

GENERAL SYNOD 2023
FULL REPORT OF FACILITATORS' FEEDBACK ON THE SEASON FOR
CHRISTIAN LIFE QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS

1. *What would be most useful to you (a) as an individual (b) as a congregation in the Provincial Season for Christian Life [prompts if ideas not forthcoming eg resources on particular things - what, online courses - on what, gatherings - themed on what, book suggestions - on what topics]*

2. *A Jesus shaped life is life shaped by God, a life on journey of learning and living the way of Jesus, becoming more Christ-like and more dedicated to model Christ's transforming love, personally, communally and in our wider societies.*

How do you react to this term 'Jesus shaped life', what does it mean for you right now and how might that influence how you think about the Christian life/discipleship?

3. *What does being intentional about following Jesus mean to you, how are you intentional in who you are and what you do to "see Christ more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly" (Richard of Chichester)?*

4. *The Five Marks of Mission are below:*
 1. *To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom*
 2. *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers*
 3. *To respond to human need by loving service*
 4. *To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation*
 5. *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth*
How do these reflect your Christian Life right now and how might this work for you and your congregation as you reflect on your individual and congregational Christian lives?

5. *When was the last time you had an opportunity to reaffirm baptismal promises [p154 of the General Synod Papers], is it useful to you - if so how, if not - what might make it valuable to you?*

TABLE 1

Q1:

The main thing that emerged was the desire for opportunities to share stories and good practice to encourage and inspire us. In some contexts this could be through gatherings though in dispersed rural areas it needs to be via vox pops and other digital means.

It would also be helpful for vestries and clergy to be encouraged to experiment and take risks - being unafraid to fail.

Our United Free Church rep also spoke of the importance of drawing our principles and guidance from scripture and good preaching. This prompted others to observe the need for clergy and congregations to be able to focus on the core calling and real priorities.

Q3:

One person said that they had made a conscious decision to use their time to serve the church rather than give it to other organisations - though it was also commented that to have served those other organisations would also have been to serve Christ in the world.

It means to live your life out of the awareness that you have given your life to Christ.

Concern was expressed over the language of intentional discipleship - there has to be a balance between this and relaxing into simply living our lives, lived in the grace and love of God but not always thinking about it. Two people spoke of starting and ending the day in prayer and then just getting on with things without too much intentionality, but trusting that the spirit would inform all they were and did.

Trying to be a reassuring, healing presence at a time of so much pain and trauma.

Not fearing conversations with people, growing in confidence about how best to communicate what it means to be Christians/Episcopalians.

Q5: didn't get on to this.

TABLE 2

Q1:

[OUR COMMENTS: Two clergy (one retired but active) 2 lay women and one lay man]

Making things real

Encouragement – from above ie Bishops – Rector/Priests -----

Are we going to be here in 50 years' time --- ie same individual churches

Need Guidance --- resources.

? need for Clergy Chapters in various areas in Dioceses to discuss issues/ideas etc.

Area Council – revitalised – good place to start – could be useful resource, something that fosters and engages people in Area Councils. Laity to be included.

We need to find a place where we are comfortable to deliver what God wants us to deliver.

Need to talk to those who are not “converted”.

Being authentic self.

Are we an invitational church?

Coffee shop group.

Being able to articulate our stories.

Ask the questions what the church should be in 50 years.

How do we equip people now?

ACORN – leads to people to speak about their faith.

Moving from established religion - religiosity has become the barrier to faith.

Café church.

‘Ethics through the Looking Glass’ (pub gathering to discuss current ethical issues – this happens/used to happen in Melrose, Scottish Borders with great success).

Go to Gay Bars – faith gathering in low key way.

Street Pastors.

Create informal places for people to talk and explore.

Male Lay member resources

Olive Tree Bible

The amplified bible

TKC (Thy Kingdom Come) app

Talking Jesus Course + survey report

+ an array of books of community prayers

Spotify – Christian hymns and songs

Female lay member resources which help her:

Cursillo Movement

Bible reading notes

House group for teaching and discussion

Informal chats at the pub

Internet, particularly the Iona Community – and their resources

Female retired priest added subsequent to discussion as the lay members were flowing with ideas/thoughts

Good liturgy – not just in churches or Cathedrals – though the latter draw in non-church goers because people can be anonymous yet enjoy the music, the numinous sense and peace.

