

A stylized illustration of a church building with a brown cross on its roof. The church is light yellow with a brown roof. In front of the church, a diverse group of ten people of various ages and ethnicities are smiling. A priest in a black cassock with a white clerical collar stands in the center of the group. The background is a light blue sky with two white clouds.

**ALL  
FOR  
JESUS**

**DIOCESAN CENTENARY  
PARISH MISSION WEEKENDS**

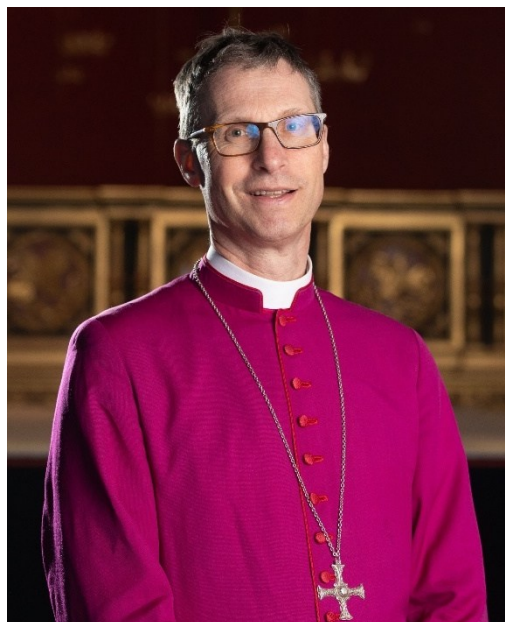


## A welcome from Bishop Philip

Dear friends,

This year, the Diocese of Blackburn is celebrating its centenary. It's like a big birthday party, in which we'll be celebrating with various events through the year.

Throughout this centenary year, we will be looking in two directions at once. First, we'll be looking back, giving thanks for all the diocese has achieved under God over these past 100 years. More importantly, we'll also be looking forward and committing ourselves to the Gospel work afresh. One of the ways we're going to do that is by inviting every single parish across the diocese to have a weekend of mission, between **Friday 11th and Sunday 13th September 2026**.



This is not going to be about great big “crash, bang, wallop” expensive events. Rather, the invitation is for every single parish to put on a weekend in which simple events are held, and in which people can be invited to enjoy themselves, to engage with other Christians and also to hear a simple gospel message.

That might also mean that we do something special with Sunday morning and open that up to those who haven't experienced the worship of the Church. It may be that the mission weekend is followed up with a nurture course, like a maternity ward, where new Christians can learn about the faith.

So, wouldn't it be wonderful if every single parish were able to do that? To host a weekend of simple events, in which those on the fringes of the life of our church can learn about what it means to follow Jesus Christ and learn about the new life that we find in him.

Within the pages of this guide, and the video course that accompanies it, you will find all sorts of support to help you engage in this exciting initiative in a way that is sustainable and achievable but also done well. I would love to think that our centenary year was a year in which many new people found faith in Jesus Christ.



As a diocese, we're committed to growth and to the renewal and revitalisation of our parishes. We're committed to that not just because we want to prop up an institution, but because we know that hope and life and salvation is found only in Jesus Christ and in relationship with Him, and we long for people to know the joy of that relationship.

These centenary mission weekends could be a wonderful way of reaching out with that good news message and inviting people to know Jesus, in whom alone they can find life in all its fullness.

I do hope you find these resources helpful. More importantly, I hope you feel able to accept this invitation to host a mission weekend this September, so that 2026 can be a real year of outreach and of growth.

+ Philip Blackburn

+Philip Blackburn  
Epiphany 2026

**Heavenly Father,  
in our Centenary year  
we rededicate ourselves and our Diocese to you.  
Send the Holy Spirit to give us  
confidence in our witness,  
generosity in our service,  
and love for our neighbours,  
that your Church may be renewed  
and many come home to you,  
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**



## About this resource

This booklet is a toolkit to help you prepare to celebrate 100 years of our diocese's mission to the people of Lancashire by hosting a parish mission weekend between 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2026. It is by no means exhaustive, but our hope and prayer is that there is enough inspiration and guidance within these pages to enable you to 'have a go' at hosting some events, and to help you start your planning if you have not already done so.



Our suggestion is to gather a small group of lay people, perhaps between 3-5, to help plan this weekend. Think about gathering a balance of ages and backgrounds, and people with the different kinds of gifts that might be needed. You can then use this resource to shape your discussions and preparations.

This booklet is also accompanied by a 3-part 'Extravagant Sowing' video course on the enclosed USB flash drive. It will help your lay people become more confident in inviting others to church, sharing their own stories of faith in accessible ways, and praying for others to come to know Jesus for themselves. Each session is around 15 minutes long, and features teaching from our bishops, as well as practical examples from the everyday saints of Lancashire. There are some discussion questions to accompany each session, which makes it ideally suited for small groups as well as individual use. The sessions are also available via the diocesan 'Fruitful' app. Please do begin to make plans to use this resource with your people over the spring or summer terms. It will be a great way of mobilising them for the mission weekend in September.

My team would be delighted to provide any additional advice or support you might need to prepare for this exciting venture. Contact details can be found towards the end. In the meantime, please do be assured of our prayers for you and your parishes as you prepare to make the very most of this wonderful opportunity to make 2026 a year 'all for Jesus'.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve". The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light yellow rectangular background.

