

CHOOSING WHAT TO LEARN LOCALLY

Showing the Kingdom in ministry and mission

Helping people to see the Kingdom of God through our ministry and mission lies at the heart of the widespread implementation of 'Changing Lives, Changing Churches, for Changing Churches in a Changing World'

By enhancing discipleship, ministry, mission, spirituality, knowledge about God and Christian leadership, many more individuals and communities will find the love of God and grow towards the likeness of Christ.

The School of Formation's extensive range of learning and development opportunities of Local Ministry Groups, Local Ministry Teams, Benefices and Parishes aims to inspire and encourage confidence in Christian communities throughout the diocese and region, and to assist them to express a joyful hope in the Christian gospel for the sake of the world in which they serve.

Faced with the array of what is on offer through the School of Formation, Local Ministry Groups, Local Ministry Teams, Benefices and Parishes might be tempted to select almost on a 'shopping list' basis, courses and learning programmes that look attractive and interesting. A more systematic approach will however be more fruitful.

There is more than one way to be systematic in choosing what to learn and different churches may have different preferences about how to work out what learning to choose.

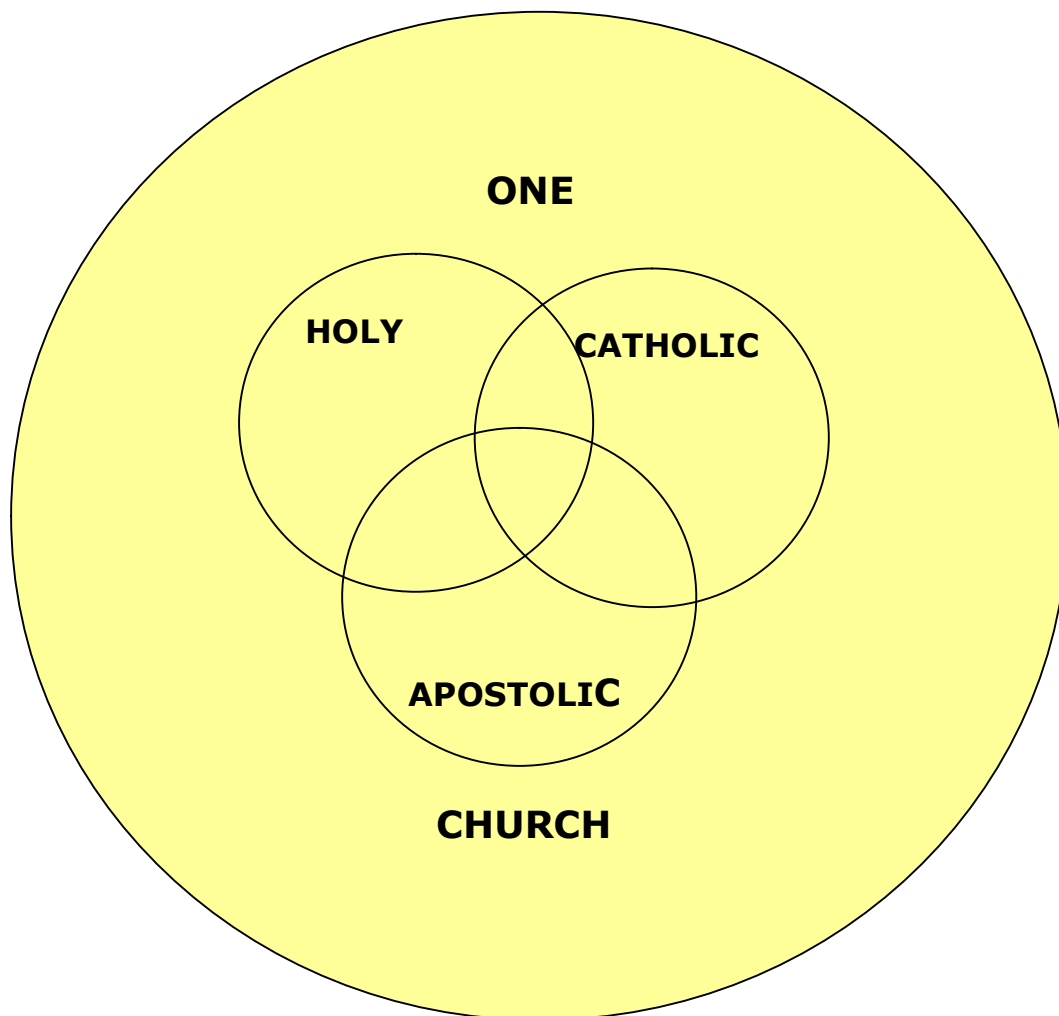
The School of Formation therefore offers three different systematic approaches that will help Local Ministry Groups, Local Ministry Teams, Benefices and Parishes choose what best to learn locally.

