



Transforming lives.

Transforming congregations.

Transforming communities

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Diocese of Wakefield

## Ideas for your Transformational Plan

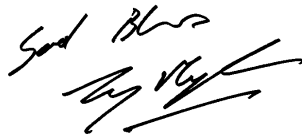
Investing in our Faith 2008-2013 and beyond

## Introduction

Most of us adopt, adapt and develop ideas that others have in turn adopted, adapted and developed from others. This booklet, based up the experiences of churches within our diocese and further afield, offers some ideas for you to adopt, adapt and develop as you put flesh on your Transformational Plans for the next five years

I am extremely grateful to those involved in Wakefield Ministry Scheme together with Flame and the Children and Youth team for sharing the fruits of their experience. Thanks are also due to parishes in our own diocese and to my colleagues as Missioners for their ideas and support.

These ideas may simply prompt you to say "we can do that" or they may lead to developing something different. It is important to remember, however, that they need to be seen as part of a culture of openness and hospitality in the local Church which leads it to becoming a place of conversation, nurture and transformation for individuals and the community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "God Bless" followed by a stylized signature.

Canon Missioner

Hold an art or music festival and ask local schools or groups to be a part of it.

Advertise what you do and send invitations to the community and groups, schools or organisations.

Art festival including work from your local schools or community groups.

Heritage days.

Social events that are for all the family to come to like curry nights, quiz nights, beetle drives, scarecrow hunts, pancake party etc.

Participate in local events like galas or fairs. Do something in your local park like fairytales or distributing drinks or Easter egg hunts, Carols in the park or treasure hunts.

Give out refreshment packs with tea and coffee or juice and ask people to invite a neighbour over.

Run some days just for dads and their children, provide some activities and food.

Go to local car boot sales and have an area for prayers or refreshments.

Do a community audit and ask local people about what they would like from the church.

### Care for Each Other

Hold a service for all the family to remember loved ones that have died.

Run a breakfast club or holiday club which includes meals at an affordable cost or even free. For some children this may be an important meal, or their only meal.

Members of the congregation to go into other groups or schools to help. It may enable them to do things that they would like to do but can't due to lack of help. By being there you are able to build relations and work together.

Support children and families who are a part of the congregation but often are unable to attend Sunday services due to sporting fixture or dance commitments, by a few people going to watch them, maybe say some prayers together first.

### Community Involvement

Initiate a day to look after the local community, picking up litter, planting flowers, painting fences or benches etc.

Get involved in local carnival or fetes that are being organised.

Have a fair trade supper.

## Section One

This first section of ideas are drawn from the experiences of churches in our diocese and throughout the Church of England

### ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Advent Carol service with drama etc

What is Advent all about – how about a 'getting ready for Christmas' service or in schools a series of Collective Worship services?

'Advent Door' – get churches, schools, etc to have a life size advent door and 'open' it on a particular day with a short service or celebration.

Make sure your church's seasonal activities are on your website, as well as websites like 'A Church near You'.

Christmas Carols with a difference

We all know that carol services are a sure-fire winner but how about using modern readings, interviews, light drama to help present the true meaning of Christmas.

Nine Lessons and Carols with Homily

Still follow the traditional format but using modern translations and the occasional modern carol, complete with punchy message.

Open-Air presentation for late night shoppers

Is there a shopping centre near you or does your village have a late night opening before Christmas? Then a short event with interviews and drama could be just the thing.

## Carols round the Pubs and Clubs

Take carol sheets with you and nicely produced invites to your Christmas services. This always goes down well if agreed with the publican beforehand [some will even help with posters etc].

## Modern Nativity play

There are lots of suitable scripts on the market – can stand alone with evening refreshments or be part of a service.

## Christmas Card to all with service times

Don't forget to explain what the services are and how long they will last – if providing refreshments afterwards do advertise the fact.

## Karaoke carols in the local pub

Don't knock it till you've tried it.

## EPIPHANY / NEW YEAR

### New Year Resolution Service

Based on the Methodist Covenant service – or why not be Ecumenical.

### Service with Wise Men Theme

Using quiz, drama, interviews 'wise people seek him still'.