Simple teaching about spirituality – and show that “mindfulness” popular as even mentioned on Spring Watch on TV is very much a Christian “thing” going back to the desert – also Buddhist. It is not modern!

See what gives people life – Nature is hot stuff at the moment – utilise that – such as Japanese ideas of “Forest washing” – invite people to a wood – with a picnic and get them to discuss what they “feel” about the place --- or the beach – or a park etc, etc.

So much literature at present coming from good scholars about the Cosmic Christ and ecology.

For those who can get access to schools: maybe suggest perhaps at Primary school – a short time of sitting quietly with a flower and just looking at it and then find out what the children think about it – colour, texture and how did it get there – somehow bring God Creator into the mix. Drip feeding!!!

(When I was still Rector in Newport on Tay – we took over a local coffee shop one day in Lent – and a group of us church goers sat around the coffee tables – no coffee but water) and each took in turn continuously ie no breaks, to read the Gospel of St Mark – using different bibles including the Scots Bible [each person had the text printed out so no page turning or looking the text up at the time in the Bibles, so seamless] – I put posters round the village and several people came to listen - it was electric. Worth thinking about.

Tenebrae – is popular but I don’t use scripture readings much – mostly a wide range of relevant “spiritual” poems and other readings – less scary and boring than just the Bible!

Being out in Nature is my resource!

TABLE 3

Q1:

- a) Material to help with giving individuals confidence in expressing their faith.
- b) Tools to help people deal with the fear and embarrassment and also complacency.

Q3:

It means believing and living in the reality of this phrase from Jethro Tull - "I'm not the kind of God you have to wind up on Sundays" or "Let your life speak" and "Live your life adventurously" (the Quaker code).

Q5:

For us the promises provide a framework to live by. We reaffirm them every Easter and in a very real sense in the Creeds and so probably on a weekly basis.

We didn't get to the 'bonus' question.

TABLE 4

Q1:

This felt to some members at the table like one more thing to do when already stretched. It felt like yet more reporting, and another layer of admin and pressure. A suggestion that you are not good enough and not doing enough and what more can you do...

– *time resources were needed.*

It was encouraging that the season of Christian life was context led and opt in.

Prayer should be the starting point

It was suggested that existing area gatherings (which are called different things depending on dioceses) might be a good place to encourage the season for Christian life.

Q2:

'I long to have a Jesus shaped life'.

'Jesus shaped life sounds like a catchphrase'.

'Quite a lot to ask in a table of people you've just met'.

'Very personal'.

It is praying and striving (maybe too much striving), maybe better to leave God to work maybe in surprising ways.

The importance of Jesus' silence when on trial. He could have defended himself, instead he chose not to. Sometimes it's important to keep your mouth shut!

Q4:

These are a constant, a part of our lives, integrated constantly.

Our Christian life reflects the five marks of mission.

General Feedback

These questions were more like 1000 word essay titles, rather than short pithy discussion starters.

TABLE 5

Q1:

Liturgy for the reaffirmation of the baptised. Baptismal promises reaffirmed every year.
? Pentecost? Church of Scotland/ Roman Catholic Church have a service for this as part of their ecumenical work. No point in reinventing the wheel.

Q3:

Proclamation of the Good News every day in words and deeds.
Expressing gratitude every day.
Seeing God in everything.
Sense of God's presence.

Q5:

See response to Q1

Even in the darkest times an acknowledgment and awareness of the presence of God. Easy to do this in the good, happy times but, perhaps more of a challenge in the difficult moments.

Every day understanding and experience Jesus.

TABLE 6

Q1:

The Bishops to Focus on this theme in sermons/addresses when visiting congregation and at Diocesan Events.

It needs a consistent approach and understanding what is its purpose and what we are promoting.

Is this a way to avoid the word Discipleship.

Make sure what we are doing is visible to others and to ourselves, needs to be bought into by our congregations.

Suggestion of Trying Biblio Drama.

Also suggestion using 'Leading by Story' work on Leadership (Richard Tiplady).

Q2:

Each life is different, so each 'Jesus shaped life' will be different and this will involve interpreting Jesus for yourself individually.

The term 'Living your best life' is popular, how do we connect with that phrase, reform and repurpose it to fit the idea of a 'Jesus shaped life'.

