

# Called: Your SHAPE for God's service

## Leaders Guide



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# Introduction

The Diocese of Salisbury has a vision of making Jesus known in every place, so that all may flourish and grow, seeking God's Kingdom here and now. Enabling that flourishing and growth is our aim in making Your SHAPE for God's Service available to worshipping communities across the diocese.

It is a series of three sessions designed to help churches as they enable people to discover their unique SHAPE, the gifts God has given them and how they might use those in God's service. It will help you to develop disciples, and the gifts of all God's people. As we serve Christ, we look to identify these gifts, invest in their development and find practical opportunities to use them.

We hope this process will enable participants to live and serve with more joy, satisfaction and fruitfulness, contributing to the flourishing of their church, as well as affecting the way each person engages with their family, friends, job, community, and voluntary/leisure activities.

**Each of the three two-hour sessions** includes input from the session leaders on the topic and some Biblical teaching. There are practical exercises, and discussions to help each person apply the materials to their life situation. There is also space for the group to pray and to listen to God together.

**A personal reflection exercise** is provided for participants to do at home after each session to help them to reflect upon what they have

heard and discussed and to consider what it might mean for their life.

At the end of the three sessions each person is encouraged to participate in an **individual review**. This involves sitting down with their parish priest or other minister to consider how they will put what they have learned into practice. Whilst this element is entirely optional and group members should be given the option not to participate in this, there is great value in making space for this at the end of the sessions. Resources are provided for this.

The sessions could be run within a church setting, or it might be appropriate to connect with other local churches to run the sessions in partnership for a focused season.

You are welcome to customise the course for your context, expanding some sessions if you wish to give more time to particular topics.

The second session makes use of material from the CPAS Growing Leaders Course, which in turn draws on a six session course exploring SHAPE that has been used in many churches and dioceses over the last decade and more. Details are provided in the Acknowledgements.

Our prayer is that this course will plant seeds that flourish and grow in your own local soil. If you would like more information about the work of the vocations team, please do contact: [vocations@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:vocations@salisbury.anglican.org)

# SHAPE Explained

Session Two provides participants with an opportunity to discern their SHAPE for God's service.

By looking at the five areas of SHAPE, participants are equipped to understand more about who they are, how God has created them and used life experiences to shape them.

SHAPE stands for:

**Spiritual Gifts:** God's unique gifts to us as members of Christ's Body.

**Heart's desire:** what motivates and excites us; what we most long to do.

**Abilities:** our strengths, knowledge and skills.

**Personality:** our character, style, preferences, personal qualities.

**Experiences:** our life experiences – both good and bad – and what we have learned and gained from them.

This indicates:

**Spiritual Gifts:** indicate what we will do when we serve.

**Heart's desire:** indicates where we are best suited to serve.

**Abilities:** indicate the gifts and talents God has given and grown within us for service.

**Personality:** indicates the ways we will serve.

**Experiences:** indicate the way God is moulding us for service and at work in our present lives.

## How to run the sessions

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**Venue:** Choose an appropriate venue where people can feel relaxed and able to share openly and honestly with one another in an informal atmosphere.

**Size of group:** We recommend that you gather a group of between 5 and 15 participants. If you have more than 8 you might want to break into smaller groups for some of the discussions.

**Leaders:** Whilst the sessions could be run by a single leader, we find it works best if there are two voices leading the sessions through.

**Refreshments:** We recommend that you offer people tea and coffee refreshments at the beginning of each session.

**Length of session:** Sessions are designed to be two hours long and have one hour and 45 mins of programmed content allowing for 15 mins of arrival and hospitality time at the beginning.

**Confidentiality:** As people are sharing honestly and openly it is important that you stress to the group the importance of the group space being a confidential place.

**Participants Workbook:** All the resources, questions and notes are available for group members in the Participants Workbook. Prepare well and make sure you have printed a full copy of the workbook for each group member.

