



Growing good

Today's workshop:

- Background and overview
- Sample Growing Good session
- Local insights and discussion
- Closing prayer



2017

2020

2021



6 Report

**Growing Good:
Growth, Social Action and Discipleship
in the Church of England**

Hannah Rich

Foreword by Stephen Cottrell,
Archbishop of York



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The Final Report of the GRA:CE Project



Research (2017-2020)

How do social action and discipleship fit together in practice? How can they be better integrated for holistic growth?

- 350+ interviews across 60+ parishes in every diocese
- Statistics for Mission and Liverpool diocese survey



Report (2020)

“...social action can be a route to church growth in both numerical and spiritual terms. It is one of the key ways in which congregations can build wider networks of relationships which can result in people initiating a faith journey and joining the church” (p.12).

Five key characteristics of churches that are growing through social action:

- Presence
- Perseverance
- Hospitality
- Adaptability
- Participation

Growing Good: Growth, Social Action and Discipleship in the Church of England

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Mission (ongoing!)

“The mission of the Church is its calling to share in the mission of God the Father to restore the fallen creation to Him through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, making manifest His Kingdom... This mission of God (*missio dei*) is cosmic in scope, encompassing the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and flows out of the nature of the Trinity as a fount of sending love.” (General Synod paper 1054 *Making New Disciples* p1-2).

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’ (Matthew 22:37-40)

“Social action is Christian mission. It is the lived expression (orthopraxy) of what we believe (orthodoxy). But the link between the two is Love.” (+Adrian Newman, CUF Bishop-in-Residence)



Growing Good Toolkit (2021)

What: short course for local churches

Why: to connect the dots between social action and discipleship for holistic growth

Who: any church that wants to grow

How: six flexible, interactive small group sessions sessions



Feedback

“It has brought more people in to Bible study and enabled them to look at what we do as a church and what each person can bring as their gift to the church and people in their community. I think it has really started people thinking ‘What can I do? What have I got? What difference can we make?’” - Marsha

“The six sessions of the Growing Good Toolkit – developed based on research from CUF and Theos - will help churches grow in faithfulness and fruitfulness. My prayer is that Growing Good will help us become a Church vibrantly fulfilling its mission to form disciples who are called to love their neighbours and seek justice.”

++ Stephen Cottrell

“...the accessible language helps newcomers to faith and others who maybe have English as a second language to participate. There's a really good opportunity with this material to be inclusive and ensure it's not just the usual people who gather on these things to just have another meeting, but rather create new thinking with a fresh set of people.”

Intro film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-qJfVtmdTI>



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Session 3: Hospitality

Building a culture of giving and receiving

Session 8: Hospitality

Building a culture of giving and receiving

Key takeaways:

- Practicing hospitality invites people into a common life.
- Hospitality is about building two-way relationships.
- Jesus teaches us to give and receive hospitality in a way that heals divides rather than reinforces them.



session [5 minutes]

If you did the optional next step from the previous session, take a few minutes to share anything you learned or experienced.



Opening question
[5 minutes]

Think about the last time you received hospitality from someone. What made you feel welcome or unwelcome?

Most Christians agree that hospitality is an important part of discipleship and witness in the world. The way that we extend or receive hospitality makes a big difference in shaping genuine relationships and helping everyone to feel they belong.



Read aloud
[2 minutes]

Jesus spent a lot of time receiving hospitality in other people's homes. In this story, he was invited to a meal at the house of an important religious leader. In those days, certain seats were considered more important than others at dinner parties (similar to how we might have a 'high table' or a seating plan at a wedding reception). During the meal, Jesus tells his hosts and fellow guests a 'parable', which is a type of story or image that Jesus often used in his teachings.

'Then Jesus said to his host, 'When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

(Luke 14:7–14)

This story is a great example of Jesus' ability to see into people's hearts. It's also very awkward! As a guest, would you rather sit and listen to Jesus calling everyone out, or leave and embarrass the host?

Jesus calls out both guests and hosts for approaching hospitality with selfish motives. Guests choosing the most important seat to try to get honour. Hosts inviting the right guests who could pay them back another time. It was all about what was in it for them.

The way we extend or receive hospitality can say a lot about what is going on in our hearts. Are we sharing life with people, or subtly trying to show them our lives are better than theirs? Are we genuinely loving people, or using them to boost our self-esteem?



Discuss
[15 minutes]

How do you feel challenged by Jesus' words at this dinner party? Why does Jesus say that we shouldn't invite people who can pay us back? What is your church's motive for extending hospitality?

As individuals and as a church, we need to be aware of other unhelpful ways we can approach hospitality. Sometimes our hospitality can be:

- **Paternalistic** (e.g. only ever serving others as if they are the only ones who need help)
- **Inconsistent** (e.g. offering a warm welcome at the foodbank but a cold welcome at the church service)
- **Incomplete** (e.g. someone has a good experience of hospitality but doesn't know you are Christians)



Watch film
[5 minutes]



Group discussion
[35 minutes]

[Note: there are several questions below. You may wish to select a couple of them for more in-depth discussion.]

- How have you experienced hospitality changing you (as a recipient or giver)? How has it made you more like Jesus?
- Where and how does your church offer hospitality to others? (e.g. Sunday services, foodbank, small groups, Holy Communion, community meals, parenting groups) Who is involved in each of these? Who is welcome?
- What does your church do well? What does it do not so well?
- Are there any groups within your community which are particularly good at showing hospitality? What can you learn from them?
- How can you share something of your faith in the ways you practice hospitality? (praying before a shared community meal)



Prayer
[10 minutes]

Thank God for his hospitality extended to us in Jesus Christ—and ask that he might make your community one that extends and receives hospitality in a genuine and fruitful way.



Feedback

We would love to hear your feedback on the Growing Good Toolkit and can make it better. After you have used the material, please share your thoughts with us in this short survey.

[Provide feedback](#)



After the session [Optional]

Invite someone round for a cup of tea at your home or local cafe. Pray that God would bless your time together.

Explore whether your church could start a **Place of Welcome**.

Discussion

- How would you envision using *Growing Good* in your context?
- How can *Growing Good* strengthen things you are already doing?
- How can *Growing Good* support missional priorities in your wider diocese/area?



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Will you join us in Growing Good?

The Growing Good Toolkit is a FREE six session course helping churches explore the connection between social action, discipleship and growth. Through six flexible, interactive small group sessions, we explore how our churches can be faithful and fruitful in our local communities.

[SIGN UP TO ACCESS THE TOOLKIT](#)

[TOOLKIT OVERVIEW](#)

Before you start



Facilitator Guide

View or download our Facilitator Guide for information and tips about how to use the Growing Good Toolkit sessions with your group.

[VIEW THE GUIDE](#)



Introductory film

What is the Growing Good Toolkit? Share this short introductory film with your group before your first session.

[VIEW FILM](#)

The Growing Good sessions



Presence: Being seen and known for doing good

Explore how your church can be more visibly and actively present in your community. Learn from a church that has grown through its physical and relational presence in its neighbourhood.

[VIEW SESSION](#)



Perseverance: Being faithful in the long-term

Explore how your church can fruitfully invest in local people and institutions over the long-term, even when it's tough. Learn from a church that has grown through investing in local schools and young people.

[VIEW SESSION](#)

Closing prayer

*Living God,
your Son made himself known to his disciples
in the breaking of bread:
open the eyes of our faith,
that we may see him in all his redeeming work;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.
Amen.*

*Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his
risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.*