## LENT & EASTER

### Lent Groups

Why not a refresher course for 'saints', or a beginner's course for 'starters'. There are some good video courses especially for enquirers.

Use Godly Play as part of a group or service.

Hold an annual service to commission all the different ministries that are within your church – Church Wardens, Welcomers, magazine writers, Children and Youth Leaders, choir etc.

Have some themed talks looking at aspects of the church, the font, the colours and seasons, why we do what we do and wear what we wear, or different parts of the building like the vestry or nave etc.

Other themes could be caring for individuals, the church and the community.

Hold an annual family Remembrance Service.

Hold an Animal Service and invite people to bring their pets into church and give thanks for all Gods creatures. There is a service sheet on the Children and Youth website.

## Evangelism and Outreach

Lent lunches or tea so all the family can be included.

Use Year of the Child package to listen to what children and young people think and want.

Volunteer to help in your local school.

Make links with local teams and give support or a blessing at matches or before they travel gather and say prayers together.

## Section Three

More Ideas and good Practice - Flame and Children and Youth Team

Items are also arranged under the topic headings of Transforming Lives.

### Spirituality and Prayer

Prayer Walk around your local community and pray for the different buildings and people who use them.

Prayer Picnic, give thanks for the world around us that God created, explore the beauty and detail in the world. Give thanks for our senses, to be able to experience the world around us in different ways.

Prayer Treasure Hunt at an open garden or strawberry tea, look for things by colour, smell, touch and say Thank you to God as you find each item.

Provide toys and activities in church for children to do during a service, for example items you would use at a baptism or things used for during a communion service for children to role play.

Have some ideas and activities for people to take home and do with family and friends, games to play, things to make, discussions topics or things to look out for.

### Worship

Have a Leaves of Life service using the ideas from The Children's Society.

Good Friday act of witness in town centre  
Make sure the symbolism is clear and the words audible.

Distribute hot cross buns in shopping centre  
Complete with card explaining meaning of Easter and an invite to an Easter service.

Corporate Worship in Local School everyday during Holy Week

'Palm' Monday to Good Friday - go on ask - the local school will take your arm off.

Erect 3 crosses on a local high point on Good Friday  
remove Early Easter  
With or without words of explanation a powerful symbol.

Easter Songs of Praise

What better time of year to belt out those traditional Easter Hymns mixed with selected modern songs - Ecumenical opportunity too.

### HARVEST

Harvest supper with entertainment and testimony  
Church Hall or why not consider a local pub or club a more relaxed environment for those nervous of church.

Harvest Service – A Green Theme.

Equally valid for urban or rural this is a live issue and the Christian Faith has a lot to say.

Harvest guest service – in Orchard, Field, Barn  
Could include - guest speaker, guest band, BarBQ.

## SAINTS & HOLY PLACES

### Your Cathedral

Is your Saint depicted in the Cathedral – how about a service – Quiet Day etc.

### An All Saints Party

Our Cathedral is designated 'All Saints' so why not have an exhibition – art, etc.

### Local pilgrimage

Is there a suitable place near you – complete with picnic and prayers.

### Leaflets in church for visitors

Information about the building, history – but also what's happening here and now.

### Parish Retreat

Take the time to chill with God.

## THEMED EVENTS EVENINGS and SERVICES

Look for the latest controversy in the press regarding religion and science etc

[e.g. a year or two ago Da Vinci Code]

Do a themed evening around the latest hot potato.

### Narnia

A themed evening/event/exhibition with 'Wardrobe door entry to church/hall' and/or a Narnia Service. A magical All-Age service – the meaning of Aslan etc.

Planning series of guest speakers in Sunday services: people active in the local community opening up social issues for Christians.

Mounting a local campaign for traffic calming and engaging with the Council.

Involvement in a campaign against a toxic waste tip and encouraging closer links of church people with the local Council.

Developing reading project for children with special needs.

Getting people trained to work in debt counselling within the community.

Becoming a 'Fair Trade' church.

Series of Sunday addresses with question and answer time, with invited guests active in various roles in the local community (Police, Councillors, Prison, Youth Work etc).