Rev'd Steve Haskett  
Director of Mission

## What kind of event?

An excellent place to start planning for a parish mission is with these questions:

*“What kind of event would people in our area come to?”*

*“What kind of event would our congregations be confident inviting their non-Christian friends and family members along to?”*

Understanding our communities is key to answering these questions effectively. In other words, *context is key*. That will mean listening to the people in our churches who know their communities well.

A great example of this, pictured below, is a ‘Chocolate Bingo’ event in an ordinary working class parish in Preston. The church made beautiful chocolate ‘bouquets’ as prizes in rounds of bingo. A Lancashire Hotpot supper was offered, along with a short evangelistic talk from Bishop Philip.



In a parish church that had an average Sunday congregation of 35, 100 people attended the event. Around 75% of them were not regular churchgoers. Each one received a wonderful welcome, experienced generous Christian hospitality and joyful fellowship, and most importantly, heard something clear about Jesus and an offer to find out more in a follow-up course.

This event was so effective because the congregation prayed and worked hard at invitation (more on that later), but also because they understood and connected with the culture of their parish in the most brilliantly effective way. A high-brow opera recital would not have

gathered anywhere near as many people. On the other hand, there are parishes in our diocese where a Chocolate Bingo event would have failed spectacularly.

So, think and pray carefully about those two key questions,

*“What kind of event would people in our area come to?”*

*“What kind of event would our congregations be confident inviting their non-Christian friends and family members along to?”*



Above are just a few pictures showing recent mission weekends held by parishes of all sorts of different contexts and traditions across the diocese. In appendix one at the end of this booklet, you will find a good list of examples of events that have been tried elsewhere (but remember the two key questions we mentioned above).

## Heritage Open Days

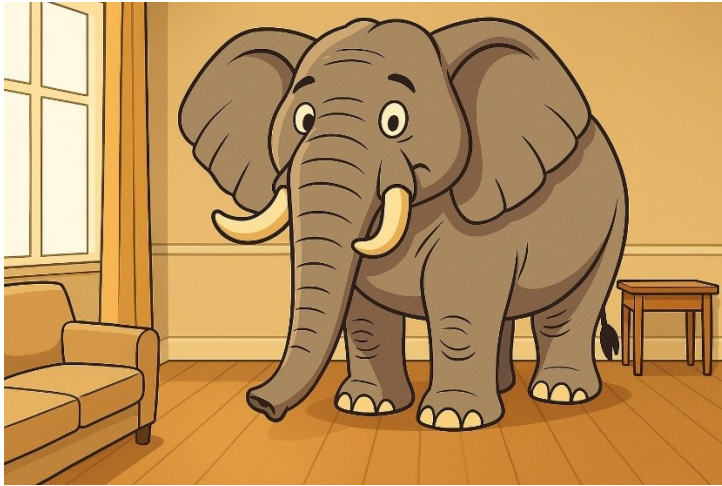
Providentially, 2026’s Heritage Open Days coincide with our centenary mission weekends. If your parish normally engage with this and decide they want to do so again, then think about how you can make it more missional.



Suggestions include finding people who can give tours around your building, using the architectural features to tell the story of our Christian faith, and the faith exploits of those who have gone before us in our parishes. Most of our churches lend themselves excellently to this task! You could even produce a short information sheet (or a treasure hunt style activity for children and families).

Also think about how you might be able to extend hospitality to visitors. Perhaps offer them tea and cake and have someone on hand to chat with them to build some relationships. Finally, have some lovely, printed postcard-sized invitations so that everyone can be invited to come back to a church service, especially on 13<sup>th</sup> September.

## Mission, not fundraising



It's important at this point to call out a potential elephant in the room. The invitation that is extended to each and every parish in the Diocese of Blackburn is to a weekend of mission, where we will be seeking to extend a warm, generous welcome to many people in our diocese who do not yet know Jesus. Unconditional welcome and hospitality are at the heart of our Christian faith. That is

what has been extended to us by our Heavenly Father, and we should therefore look to offer that to others in our mission and witness.

Please therefore resist temptations to see this weekend as an opportunity to make money by charging admission or selling raffle tickets for the building appeal or the heating costs (as important as those things are). Try making your events free wherever possible. If absolutely necessary, you can ask people to offer a donation (without obligation) for refreshments. If you do this, you will almost certainly be asked by someone why you are not charging. What a beautiful opportunity that will be to witness to 'He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all'.

## Sunday worship

An effective parish mission weekend will culminate in a focused effort to invite people that you have engaged with to come along to Sunday worship. To make the very most of this opportunity, please consider these 3 golden rules:

1. Do what you would normally do, but do it as well as you possibly can...

When inviting people to church, you want to give them an authentic experience of the style of worship you would find in your Sunday worship week-by-week. That means, if your usual tradition is a choral eucharist with a robed choir, then do that as

well as you possibly can. If your usual tradition is a contemporary worship band and an informal atmosphere, then do that well as well as you possibly can too! Don't try to be something you are not because you think it might tempt people to come back. It doesn't work!

2. Give a clear, accessible and engaging presentation of the Christian faith...

Within your offering of worship, think about how you can give time to offer a presentation of the Christian faith that is

a) clear in its aim to share the good news we have in Jesus with those who don't yet know Him, and offer ways people can respond and find out more;

b) accessible in its language, avoiding technical language and philosophical ideas and instead presents the Gospel in plain Lancastrian English;

c) engaging for those curious about our faith. In that respect, think about how you might be creative. If you know someone with a particularly engaging story of how they came to faith in Jesus, and/ or the impact that has had, consider interviewing them. In our culture, personal experience carries.



