in our prayer life) spend some time reflecting on the Lord's Prayer. Pray it slowly every day, and take one phrase each day to meditate on.





Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
 No hands but ours;
 No feet but ours;
 Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
 Must look out upon the world;
 Ours are the feet with which you
 Must go about doing good;
 Ours are the hands with which you
 Must bless men and women now;
 For your name's sake. Amen.

Opening

Death is often considered something of a taboo in our society. In small groups, see how many euphemisms for death and dying you can think of (you might like to look at the title of this session to get you started!).

Case Study

'Bereavement counselling helped me to move forward'

When his wife and children were killed in a road accident, Andrew Gitsham was left with two choices. 'I could sit there, paralysed, doing nothing with my life, or I could pick myself up and try to move forward.' Realising he could not do that without support, he contacted the Huntingdon branch of Cruse Bereavement Care. 'Someone came to my house and for the next 18 months she was a constant in my life. She made me realise that my grief was a normal reaction,' Andrew said.....

'Run away'

'The day after the funeral I suddenly realised that I was alone,' he said. 'I was there in a house that less than a week ago was busy with children, and with just living. The silence was deafening. Everywhere you looked there were reminders.'

'I knew right then that I had to do something about it for my own sanity,' added Andrew. 'I could run away from it but eventually it would find me. I made the decision that I was going to turn and face it, and whatever came my way, came my way. But I needed support to do that.'

'Healing'

When Cruse Bereavement Care sent 'a little old lady' to Andrew's house, that was the start of the healing process. He explained the importance of talking to someone objective. 'Family and friends will listen, but they have their own memories as well - you know, it wasn't all about me,' he said. 'There's an enormous ripple-effect. I was the figurehead because I had lost everything but there were other people in need too.' ...'I think I was looking for someone to say that feeling this way was normal, because at the time you feel so abnormal. You feel a bit of a freak really.'

http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/cambridgeshire/hi/people_and_places/newsid_9102000/9102756.stm

It is important to note that the role of Cruse counsellors is very different from that of LPAs.

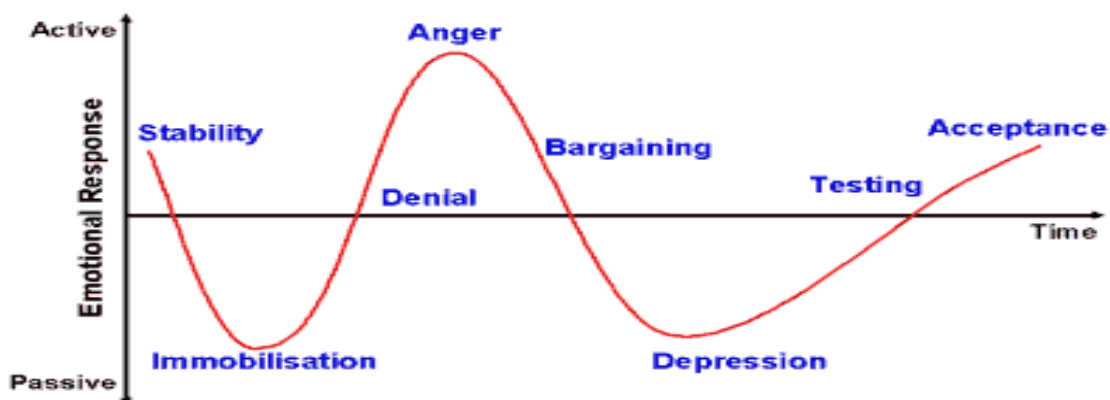
- Nevertheless, what strikes you from Andrew's account of his own grief?
- What role could an LPA play in encountering someone like Andrew?
- Imagine that Andrew had 'run away' from his grief, and you met him as an LPA several years later. What might be the signs that something needed addressing? How might you begin to engage with his situation?

Different models of grief



<http://dilbert.com/strips/comic/2003-06-22/>

The five stages of grief identified by Kubler-Ross in *Death and Dying* (1969) have almost become a cliché and applied to any number of situations. However, they were offered as a way of helping to understand grief, not as a prescriptive pattern people must follow. It can be a helpful way of being aware of why people react to loss in the way they do.



1. *Shock*: Initial paralysis at hearing the bad news
2. Denial: Trying to avoid the inevitable
3. Anger: Frustrated outpouring of bottled-up emotion
4. Bargaining: Seeking in vain for a way out (often shown in trying to negotiate with God)
5. Depression: Final realization of the inevitable
6. *Testing*: Seeking realistic solutions
7. Acceptance: Finally finding the way forward

Note: Stages 1 and 6 were added to Kulber-Ross' original theory.

Another approach has been suggested by William Worden. This focuses not on the reactions of the grieving person, but on their 'tasks.' This comes from an understanding that grief is something that we 'do' rather than something that just 'happens' to us.