**Adaptation:** Whilst much thought has gone into the design of each session, you know your group best. Please feel free to adapt the sessions as you see fit to best meet the needs of the group you are working with.

## The Leader's Role

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The leader needs to be experienced at leading small groups, an encourager who is mature in faith, discerning, able to create a relaxed atmosphere and set an example of openness and honesty.

It is not necessary to be good at didactic teaching/preaching or to know much about the theology of gifts, calling, etc.

The role is one of gentle facilitation – making people feel safe; chairing the discussions; drawing people out so that everyone participates; keeping to time.

Do pray regularly for the session participants throughout the duration of the SHAPE sessions.

## Using the Leaders' Notes

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For each of the three sessions, there are detailed Leaders' Notes. They provide a detailed script for all the input sections to save you preparation time. The scripted sections are noted by italics.

Obviously it would be very stilted if you read this out word-for-word! It simply gives an indication of what needs to be covered. The key points are underlined, so you could just use these, and expand on them in your own words. Please do also make time to tell personal stories, share your own reflections or use props to illustrate and reinforce key points to people.

The Leaders' Notes also give detailed instructions for all the group activities and exercises, and everything that needs to be done by you.

Each session is divided into short sections, to give plenty of variety. An idea of timings is given for each section. This is not intended to tie you down, but is shown so that if you decide to change the content to spend more time on one section, you will know how much you'll need to shorten another.

## Individual Review Session

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At the end of the three sessions, each group member should be offered the opportunity to have a personal one-to-one session with someone (probably their parish priest or other minister). This entirely optional session provides individuals with the opportunity to discuss how they can put the insights about their SHAPE and gifts into practice – for example, looking at practical ways in which their unique SHAPE might enable them to serve God more fully through the Church or in their job, in the community, or through their other relationships and activities. This meeting should also provide an opportunity for the individual to pray with their parish priest or minister about what God has been saying to them through their participation in the sessions.

Information regarding this can be found at the end of this leaders guide and in the Participants Workbook. The 'Individual Review: Information for Individual Review Facilitators' pages should be copied and made available to anyone facilitating one of these meetings to guide and inform their discussions with group members.



## Publicity

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You are free to produce your own publicity to use to invite people to participate in the sessions, however here we have provided some suggested wording that may help you produce your invitations:

Join us to explore Your SHAPE for God's Service

Please join us for three informal meetings where together we will explore our unique God-given "SHAPE", discover more about our gifts and strengths and how we can use these to make Jesus known and enable all to flourish and grow.

We will look at:

- God's unique gifts to you
- What motivates and excites you; what you love to do
- Your talents, knowledge and skills
- Your character, personal qualities and strengths
- Your life experiences and what you've gained from them

Following each session a personal reflection activity will enable you to consider these themes further.

Dates:

Venue:

Contact details:

## Acknowledgements

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Adapted (with permission) from Your SHAPE for God's Service, produced by the Diocese of Bristol, with content written by Revd Derek Chedzey and Chris Priddy 2018.

'SHAPE' material in session two adapted from the CPAS Growing Leaders Course.

Other materials adapted with permission from the 'Your SHAPE for God's Service' course written and produced by Amiel Mary E. Osmaston, 2013.

A six-session course exploring SHAPE in more detail is available from <https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/vocations-and-discipleship/discipleship/shape>

# Session 1: Disciples

Through this session, participants will explore these topics:

- Developing a biblical understanding of discipleship
- Understanding our identity as a disciple
- Knowing who we are in Christ
- Our place as a created, gifted individual made in the image of God

You will need:

- Session 1 worksheet in participants booklet pages 1-7

## SHAPE Sessions Overview (10 minutes)

You might like to use a light-hearted ice-breaker to allow people to introduce themselves to each other at the start of the course.

Explain the purpose and structure of the sessions as on page 1.

