

Interim Ministry Source Book

Tools and Resources for Interim Ministry

Worksheets and templates



Family Systems Theory and how it connects with Interim Ministry

Murray Bowen was an American psychotherapist (b1913 Tennessee) who began researching the impact of family on a schizophrenic child in 1950s. He connected his work to general systems theory which had evolved in 1930s-40s (Austrian theorist: Ludwig von Bertalanffy). Over the next 16 years Bowen developed his research into a single unified theory known as family systems theory, or Bowen Theory. The work was subsequently explored in relation to synagogues and churches by Rabbi Edwin M. Friedman, who also went on to apply his interventions to corporations, educational institutions and government agencies.

Systems theory suggests that systems are

Dynamic things are in constant motion in a system.

No part is static.

Interconnected you cannot change one piece without affecting all the others.

Tend towards a steady state each movement provokes a counter-balancing movement, hence overall changes resisted.

Boundaried define what is inside and outside. Boundaries in a healthy system are clear but permeable. Boundaries in an unhealthy system tend to be rigid or invisible.

Organic they are the basis of all life and they are born, grow, develop and die.

So Bowen said Each family should be regarded as a dynamic emotional system, therefore when treatments is needed it should be directed at the whole family system, not just the 'sick' one. A diagnostic focusing on one individual is unhelpful (although some critics have said that Bowen also 'pathologises' the family too).

Family systems theory assumes the existence of two forces in relationships:

- the desire for togetherness (the need to remain emotionally connected with others)
- and the desire for separateness (to be an individual)

Anxiety

is 'heightened reactivity' (an emotional reaction to threat) which arises from managing these forces within the relationship system.

The smallest unit of a family system is a triangle of 3 people. Triangles act as a way of absorbing or shifting anxiety – where anxiety rises in a system of two entities, a third will be drawn in to manage that anxiety. Family Systems develop mechanisms for managing that anxiety:

Distance cutting off (lack of emotional connection)

Conflict caused by fusion (too much emotional connection) which generates tension

Over or under-functioning mechanisms for managing anxiety: one person may be doing too much and compensating for (or removing agency from) the other.

Projection problematising a person in the system as an outlet for the anxiety in the system.

Differentiation is key a well-differentiated person has capacity to remain connected to the system without losing their sense of self and is less emotionally reactive. They are able to manage the tension between togetherness and separateness in a healthy way. A poorly differentiated person is emotionally reactive and gets entangled in the system.

These patterns of relating have

- a multi-generational transmission (transferred from one generation to another),
- may relate to sibling position
- emotional distancing taken to the extreme leads to cut off and breakdown.

The emotional patterns in a society and churches have the same characteristics as family systems.

Just as a family is built up of interlocking relationship triangles, so in society as a whole there is a more complex version of the same system – and emotional patterns of relating from families will be replicated in society at large.

Acute anxiety is temporary stress in the emotional system; chronic anxiety is anxiety which is ingrained in the functioning of a system – this sort of anxiety may have built up over time as a result of repeated incidents.

Chronic anxiety in society mirrors chronic anxiety in a family, and may result in regression: where the herd-mentality of togetherness overrides the need for individuality (the desire for separateness).

Symptoms might appear such as violence, polarisation and rigid beliefs, fear or risk, a 'blame' or 'scape-goating' culture, litigiousness, all of which can be magnified by the media 'reflecting back' anxiety like a mirror into the system. These issues are not causing the anxiety; they are the symptom of the anxiety.

Churches are complex family systems, and these symptoms of anxiety may appear in churches too: as a symptom of anxiety in church relationships; or as a result if anxiety at large in society, from which people might 'seek refuge' in churches.

IM as leaders of anxious systems

Interim Ministers are often called to work with church systems suffering from acute anxiety (a short-term stress in the system, such as the loss or indisposition of a leader) or chronic anxiety which might have built up over time.