Experience	The bereaved person needs to	Theme
<p><i>The first reaction may be</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If death is unexpected, disbelief • Numbness or collapse 		Shock /denial
<p><i>In the first few days there is often</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of unreality, everything seems remote, like a dream • Or a feeling of behaving like a robot • Control both by the bereaved and by family and friends to ensure socially appropriate behaviour, e.g. at funeral 	'take in' the reality of the death	Control
<p><i>In the weeks ahead</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often very painful and very frightening • Very strong emotions, often unpredictable and hard to manage • Outbursts of weeping, complaints or aggression • sometimes there is a feeling of being out of control • the bereaved person is under great strain, so is often irritable • energy is absorbed in maintaining 'normal' behaviour and not being overwhelmed by emotion • hence there is little energy for interaction with world around 	'let go', to risk losing control and experience the pain of grief	Pain and suffering
<p><i>At a later stage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person who has been bereaved begins to free him/herself from the image of being a mourner • and begins to take action for the future • the dead person becomes less central in thoughts • feeling for reality is regained • alternatives between times of coping with life and times of apathy or despair 	find a life worth living again to adjust to life without the person who has died	Adaptation
<p><i>Later still</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the active processes above continue, and attacks of apathy and despair diminish 	reinvest in other relationships	Acceptance

For in grief nothing 'stays put.' One keeps on emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats. Am I going in circles, or dare I hope I am on a spiral? But if a spiral, am I going up or down it? How often -- will it be for always? - how often will the vast emptiness astonish me like a complete novelty and make me say, 'I never realized my loss till this moment'? The same leg is cut off time after time.'

C.S. Lewis (1961) *A Grief Observed*

- **How do you relate to these different models of grieving?**
- **Do they apply to your own experience of grief and what you have seen in others?**

Guidelines for engaging with people dealing with loss or grief

These suggestions are provided by Cruse Bereavement Care, one of the major sources of support for those dealing with loss.

Do:

- Be there for the person who is grieving - pick up the phone, write a letter or an email, call by or arrange to visit
- Accept that everyone grieves in their own way, there is no 'normal' way
- Encourage the person to talk
- Listen to the person
- Create an environment in which the bereaved person can be themselves and show their feelings, rather than having to put on a front
- Be aware that grief can take a long time
- Contact the person at difficult times such as special anniversaries and birthdays
- Mention useful support agencies such as Cruse
- Offer useful practical help

Don't:

- Avoid someone who has been bereaved
- Use clichés such as 'I understand how you feel'; 'You'll get over it'; 'Time heals'
- Tell them it's time to move on, they should be over it - how long a person needs to grieve is entirely individual
- Be alarmed if the bereaved person doesn't want to talk or demonstrates anger
- Underestimate how emotionally draining it can be when supporting a grieving person. Make sure you take care of yourself too

From: www.cruse.org.uk

When and how to talk about faith?

John 14.1-6

'Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'

1 Thessalonians 4.13-end

'We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.'

Revelation 21.1-4

'I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

'See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.'

- **What answers to the question 'What happens to us when we die?' are offered by these passages?**
- **Which do you feel most comfortable with?**
- **Discuss: How would you answer the question 'Is he in heaven?'**



There are many biblical images of death and the 'afterlife'. It is important to be aware of what images and understandings you are working with, as well as what those you encounter may believe or expect.

Would you talk about God with the people below? If so how and when? Would you offer to pray with them?

- **John whose wife has died aged 45 leaving him with 2 young children**
- **Mrs Jones, a regular churchgoer throughout all her life with traditional views whose son-in-law has committed suicide**
- **Claire, who has come to faith recently and is reflecting on her mother's death 5 years ago**

Be careful not to fall into clichés such as 'God needed another angel in heaven.' We will look in more detail during the course about when and how to pray with people, but remember God is always present, and we should hold every encounter in prayer whether silently or out loud.

Unnoticed Grief

As we saw in session 3, loss does not necessarily refer to the death of a loved one. Many different events of life can be experienced as bereavement: moving house, divorce, a new job, unemployment. You may find in supporting people through these experiences you notice many of the signs of grief, and will be journeying with people through a similar process.

In a similar way, the reaction to one form of loss (e.g. children leaving home) may be linked to another form of grief. An unexpectedly strong reaction to something such as the death of a pet, or an occasion of national mourning may signal the resurfacing of an old grief, or a bereavement that was hidden or displaced. One interpretation of the outpouring of grief at Princess Diana's death was that it allowed an expression of mourning for those for whom it had been culturally unacceptable.

'Getting over it so soon? But the words are ambiguous. To say the patient is getting over it after an operation for appendicitis is one thing; after he's had his leg off is quite another. After that operation either the wounded stump heals or the man dies. If it heals, the fierce, continuous pain will stop. Presently he'll get back his strength and be able to stomp about on his wooden leg. He has 'got over it.'

But he will probably have recurrent pains in the stump all his life, and perhaps pretty bad ones; and he will always be a one-legged man. There will be hardly any moment when he forgets it. Bathing, dressing, sitting down and getting up again, even lying in bed, will all be different. His whole way of life will be changed. All sorts of pleasures and activities that he once took for granted will have to be simply written off. Duties too. At present I am learning to get about on crutches. Perhaps I shall presently be given a wooden leg. But I shall never be a biped again.'

C.S. Lewis (1961) *A Grief Observed*

Lewis' words are a reminder that grief never completely disappears.