*Participating in these sessions may confirm things you already know or have half expected.*

*On the other hand, it may challenge or even change the way you see yourself. We're not just doing this for selfish reasons, looking for self-fulfilment. This is so that we can make Jesus known as each person finds the ministry to which God is calling them in the Church and in the world. We want God's will to be done on earth, as we pray in the Lord's Prayer.*

*As we find our role in this, it will enable each of us to live and serve with more joy, satisfaction and fruitfulness. We aren't just talking about doing things in church either; it will also affect the*

*way we engage with the wider world, our family, friends, job, community, voluntary and leisure activities.*

*It's important that we can create a friendly, relaxed atmosphere where people feel safe to share things at a personal level; however, nobody will be forced to talk about anything which they wish to keep private.*

*If we really want to learn more about our SHAPE for God's service, we'll need to be as open and honest as possible. So we'll want to be sure that nobody is going to repeat personal things about us to anyone else outside this group. We must keep confidential everything that other people say about themselves or about other people.*

*If you have any questions or concerns about anything that happens during the sessions, then please do come and speak to the leader(s) or to your parish priest or minister.*



## Activity One | Session Introduction (5 minutes)

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Ask group members to turn to Session 1 in their Participants Workbook and explain that we will use this sheet as our guide throughout the session.

'And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Matthew 28:18-20 (NRSV)

"Discipleship is the ongoing, lifelong process of growing to live more fully as a follower of Jesus Christ."

### Question

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Invite the group to share their thoughts about what a disciple is in today's world.

*If evangelism is the natural outworking of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ then discipleship is the term we use for teaching, baptising and nurturing Christians. Discipleship is based in a relationship. To be a disciple of Jesus means, first and foremost, to have a relationship with him.*

*For the faithful disciple, this relationship with Christ continues to grow. Like any relationship, when it is not attended to it withers; when it becomes stagnant it dies; when it is taken for granted it becomes shallow. Faithful disciples of Jesus Christ attend to their relationships with Christ so that it will continue to deepen; to become richer; to shape their identity as people.*

## Session Content (20 minutes)

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**Acts 2:41–42** provides some key insights into ways this deepening happens in the life of the disciple.

**‘So those who welcomed his message were baptised, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.’**

*This definition of discipleship gives us our opening into the importance of teaching and lifelong learning within the life of the local church and community. From the earliest days of the Church, the very personal commitment to follow Christ on the Way has been marked by the public act of baptism. The Church is the community of people who have been baptised.*

## Reflect and Share

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- Can you remember any of the words or actions that form part of the baptism or confirmation services?
- In what ways might the act of baptism or confirmation be significant in the life of a disciple?
- How might you explain to people the significance of baptism or confirmation?

## Reflect

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One definition of baptism is “the sign of new life through Jesus Christ. It unites the one baptised with Christ and with his people.” Some are obvious ‘up front’ gifts like preaching, teaching, leading worship or what we call ministry gifts.

Paul writing to the Corinthians picks up this theme in **1 Corinthians 12:12–13**, when he says **“For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body”**.

It has been said that baptism is God’s gift and our response to that gift. In other words, it’s about giving and receiving.

*God calls every one of us to serve as followers of Jesus Christ. As we saw in the passage from Corinthians, gifts are given to those disciples for building up the local church and for supporting one another. Some are obvious ‘up front’ gifts like preaching, teaching, leading worship or what we call ministry gifts. For many in the local church, the hidden roles are where our gifts are most used. Gifts like hospitality, administration, friendship, pastoral care and kindness may go unseen, but are often taken for granted. The word Paul uses for many of these roles is the gift of ‘helping’ or in modern terms ‘administration’.*

## Question

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- If we all have gifts, how can we learn more about them and about our role in the church?

## Activity Two (15 minutes)

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Invite group members to 'think', 'write', 'share' with the following three questions. People should be invited to reflect in silence before making some brief notes in response to the questions. After this time, invite the group to come back together and to share some of their responses and reflections.

### Questions

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- How do you 'view' the church – as bricks and mortar, as a body, as the people who worship there?
- What does 'church' mean to you and your growth as a disciple?
- In what ways do you see yourself as part of the church?