The theology of presence of Jesus being present in the heart minds and action of our congregations and the work they undertake, learning from each other and working collectively and individually to model this to the world.

Probably not something we can measure but both congregations, individuals and building can be a witness.

Q4:

The 5 Marks of Mission are often lived unconsciously in many ways.

They encompass the whole idea of Christian Life as we are the body of Christ on earth, striving for justice, peace, care for others & creation by sharing God's love with all we meet.

The action we do Marks 3, 4 & 5 will lead us to conversations with those outside the church that we love and patience may lead them to Christ Marks 1 & 2.

We do all this because as 'disciples' that is what we are called to do. No Excuses.

Congregations by their lives and actions can help lead others to Christ.

TABLE 7

Q1:

Short, accessible and online Daily Offices eg St Martin's in the Field (London) – includes music. Or some sort of daily reflections to join in with.

Some still not clear what the Season for Christian Life is. A little confusion as to season: When? Why? Does it refer to existing things? Evangelism? Surely 'Christian Life' refers more to all the time than a few weeks or months?

One person mentioned a thriving ecumenical group for Daily Prayer using printed sheets, but which did not survive Covid and a change in clergy. It was missed and there was a desire to have this re-instated.

Good idea to pick a target group and build around that – noted that young adults often prefer Mattins and Daily Prayer – result of school experience?

Resources for 18-30s - Wording matters. It was thought that 18-30s might relate more to "thanksgiving for life' than 'I turn to Christ'.

Such resources could be ecumenical and respond to local context.

There are pockets of expertise in different charges – there should be more opportunities to share knowledge and working together would be good.

Q5:

Everyone immediately thought of Easter, followed by baptisms in church. Videos at Synod had also reminded people of baptismal promises. The difference between the creeds and baptismal promises was noted – the baptismal promises being specific intentional and requiring assent and action.

TABLE 8

Q1:

Having regular services (including midweek). Deepening knowledge of Scripture including discussing Sunday readings. Lunch club (Musselburgh) leading to outreach; conversations happen. Ask people who do go to church what they want, how do they see the congregation in 5 years' time, and what do they most value about the congregation.

Q2:

Jesus as the touchstone; our whole life is open to Christ. Growing our faith helps us share our faith and to grow in confidence. Lockdown helped people support each other. We should be authentic, people of integrity; we need support to do this. When the church is working in the local community it gives people the confidence to come through the church doors; the SEC "pub sign" with its slogan "the SEC welcomes you" is significant.

Q3: Not addressed.

Q4:

Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform, Treasure - all 5 marks are interconnected. We could use the 5 marks as headings for our church annual reports.

Q5: Not addressed.

TABLE 9

Q1:

Simple / accessible resources eg Methodist way of life.

Morning Prayer / Evening Prayer / Compline online – making daily practices straight forward (one person didn't know they were already online, others suggested there were glitches and it wasn't always straight forward).

Courses readily available – short – 2-3 weeks is adequate for most people. – on how to live as Christians, basics such as prayer, bible ...

Make sure things aren't just in the middle of the day in the weektime!

Q3:

“Abiding in” ...

How we are becoming – a journey of discovery.

One idea – St Mary's Cath, Glasgow – hold a 'Not the Alpha Course' after Sunday services – a great opportunity for people to discuss faith.

Creating safe spaces to question.

Having / becoming / growing confidence to speak of an active choice to follow Jesus, to learn to speak of faith.

Q5:

Easter Day service / Pentecost / at every baptism.

Every time we turn up to church and go to work, I reaffirm my baptismal promises.

And it is really important to me to do it corporately.

TABLE 10

Q1:

Feedback highlighted a range of perspectives. Some participants desired a clearer understanding of Christian Life, while others suggested the implementation of a discipleship course or the provision of Scripture study resources. There were reservations about the potential quality of materials offered by the Province (based on past experiences), and some individuals called for a reconsideration of the Five Marks of Mission. Additionally, a significant number of participants emphasised the importance of encouraging congregational autonomy in engaging with the Season of Christian Life.

Q2:

The feedback regarding the term “Jesus shaped life” was varied. While some found it helpful and resonant, others expressed concerns about it being jargon or proselytizing, and some felt it lacked specificity or made them uneasy. These perspectives highlight the need for thoughtful and inclusive language that effectively communicates the

transformative nature of Christian life and discipleship while remaining accessible and meaningful to diverse individuals and communities.