The 2026 Diocesan Study Days will cover how to do this really well, and the invitation for this year is open to all our licensed clergy, PTOs, and LLMs. This is to cover as many people as possible who may be preaching on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2026. A reminder of how to book for those is at the end of this booklet.

3. Go the extra mile (and then some) on welcome and hospitality...

Make sure that the welcome you offer people is warm and sincere, which means being careful about who is 'on duty' that particular week. Consider stationing some welcomers *outside* the church doors, so that crossing the threshold of the building is slightly less intimidating for those visiting for the first time.

Also think about how you can upsize your hospitality. Can you offer a bring and share/ Jacob's Join (with visitors made welcome to stay even if they come empty handed!), or a soup and sandwich lunch? Doing so always encourages more people to invite friends and family along and allows visitors a chance to get to know folks. When thinking about this, please be mindful of the fundraising elephant mentioned earlier. Generously sharing sincere Christian hospitality, without cost or condition, is a beautiful act of witness.

#### 4. What about children and young people?

If you are expecting children and young people to come to your service, make provision for them. Make sure your children's groups are ready and set up for newcomers and consider asking children's group leaders to introduce themselves to the parents of any new families as they come in, so that they know who is leading the groups and what the procedure will be. If you are not able to facilitate that, you may want to organise somewhere that parents won't feel uncomfortable sitting (i.e. not at the front!). If you are going to go for an all-age worship service, then consider the tips in the appendix of this booklet.



### Invitation, not publicity



Effective mission is borne out of confident invitation. Getting people in your churches to be courageous in inviting others to come along to church will be key to a fruitful mission weekend, and will likely have a longer-term impact on the growth of your parish.

Many churches, when engaging in mission initiatives, make the mistake of focusing purely on advertising. 'We put it in the shop windows... we put it on the website... we put it on Facebook page... we hired an aeroplane with a banner to tell people... but nobody came!' It may

be a familiar experience. In a good parish mission weekend, publicity and advertising should only ever exist to *reinforce* personal invitation, not *replace* it.

Our advice is to invest in some good quality invitations (companies like VistaPrint have lots of good templates on their website) and then spend your time encouraging folks how to do that well. The next five sections of this booklet will focus on that.

### What stops confident invitation?

In short, two things.

The first is *the fear of NO*. This is a natural human response, but one which can be disarmed by creating a 'have a go' culture in our churches. This can be achieved by encouraging the whole church to pray for and reach out to people they will invite over the same

period of time, cheering each other on as you go along, and affirming any attempts to invite people to church, even those that have been declined.

The second thing that stops people from inviting is the lie that *nobody is interested*. Thankfully, we now have some pretty good evidence to say this simply isn't true. The Bible Society's 'Quiet Revival' report, released in 2025, provided data from robust research conducted by YouGov, tracking attitudes towards churchgoing and Christianity in the UK between 2019 and 2024. It concluded:

- UK regular churchgoing rose from 8% (2019) to 12% (2024).
- Big growth among under-25s, with young men rising from 3% to 21%, and young women from 3% to 12%.
- Over half of respondents would be happy to be prayed for by a Christian friend.

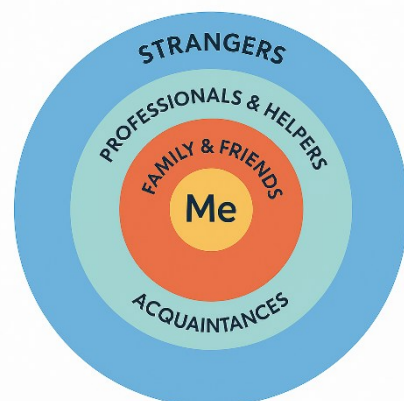
And crucially,

- **1 in 3 non-churchgoers would attend if invited by a friend of family member.**
- In this, personal relationships matter more than celebrity influence.

There are caveats with the data of course, but there is lots of anecdotal evidence to back it up, and the headline is that *something has shifted*. People in the UK are interested in the claims of Christianity in ways they haven't been for decades. Spread the news among your congregations - now is the time to be confident and courageous in extending invitation to those who have not yet discovered Jesus.

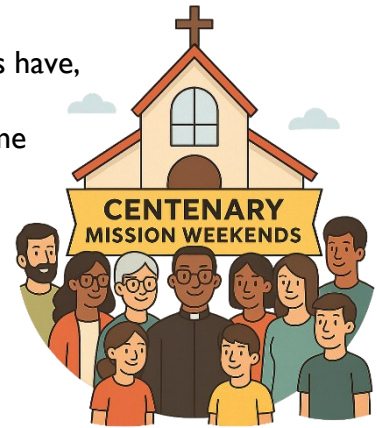
## Who will come? Part I – personal circles

Helping your people to see who is in their circles of influence will be crucial to enabling confident invitation. 'Praying for Five' is a habit of prayer that has grown in popularity in recent years. Encourage your people to be praying daily for 5 people to come to faith. To help them think about who those people might be, do an exercise with them where you ask them to list as many people as possible in their circles of influence. This disarms the objection that is often made: 'I don't know anyone who doesn't come to church!'



## Who will come? Part 2 – church circles

As well as all the individual connections people in your congregations have, you have even more as a church. The average parish church has connections with hundreds, if not thousands, of people that they come into contact with on a regular basis. It would help to write an exhaustive list for your own parishes, and then think about how you might go about engaging them and inviting them along to your parish mission events.