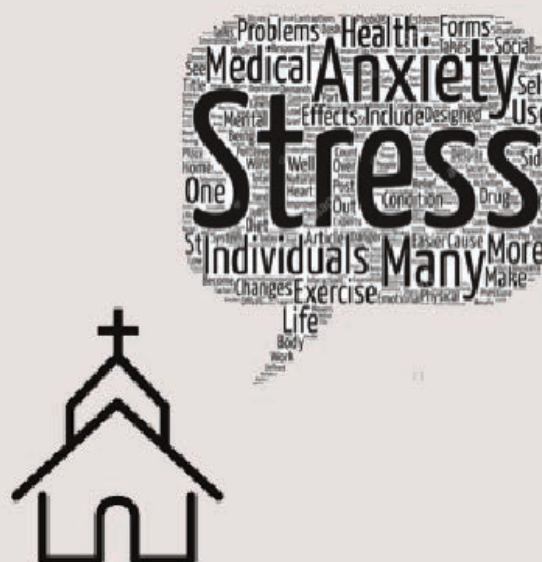
A significant skill of an IM is to be 'a non anxious presence' – that is a well differentiated person who is able to work with the system to help it understand its patterns of relating and responding to tensions and stresses; the historic patterns of relating; and to help it see where the issues are and start to define itself differently.

Leaders in an anxious system will experience some predictable responses

Resistance because systems tend towards a steady state, the system will try to re-establish equilibrium, therefore attempts to define in a new way may represent a threat to the equilibrium, and the leader may experience groups/individuals banding together to resist a change in the system.

Blame and scape-goating anxieties in the system might cause the targeting of individuals as the one responsible for the group's problems. They might be the most vulnerable or the most responsible – even the IM. But this is the system trying to find an outlet or relief for the anxiety by focusing it in a specific place. Some parishes may be labelled 'clergy killers' as they may have scape-goated a number of previous clergy. In fact, they are just projecting their anxiety onto that leader. The IM needs to help the system understand its anxiety and resolve it in a healthy way.

Invisible patterns ('The Naked Emperor') system's patterns of relating are largely invisible to those people within it. Repeated patterns of relating or events go unnoticed; little is learned from past mistakes; the system seeks over-simplified explanations and quick fixes.



The BB manual notes

'It may take careful research to see how events are interrelated and are driven by an emotional field, affected by a complex web of relationships. Working at this sort of understanding is one of the most important contributions that a leader can make.' (p17, leading in *Anxious Times Manual*, Bridge Builders Ministries 2018)

The work in IM to explore history, identity and seek a new vision, identifying resources and potential partnerships for future development, are therefore critical to help those within the system to notice their patterns and to start defining their system in a new (and hopefully healthier) way.

IM leaders (and all leaders in anxious systems) therefore have to:

Foster a non-anxious presence creating relationship and fostering an environment in which issues can be expressed and explored in a healthy way, without retreat or attack. As leaders we must offer a living example of that way of being non-anxious (as Jesus was) – but also we must lovingly accept that whatever patterns people bring with them into the system will be learned from their family of origin and may take time to un-learn or change.

Support self-definition help people to define themselves in a clear and positive way – as individuals and as a system. This means being able to express what you feel or believe, what you need and can offer, what you hope and feel disappointed about. IMs lead the way in this process of definition – not by telling people or the system how they should be, but by responding to the process and behaviours of the system, and often by holding up scripture and biblical examples as models of behaviour and kingdom living, and helping others to define themselves/church well.



Zachary Olson, Unsplash

Maintain connection when people feel anxious they will move away from the source of the anxiety – by becoming rude, aggressive or by physically distancing. The IM must retain emotional contact with people who are seen to be blocking the process, disagreeing or rejecting; and the IM also needs to help individuals to maintain (or rebuild) emotional contact with one another.

Stand firm Resistance and pressure to return to the old ways are inevitable. The IM is there to hold firm to the objectives (agreed at the outset) and the process of change, and their own honestly held convictions, while being flexible enough and willing to adapt the process in the light of others' genuine concerns.