Q3:

Participants at General Synod offered diverse interpretations of being intentional about following Jesus and living out the quote by Richard of Chichester. This included discerning one's actions, engaging in fellowship and community, maintaining a balanced life, and considering the broader societal implications of intentional living. Perspectives reflected the multifaceted nature of intentional discipleship, highlighting the importance of personal reflection, communal support, and active engagement in the world as core components of following Jesus intentionally.

Q4:

Overall, the feedback indicated a weariness and scepticism towards the Five Marks of Mission as a framework for reflecting on Christian life. Participants expressed concerns about the effectiveness, memorability, and meaningfulness of the current approach. This feedback suggests a need for renewed exploration and innovation in how the mission of the Church is understood and practiced, considering fresh perspectives and approaches that resonate with the current realities and aspirations of individuals and congregations.

Q5:

Participants had varied experiences and opinions regarding the reaffirmation of baptismal promises. Some remembered affirming these promises at Baptisms and Easter, finding it useful and meaningful. Others did not see the practice as relevant to their spiritual journey. Additionally, it was acknowledged that different baptismal rites used for certain generations may have resulted in the absence of explicit promises for some individuals. These diverse perspectives call for a consideration of the ways in which reaffirmation can be meaningful and accessible to individuals across different contexts and generations.

TABLE 11

Q1:

No need for an end time.

Christ's Story is an anchor.

Book Suggestions- Advent/Lent/Home Groups- with reviews in Waterstone' styles of personal recommendations.

Versatile course(s) about Christian life using images/poetry/music/further reading etc. with different access points (see Edinburgh Lent course for examples).

It should provide challenge rather than celebration- this is the reality of life and the counter-cultural aspect of Christian life- challenge helps us to grow in maturity in our faith with doubts and fears, facing ourselves and hanging in there.

Help to understand ourselves and our faith.

To know we are not alone.

Trust and faith is all we have sometimes which will have a bearing on everything else we have to do. Eg PEG.

Flexible adaptable materials from a central resource:

- Not just course based.
- No measures or outcomes.
- 'Stuff' for the absolute beginner- eg St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow newcomers course.

Q3:

Sheer accident.

Virtue ethics - how is it engrained in our daily lives.

Improvisation by Sam Wells - how liturgy shapes us.

Discipline/habit/repetition/living mindfully/embody/fruit of the spirit.

Right language for the right people.

Different ways of praying individually and corporately.

What does community mean?

Q5:

This is problematic - not how faith is expressed. Eg renewal of promises/vows for people who find they are still working.

The reminder of these vows at a Baptism/Confirmation are far more powerful.

TABLE 12

Q1:

Gathering for some fun together and the pleasure of belonging to the SEC.

A gathering that gave time to explore things more deeply.

A gathering at which we could learn to share our faith 'simply' and authentically.

Something about equipping people to be Christians in the 21st century.

Something about apologetics - how do we articulate our being a Christian today.

Developing a confidence in talking about our faith.

Q2:

The group didn't relate to the language of this question at all. Two points were made:

1. "Reuben lives a Reuben shaped life, but I am inspired, encouraged and challenged by Jesus."
2. We follow Jesus and not the teaching of Jesus (the historical character).

Q4:

It was felt that adoration and worship have been lost in the Marks of Mission which are all very 'do-ey' things.

The group generally felt that there should be a zeroth mark of Mission - to worship and adore God in Jesus Christ through the sacraments.

TABLE 13

Q1:

Concern that we were calling it “a season” - it is an ongoing and permanent way of life.

Resources were discussed - an app for the Daily Offices and/or a simple and perhaps visual app/resource for those who want something other than the formal liturgy of the offices.

Greater awareness of what the role of spiritual directors are and how to find one.

Resources to help congregations develop a prayer life/groups.

More time and financial resources for clergy retreats and learning opportunities.

Online lent and advent courses helpful but it was felt they were quite academic and that congregations would appreciate simpler more practical learning opportunities.

Q3:

Intentionally following Christ means daily denying oneself and taking up the cross to follow Jesus.

It is a life rooted in prayer - “using the spectacles of prayer” to see the world as God does and living out of that place daily.