Here are some suggestions to get you going:

Toddler group members	Uniformed organisations	Children in your school
School teachers and staff	Parents and families from school	Church neighbours
Local businesses	External groups that use hall/ rooms	'Fringe'/ occasional attenders, eg Messy Church families
Recent occasional offices	Community groups	Community leaders, eg councillors

### Knock knock!



One way of engaging neighbours and local businesses is to knock on their doors, introduce yourself, and offer them an invitation. Lots of churches, of all kinds of traditions, have found this a really fruitful way to engage and welcome new people to mission events and services. Please remember though to always do this in pairs.

### Pray, pray, pray

One of the most startlingly obvious verses in the whole bible is 'You do not have, because you do not ask God' (James 4:2). Persistent prayer is another fundamental element to an effective parish mission weekend.

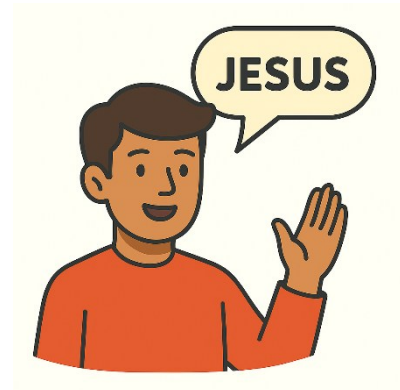
You will need to consider how to encourage your congregations to pray regularly for the people they will invite. We have already mentioned 'Praying for Five' as an excellent example. Appendix five of this booklet also features an A5 'Prayer and Invitation Guide' that you could give out and ask people to complete during a Sunday service. There is an electronic (.pdf) version of that guide on the resources USB that accompanied this booklet.

You will also need to consider how you will call your congregation to corporate prayer for this mission weekend. At the very least, it should be included in the intercessions in your services between now and then. It is never too early to start praying!

In addition, think about another time you might focus on prayers for your mission weekend. During our 2025 diocesan 'Year of Prayer for Growth and Renewal', many parishes formed the habit of assigning morning or evening prayer once a week to focus their prayers for that purpose. If you did that, please keep doing it to pray for this mission weekend and the growth of your church. If you haven't yet done that, why not consider it?

### **Mission not social – speaking of Jesus**

We have talked about the dangers of fundraising creeping into these parish mission weekends, and of the importance of giving a clear, accessible and engaging presentation of the Christian faith in our Sunday morning services. However, in order for your other events to be mission events and not just purely social events, something must be said of what it is we believe in, and whom it is we follow.



Here are some ideas of how you can do that:

- A 5-10 minute 'Thought for the Day's style reflection, linking to Jesus and following Him.
- A short interview slot where 1 or 2 church members share their stories of how they came to faith in Jesus. The 3-session 'Extravagant Sowing' course that accompanies this booklet features a session devoted entirely to helping people share their stories.
- An engaging all-age style illustration/ game that brings the point back to following Jesus (be careful that the illustration doesn't become more memorable than the point).
- As well as an 'up front' message, encourage faith sharing around tables, where people have a go at sharing their own stories during conversations.

And here are three top tips for doing this well:

1. Be unapologetic: Think how strange it would be if you went to a pub and the bar staff didn't offer you a drink, or talk about the guest beers. We have something much better, and it would be odd for us not to mention the One whom we follow in His house of worship!
2. Be engaging and to the point: Consider who else you might invite to speak alongside you. As mentioned, diocesan study days are open to LLMs and PTOs. There is also a separate day for ALMs to help them prepare a short evangelistic talk exactly for this purpose. If you have ALMs and LLMs, encourage them to make the most of those opportunities so that you can share the load.

3. ALWAYS bring it back to invitation. 'If you want to hear more, we'd love to see you in church on Sunday at .... (time etc). We've also got a short course coming soon, where you'll be able to find out more'. Having printed invites available for your services and enquirer's courses is an advantage when doing this.

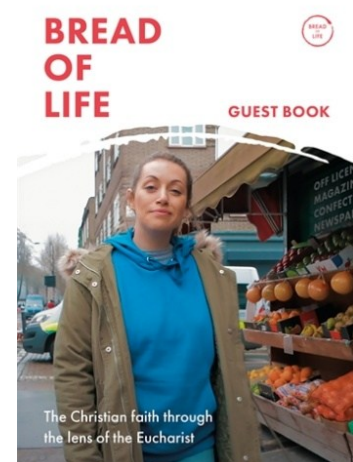
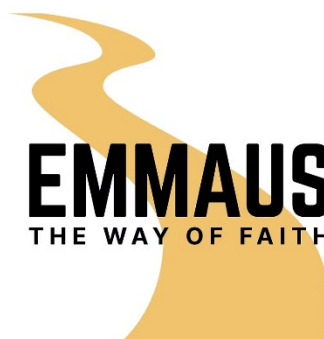
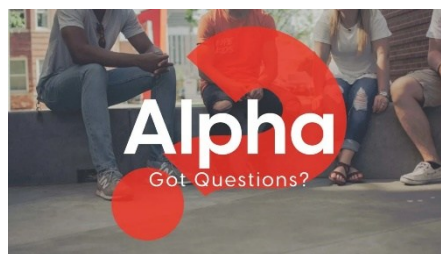
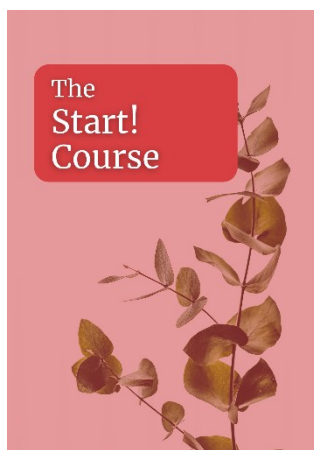
## Start with the follow-up

A helpful way of planning for mission is to start with the follow-up, and work backwards. In other words, asking yourself the important question:

*'How will we encourage the people that come to our mission to find out more?'*

The answer is in a short follow-up course that will allow people to come and ask big questions, hear in more detail about 'the faith once delivered to the saints', and how they can respond and begin their own pilgrim journey as a follower of Jesus.