Make a list of the people you might encounter as an LPA who may have a 'wooden leg'? How would you know?



It is worth bearing in mind that especially older people who are living on their own and 'lonely' will often be grieving the loss of a partner.

Be aware too of the effect someone's death will have on people beyond the immediate circle.

Watch the clip below: <http://tinyurl.com/pmxqvw4>

Especially as family structures become more complex, there may be relatives from previous relationships who are left out of the grieving process. Such grief may manifest itself in different ways as it is not allowed to be expressed as bereavement.

Models of bereavement care

What is the current practice and structure of bereavement care in your parish/benefice/ministry team?

- Do LPAs play a role in an All Soul's service?

What are the other difficult times of year when LPAs could provide support to those who are bereaved? E.g. Has your church considered a 'Blue Christmas' service? (see

http://www.wellsprings.org.uk/liturgies/blue_christmas.htm) Short link <http://tinyurl.com/oupknrm>

- What other ideas have you come across?

Closing Prayers

Let us pray with confidence to God our Father, who raised Christ his Son from the dead for the salvation of all.

Grant, Lord, that your servants may know the fullness of life which you have promised to those who love you.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Be close to those who mourn:

increase their faith in your undying love.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

May we be strengthened in our faith, live the rest of our lives in following your Son, and be ready when you shall call us to eternal life.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Show your mercy to the dying; strengthen them with hope, and fill them with the peace and joy of your presence.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Lord, we commend all those who have died to your unfailing love, that in them your will may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with them in your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer focus before next time: The communion of saints

An important part of the Christian hope in the face of death and loss is that through the death and resurrection of Christ we are united with the communion of saints on earth and in heaven. When we pray, we join our prayers with all those members of the mystical body of Christ.

As you continue to reflect on your own experience of death and bereavement and how we can be alongside those experiencing pain today you might find these scripture passages and prayers helpful. As you pray (or sing!) try to imagine that you are joining the endless stream of worship and prayer on earth and in heaven.

Another way this is expressed is through the pattern of the Daily Office derived from the monastic tradition in which prayers are offered around the world at least morning and evening. Even if someone is praying alone, there in a sense in which they are joining with many others praying in a similar way. Here is a link to the Daily Prayer service on the Church of England website.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/join-us-in-daily-prayer.aspx>

Hebrews 12.1-2; 22-24a

Almighty God,
you have knit together your elect
in one communion and fellowship
in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:
give us grace so to follow your blessed saints
in all virtuous and godly living
that we may come to those inexpressible joys
that you have prepared for those who truly love you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

'The day thou gavest'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=iMk8x6PbR3o



Prayer focus before next time: The communion of saints

Interviews and conversations posted by Cruse on You Tube

Behind every headline is heartache: family members reflect on the death of loved ones in active service

<http://tinyurl.com/noe6zwn>

Young people speak about their own experiences of bereavement and provide a guide to others:

<http://tinyurl.com/qfly67w>



Developing listening skills

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
 No hands but ours;
 No feet but ours;
 Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
 must look out upon the world;
 Ours are the feet with which you
 must go about doing good;
 Ours are the hands with which you
 must bless men and women now;
 For your name's sake.
 Amen.

Case Study

John 4.5-26

'So Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink', you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in

Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’”

- **How would you describe the woman’s listening?**
- **How would you describe Jesus’ listening?**

Filters when we listen

What reasons do we have for not listening?

At times we can retreat to ‘ivory towers’, places we go to avoid listening to others. Being honest about these and trying to understand why we go to them can make us more open to listen to others.

- **Which of these do you recognise in yourself?**
- **What is the attraction of your particular ivory tower(s)?**
- **How can you make sure you don’t retreat into them?**

I can’t fix it: I don’t want to listen, because they might expect me to have an answer to their question and I don’t think I have

I may upset them: I don’t want to listen, because they might get upset so it is safer not to start

This may take too long: I don’t want to listen, because I’ve got to be somewhere else in an hour and I don’t have time

I’ll catch their misery: I don’t want to listen, because it will upset me, or remind me of a time when I was unhappy and I can’t cope with that

This needs a professional: I don’t want to listen, because I don’t feel qualified, I don’t have any specialist training

Listening isn’t enough: I don’t want to listen, because I know they need someone to take action

I’m not in the mood: I don’t want to listen, because I’m too tired, I don’t have the emotional energy at the moment

Not this again: I don’t want to listen, because I’ve heard it all before

Listening is a woman's job: I don't want to listen, because women are much better at that sort of thing. I'll wait until there's something practical I can do

They should have known: I don't want to listen, because it was obvious that this would go wrong

I can't believe that: I don't want to listen, because I'm sure what they are telling me can't be right

(Norma Fergusson- training materials)

Some of these are valid reasons in a particular time or place: if you don't have the time, or the emotional energy, or feel the issues are too close to home, or that more professional help is needed, or that you have been hearing the same story over and over again, it may be that you are not the right person to listen at this point in time. But in that case, make sure that you arrange another time or another person to listen. If you seem to always be finding an excuse then perhaps you need to pause and think about your motivation, and what could help you be more open to listen to others.