It is intentional - a heart turned to God - puritas cordis.

“It is likely our hearts are pure and our intentions spotless, when we are not solicitous of the opinion and censures of men: but only that we do our duty and be accepted of God.”

We started a discussion about the meaning of intentions with as discussed by the Church Fathers - and I followed it up at home and found the quotation above which seems to encapsulate what we talked about. It is from Jeremy Taylor Holy Living.

Q5:

This was only touched on briefly at the end of the discussion - many had reaffirmed at the Easter Vigil annually - others had not. We began to discuss the need for perhaps a simple rededication that was “not wordy”.

TABLE 14

Q1:

Several suggestions re help:

Card resources (like ‘Gravetalk’ or NetZero Cards) to prompt discussions

Series of sermon themes
Podcasts etc for linking into to take people deeper
Wider sharing of experiences across Dioceses and across Province
External facilitators to assist in Charges in vacancy

Discussion re the focus felt that the Eucharist should be the core central focus from which everything comes.... It is the power and prime energy source.

We felt we must value individuals in their differing sources of inspiration for faith.

Q2:

Most felt the language presented 'Jesus-shaped life' grates....and does not assist in thinking about life/ discipleship.

Jesus-shaped implied male/ tall/ skin colour – in other words the distraction of peculiarities.

Suggestions were: Christ-centred/ life shaped by Jesus....

We wanted to know what does the phrase mean? Its very nebulous.

The phrase halted our discussion rather than leading us on to discuss the objective.

Q4:

We felt in Mark 2 we wish to remove the word 'new' and look to teaching, baptising and nurturing believers.

We felt the breadth of the 5 Marks allows individuals to be called to particular aspects and would wish to affirm the understanding that we should not have to do all of it individually – but corporately a church can cover all. This enables us to think of the 5 Marks as the calling of the Body of Christ not just each part.

We reflected on the 5 Marks reminding us of the 5 wounds of Christ... each Mark not lived and achieved is a wound. We also pondered that we too might be wounded as we follow them.

We felt that they should not be numbered as this implies priority.

TABLE 15

Q1:

The discussion we had was mainly around time management, and a lack of capacity for our Bishops, clergy and laity. How do we free up clergy and bishops so we can be more caring and nurturing. It isn't the lack of understanding, knowledge or teaching, it isn't the lack of online resources, we simply lack time and capacity.

Q2: We didn't look at this question.

Q3:

We spent a while discussing being "intentional", and after a while we honed down and became much more critical of our own discussions. We reflected on being kind and building relationships in different contexts, from soup on streets and meeting some needs

of the homeless, meeting mainly young Nigerian students and offering hospitality and kindness, offering our church spaces to Ukrainians and Romanians. These outreach activities were intentional however what was fascinating is where the discussion moved next. We recognised we were good at the intentional meeting and being kind to others, we were much less intentional with regards Marks 1 and 2. We felt that we were not at all intentional with making disciples or even proclaiming the gospel, being kind and a good neighbour yes, having intent to grow the kingdom of heaven, alas no.

Q4:

We were getting on a roll now and leading on from question 3 were critical of ourselves and the wider church with regards what we had heard and what our practices are.

Mark 1: If we could communicate the love and hope of the Good news of Jesus then confirmation wouldn't be a problem of a rite looking for a wrong. However because we can't proclaim the gospel, or at least seem incapable of doing so, our confirmation isn't a rite that has any right of being in any widespread use.

Mark 2: To be critical of the 2nd mark itself we can't understand why this is exclusively about "new" believers and think the mark should say "new and existing believers", we need to see all our discipleship as Christians as an ongoing journey of transformation and an ongoing journey of ministry and discernment, such that the whole church becomes equipped to grow and flourish into becoming all we are called to be. We felt if we got a new understanding of mark 2 that included the whole body of the church into lifelong learning and discipleship we may have the transformation we seek.

Mark 3: We look at ourselves and recognise that we are unable to love our brothers and sisters within our own dioceses or other dioceses within the SEC - if we can't love the brothers and sisters we can see how do we love and respond to human need outside of our church. We recognise that relationships and personalities sometimes breakdown and don't get along, however we felt that an openness and transparency are required from within our own denomination such that we can model what loving kindness looks like.