### Bible Study (20 minutes)

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Ask a group member to read Ephesians 2:10:

'For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.' (NRSV)

And then Psalm 139:14-16:

'I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written  
all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed...' (NRSV)

### Reflect and Share

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Think creatively together about the differences between something that is made on a production line and something that is handcrafted. You might like to show some examples of things which have been handcrafted and things which have been mass produced.

## Questions

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Reflect as a group on the two passages by asking:

- What do these passages have to tell us about how we have been created?
- What implications does this have for us?

*Knowing that we've been created is something that we can take for granted, but many people go through their lives totally unaware that they have been made by a creator God. Knowing that we're not mass-produced, that we are people created with a purpose, should give us a whole new perspective on our lives.*

## Experiences (20 minutes)

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The 'E' of SHAPE stands for experiences. The person we are today has been moulded by both the positive and the challenging experiences we've gone through. God can use all of these experiences for good, at work in and through us all.

## Activity

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Invite each group member to share an experience from their life that has been most influential. Next, invite group members, using the space in the Participants Workbook, to take a moment to list three experiences that have been most influential in shaping the person they are today.

## Summary (10 minutes)

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To draw the themes of this session together, consider through group discussion the following two questions:

- How does your church offer opportunities to use our gifts?
- How do we help one another to grow as disciples of Christ?

## Personal Reflection (5 minutes)

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This session's personal reflection task invites group members to complete the 'Growing as a disciple' section and to reflect on their spiritual growth through this, identifying areas where they would like to invest further in their walk with Christ as a disciple.

There are no 'right answers': it is a tool for reflection and planning, and it is good to give it plenty of time, and to revisit it as the course progresses, and afterwards. In the next session we will explore further our individual SHAPE for God's service.

Close the session in prayer.

# Session 2: Identifying Our SHAPE

Through this session, participants will explore these topics:

- The five elements of SHAPE
- Discovering our gifts, skills and abilities by using the SHAPE elements
- Reflecting upon the unique combination of gifts that God has given each of us

You will need:

- Session 2 worksheet in participants booklet pages 8-13

## SHAPE sessions introduction (5 minutes)

Through this session we are going to explore together our individual SHAPE and look deeper at the skills, gifts, experiences, talents and abilities that God has gifted to each one of us.

We remember that we are all created uniquely in God's eyes and respond to one another with grace and love as we enable each other to flourish and grow.

You may want to invite members to share any thoughts that have arisen as a result of their personal reflection in the time since the last session.

Ask group members to turn to Session 2 in their Participants Workbook and explain that we will use this as our guide throughout the session.

## Session Content (10 minutes)

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*Last week we acknowledged that each one of us has been made in a completely unique way.*

*This week we're going to take some time to explore how God has put us together, discovering our SHAPE for God's service:*

**Spiritual Gifts:** what spiritual gifts has God given you?

**Heart's desire:** what are you really passionate about?

**Abilities:** what are you naturally good at?

**Personality:** how do you usually relate to people and situations?

**Experiences:** what have been your positive and negative experiences and what have you learned from them?

*Knowing our SHAPE will enable us to serve in the most effective ways in the places that God has called us to.*

## Question

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- If you were to use just three words to describe yourself, what would those words be?

Invite the group to share these with one another now.



# Spiritual Gifts

Depending on your group, you may find it more appropriate to consider the Spiritual Gifts section after the other sections in this session.

*'Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ.'* 1 Peter 4:10–11 (NRSV)

*Spiritual gifts are given to God's people to help the Church be all that it is meant to be.*

*God doesn't give the gifts so that people can feel proud about their special abilities, like trophies on the mantelpiece; rather they are given as tools for the job of building the body of Christ so that we may make Jesus known in the world. Everyone who has God's Spirit has some spiritual gift or gifts.*

*So what are they? Well first let's look at what they're not:*

- *they're not natural talents*
- *they're not personality traits*
- *they're not the same as the Fruits of the Spirit.*

*They are special abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to individuals to serve others.*

*'Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.'... 'there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit'* 1 Corinthians 12:1 and 4 (NIV)

## Group Work (10 minutes)

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In smaller groups, look at the following passages and ask the groups to pay attention for the spiritual gifts that are mentioned:

- Romans 12:4–8
- 1 Corinthians 12:1–11, 27–28
- Ephesians 4:11–12
- Can you think of examples where you have seen these gifts used in the life of your church?