Listening to what isn't said

Delving deeper

An important part of good listening is listening to what isn't said as much as what is. This can include paying attention to body language, noticing silences and pauses, and listening for the feelings which are expressed behind the words. These can help you as the listener to discover what is really going on in a situation.

Ask two people in your group to read the parts of Karen and Ben. Listen carefully to the conversation, and list the feelings you hear expressed and those behind the words by each person.

Karen: Are you sure you have to work late again?

Ben: *Yep. It can't be helped.*

Karen: I thought you said we might go out tonight.

Ben: *Well, I didn't know I had to work.*

Karen: Seems like you always have to work. There's never time for us.

Ben: *Are you going to start that again? I'm sick and tired of your nagging.*

Karen: Well, I'm sick and tired of your always putting work first.

Ben: *Some wives would appreciate all the hard work I'm doing for this family.*

Karen: And some husbands would appreciate their wives and want to be with them.

Karen's feelings	Ben's feelings

How have you picked up on these emotions and feelings? What other clues might you use in such an encounter?

Active Listening Exercise

How you respond in a listening situation involves skills that need to be developed and practised. 'Active' listening involves feeding back to the person what you think you have heard, to help them in their reflection and exploration. Rather than directing their thoughts or decisions, it is a way of making the situation clearer, and allowing them to acknowledge what is really going on, perhaps below the surface. The following exercise will help you to practice this skill.

1. For the first five minutes one member of the pair needs to tell the other about something that has given them pleasure.
2. The listener must keep absolutely quiet during this time, but must focus on what is being said and the words that are used which carry feelings.
3. The listener now needs to reflect back to the speaker what s/he has just said, paying particular attention to including the 'feeling' words in this reflection.
4. The partners now swap roles. This time, as well as keeping quiet and reflecting back using *feeling* words, the listener needs to ask the speaker how s/he feels having shared their story.

Come back together.

- How did it feel to be listened to?
- Did you notice anything about the way that words were reflected back?
- Did you recognise the story that came back to you?
- How did it feel to listen?

What is your body saying?

Body language can say a lot about what a person is feeling. However, it is dangerous to judge how someone is by just one posture. Try and work out what each of these is saying about the person, but never take them in isolation when listening to someone else. You might like to work in pairs and act them out to get a feel for them!

- 1 While you are listening to someone, they lean forward towards you
- 2 In conversation one person crosses or folds their arms
- 3 While sitting together, one person crosses their legs towards you
- 4 Whilst sitting at a table in a meeting, someone clasps their hands behind their head and rocks in their chair
- 5 While speaking, the person puts a finger or their hand over their mouth
- 6 A person fiddles with shirt collar, ear pulling.
- 7 The person who is about to speak strokes their chin before replying
- 8 While talking, the speaker rubs his/her hands slowly together
- 9 Whilst standing up, the speaker places his/her hands behind their back – clasped
- 10 The speaker rubs his/her hands quickly together whilst speaking

(Answers at the end of this session)

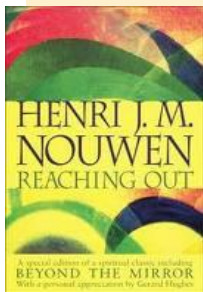
Never take one of these in isolation; they need to be read in conjunction with others to get the best picture- it is **body** language. They should also be consistent with tone of voice and other signals.

When might these interpretations not be the correct ones?

What are the dangers of putting too much emphasis on body language?

Listening as healing

Listening is the highest form of hospitality. The aim of hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place



‘Why is listening to know through and through such a healing service? Because it makes strangers familiar with the terrain they are travelling through and helps them to discover the way they want to go.’

Nouwen, Henri J.M., *Reaching Out: the Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, Doubleday: New York, 1975.

Summary of good listening

- *Listen with undivided attention, without interrupting. Make sure you hear what is actually said and not what you expect to hear or think you ought to hear.*
- *Listen to the way it is said, the rush of words, the slow and hesitant speech, the long pauses, broken sentences, the tone of voice.*
- *Listen to the ‘base-line’ - what is not openly said, but possibly being felt. Watch for any discrepancy between what is said and the way it is said.*
- *Watch for non verbal clues to help you understand feelings.*
- *Help yourself and the other person to feel comfortable and relaxed with each other, even when you don't feel calm. Watch your own body language, how you sit and hold yourself.*

Note: It is important to emphasise that it has been impossible to do more than scratch the surface of effective listening and that to do it full justice a more in-depth course could be followed.

Questions and comments



Closing Prayer

The Lord God almighty is our Father: **he loves us and tenderly cares for us.**

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour: **he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end.**

The Lord, the Holy Spirit, is among us: **he will lead us in God's holy way.**

To God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, **be praise and glory today and forever.**

Amen.

Prayer focus before next time: Silent meditation

Listening to others begins with listening to God. Silence can be difficult and unusual for us, but many Christians find silent prayer a vital part of their spiritual life. Try to find at least 15 minutes every day for silent prayer.