Church 'Open Weekend' with displays by church and community organisations and local social services, with children's activities, organ recitals, refreshments and a parade service on the Sunday.

'Open Door' project to build community links: including a weekend Community Celebration bringing church and village organisations together.

Art Exhibition weekend in church.

Building relationships through the local Community Association leading to church-led events on community premises ('Open House' project for the elderly in the Village Hall, a Lent lunch held in the Working Men's Club).

'Churchyard Working Party' days drawing in people from the community to help.

Innovative social events making use of the church building (Ceilidh, Medieval Banquet, Folk Night, Antiques Roadshow).

Setting up a church-run Charity Shop.

Local Post Office saved from closure by relocating to the church, with a café run by church volunteers at PO opening times.

Weekend of activities focused around the local football club on its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary (club was originally started by the church).

Celebration of talents event for church and community: paintings, needlework, handicrafts, all ages represented.

Patronal Festivals

A special reason to visit my local church – is the service seeker-friendly. Is the publicity upbeat?

Christians in Sport Dinner

What local sports teams clubs are in your patch. The organisation Christians in Sport can help you run these and provide a good speaker.

Christians in Sport Quiz night

As above but why not put up some trophy or prizes for the winning team.

Chill out with Compline

Offer the peace and quiet and holy atmosphere of your Church complete with 'Prayer/Reflection zones. Open for a set period of time and finish with a simple service like Compline.

Deanery Evensong

Invite a class Choir or form your own – some will love it.

Seasonal Displays in Church

With prayer/reflection leaflets. People on hand to talk with – if needed.

'Historic worship' to suit the age of the church building

Complete with costumes this is a fun way to 'do' worship and history. Good for local school involvement.

Act of Worship in local Historic Site

e.g. St George's Day Ideal for schools and/or local uniformed organisations.

The Gospel According to The Simpsons  
'Doh' – Popular with youngsters – book available.

The Case Against Christ Night  
A themed night based on the John Young book or invite the author for an event [he lives in York].

Street Theatre/Dance  
At the right time in the right place this can be both fun and powerful – puppet theatres can score here as well as at local shows.

House coffee mornings – meet the clergy  
It's sometimes easier to invite people to a home rather than a Church. Clergy and others from the Church can make contact.

### SCHOOLS and CHILDREN

School Collective Worship  
Schools are both an opportunity and responsibility – why not form a team that can offer appropriate material that fits with the local curriculum.

Organise a Children's week  
A number of parishes do this a great way to introduce children to your church and the faith.

Tea Time Church  
Also known as 'messy' church or 'sticky' church. This is all action Sunday School stuff but at midweek we have some of these already thriving in our Diocese.

Start a Church Toddlers Group  
Always a winner and good way to make contact.

Weekly afternoon meeting place at church for bereavement befriending, with refreshments.

### Community Involvement

Holding an open church and community evening 'Point us to the Future' to seek together some ways forward for the local church.

Producing questionnaire for Community Survey about local needs and relationship with the church, and carrying out the survey.

Provision of handrails to facilitate access for the elderly and disabled to the Garden of Remembrance from the church car park.

Production of Welcome Pack with details of village activities, useful phone no's, public transport timetables etc for newcomers to the village.

Initiating Mums and Tots group free of charge for all unable to pay, as a community service to poorer housing area within the parish.

Building up links with village Parent and Toddler group and developing pastoral contacts and joint projects.

Community website developed in conjunction with the Parish Council.

Use church premises (church and hall) to offer a complete 'wedding package' to couples marrying in the church, including reception.

Provision of monthly afternoon tea for the elderly with entertainment and/or activities.

Afternoon tea and community Songs of Praise with personal invitations to residents of Senior Citizens flats.

Luncheon club for the elderly and personal invitations to service for those who have been bereaved.

Door-to-door visiting in areas of the parish inviting prayer requests.

Setting up parish Pastoral Visiting Team.

Weekly meeting for prayer and informal exchange of pastoral needs and information, open to anyone involved in pastoral contact with people across the parish.

Baptism Visitors project offering ongoing support to baptism families.

Setting up Pastoral Care Team for visiting including Bereavement Ministry and Home Communions.