## Activity (10 minutes)

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You may decide that the session will flow better if people do this activity at home as part of their personal reflection.

*Using the list in the Participants Workbook, in pairs, go through each of the definitions of the gifts and highlight whether you think this is:*

1. *definitely me*
2. *maybe me*
3. *definitely not me*

*A helpful way to know if you have a certain gift is to ask yourself: are people helped when I do this? Is God honoured? Do I feel that I am making Jesus known?*

*The key things to remember are:*

- *all God's people have spiritual gifts*
- *we have to use them for them to grow*
- *we can ask God for other gifts at any time,*
- *God may give us new gifts for the benefit of the Church.*

# Heart

Tell a story about somebody in your church who has made a difference in a particular area because they were so moved by an issue.

*God as our creator has left clues inside us about how we can serve as disciples. For each of us, the passion that moves our hearts will be different. As St Benedict puts it, God asks us to 'listen with the ears of our heart'.*

*Now obviously we can't all pack up instantly and go on some great campaign, but God will use us where we are to make a difference if we are willing.*

*You may also find that you're passionate about other things as well as causes that you encounter. You may be passionate about music or sports or designing things. We need to listen to these things too because God can use us in all the areas that we're passionate about.*

## Activity and Questions (15 minutes)

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In the Participants Workbook, under the Heart section, participants will find the following questions.

- What do you really love to do?
- What are the areas in which you would love to make a difference?

Invite the group members to discuss these in pairs or threes. Invite group members to make some notes of their discussions in the spaces provided and encourage them to share something from their conversation when the whole group reconvenes.

*It's a very British trait to play down our talents and abilities, but they are things that should be celebrated because they too are from God, things that were chosen for us as we were created.*

## Bible Study and Questions (15 minutes)

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Invite someone to read aloud [Matthew 25:14-30](#) – the passage known as the parable of the talents and for everyone to listen slowly and prayerfully.

Divide into pairs or threes to share

- What has struck you afresh in that reading?
- What questions has it raised for you?
- What encouragement do you find in it?
- What does this suggest to you about use of your talents?

The Participants Workbook provides a list of talents; this is by no means exhaustive, but might support people's thinking.

Through discussion with each other, invite the group to write in the appropriate section of the Participants Workbook what they, and others, think their God-given abilities might be.

*God's intention is that we link our abilities with our spiritual gifts, inspiring us with passion to do something that demonstrates to the world around us something of God's creativity and goodness.*

## 5 minutes

*There is no such thing as a good personality or a bad personality. We can be people of good or bad character, but personality is a different thing.*

*Our character is something that we can work, with God's help, at changing, but our personalities are pretty much given and formed by the time we're four or five.*

*Whilst passion will help us work out the 'where' of using our spiritual gifts and abilities, understanding our personality will go a long way to helping us work out 'how' we will use our gifts and abilities.*

*We discover what our personality is like in two main ways:*

- 1. how we relate to people*
- 2. how we respond to different situations.*

## Activity (15 minutes)

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Invite group members to reflect individually on these two questions by putting a mark on each of the scales provided in the Participants Workbook and to use these scales to help them to reflect on how they personally relate to people and situations.

As the leader you may need to give some examples to illustrate what they mean – if possible use yourself and another team member who has a different personality type, demonstrating that leaders really do come in all shapes and sizes.