- Sit comfortably and still your mind. It may help to concentrate on your breathing
- Repeat a word or phrase such as 'maranatha' (which means Come Lord)
- Let go of all thoughts and imagination
- When distractions come acknowledge them and put them aside
- There is no specific outcome for this form of prayer - it is simply about being with God

You might like to look at this website for further suggestions and advice, but remember as all teachers of prayer say - there is no replacement for prayer, not even reading about prayer!

<http://www.christianmeditation.org.uk/how-to-meditate/how-to-meditate2>

Answers to questions on page 54

No	Action	Interpretation
1	Leans towards you	Interested in what you are saying. Intent.
2	In conversation crossed or folded arms	Could be normal way of sitting or uncomfortable with what you are saying, indicating unease, a defensive position.
3	Crossed legs towards you	Comfortable towards you – or crossed away and not comfortable. Gender issue: women generally cross their legs away from strange men
4	Hands behind head- clasped rocking in a chair?	Superiority gesture. <i>I've heard it all before</i>
5	While speaking, places hand over mouth	Indicates discomfort with what they are saying nervous or even lying. Children cover whole face and say: <i>it wasn't me</i>
6	Fiddles with shirt, pulls ears	Nervousness – even lying
7	Person strokes their chin before replying	Need time to think before answering
8	Rubs his/her hands together slowly	Person is thinking of their own benefit
9	Clasped hands behind back	Confidence: <i>you can't hurt me</i> (e.g. Royal family)
10	Rubbing hands together quickly	Enthusiasm

Nurturing the spirituality of children and young people

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
 No hands but ours;
 No feet but ours;
 Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
 must look out upon the world;
 Ours are the feet with which you
 must go about doing good;
 Ours are the hands with which you
 must bless men and women now;
 For your name's sake.
 Amen.

Case Study

From a very early age, Andrew would get up on a Sunday morning eager to go to church. It was his job to give out the books at the door as people arrived and he was there every week with a smile. He was 7 years old and did a good job and it made him feel part of the church.

One Sunday, to his surprise, he found that a stranger was doing his job. Apparently he had fallen on hard times and the church wanted to make him feel welcome so they gave him Andrew's job. A few weeks later, the Vicar asked for people to put their names down to act as sidespersons. Andrew put his name down. At the next PCC meeting it was revealed that Andrew's was the only name on the list. This caused hilarity in the meeting. Andrew was not even thanked for his offer.

- **If you were part of this church as an LPA what would you do now?**
- **Do you think children and young people 'feel part of' your church?**
- **In what ways could you encourage them?**
- **Are there any problems with the model of the children 'handing out the books'?**

Children's Spirituality



The Diocese of Salisbury aims to have children and young people 'at the heart of all we do' (Bishop Nicholas, charge to churchwardens May 2012; Children and Young People Strategy (<http://tinyurl.com/o8tgiby>)). It is therefore vital that as LPAs we are aware of the opportunities to engage with children and young people in our communities. However, it is also important to be aware of what we think we are doing when we work with children and young people. Are they empty vessels into which we must pour knowledge and experience of God? Or are they full of treasures of their own?

Read these paragraphs aloud in the group, a different person reading each one.

Paragraph One

'I took a little child's hand in mine. We were to walk together for awhile. I was to lead him to the Father. It was a task that overcame me, so awful was the responsibility. And so I talked to the child only of the Father. I pointed to the sternness of His face were the child to displease Him. I spoke of the child's goodness as something that would appease the Father's wrath. We walked under the tall trees. I said the Father had the power to bring them crashing down with His thunderbolts. We walked in the sunshine. I told him of the greatness of the Father who made the burning, blazing sun. And one twilight we met the Father. The child hid behind me. He was afraid. He would not take the Father's hand. I was between the child and the Father. I wondered. I had been so conscientious, so serious.'

Paragraph Two

'I took a little child's hand in mine. I was to lead him to the Father. I felt burdened with a multiplicity of the things I had to teach him. We did not ramble. We hastened from spot to spot. At one moment we compared the leaves of different trees. In the next moment we were examining a bird's nest. While the child questioned me about it, I hurried him away to chase a butterfly. Did he chance to fall asleep, I wakened him, lest he miss something I wished him to see. We spoke of the Father. Oh yes, often and rapidly, I poured into his ears all the stories I thought he ought to know. But we were often interrupted by the wind blowing, of which we must trace its source. And then in the twilight we met the Father. The child merely glanced at Him and then his gaze wandered in a dozen directions. The Father stretched out His hand. The child was not interested enough to take it. Feverish spots burned in his cheeks. He dropped exhausted to the ground and fell asleep. Again I was between the child and the Father. I wondered. I had taught him so many things.'

Paragraph Three

'I took a little child's hand to lead him to the Father. My heart was full of gratitude for the glad privilege. We walked slowly. I suited my steps to the short ones of the child. We spoke of many things the child noticed. Sometimes we picked the Father's flowers and stroked their soft petals and loved their bright colours. Sometimes we watched one of the Father's birds. We watched it build its nest and lay its eggs. We wondered, elated, at the care it gave its young. Often we told stories of the Father. I told them to the child and the child told them again to me. We told them, the child and I, over and over again. Sometimes we stopped to rest, leaning against one of the Father's trees and letting His cool breeze cool our brows, never speaking. And then in the twilight we met the Father. The child's eyes shone. He looked lovingly, trustingly into the Father's face. He put his hand into the Father's hand. I was for the moment forgotten. I was content.'