Mark 4: We stated some obvious and not so obvious examples of the lack of social justice with regards, the poor and rich in society, asylum seekers, climate change, violence against women perpetrated by men, etc, etc, however again felt that to have a voice that will be taken seriously with regards social injustice and seeking transform those structure we need to start within our own denomination, again following on from the previous discussion on the 3rd Mark we travelled around being open and transparent with some of our own internal struggles.

Mark 5: Our discussion was less fruitful as we were in accord with recognising the importance of safeguarding creation and mitigating climate change and becoming carbon neutral, however we feel unequipped and with little or no spare capacity to carry it out effectively. Furthermore we recognised the difficulties with how we turn the focus external and see how we do outreach or grow the kingdom of heaven through this mark of mission.

Q5:

We struggled with being specific with our baptism vows, in fact we struggled to mention in any context where we could speak about Jesus, we could remember Easter Sunday services with the reaffirming of our Baptism vows, we could recall Ash Wednesday services and the imposition of ashes, however no one could then recount a time when the service led to speaking to anyone about Jesus. We discussed the terms, disciples, apostles, ambassadors, a royal priesthood, heirs and co-heirs, we recognise the terms are who we are and yet on the whole find it extremely difficult to talk to others about Jesus.

We weren't sure if it was a lack of teaching or discipleship and on balance felt no it was something else, maybe partly to do with courage, fear or the value of doing it or indeed the need to do it. We then looked back at the question and think the question suffers from the same issue, is it important reaffirming baptismal promises or more important to speak them and live them out? To share our faith of baptism with others who don't as yet share that faith?

TABLE 16

Q1:

The table members thought that having a list of resources available would be helpful for the clergy to plan what is suitable for their charge.

Suggestions included the SEI courses such as "What it means to be an Anglican", a link to an Emmaus course and details of the CofE Pilgrim Programme.

Discipleship courses were most sought after.

Q2:

The table liked one person's suggestion that a Jesus shaped life was "A hunger for the life of the soul". It was noted how often Jesus took time out to pray. It was felt that there was a need for more emphasis on personal and collegiate prayer. The Eucharist is an invitation to the deepest love/communion with God.

It was felt that people are searching for the mystical, for a deeper connection to God. It was noted that some of the clergy had often heard the remark "I am spiritual, not religious". This led to the suggestion that more use of, and promotion of, retreat centres would be welcomed. Also, more use made of walks with spiritual input such as the St Magnus Well Walk on Orkney.

It was felt that we do not take time to listen to people sufficiently.

A comment was made that the wordiness of the question reflects the difficulties we face as a church in not presenting a mystical/spiritual connection with God. We use too many words!

Maybe more use should be made of "Godly Play" to help people express their own reactions to the bible stories – more emphasis on "I Wonder" rather than being spoken to.

This lively discussion took up all the time allocated.

TABLE 17

Q1:

What is the Season of Christian life? The presentation never defined it. So we struggled to 'get it'. So clearer definition please. So that we know the context for the season, and plan for it.

The acronym CRAIC was offered at one point – that suggested having a good time together!

Q3:

Intentionality is predicated on prayer and relationship - a sense of God in the guts! And a living relationship with others that share that sense of God. Need to explore that.

Intentionality is going beyond spontaneity. It's about that which is over and above.

It's about recognising need to read well, and interrogate the world well.

It's about the opportunities to develop our relationship with God and one another.

There is a vital need to restore confidence in what we proclaim and live out.

Q5:

Frequently! Particularly because we have just had Easter and Pentecost. Perhaps too often makes it lose impact.

The fact that it is a corporate act is important – affirming alongside others.

Liturgy should spark questions – and need to empower the laity to ask those questions and explore the answer(s). Eg what does 'renounce evil' mean?

TABLE 18

Q1:

Individual – prayer resources, space, less anxiety, more trust. Permission to not do things and affirmation that what I am doing is OK. Advice on how to move from membership to discipleship.

Congregations – material for small congregations with little to no resources on how to work with children and young people. Permission to just carry on growing. Practical examples and case studies. We struggle with yet another initiative when we are just trying to keep our small church going.

Q2:

Discipleship is not a course or a season but a way of life formed by the dwelling of God within us.

Where is there room for the Holy Spirit in the above definition?

Where do the sacraments fit in?

There is a need to embrace the cross and see where that leads you.