There are a number of possibilities, and many of you will be familiar with them and used them in your own context. Start, Alpha, Emmaus, Christianity Explored and Pilgrim are probably the most common. Bread of Life is a more recent resource that many in catholic contexts have found helpful. Most of these courses come with the option to use video materials, or deliver the talks yourself, so they are very easy to run.



For those who are newer to church communities, we have found that some of these resources have been too long to engage people at that stage. Churches of a wide variety of traditions have therefore found Hope Explored and 3-2-1 very helpful, as they are both only 3 weeks.



As you think about your parish mission weekends, do be considering how you can make the most of this opportunity and host an enquirer's course for people to hear more. Promote it in your church in the run-up too, so that you can gather a critical mass of people to participate before the mission begins.

To help with this, we will be hosting two webinars on the different types of enquirers course and how to run them well. They will be repeated on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> and Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June. Details of how to sign up to that can be found at the end of this booklet.

### **The start of a season of invitation**

In addition to the follow-up courses, please consider the many opportunities you have to invite people back to church between September and Christmas. For example:

- Harvest
- All Souls/ memorial services
- Remembrance
- Nativities
- Advent services
- Christingle & Carol services
- Crib services/ Christmas Eve and Christmas day worship.

Many people will become *occasional* attenders before they become *regular* attenders, so why not plan the dates and times of these services over the summer and add them to the invitation cards mentioned earlier. Making sure a warm and genuine invitation is extended from the front to attend these services will be important.

## A suggested timeline for planning

When?	What?
Spring term (Feb-Easter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage your PCCs and congregations ASAP if you haven't already!</li> <li>• Form a small working group (3-5 people)</li> <li>• Consider what events you will host.</li> <li>• Begin to pray as a church.</li> <li>• Book yourself onto study days and encourage LLMs/ ALMs/ PTOs to do likewise.</li> <li>• Consider running the 'Extravagant Sowing' course over 3 weeks.</li> <li>• Book yourself and your team onto one of the follow-up course webinars.</li> </ul>
Summer term (Easter to July)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to talk in earnest about praying and inviting in church on Sundays.</li> <li>• Use the prayer and invitation guide during a service.</li> <li>• Think about how you will invite and engage your church contacts.</li> <li>• Plan dates for your 'Season of Invitation' services and follow-up course and print invitations.</li> <li>• Think about who might speak at the different events.</li> <li>• Cover practicalities like hospitality, catering, and welcome.</li> </ul>
Summer holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pray and prepare for preaching on 13<sup>th</sup> September.</li> <li>• Pray and prepare for any other short talks that you or your team might give.</li> </ul>
Final touches (early September)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a final run through your plans.</li> <li>• A big final push on encouraging congregations in invitation – create a 'can do' culture.</li> <li>• Keep calm and carry on praying!</li> </ul>

## Final top tips

- Don't forget to sign up to our study days for evangelistic preaching for clergy and lay preachers, using the QR codes if you are licensed clergy, PTO, LLM, or ALM.



Scan this code for licensed clergy, PTOs & LLMs



Scan this code for ALMs

- Book in for one of the two webinars on follow-up courses, using the QR code below.



- Remember where we started: Think *'what will people come to?'*
- Keep the focus on personal invitation. Don't rely on publicity.
- Think quality over quantity. Choose a couple of events and do them well!
- Pray persistently that the Lord would use this mission weekend to build His Church.
- Pay attention to safeguarding, especially in regard to DBS checks, and risk assessments where needed. If in doubt, please ask for advice.



Finally, please have fun! It is such a wonderful witness when people come into our churches for the first time and see Christian people smiling, enjoying themselves and modelling genuine loving community. That in itself, before we even speak a word about our faith, will show people something they might want to be a part of. Many churches across our diocese have found this process thoroughly enjoyable and experienced plenty of laughter on the way. Our prayer is that you will too!

## **Further help and support, and support for parishes in vacancy**

If you have any questions or need further guidance to make the most of this wonderful opportunity, please in the first instance contact [janet.sanderson@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:janet.sanderson@blackburn.anglican.org), and a member of the team will be in touch.

If you are a parish that is in vacancy, or are expecting to be by September 11<sup>th</sup>, please do carry on and have a go at planning a mission event. It will be a great way of keeping a missional focus during the vacancy. It will also be a great encouragement to a potential new incumbent if they see that a parish might be able to do this on their own initiative.

To support parishes in vacancy over 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September, we have arranged for a good number of members of the Archbishops' College of Evangelists to come and base themselves with vacant parishes over that weekend. Someone will be in touch with church wardens, but in the unlikely event you don't hear anything, please contact [sarah.odonoghue@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:sarah.odonoghue@blackburn.anglican.org) and she will happily assist.