Sunday afternoon services at intervals, for elderly people unable to get to church in the morning, providing transport, with refreshments afterwards.

Monthly 'Prayer and Care' time after the Sunday service, to which anyone can bring needs and receive prayer, advice or practical support.

Prayer Visiting scheme to build pastoral contacts.

Soft Play Area in Church

A sign of welcome and no noisy toys. Contented children means contented parents.

Invite Primary school to have weekly 'fun' Corporate Worship in Church

Some of our buildings really do lend themselves to this one.

Form a School Corporate Worship team

Your local school may really appreciate this.

Pram services

A number of churches can help with the do's and don'ts of this.

## SONGS OF PRAISE

Songs of Praise Specials

Team up with local press run a 'favourite hymn/song' questionnaire – form a Deanery choir – combine with interviews and/or drama.

Open Air Songs of Praise at local beauty spot  
Local Brass Band, Bouncy Castle and picnic.

Ecumenical Songs of Praise

Music from different traditions and ages. Celebrate diversity and the things we share.

Songs of Praise in local pub grounds – brass band  
Salvation Army, Methodist District, schools – have you a band near you?

## BOOK & FILM

### Book Groups

Either start one or join one but this is a proven winner.

### Film and Faith

For house groups join together to watch a film with invited friends and engage in discussion e.g. Narnia, The Matrix, Chocolat.

### Lend/give a Book

Have your church members got Christian books gathering dust on their bookshelves, why not reread and then lend one to a neighbour or decide on a book and buy a number of copies. Then make the contents the theme of a service or evening presentation.

## PUBS & CLUBS

### Form a Darts team

'The God Squad' 'Saints' 'St. Andrews Arrows'  
Great fun and a good bridge builder between church and community. Why not donate a new trophy for the most improved team, sportsmanship etc.

### Pool team

As above.

### Pub Quiz Team

As above but with the advantage of not being too sporty.

### Pints of View

No seriously this can work - there is even a Grove Booklet on how to do it!

'Opening Doors' Outreach project with a varied programme of events spread over two weeks, widely publicised with personal visits and invitations.

'DOT' exercise inviting people to place coloured dot stickers on a large map of the parish to identify where congregation members live and where people are involved in the community, and to reveal where the gaps are, as the basis for a Mission Plan.

Regular emphasis on four Outreach services at Mothering Sunday, Father's Day, Harvest and Christingle, with invitations, to build contacts over time.

Set up 'Two by Two' group for under 5s and their carers.

Free magazine developed to go out to every home in the parish.

Ascension Day procession with band.

Using 'Back to Church Sunday' as a model for other 'by invitation' special services spread through the year.

Church-run Parent and Toddler group linked in with Baptism Preparation and Follow-up and monthly All Age Worship.

## Care for Each Other

Sending invitations to relatives of those whose funerals were conducted in church, to attend worship at the time of the Year's Mind.

Inviting those who have been married in church to attend morning service on the Sunday nearest the first anniversary.

## Evangelism and Outreach

Developing team of Baptism Visitors responsible for carrying out parish Baptism policy including preparation, follow-up and pre-baptism Thanksgiving Service.

Establishment of a Celebration of Baptism special service and lunch on a summer Sunday for families who had a child baptised during the previous two years.

Development of after-school group for children aged 7-11 attending local school.

Sunday afternoon tea event followed by Songs of Praise service in church.

Exhibition of old photos gathered from around the parish, and exhibition of parish records.

Involvement in planning and participation in month-long "Flour" Festival programme of events around Harvest themes.

Provision of a Welcome card and leaflet and training of team of visitors to welcome people in new village housing.

Arrangement to contribute 'spiritual' inputs to village website at main festivals.

Plan to spotlight local community 'past, present and future' over a celebratory weekend, with the church making its distinctive contribution to thinking and events.

Setting up and training a Baptism Visiting Team to work across a Group of churches.

## SMALL GROUPS

Start House groups

We know that small groups work for outreach and pastoral care – why wait until Lent. There are lots of good books/materials around.

'Lost for Words' group

This superb course is a proven winner easy to run and a great confidence builder.

'Start Group'

A short 6 session group designed for seekers with lively video material – is working well across the country.