# Experience

5 minutes

*The final element that makes up our SHAPE is our experiences, both the good ones and the difficult. The person we are today has been moulded by the experiences we've gone through.*

*Sometimes it's difficult to understand how the difficult things that we've gone through can ever be used for good, but they can. God will often bring people across our paths who are going through something that we've experienced. In those moments we're able to come alongside them and encourage them.*

Last week we each shared an experience in our life which was influential in shaping us. As group leader, you may wish to take a moment to share with the group an experience in your life which was influential in your journey as a disciple of Christ.

## Summary (5 minutes)

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Invite group members to look back at the SHAPE sections in their Participants Workbook and to reflect, either individually, or with the group, how clearly they feel it acts as a mirror for the person God has created them to be.

## Personal Reflection (5 minutes)

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Ask group members to look at the Personal Reflection exercise in their Participants Workbook.

This session's Personal Reflection invites group members to take the notes they have made during the session, to prayerfully reflect upon them, and to look to write a concise statement about their SHAPE in light of the person they believe God has created them to be.

Invite group members to ask any questions they may have, and to begin to make a few notes to help them with this exercise.

Close the session in prayer.

# Session 3: Using Our Gifts In God's Service

Through this session, participants will explore these topics:

- Discerning the call of God within our lives, being affirmed in and commissioned for service
- Using our gifts effectively in God's service, in a God-honouring way both within the church and the world
- Identifying the opportunities for service that God has presented us with
- Considering how to say no to the wrong opportunities
- What next – acting upon what we've learnt

You will need:

- Session 3 worksheet in participants booklet pages 14-17
- Individual Review Information in participants booklet page 18-19
- Individual Review: information for review facilitators

## Session Introduction (15 minutes)

Begin this session by inviting the group to reflect on Session 2 and to share with one another something that they have discovered, or had reinforced to them, about themselves as a result of exploring their SHAPE.

*Whatever gift we each have, it is God-given, as we are called, chosen and prepared for service. We learn how to use these gifts by learning more about God and the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed.*

*Each and every one of us needs to nurture and use the gifts God has given us and, more importantly, nurture our faith. We can only do this as we meet together in worship, prayer and fellowship. Our mission as the Church will only be effective if we build each other up and learn more about our faith.*

*However, it is not just down to us; the local church community has a role in discerning our gifts. It is a partnership between you, the local faith community and God. We discern gifts in community and not in isolation.*



## Session Content (5 minutes)

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Ask group members to look at the Personal Reflection exercise in their Participants Workbook.

The Christian life is about living and working out our faith and discipleship in community.

It is not about my gifts and my ministry, but about our gifts used for the benefit of God's church. As one commentator has put it there are no Lone Rangers in the Christian Church. Jesus modelled a different kind of ministry, a ministry of servanthood and service. When the disciples were arguing about their position in the Kingdom, Jesus reminded them that this was not his way; he tells them '...anyone who wants to be important among you must be your servant'.

- We must approach our service with a servant heart
- We must develop our 'character of service'
- We should test out any calling – how do we do this? Is now the right place, context, time?
- Having resilience skills so that when service is hard, we remember that God has called us to this.
- Serving in the widest possible contexts – not just within the church but in the wider world as Christ's ambassadors.

## Bible Study (25 minutes)

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**John 13: 13–16** provides some key insights into Jesus view of servant leadership:

**'You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.'** (NRSV)

### Reflect And Share

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Share a personal story or reflection about an experience you had had when you were involved in serving others in a way which was attuned to your SHAPE for God's service. What was the impact? How did it feel?

Invite the group to reflect on their own experiences of serving others and to share their responses to these questions with the group.

- In what ways do you use your gifts to serve others and what difference does this make?

## Bible Study (20 minutes)

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‘Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ.’

Colossians 3: 23–24 (NRSV)

‘So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.’

2 Corinthians 5:20 (NRSV)

## Reflect and Share

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*Often, when we think of spiritual gifts, we default to thinking about leadership roles in the church. However, as church members we act as a bridge between the Church and the wider world, a bridge between our working context and our personal life and, as ultimately as signposts of God’s Kingdom, wherever we find ourselves. For many our gifts will be used in support of our wider communities, not just in church.*

Invite the group to reflect on their experiences of serving others outside of the Church.