**Heavenly Father,  
in our Centenary year  
we rededicate ourselves and our Diocese to you.  
Send the Holy Spirit to give us  
confidence in our witness,  
generosity in our service,  
and love for our neighbours,  
that your Church may be renewed  
and many come home to you,  
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

## Appendix One – Examples of mission events from other parishes

<p>Friday daytime</p>	<p>If you have links with schools in your parishes, think about whether you might be able to do something in school on the Friday daytime, to engage the children (and by association, their families) in the events you will be holding over the weekend.</p> <p>One parish held a parish mission weekend with a harvest theme. They invited the local school to do their harvest collective worship in church on the Friday morning. The church provided refreshments for the parents and family members that attended and gave invitations to the weekend's events. Many of them attended as a result.</p> <p>Another parish worked with a sports ministry to organize a football tournament after school on the Friday afternoon of their mission weekend. Lots of the children and their families attended.</p>
<p>Friday evening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chocolate Bingo – bingo with lovely chocolate bouquets instead of cash prizes. Food served following a short talk and invitation to church at the half way point</li> <li>• Quiz nights – a quiz with food and a short talk and invitation to church at the half way point. Always very popular and well attended events!</li> <li>• Beetle Drive – still works very well in some places (remember the two key questions we started with). Again, a short talk and invitation to church followed by food at the half way point.</li> <li>• Ladies Pudding Party – a ladies only evening, where desserts and puddings are served and an inspiring female speaker brings a talk on faith and life, and an invitation to church.</li> <li>• BBQ and treasure hunt – a bbq, with drinks and a treasure hunt on a Sunday. A short talk and invitation to church following the treasure hunt, during which prizes were given out to the participants.</li> <li>• Bonkers Bingo – very popular at the moment, and if you have someone that can do this well, it will attract a good crowd. Again, food served at the halfway point following a short talk and invitation to church.</li> <li>• Male Voice Choir concert – a local choir came to perform. Refreshments and a short talk and invitation to church during the interval.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sea Shantie/Bingo/Quiz – held in the local pub, with hotpot and a short talk and invitation to church at the half way point.</li> <li>• ‘Hot Seat’ evening – held in a local social club, with a panel of guests being invited to answer life’s big questions. Refreshments and an invitation to church were offered.</li> </ul>
Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pet Blessing – these are always popular. A more formal liturgical service, which allows people to come with their animals and be blessed, whilst hearing a message about how Jesus loves them much more than they love their animals! Human and pet refreshments served afterwards, with an invitation to church.</li> <li>• Dog Show - a fun time with different categories (serious and less so), including a short talk and an invitation to church.</li> <li>• Men’s breakfast – an engaging speaker with a good story of coming to faith in Jesus and an opportunity to eat breakfast together at a local pub. An invitation to church given to all.</li> <li>• Sports breakfast – a former chaplain to a football club speaking over breakfast. An invitation to church given to all.</li> <li>• Ladies pamper afternoon – refreshments, crafts and pampering with a short talk and invitation to church.</li> <li>• Beer &amp; Hymns – ask congregation members to choose a favourite hymn and share their reason why in 2 minutes. Sing hymn and repeat 10 times! Give each person 2 x cloakroom tickets to swap for a bottle of locally brewed beer at the start and another at the interval. Conclude with a short talk and an invitation to church.</li> <li>• Pimms &amp; Hymns – as above but with Pimms instead of beer (know your context - which one will work in your parish. That isn’t always the same as the preference of your congregation!).</li> <li>• Songs of Praise – as above but with tea &amp; cake afterwards instead of beer or Pimms.</li> <li>• Afternoon tea – afternoon tea served at tables with crafts, a quiz, activity sheets and a singalong. Including a short talk and an invitation to church.</li> <li>• Family fun day – bouncy castle, games, music/entertainment, bbq and refreshments. Get your uniform groups (if you have them) to help. They’ll often be happy</li> </ul>

	<p>to do a bbq or run some games. Give a short talk and invitation to church during prize giving for the games and/or ask the school choir to sing a couple of songs and offer the talk in between.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Picnic on the beach/ in the park – invite families to bring a picnic to the park or beach. Run some games and a story time with a short talk and invitation to church.</li><li>• Messy Church – a carousel of craft activities with a short talk all themed around a bible passage. Offer refreshments and an invitation to church.</li><li>• Chat show style interviews – hire a function room in a local pub or bar and interview someone with a particularly good story of finding faith in Jesus. Finish it up with a ‘what about you?’ challenge and invite to come to church and find out more.</li></ul>
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## Appendix Two – Transcript of Bishop Joe’s talk on 1 Peter 3:15

‘But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you.’

*1 Peter 3:15 (New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised)*

I'd like to work backwards in this verse and begin at the end, with ‘the hope that is in you’.

We are an Easter people, a people who are filled with hope. We're filled with hope because we believe that Jesus is the victor. He's the victor over sin and over death. So, what does that look like to be filled with hope? Well, it looks like this.

If we are so filled with hope because Jesus has overcome death, it means that we know that we have all the time in the world.

We live in a culture that is really careful with time, isn't it? We can often feel ourselves that we don't have time for this. We don't have time for that. But the truth, the truth that we believe and the truth that we can live in our lives, is that Jesus has overcome death. That means therefore that we have all the time in the world! All the time in the world to lavish on loving other people.

So being people of hope means first of all, knowing that we have time to lavish on loving other people because Jesus is the victor over death, He's also the victor over sin. As people of hope, we know that we have been forgiven because of Jesus's death. Because we know that we have been forgiven, that can give us courage to forgive other people, to lavish forgiveness on others.