Rebecca Nye

- **In pairs, think back to your own childhood. What was your earliest experience of God?**
- **Did any adults help you to explore this?**
- **What was most helpful, and most unhelpful thing about their approach?**
- **What is one new or different thing you could do in your engagement with children and young people that might help them encounter 'the Father?'**

Children's spirituality is a large area - look out for CMD courses which will allow you to explore these issues further.

Working with schools

For some congregations, one of the challenges in engaging with children and young people is that they are not often in church on a Sunday morning. As LPAs you can be part of seeking out other opportunities. The most obvious of these is through schools and especially church schools. There are 196 church schools in the Diocese, as well as community schools and academies.

- **Can you identify the schools in your parish or community?**



- **Are they Primary (aged 5-11) or secondary (11-16 or 11-18)? Are they church schools?**

Here are some examples of common ways that churches can engage with local schools. You may be able to share others from your context. You don't need to be an LPA to be part of these things (you may already be doing them) but as an LPA they can become part of your pastoral ministry with children and young people.

- **Open the Book**

Open the Book is a programme designed to be used in Collective Worship over 3 years which tells Bible stories through drama (using the Lion Storyteller Bible) and provides a time for reflection. It requires a team of volunteers from the local church who act out, or lead the children in acting out the stories. <http://www.openthebook.net/home.php>

- **Visits to church**

As part of the RE curriculum, schools will study places of worship. One helpful way to do this is to visit the church, and it is often helpful to have members of the church present to help welcome the children or young people and show them around. One seasonal resource is the 'Experiences' which use stations around the church to explore the stories and meaning of a festival such as Easter. <http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/schools/jumping-fish-publications/experience-journeys78004/> (<http://tinyurl.com/ozkh2rw>)

- **Visits to school**

Most schools (especially Primary schools) welcome volunteers from the local community to help read with pupils or to support the school in other ways. Secondary schools often value input from mentors, or one-off assemblies on particular issues.

- **Breakfast or after-school clubs**

Primary and Secondary schools often have clubs for children who need to be dropped off earlier in the morning, as well as extra-curricular activities after school. Churches (or halls) next to a school could develop a partnership to offer this.

- **School Governors**

The role of a governor is an increasingly important one, and requires a significant commitment. In church schools Foundation Governors represent the local church, but all schools need people with skills and expertise from the community to be on the governing body. Contact the Diocesan Board of Education for more information. <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org/schools/board-of-education>

Things to remember

Working with schools offers a wonderful opportunity to engage with children and young people, as well as the teachers and staff. It is important to recognise that a school is an organisation in its own right, with its values and priorities. There are points of convergence as we have noted, as well as boundaries to be aware of:

Opportunities

- **Daily collective worship is a requirement in all schools**
- **There is increasing emphasis in OFSTED inspections on spiritual development**
- **Involvement and engagement with the local community is also part of the inspection criteria**

Boundaries

- **Schools work to a timetable and curriculum specifications**
- **Schools will have their own policies for safeguarding etc. which you will need to comply with as well as having your own**
- **As a visitor you shouldn't be left on your own with children - staff should be responsible for control and discipline**



The Diocesan Board of Education has a wide range of resources for working with schools and more generally with children and young people. They run courses, some of which are available through the CMD programme. Barbara Meardon (Diocesan Adviser for work with children and families) and Lizzie Whitbread (Diocesan Adviser for work with young people) are key contacts for advice and support. There is a Children and Young People Strategy for the Diocese (see p.65).

Working with children and young people in the church

The decline in children's church attendance reflects the bigger picture of the rise of the secular Sunday. 'Sunday is not a good day for children and church,' Mrs Smale says. 'We are competing with all the other activities on offer, from football to drama.'

Even for children who do attend church, continuity can be a problem: with a higher proportion of broken families, some may be away with their other parent on any given Sunday. Where both parents work during the week, they may be reluctant to be separated from their children again when the Sunday school goes out of the service.

THE Revd Ruth Pyke, Priest-in-Charge at All Saints', Caddington, is a children's adviser in St Albans diocese and is on the Year of the Child steering group. She says that one effective church response has been to pioneer activities outside Sunday. She runs a Toddler Church and a Messy Church for older children midweek. Both events seek to be accessible to all families, and include worship as well as fun and games.

'At Toddler Church we have a pared-down form of service. We ring the bell, light candles, have action songs, a Bible story, and interactive prayer. Amid all this, I find parents are beginning to come and share their concerns with me,' Ms Pyke says.

Supporting parents in nurturing faith at home is becoming an increasingly important dimension of the Church's care for children, as fewer young parents come from a Christian background or have any experience of church.