- How do you see yourself as an ambassador of Christ and his Church in how you use your gifts?
- In what ways are you currently serving Christ?

## Activity (10 minutes)

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*James in his letter ([James 1:2–4](#)) reminds the early Church that life doesn’t always run smoothly and that faith is built through suffering and perseverance – in fact, he tells us to consider it a joy!*

*In pairs, think of a time when you have found serving God hard work and how you have seen God at work as you have used your gifts, even though you haven’t seen an obvious result or outcome until much later.*

As group leader you may like to share a personal experience of this as a way of introduction.

## Reflect And Share (15 minutes)

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*How do you know whether you are called? When you talk to people about the possibility of using your gifts or skills in service, they don't look at you as if you are mad; instead they affirm it, and say: 'Of course, I could have told you that years ago!' They encourage you. In other words, in the eyes of others, your sense of calling also seems to make sense – it is not just an external sign or confirmation for you, but it is the beginning of a recognition of your gifts by others too. It is not enough for us to use our own judgement; we all need to have our gifts of service tested.*

## Personal Reflection (5 minutes)

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Consider as a group how the Church – both local and wider – might test any calling and why we should we do this.

Next discuss how we might go about identifying whether God is calling us to serve in a particular way.

- How will we test that call and how might we say no to opportunities we are presented with that where we do not feel called to serve?

Ask group members to look at the Personal Reflection exercise in their Participants Workbook.

This session's Personal Reflection invites group members to review the places where they already serve, to consider how aligned this service is with their SHAPE and also to prayerfully consider, in light of what they have learnt through the sessions, what new opportunities God may be calling them to explore in making Jesus known.

Invite group members to ask any questions they may have about this

## Individual Review

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Ask group members to look at the Individual Review Information page in the Participants Workbook. Explain to group members the purpose of these sessions emphasising that this is an optional opportunity and that should they not feel comfortable participating in this then they are free not to do so.

Make sure that you have read the Individual Review Information and the Individual Review Information for Individual Review Facilitators ahead of this session so that you understand the purpose of this element of the programme and can explain it to your group members here.

## Summary

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Close the session with a time of prayer.

You might like to suggest that the group prays for one another for the next steps that they each will take.

Depending on the group, this could be done in different ways:

You might choose to invite people to silently pray for the person on their left, you might ask people to stand, one by one, in the middle of the circle whilst people pray for them.

Alternatively, everyone's name could be placed into a hat and everyone invited to draw a name and to pray for that person throughout the coming week or month. Please choose an approach that is appropriate for your group.

# Individual Review: Information For Individual Review Facilitators

**'Your SHAPE for God's service':** Enabling people to discover the gifts God has given them and how they might use those in making Jesus known.

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The Diocese of Salisbury has a vision of making Jesus known in every place, so that all may flourish and grow, seeking God's Kingdom here and now. Enabling that flourishing and growth is our aim in making Your SHAPE for God's Service available to worshipping communities across the diocese.

It is a series of three sessions designed to help churches as they enable people to discover their unique SHAPE, the gifts God has given them and how they might use those in God's service. It will help you to develop disciples, and the gifts of all God's people. As we serve Christ, we look to identify these gifts, invest in their development and find practical opportunities to use them.

We hope this process will enable participants to live and serve with more joy, satisfaction and fruitfulness, contributing to the flourishing of their church, as well as affecting the way each person engages with their family, friends, job, community, and voluntary/leisure activities.

Each of the sessions includes input from the session leaders on the topic and some Biblical teaching. There are practical exercises, and discussions to help each person apply the materials to their life situation. There is also space for the group to pray and to listen to God together.

A short personal reflection exercise is also provided for participants to do at home after each session to help them to reflect upon what they have heard and discussed and to consider what it might mean for their life.

Session Two provides participants with an opportunity to discern their SHAPE for God's service.