So first of all, the hope that is in US. Living that out means being people of patience, people of courage, people who love other people and forgive other people. The hope that is in US.

What comes next as we work back?

Well, I often this text says this. I think it says ‘always be ready to give a defence for the hope that is in you’. That's just what's in my head, but it's not what it says.

Let's take a look at what it says. It says ‘Always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you about the hope that is in you, to everyone who asks you.’

Who's going to ask us? What Peter is telling us here is that to live as people filled with hope and the resurrection is to live in such a countercultural way, so different from not having hope, that people will be curious. He's encouraging us here. He's challenging us to be so filled with hope, to lavish love and forgiveness on other people so much that people look at

us and say “What's going on in those people's lives? What's different about them?”

So that bit about the people who ask you, which I kind of somehow just kind of forget about and miss in my life, is actually really important in this text. It's telling us not just to be people of hope, but to be so filled with hope in our lives that people wonder what's different about us and ask us what it is that's motivating us.

The next part says ‘Always be ready to give a defence’. Now that word defence can sound a bit in your face, can't it? When you think about it, Peter was writing to people who were being persecuted for their faith, who knew they might end up in court literally giving a defence. Well, thank heavens that's not going to happen to most of us, but what does it mean then for us to give a defence?

Well, it's about speaking winningly and persuasively. That's really what you're trying to do in a courtroom and it's what we're trying to do as well as Christians. That's what Peter's challenging us and encouraging us to do, to speak winningly and persuasively about Jesus.

What does that look like?

Well, it can be something really simple like having coffee with our friends and they're telling us about something that's worrying them. And we can be say, “when I'm saying my prayers tonight, would you like me to pray for you?”

Or it could be, could be just speaking naturally about Jesus. Jesus matters in our lives, because we know that Jesus is the central figure in the whole of the universe. If he's central to our lives, let's talk about him just naturally. We can do this by talking about how we see life as Christians, and talking about what's happened to us to make us see things in that way. And we just talk about Jesus naturally as part of that.

So speaking winningly and persuasively about Jesus can sound like you have to have gone and done a theology degree or gone to theological college. This text doesn't say that. The 1<sup>st</sup> letter of Peter is speaking to all of God's people, not just church leaders. It's encouraging us just to speak naturally to our friends and our family, to the people we meet about how we see life, about Jesus, just speaking naturally about prayer.

And then finally, we're not quite done yet, because mission is always invitational. We've only ever done half the job when we've spoken about Jesus. The last part of the job, and perhaps the most important part of the job, is to invite other people to get to know Jesus for themselves.

When Andrew the Apostle meets Jesus, the first thing he does is he leaves Him again. “Excuse me for a minute”, He says. He goes and gets his brother Simon, and he says we have found the Messiah and he invites them to come over and meet Jesus for himself.

That's the last and really the most important part of mission, to invite people. We find our hope at the foot of the cross, and mission is about inviting other people to come and stand at the foot of the cross with us and see the love of God in Jesus.

We could be inviting people to come to something where we know that a Gospel message is going to be preached and where we know that they'll be invited to commit to finding out more about what it means to follow Him. We, like Andrew, have found the Messiah. Our job is to model him and invite people to come to see the Messiah with us.

So what does mission look like in this text? 'Always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you to speak about the hope that is in you.'

It's about being people so filled with hope that we are lavishing love on other people; lavishing forgiveness on other people; living in a way where people are wondering how we're able to do that, and where people are curious about how we're living.

It's about always being ready to speak about Jesus naturally in our lives. Perhaps offering to pray for people. Just speaking about how we see life as Christians, in a natural way, that we can all do.

And it's about inviting people. Inviting people to a place where we know they'll hear the gospel and be invited to give their life to Jesus too.

That's what mission looks like in this beautiful, beautiful passage. Inviting people to come to Jesus, the Jesus that we know loves us and loves them.

Let us pray...

Heavenly Father, We thank you that your Son Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would give us power to be His witnesses. We pray that ahead of our parish mission weekend this September, that you would send your Holy Spirit in power upon each one of us. Take away our fear, our reticence and our apathy. Help us to confidently and joyfully be good witnesses for Jesus, and to confidently and joyfully invite others to come and encounter Him for themselves. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## Appendix Three - some suggestions for an All-Age Eucharist

### Greeting

Use as appropriate

### Prayer of preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

### Song

### Confession

Consider one of the following:

- Use Kyrie Confession with sign language for Lord & Christ.
- Confessions B42, B45, B46, B49 from Common Worship.

Or a simple confession such as...

Father God I am sorry that my thoughts are not your thoughts (point to head).

Father God I am sorry that my words are not your words (point to words).

Father God I am sorry that my actions are not your actions (hold up hands and wiggle fingers).

Or...

Father God, sometimes it is easy to put our faith in you. At other times, it feels so hard. Forgive me for the times I worry too much; for the times I do not trust you, and try to do things on my own. Please help me to trust in you in every circumstance. Amen.

### Absolutions

Consider B73, B77, B80, B82, B83 from Common Worship.

### Bible reading:

Just use one, or a maximum of 2 readings, but think about the version that is used and how it might be accessible to all. Also consider how it might be delivered creatively. You can read it, add a dramatized version, use video, etc

### Talk

## Song

## Prayers

How might these engage and link with your theme? Read straight, or incorporating a prayer activity? You could include the Collect here as part of the prayers

## Creed

Consider one of the following:

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him (said & signed)

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him. (said & signed)

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

We believe and trust in him. (said & signed)

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen. (said & signed)

Or...