Breaking the Sunday mould raises some concerns, Ms Pyke says. 'Church members ask me why families are not coming on a Sunday. I say 'Because they come on a Thursday,' but they find it hard to see that church can happen on a different day.' (1)

- **Do you recognise any of the scenarios described here?**
- **Have things moved on in the church since this article was written?**
- **What are the activities that happen in your community along these lines? What role do (or could) LPAs play?**

(1). Church Times article : 29 Apr 2009



Some things to think about include Messy Church (www.messychurch.org.uk), Holiday Clubs, Youth Groups, Toddler Groups. CMD and the Diocesan Board of Education (see above) will provide helpful information and training in these areas.

Bible Study

Mark 10.13-16

'People were bringing little children to him [Jesus] in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.'

- What do you think Jesus meant by 'as a little child?'
- In what ways does the 'Kingdom of God' belong to children?
- How can your work with children and young people express this?

Closing Prayer

God of all grace and compassion,
 whose ways are perfect,
 whose words give us life,
 whose love seeks to draw us together in harmony to build your heavenly kingdom;
 May we walk in truth and grace day by day
 in our teaching and learning
 in our living in community
 in the building up of one another.
 through Jesus Christ our Lord
 Amen.

(A prayer for Education Sunday)

Prayer focus before next time: Praying through art

One of the gifts of the spirituality of children is the openness to play and creativity. You are therefore invited to practise praying through art. Don't worry about the artistic merit of what you create! In the act of expressing your prayer through the work of your hands open yourself to God and his presence.

- You could buy a 'Colouring book for adults' or search for resources online
- Draw or paint or sculpt an image of your journey with God or where you are in your relationship with God
- Investigate the practise of icon 'writing' from the Orthodox tradition



Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us that you have no body now on earth but ours;
 No hands but ours;
 No feet but ours;
 Ours are the eyes through which your compassion
 must look out upon the world;
 Ours are the feet with which you
 must go about doing good;
 Ours are the hands with which you
 must bless men and women now;
 For your name's sake.
 Amen.

Case Study

Luke 5.12-16

'Once, when he [Jesus] was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.' Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, 'I do choose. Be made clean.' Immediately the leprosy left him. And he ordered him to tell no one. 'Go', he said, 'and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them.' But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.'

Various issues concerning LPA ministry could emerge from this passage. Discuss these in small groups. Feedback one significant point from each question in plenary.

- 1. In the context of this passage, the leper's words are often seen as a confession of faith, but sometimes peoples' expectations of what we can offer as an LPA become unrealistic and difficult to manage. Occasionally we may even feel we are being manipulated. 'If the church was really caring you would visit me.' Are you aware of your boundaries, and when it is appropriate to say no?**
- 2. Jesus sends the man to the priest to make his sacrifice. At one level he is acknowledging that there is a role for the 'professional' in this situation. In what contexts would you refer someone on to a professional?**
- 3. After this incident Jesus withdraws to pray. How do we look after ourselves in challenging situations?**

Being aware of the signs

As we have seen and will see in a variety of pastoral situations (such as loss, or spiritual difficulty) sometimes the issue or the need which is first presented to you as a pastoral minister may not be the full story, or the main need. It may be easier for people to ask for a visit or to discuss a problem that seems more 'acceptable', or they may not have acknowledged to themselves the true situation, for all sorts of complex and valid reasons.

In any pastoral encounter it is important to try to use our listening skills in the fullest sense. This means being aware of what is not said or avoided, what is being said through body language, or signs that are in the room. In listening to the other person, we also listen to ourselves and the assumptions and experience that we bring to the encounter.

Our own experience

In this session we will be looking at some difficult issues including addiction, abuse, mental illness, and debt. There can be a tendency in the church to assume that these issues affect 'other people' but we are all likely to have had some experience of issues such as these, either personally or through friends and family.


In pairs, (remembering your group's confidentiality agreement) discuss your experience of these issues. How might this affect the way you approach a similar situation as a pastoral minister?


What to look out for




Below are some materials from organisations and charities which seek to support people with underlying issues that you might encounter. With many of these issues it is about noticing when people are trying to hide things - this may not be conscious or deliberate. With all of these issues it is important to balance awareness of what might be happening without jumping to conclusions.


These are offered not so that you can 'diagnose' these issues, but so that you have some awareness of when someone might need professional support, and where you might look for it.


In groups look at these comments and discuss what signs you might notice on a visit or in the course of your pastoral ministry. What would you add?


Alcohol dependence	
Possible signs	Support and information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking at all times of the day, often drinking alone • Physical signs of withdrawal - shaking or sweating • Downplaying or attempting to conceal the extent of drinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinkline - National Alcohol Helpline 0800 917 8282 • Alcoholics Anonymous Helpline: 0845 769 7555 • Local GP <p>Web: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk</p> 

Domestic violence	
<i>Possible signs and symptoms</i>	<i>Support and information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person experiencing violence may be kept in a position of fear • The person committing violence may use pressure tactics such as threatening to leave, or commit further violence if anything is reported • The person committing violence may try to isolate the victim • The person committing violence may act in a very caring way in public as part of the manipulation of the victim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247 <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.womensaid.org.uk