Which approach might serve you best?

Approach A - one holy catholic and apostolic church

This approach recognises that we are called to be 'one holy catholic and apostolic church'. A church:

- in communion with God
- in which its members are in communion with each other
- in communion with the communities of which it is part
- that is united



To apply this approach we suggest you listen to God, to each other and to your communities and strive to hear what is being said about the ways in which you are already 'one holy catholic and apostolic church'. You will find there is already much to build upon.

Also listen to what is missing and needs to be present so as to help you grow further as 'one holy catholic and apostolic church.' This will help you work out what to choose to learn.

The following questions may help with your listening:

One:

- in what ways are we already one church?
- what, if it were present would enable us to be even more one church?
- what training and development would help put in place that which needs to be more present?

Holy:

- what is it about our welcome and worship that brings us closer to God?
- in what ways could our welcome and worship be made more inspiring?
- what training and development would help our welcome and worship to be more inspiring?

Catholic:

- in what ways are we a ministering supportive Christian community?
- what if it were present? Would it enhance our ministry and communal life?
- what training and development would help us?

Apostolic:

- to what extent are we an outward looking Christian community?
- what practical examples can we point to about our service to local communities and more distant communities?
- what gifts has God given us for mission and outreach?
- what training and development would enable these gifts to be given to local and other communities?

During and after listening reflect on what you have heard. What to choose to learn and where to make a start will become clearer to you.

You may then wish to look at the School of Formation web site: <http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/> and contact us about accessing what you have chosen to learn.

Approach B – The ladder

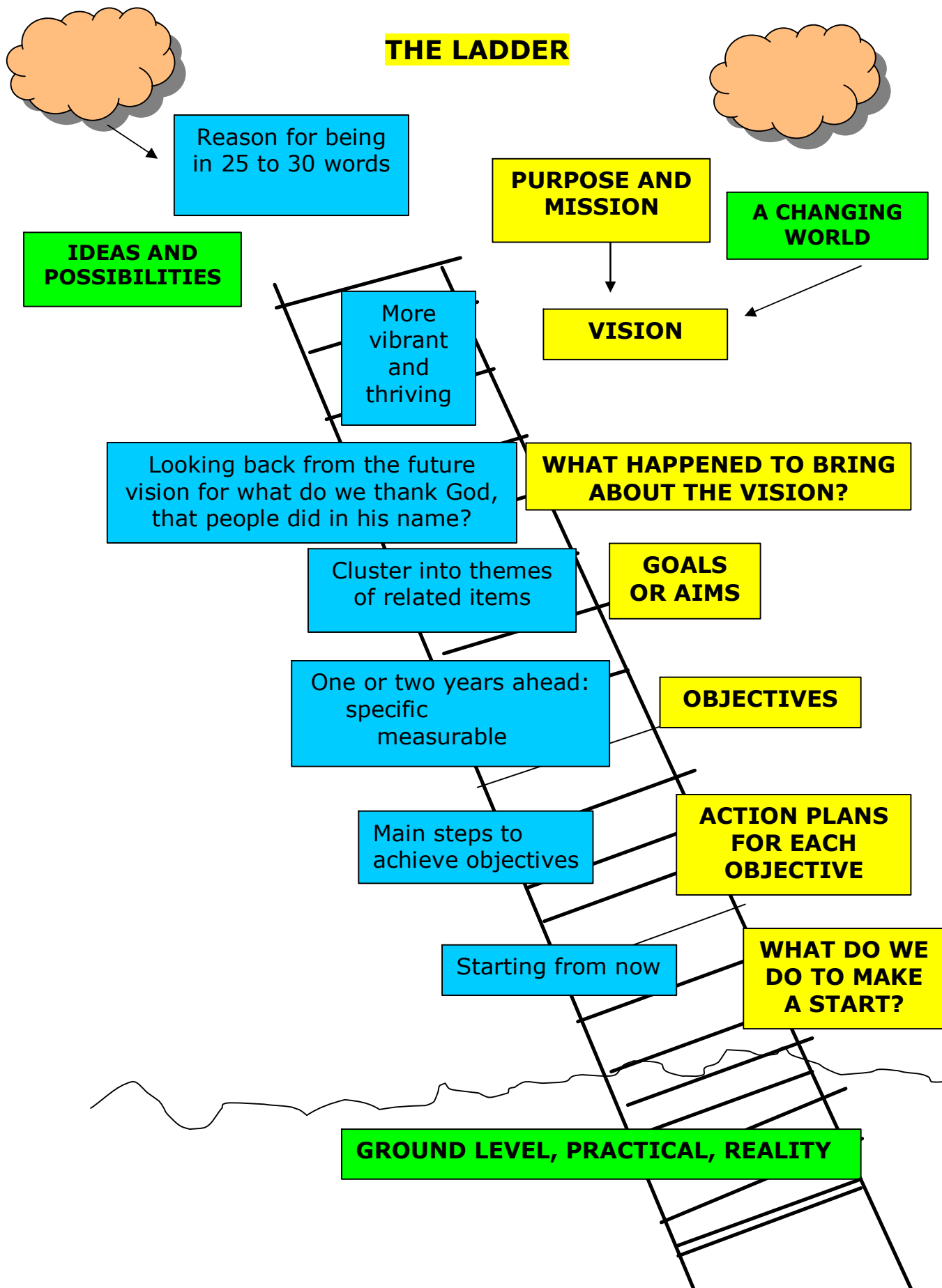
Jacob dreamt he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with angels, going up and down on it. In seeking to bring earth closer to heaven Local Ministry Groups, Local Ministry Teams, Benefices and Parishes try to model aspects of heaven on earth.