'Know Your Own Faith'

A short course for church members based on the book by John Young ideal for those wishing to share their faith but afraid of not knowing the answers.

## WORSHIP with a DIFFERENCE

Plant a new service/congregation

A number of churches have done this and when done well can lead to new members who don't connect with more traditional worship. Remember new and connecting does not have to be trendy and noisy.

Start a non Eucharistic service

Those of us who understand the value of Eucharist often forget that it can seem alien to the uninitiated – so why not another sort of service designed for newcomers and seekers.

### Taize evenings

A lot of churches use bits of Taize in their services but how about doing the whole thing using lots of silence and symbolism with a simple explanation of the Gospel.

### Saturday night Vigil Service

Eucharist with a different ambience, music, multi generational.

### Testimonies in church services

Everyone loves stories – true ones especially – a simple way to present the Gospel truth.

### Seeker Services

A guest service that is totally geared to the seeker.

### Healing service

A number of churches already do this – it can be done well.

### Pet service

If it's good enough for Dibley.

### Baptism reunion service and party

A good excuse to come back to Church – why not have a suitable DVD/bookstall available.

### Renew Wedding vows service

Party & photo's [then & now].

### Cafe Church

A Fresh Expression that is taking off around the country.

Occasional church 'Prayer Vigils' to develop vision and deepen spirituality.

Using occasional evening services to introduce and model different styles of prayer.

Prayer Board in church with prayer cards for people to take away and candles to light.

### Worship

Design and leading of a Friday evening Service of Healing & Peace.

Introduction of midweek evening Communion service for people unable to come on a Sunday or in the daytime.

'Healing and Wholeness' Prayer time offered during the Sunday service.

Worship Project with a wide range of different types of service offered over a six-week period, involving as many people as possible and leading to decisions about which types of worship should become regular events.

Using church members with good IT skills to develop visual components in Sunday worship.

Organisation of a 'season of experimentation' during which Sunday services were deliberately done in different ways, feedback was sought, and some of the changes were then incorporated regularly.

New seasonal altar frontals designed by Sunday Club children.

## Section Two

The following Items are arranged under the topic headings of Transforming Lives. They are drawn from the experiences of core groups and WMS Parishes in the diocese

### Spirituality and Prayer

Setting up Prayer Circle of 8 people who pray and pass on prayer requests.

Drawing up a Cycle of Prayer for the parish and providing cards listing areas and suggesting how the cycle might be used.

Producing weekly Prayer Card with Cycle of Prayer for the parish, distributed to all church members.

Extending Prayer for the Parish through visiting and receiving prayer requests.

Producing parish Prayer Diary with daily Bible Study notes.

Day of Prayer with church open, with different areas offering a variety of ways in to prayer and spirituality for people to try.

Setting up Prayer Ministry Team to be available to pray with people during worship.

Introducing the Labyrinth in church.

Week of Prayer for all church groups and organisations to seek God's way forward.

Make large print service booklets/pew sheets available

A few copies available for every service will be really appreciated.

Fit a loop system for the hard of hearing  
Make sure the message is heard.

Review the time of your Sunday Services  
Are the times suitable for those not yet attending?

### DISPLAYS, DRAMA, EXHIBITIONS

Local Mystery Plays  
How about a Deanery initiative on this one?

Flower Festivals for local charity  
Team up with a local charity – choose a Christian theme – here come those Northumbrian Saints again.

Stall/Tent at local agricultural show  
And not just second hand books and cakes how about a video made by your church – leaflets about your church 'Then and Now'. Puppet theatres work well here, see below.

Street Theatre/Dance  
At the right time in the right place this can be both fun and powerful – puppet theatres can score here as well as at local shows. We have our own Hand to Mouth Ministry in the Diocese – [www.handtomouth.org.uk](http://www.handtomouth.org.uk).

Opening hours for your church  
Advertised opportunities for people to look round and someone to talk to if they want.

Joint meetings with local Art Group  
Pick a topic and go for it.

Joint meetings with local history group  
Has your building played a part in local history – nostalgia is in.

Local History exhibition [125 years of Church/Parish]  
Flowers photos etc – finish with Songs of Praise.