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Peace

Ensure this is explained.

## Song

### Eucharistic Prayer

Think about how to engage the children - can they sit around / near the altar? Do they understand the responses?

Eucharistic Prayers H or D are more accessible.

### Lord's Prayer:

As our Saviour has taught us so we pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

'Draw near with faith'... or similar.

### Post Communion prayers

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

### Song

### Blessing & Dismissal

## **Appendix Four – a sample pet blessing for use in a mission weekend**

### Welcome

### Opening Hymn

### Opening Prayer

Loving Lord, fill us with your life-giving, joy-giving, peace-giving presence, that we may praise you now with our lips, and all day long with our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### Responses

The earth is the Lord's:  
And all that is therein.

He made birds and cattle and all creeping things:  
The birds of the air and the fish in the sea.  
He made them all and delights in them:  
He made them to glorify him.

### Confession

Let us confess our sins to God:  
Almighty God and Creator of all, You have chosen humankind for a position of special responsibility in your world; we have failed to respond in awe at Your wonders; we have misinterpreted our role of dominion and abused our power. We have caused the animal kingdom needless suffering. Forgive us as we seek anew the vision which You set before us, and as we strive to respond to Your call; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

{The priest says the words of absolution.}

### Collect

O Lord, we pray now for your blessing and protection upon all those who work for animal welfare and in animal sanctuaries.

Bless and protect those animals  
who are exploited for money or for pleasure, those who help and comfort humanity, and  
those engaged in daily work. Amen.

### Reading

(Isaiah 11: 6-9 or other suitable passage)

Hymn

Address

Prayers

Blessing of the animals

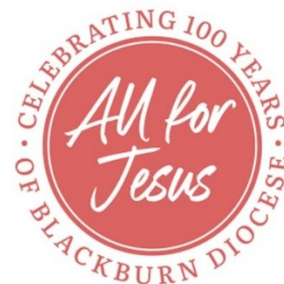
Now, O Father, we pray that you will protect and bless all things that have breath, especially these animals gathered here; guard them from all evil and grant that they live with us in peace. Amen.

Hymn

Blessing

May God bless the sun that is above us  
The earth that is below us  
The creatures all around us  
And lead us all into his peace.  
And the blessing of God Almighty,  
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
Be with us this day & remain with us always. Amen.

## Appendix Five – a simple prayer and invitation guide



# AN EASY GUIDE TO INVITING SOMEONE TO A MISSION EVENT.

**ASK GOD:** Write down the name of a friend, neighbour, family member or colleague who you would love to see come to know Jesus. Pray the prayer below daily, asking God to help them.

**Heavenly Father, I pray for \_\_\_\_\_.**

Please would you be at work in their hearts and minds, preparing them to be invited to an event over the mission weekend. Please would you help me to be courageous in inviting them. Please would you help them to respond positively to the invitation, and to everything they see and hear during the weekend. I long to see (NAME) come to know more of your love and your great plan for their life. Would your Holy Spirit be at work in me and in them.

**This I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**ASK THEM:** Spend time with your friend. It can deepen your friendship and create a chance to talk about attending the event with you. Nearer the time, ask if they would like to come with you.

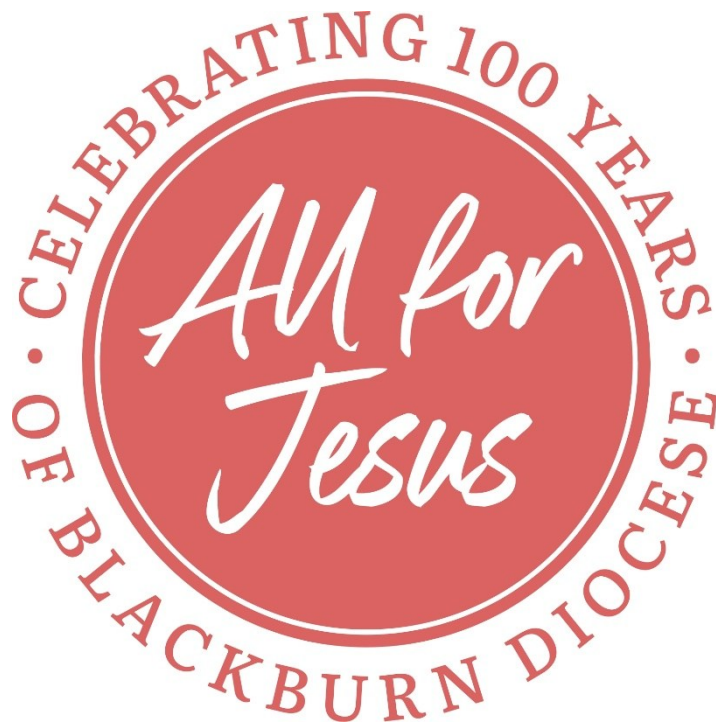
**BRING THEM:** Bring your friend to an event over the weekend. Arrange to collect them and take them with you to the event or the service, so that they can meet other Christians and hear about Jesus. Remember:

**'I'M GOING, IT'S GOING TO BE GREAT,  
WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME WITH ME?'**

**ENCOURAGE THEM:** After the event, invite them to church with you, or to an enquirer's course that your church will be running after the mission. Keep praying for them each day.







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