Q4:

The area in which we struggle most is the first Mark of Mission. This is partly because of a difficulty with what mission means, but also lack of confidence in our ability to talk about our faith.

We need to practise talking about our faith and Jesus with each other, to give us confidence to talk about it with those who have questions, with those we encounter from day to day.

TABLE 19

Q1:

How do we encourage depth of discipleship in our congregants?

How do we encourage our congregants that they are agents of God wherever they are?

How can we encourage our people to love Jesus with and in the whole of their lives.

Ideas and encouragements about how we can open up our buildings, and use them to tell the Christian Story (egs of Experience Easter from the CofE).

How can we engage schools? (eg Gareth Malone style choirs?).

Q3:

Aligning my will to the will of God.

Taking opportunities to pastor / love / not walk past people.

Authentic living for Jesus. Whole Life not just words.

Not compromising, standing firmly to the rock of my salvation so that my life looks different from the world and speaks of Jesus.

ONLINE BREAKOUT GROUP 1

Q1:

There was a feeling that many congregations are at capacity and that resources need to be simple and encourage congregations to build on what is already happening and the resources and capacity they have, rather than being lots of 'other things to do'.

There should be resources to help to enable us to name the things we already do to live out our discipleship.

Resources encouraging congregations to see what they can do to 'respond to human need with loving service' to existing members who are declining due to age and need extra support and friendly faces to visit them (lay Pastoral Care Teams etc.), or if there is not capacity for that then good signposting support.

Book lists and resources for those who are housebound on discipleship – especially any resources that contain stories of older people and those who are differently abled or less able than they used to be.

Resources that can be used across congregations and alongside brothers and sisters of other denominations. Can congregations work together if they are having services to celebrate Christian life? What about diocesan services to celebrate this?

We were conscious of the group that the videos used during the presentation were from a Youth Event. Most congregations have a lack of young people, and it can be disheartening, (and a bit devaluing) when the voices of older people (who make up a majority in most places) are not heard/solicited in such presentations. Let's also ensure we engage with, recognise and celebrate the faithful discipleship and witness to Christian life of our older members.

Q2:

We were concerned that the phrase 'Jesus shaped life' felt a bit like a 'cookie cutter' model of discipleship, perhaps a little too 'holy' and unattainable – we are all flawed human beings who fail and falter each day and none of us are Jesus! How do we respond gently to our own failure and the failure of others in the living out of our Christian discipleship.

Q3:

Many are following Jesus in very simple and everyday ways and don't note these or think of them as being intentional about following Jesus. There is perhaps a need to look at how we enable people to name and celebrate the things that they already do and the things that are already happening.

Q4:

The group felt that these were a good framework to help us to think about discipleship, but some of the group did not know the context of the Marks of Mission – is there assumed knowledge that needs to be communicated?

There is a danger in these becoming some form of 'performance criteria' for churches and for us as disciples. This was noted but not explored.

Q5: We didn't get to this question (online group).

ONLINE BREAKOUT GROUP 2

Q1:

How long is the season?

It would be helpful to receive a monthly email promoting ideas as to what we are supposed to be doing each month – eg collecting vox pops.

Practical things would be very helpful – prayers, suggestions, how we do certain things or begin certain ideas eg foodbanks, local resources etc.

Useful to have information SEC website that you can go to to get ideas, resources, preaching ideas for the week etc.

Coordinating with Net Zero campaign/16 Days of activism/Thy Kingdom come on monthly/annually emails as it can be overwhelming – helps to put activism into action.

As we all need time to prepare so timelines would be helpful to incorporate forward planning.

Q2:

Perhaps it would be better phrased as a 'life shaped by the person of Jesus'.

Why is this different from what we do on a daily basis anyway as Christians?

Focusing on creating a focus on a community that is shaped around the vulnerable.

At a simple level it is remembering at the back of our minds for every situation we are thinking 'what would Jesus do' – asking ourselves what is the right thing to do?

Being willing to be unpopular or go counter-culture.

Focusing on Jesus' life rather than our own. Think about his different lived life experiences not just our own. How we can find inspiration, solace, comfort from the life of Jesus from birth to ascension.

Q4:

How do we get away from viewing this as a church leader as another overwhelming tick list to do.

The whole church should be doing this and we can only focus on one part at one time as individuals and as charges.