Stall on the riverside  
Handing out stuff offer to pray chat the Gospel.

A Church stall at your local Show and /or Farmers / WI market  
Including some free leaflets and invites to next social/service.

Local Art Festival  
A great way to work with your local schools and art groups.

Seasonal displays in Church with prayer/reflection leaflets  
People on hand to talk with – if needed.

Fresher's Fayre  
In cooperation with local groups and clubs a 'marketplace' where folks new to the area can see what's on offer.

done, - just holler. Or how about inviting a Mission Team from a Theological College for a weekend or a week of events. Work together with such a group- a great opportunity.

## Treasure Hunt

Followed by a meal and unveil the treasure of the Gospel.

## Any Questions with Pie & Peas

Goes well with a glass of something.

## Luncheon Club

A way to serve the local community and relax.

## Progressive Supper

House to house for different courses. Also a great way to introduce newcomers to regulars.

## Church Sunday Lunch

Ideal for newcomers and those who live alone.

## THINK BIG

### Brainstorm a year of planned events

Why not begin with a refresher course for saints, or a beginners course for starters. There are some good video courses especially for enquirers. Equip the Church and take it from there.

### Back to Church Sunday.

Choose a Sunday – contact all previous attenders – including weddings, baptisms etc. Details available.

### Use Local Press /Local radio and TV

Appoint a Press Officer – provide stories, photos news and views.

### Faith Sharing Weekends

Want help planning a tailor-made weekend of faith sharing for your parish/cluster/deanery? It can be done, it is being

## ENQUIRERS & NURTURE COURSES

### Series of talks/lectures

In your town or village – or as a Deanery.

### Start a night class WEA /LEA

Introduction to Spirituality – Intro to Christian Meditation.

### Give training in Evangelism

A short course in 'Cringe- Free' Evangelism.

### Essence Course

An intro to spiritual matters in 6 easy units.

### Alpha Course

Yeah that one but when done well it works.

### Emmaus Group

A more gentle approach but also well proven.

## COMMUNICATION

### Use Local Press

Appoint a press officer – provide stories. Photos news and views for your local rag or free paper. Local radio are always looking for Good News stories!

### Evangelism on your Website

Testimonies, interviews with a link to the 'Re Jesus' site.

### Get into Radio

Local radio are always looking for Good News stories!

## Printed Invitation Cards for Festival Services

Lots of professionally produced stuff on the market that you can print over – but in these days of computers.

## Display a Poster in your window

We do this for political parties and issues so why not do it for the King of Kings.

## PASTORAL

### Baptism Families Follow Up

A visit, a special service, anniversary card etc.

### Bereavement Follow Up

Sometimes it is on the anniversary of bereavements that folk value being remembered – is your All Souls service easy to follow and suitable for non-churched people?

### Check Welcome Policy

We all know how important this is – when was the last time your Church checked what it is actually doing – we have a number of examples of good practice.

### Design a Welcome Pack

To your area, to your Church – Welcome Packs do make a difference – so take your time and plan one now.

### Door to Door Visiting

Don't frown – we know this can work – we have a parish or two with considerable expertise who could advise.

### Door to Door Prayer Requests

A development from the above – it sounds daunting but has been very well received.

## SOCIAL EVENTS/OPPORTUNITIES

### Celeidh with Interviews/Testimonies

These are great social events and in between sets of dances an interview and/or introduced musical item that folks can listen to while they get their breath back.

### Guest Dinner Parties

For small groups with an invited and advertised guest who can speak after the meal or be interviewed between courses.

### Supper Parties for Network Groups

For larger numbers with suitable speaker, interviewee and entertainment.

Meet our Vicar tea parties/suppers/barbecues etc Forget the 'more tea Vicar' lines – your clergy will have a real life story to share and people like a story. Can be followed by Q and A.

### Body & Soul – Ladies Pampering

We promise this one works – an easy and fun introduction to spirituality and wholeness.

### Men's Breakfast

Cooked breakfast – lively speaker – well used successful event.

### Women's Breakfast

As above but with croissants and music.

### Walking Group

Ramble and chat the Gospel – as easy as that.