By looking at the five areas of SHAPE, participants are equipped to understand more about who they are, how God has created them and used their life experiences to shape them.

## Shape Explained

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**Spiritual Gifts:** God's unique gifts to us as members of Christ's Body.

**Heart's desire:** what motivates and excites us; what we most long to do.

**Abilities:** our strengths, knowledge and skills.

**Personality:** our character, style, preferences, personal qualities.

**Experiences:** our life experiences – both good and bad – and what we have learned and gained from them.

### Briefing for those carrying out an individual review with a group member

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One-to-one Individual Review meetings are a really important final part of the SHAPE sessions. These meetings, which we suggest last for approximately one hour, provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on their participation in the sessions and what God has been saying to them through the SHAPE materials.

These meetings should be relaxed and informal and are designed to be of benefit to the individual. Please do not use these meetings to simply try and get the individual to sign up to a particular volunteering role you have in mind for them at the church!

### Potential Questions And Meeting Structure

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Below are some questions which you may find helpful as you carry out an Individual Review with a participant from the SHAPE sessions. Please feel free to use as many or as few of them as you find helpful and to use your own questions also.

- What stood out to you most about the SHAPE sessions?
- What did you learn about yourself and your SHAPE?
- How would you describe your SHAPE to me?
- Which element of your SHAPE was most enlightening to you?
- Is there any area of service you feel God inviting you to explore further as a result of what you explored through the sessions?
- Is there anything you feel God is asking you to lay down or give up as a result of what you explored through the sessions?
- What area of service are you going to explore in light of your personal discoveries?
- What can I do to support you as you embark on this journey?
- Would you find it valuable to meet again to see how things have progressed, perhaps in six or 12 months?



## Recommended reading for those keen to explore further

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You may like to recommend any of the following books or resources as appropriate to the person you are meeting with:

GOLDSMITH Malcolm and WHARTON Martin, *Knowing me, knowing you*, SPCK 1993. Exploring personality type and temperament – a beginner's guide to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

Belbin Team Roles originally described by Dr Meredith Belbin. The nine roles represent team members' preferred ways to interact and behave in a group. Belbin Team Roles | Belbin

MUIR David, *Fit for the Purpose*, 2006. Book based on the St John's Nottingham Extension Studies module. About the meaning of Christian vocation and how to respond when God calls.

NOUWEN Henri, *In the Name of Jesus*, Crossroad Publishing 1992. Exploring the essence of Christian leadership through the lens of servanthood

CROFT, Stephen, *The Gift of Leadership*, Canterbury Press 2016. Tracing the nature and the exercise of leadership throughout the Bible.

CONRADIE, Liesl & GOLDING, Tyrrell, *The Short Guide to working with Children & Young People*, Policy Press 2013.

BRUCE, Kate, *Igniting the Heart*, SCM Press 2015. Bruce seeks to inspire and equip preachers to be imaginative in the way they think about, prepare and deliver sermons.

BAKER Jonny & ROSS Cathy, *Imagining Mission*, SCM Press 2020

HOPKINS, Michael, *Pastoral Care in Practice*, Canterbury Press 2023. A short yet comprehensive guide that encourages all Christ's disciples to reflect on the pastoral implications of the Christian faith.

ROWLING Cathy & GOODER Paula, *Reader Ministry Explored*, SPCK 2009. A basic and theological introduction to the role and work of a Reader/LLM in the Church of England.

LEES John, *How to get a job you'll love*, McGraw Hill Professional, 2008. A practical guide to unlocking your talents and finding your ideal career, by an ordained careers consultant.

COTTRELL, Stephen, *On Priesthood*, Hodder & Stoughton 2020  
The Arrow Leadership Course, CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society). For leaders aged 25-40 [www.cpas.org.uk/browse-everything/arrow-leadership-programme](http://www.cpas.org.uk/browse-everything/arrow-leadership-programme)

EVANS Neil, *Developing in Ministry*, SPCK Library of Ministry series, 2012.