This way of working out what to choose to learn involves dreaming a little about what it would be like to have moved along the ladder just to show others the way.

This approach suggests you picture the ways in which your Local Ministry Group, Local Ministry Team, Benefice or Parish will be more thriving and more vibrant at some point in the not too distant future, say five years.

With this picture in mind you are asked to look back down the ladder you have just climbed and give thanks to God for what happened to enable the picture to be realised.

THE LADDER



Suggested key steps are:

1. Purpose and mission

Remind yourselves about the purpose and mission or reason for being part of the Local Ministry Group, Local Ministry Team, Benefice or Parish. Write it down in 25 to 30 words. Is it comprehensive, concise, clear and readily understood?

2. Vision

Describe what your Christian community/church will be like in 5 years time? What is God calling you to be? In what ways will your Christian community/church be vibrant and thriving? How is the world around you changing and how is God asking you to respond?

Include in your picture, welcome and worship, prayer and spirituality, the sense of community within your church, service and outreach to communities and other factors you see as relevant.

3. Looking back from the future

Looking back from five years from now, make a list of what you are glad has happened to bring about this picture. Give thanks to God for all that people did in his name and what stumbling blocks were overcome.

4. Cluster

Group items on the list into clusters of common themes and name each theme.

Each theme is a broad aim or goal; something to aim for, something to move towards

For each aim decide what you will do in the next 18 months to move you towards that aim. These are your objectives. Be realistic

For each one, agree indicators of success and the key actions to take. This will help you assess progress for each objective. Make sure you are clear about where, when and how to start and who will do what with whom.

Write this up as a plan.

5. Training implications

Finally ask what learning and development will help us to take forward the plan and continue to climb Jacob's ladder together?

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Approach C – Samuel and Eli

Eli listened to Samuel, who spoke God's word to him. Out of the listening, Eli responded to what God was saying.

The Holy Spirit is at work in people and the world and our duty is to collaborate with the Holy Spirit in building the Kingdom of God that is both now and to come.

In this approach for choosing what to learn, Local Ministry Groups, Local Ministry Teams, Benefices and Parishes listen and look for signs of the work of the Holy Spirit and look for the gifts that have been given as we are already resourced to be the helpers of the Holy Spirit.



- 1. Who are all the people and groups in your Christian community?**
 - who needs to be heard and how can you listen intently?
 - who can be heard already and who may need to be helped to find their voice?
- 2. Listen**
 - what yearnings can you perceive?
 - what is the Holy Spirit prompting through them?
- 3. See the work and gifts of the Holy Spirit?**
 - what already shows the Holy Spirit is making a difference?
 - what shows that the Holy Spirit is at work?
 - what has been gifted by the Holy Spirit and where are the gifts?
- 4. Responding to the Holy Spirit**
 - what actions and changes would enhance your Christian community's response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit?
 - what training and development opportunities will help encourage and mobilise people to respond to the Holy Spirit's promptings?

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