

Getting Started with the Programme

Are people clear about the process? At the beginning people may struggle to 'get their head around' the way it all fits together. Look at the Handbook, which gives a summary on page 5. Be clear that the three elements of parish work for the year will be a course for the Core Group, a course open to the congregation and a practical project. There is a leaflet (IL B7) that gives in diagrammatic form three typical ways of programming in these elements through the year.

What about diocesan sessions? People should have in their diary the first Diocesan Day for all parishes which will be on the third Saturday in September (in a few cases this may already have happened by the time the group has its first meeting). They can also put in the second full Day in Year One, on the second Saturday of the following May. Dates will be in the Handbook. In November there will be a choice of Spirituality sessions and Parish Contacts should look out for a letter with details of these arriving very soon.

What does the Core Group need to do next? At the earliest opportunity the group should decide on its route through the first year. Look through the Handbook and the courses and resources listed for Year One and the general materials (pages 9-12). If you can't make a decision from the information given, ask for sample copies of any materials you want to consider. Requests for materials should be made to the Dean of the Wakefield Ministry Scheme, and can be sent out by post or by email (most documents are in Microsoft Publisher).

Remember that the overriding aim of Year One is to get the Core Group up and running as the focus for collaborative ministry in the church. Be ready to spend time on this in the early weeks and months and not to be impatient about 'getting on and doing'! A really enthusiastic and effective Core Group will pay dividends as the process evolves.

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Wakefield Ministry Scheme



**Getting Started: Guidance for
Parishes and Helpers**

This leaflet sets out the things that need to be covered in the course of the first two or three meetings of the Core Group. Some can be dealt with very briefly, others will take more time. Some will be covered during the very first meeting when a WMS Staff member will be present; after this there will normally be a Diocesan Helper to make sure the ground has been covered.

Getting Started as a Group

Who are the Core Group members? Make sure that everyone knows who everyone else is. Give an opportunity for members to introduce themselves: find out what roles people already occupy in the church's life, and something about the talents and skills they may bring from life beyond the church as well. If necessary, have some kind of 'ice breaker' exercise to put people at ease.

Who will be the Parish Contact? The diocesan WMS Staff need a Contact Person (apart from the Vicar) in each parish. The Contact receives and disseminates information about forthcoming WMS events, sends in numbers expected to be attending them from the parish, and forwards requests for training and study materials. Choose someone who is reliable at basic administration!

What kind of a Core Group will it be? Discuss in a preliminary way what the expectations are. Is it a team of existing leaders or does it include some people who aren't in specific authorised roles? Will it be an 'action' group, heading up projects of its own, or more of a 'thinking' group, developing ideas and vision for the church? Does it already have the makings of a Team or does it need to do some Teambuilding work quite early in the Scheme?

When will the Core Group meet? A minimum of once a month is recommended, but in the early stages more frequent meeting will help if this is possible. Try to find a regular time, e.g. first Tuesday evening of the month, or after church on the third Sunday, and so on. Even if you can't manage that yet, get a few dates in the diary *now*.

How will the Core Group pray for each other? Think about writing a Core Group prayer or a simple piece of liturgy to use at every meeting. Or how about people agreeing to pray for one another at a particular time during the week wherever they happen to be? Some Core Groups devote an occasional meeting to prayer.

Getting Started as a Church

How will the congregation be kept informed of what is happening? At the beginning the Core Group may not yet be producing lots of visible activity. Think about how to communicate with the wider congregation. Some members could say a few words at a church service about how they see their role. Information could be put regularly in the weekly notices sheet, on the notice board and in the parish magazine. And make sure the WMS and Core Group always feature as an agenda item on the PCC.

How can the congregation be involved as well as informed? Remember that there should be at least one course activity each year to involve the wider congregation. Think about the kind of initiatives that can't happen without engaging people: a time-line telling the church's story, a survey of talents and gifts, a questionnaire about people's hopes for the church.

Are there factors to take into account from the wider parish context? Is the church part of a team, group or cluster? Are there any relevant deanery commitments, e.g. youth work? The way WMS works in the parish also needs to take on board any local ecumenical arrangements and contacts. What about significant links with the local community, e.g. through schools, old people's homes, hospital, hospice etc?

Note. Where the parish has an OLM candidate starting training, projects relating to the life of the church in the context of the local community will form part of the required work for ordinand and Core Group to work on together, and details of this will be issued to the candidate as part of their programme organised by the Dean of the Wakefield Ministry Scheme.