Child abuse	
<i>Possible signs and symptoms</i>	<i>Support and information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of physical abuse e.g. bruises • Emotionally withdrawn • Inappropriate violent or sexual behaviour • Neglected personal appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child comes to you with an allegation of abuse, or if you suspect a child has been abused, by law you must report it to the Police or Social Services. If there is no immediate danger use the 101 number. • As an LPA you must attend a Diocesan Safeguarding training course and keep up to date with training. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is available to discuss any queries you might have. <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop It Now – 0808 1000 900 If you are concerned about the behaviour of another adult, or concerned that you might abuse children yourself. <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>

Drug addiction	
Possible signs and symptoms	Support and information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical signs: needle marks, bloodshot eyes, unusual smells • Changed social interactions • Abrupt changes or extremes of behaviour or mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS direct and local GP • Frank: 0800 776600 or 0300 123 6600 www.talktofrank.com  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.addaction.co.uk

Depression	
Possible signs and symptoms	Support and information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous low mood (the NHS defines this as most of the day, every day for 2 weeks) • Feeling helpless and hopeless or tearful • Losing interest or motivation in what used to be important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best first point of contact is the local GP • NHS direct 111; www.nhs.uk • Mind www.mind.org.uk 

Debt	
Possible signs and symptoms	Support and information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If someone is worried about debt they may hide bills or other financial documents • Conversely, you may notice a large number of unopened bills • Evasive about money- taking sole control of finances • Receiving lots of phone calls- anxious about answering the phone or the door • Being in serious debt is likely to lead to anxiety which could show itself in a variety of ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens Advice: www.adviceguide.org.uk • 08444 111 444 or check your local bureau's contact details • Christians Against Poverty www.capuk.org 

Risk of suicide	
<i>Possible signs and symptoms</i>	<i>Support and information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking about feeling trapped, such as saying they cannot see any way out of their current situation • Sudden mood swings – a sudden lift in mood after a period of depression could indicate they have made the decision to attempt suicide • Threaten to hurt or kill themselves or talk or write about death, dying or suicide. (This may seem obvious, but this should be taken seriously even if it seems unlikely.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samaritans 08457 90 90 90 www.samartians.org  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.nhs.uk ; 111 • Mind www.mind.org 

What is available locally?

Some national sources of information and support are listed above, but what is available locally in your community? The GP may be the first point of call in many cases, but do you know if there is a local Alcoholics Anonymous group, or a Women's refuge for example? Is there a local directory of sources of information and support?

Gather a list of the organisations and resources that you are aware of. Are there any gaps in your knowledge that you want to follow up?



If you are concerned for your own or some else's immediate safety ring the Police on 999. In other serious circumstances, where you do not require an immediate emergency response, use the national police helpline, **101**, where your query is more likely to receive the proper response.

Don't forget to get support for yourself in these circumstances. You should be meeting regularly with a supervising minister and/or a support group, but do contact someone as soon as possible if you encounter any of these issues, or have questions in these areas.

Keeping yourself safe

Tell someone where you are going. If you are concerned, don't go on your own, or meet in a public place.

On entering be aware of hazards.

When sitting in a room think about how to keep yourself and the other person safe. If you are in a position of power, it is good practice for the other person to be closest to the door, but if you are worried for your safety be aware of how you might escape or call for help.

What next?

If you think someone is experiencing one of these situations, it is not something you can adequately respond to as an LPA. You can encourage the person to seek help elsewhere, or refer them on with their permission. Part of good pastoral ministry is recognising our limits and knowing when people need more support or help than we can offer.

However, this doesn't mean that the basic pastoral gift of prayer and being with someone offering Christ's eyes and feet and hands doesn't have a place. Alongside the support from professionals it is almost always possible and appropriate to offer ongoing support and prayer. For many people acknowledging that they need further help is a big step, and we cannot underestimate the role of walking with someone through the experience. It is necessary and helpful to be clear to ourselves and the other person the boundaries and expectations here so that you are not dealing with more than is appropriate. As with all pastoral relationships, there may be times when this is not appropriate or desired by the other person, and it is time to bring the relationship to an end in a positive way.

Care can be expressed in transformative ways by the mere act of being there- of not going away. This is especially true '[w]hen people are pushed by all sorts of destructive forces into seeing themselves as hopeless, as rubbish, so that what they do doesn't matter any more.'

Ben Quash (2012) *Abiding* p.77 (quoting Rowan Williams)

'But let us not put our sights too high. We do not have to be saviours of the world! We are simply human beings, enfolded in weakness and in hope, called together to change our world one heart at a time.'

Jean Vanier (2008) *Becoming Human* p.163

Closing prayer

Keep a time of silence, holding before God those undergoing difficult situations at the moment.

The love of the faithful Creator
The peace of the wounded Healer
The joy of the challenging Spirit
The hope of the Three in One
surround and encourage you
today, tonight and forever. Amen.

Galloway (1996) *The Pattern of our Days*

Prayer focus before next time: Praying for organisations

Search online for an organisation that supports those going through times of difficulty or communities in need (e.g. Alabare, Christians Against Poverty, Trussell Trust). Sign up for a newsletter or prayer diary, or regularly check for news online.

Pray every day for their work and the people they serve.

Prayer requests:



Notes