Well differentiated leadership has the following characteristics:

- Clear self-definitions, purpose, convictions, identity (hence the importance of clear objectives)
- Non-anxiety: The capacity to stay calm in the face of difference and anxiety, and to avoid getting reactive.
- Maintain healthy relationships: The ability to model intimacy and good boundaries
- Maintain connections: The ability to stay connected with those you disagree with and dislike
- Teamworking: drawing on the wisdom of others and sharing the load with peers (transition teams!)
- Resilience: the ability to stay on course in the face of opposition and disappointment
- Humility: the ability to be able to recognise and admit your own limitations and mistakes.
- Courage: the willingness to rock the boat at the right time and disrupt the status quo, especially when faced with injustice or wrong-doing.

Poor differentiation may be marked by an over-functioning, authoritarian approach – not listening, inflexibility, lack of consultation and collaboration; or by contrast, by under-functioning and accommodating, trying to please everyone leaving a leadership vacuum.

Jesus said: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.' (John 14.27).

However, according to the Bridge Builders training programme, 'the processes in a family always have the power to subvert or override its religious values. The emotional system can always jam the spiritual message it is receiving.'

This material has been developed in response to and with the considerable aid of the training manual from *Leading in Anxious Times*, by **Bridge Builders Ministries**, 2018.

LINK: <https://www.bbministries.org.uk/training/>

Interim Ministry Appointments

Template for Terms and Conditions

Candidate

Parish

Timeframe

Appointment type

Letter of appointment:

Statement of Particulars and T&Cs sent when objectives agreed with IM and parish. Objectives of IM to be reviewed with parish after 6 weeks and revisited during supervision.

Supervision:

e.g. Supervision meetings with whom (often Archdeacon), and how frequently?

Additional support:

e.g. coaching/mentoring; external mediation

Training needs:

e.g. Bridgebuilders

Financial resources:

e.g. what expenses will be paid by parish/diocese/area team.

Additional input from diocese

e.g. parish finance team, MMA, governance information.

Additional support

will be provided through Chelmsford IM meetings quarterly.

Background issues

Preparing for appointment –

understanding, roles, responsibilities, reporting, relating to others

Getting to know the parish and people –

contacts, external view AD/Area Dean, CWs, research

Preparing yourself –

to reflect/retreat; support systems, reading, biblical reflection

Planning entry and exit –
(when/what liturgy?)

Administration -

Evaluation, monitoring, documentation,
handover

Review of parish context and situation

IM Priorities

(from the list below what is highest/lowest
priority and what needs doing in each area?)

Leadership, relationships and power

Governance and systems (Safeguarding,
Administration, Finance, projects/buildings)

Context and connections

History, identity and values

Vision and Mission

IM Process tasks

(what time will be put into these, and in
what order do they need to be addressed?)

Healing/Listening

Review history, identity, vision

Development of lay leadership

Renewing/building links with other stake
holders

Planning for the future

Additional tools and resources are available
to help with these tasks.

Additional notes

LINK: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files//2018-06/interim-posts-Guidance-to-bishops.pdf>

Taking the Temperature

All churches are systems of interacting people and influences – rather like the mobile right, they can be tipped out of balance by change. But change is also an opportunity to shift the system into a better and perhaps more harmonious shape. You want enough movement to change the shape, but not so much that it tips completely into a tangled mess! But how do you know the state of the system, and therefore in what direction it needs to shift, especially as an outsider coming in with little knowledge of the system and how it works?

Discernment

As Elizabeth Jordan's paper (Tools for Discernment) points out, there is a need to discern where parishes are, and then to enable a process of self-discovery so that parishioners themselves can start to assess their own state and needs. At the early stage of the process, parishes may not have sufficient capacity to see this clearly. The preparatory period for, and early weeks of, Interim Ministry are an important time for assessing this.

How can you find out?

Before you arrive in post

- Ask the Archdeacon/Area Dean for a full briefing;
- Review recent PCC minutes, annual reports and parish profiles;
- If possible, observe worship and the life of the congregation before you step into it;
- Explore the context, history and setting of the parish so far as you can gather it from websites, looking at key connections and relationships/gaps;
- Pattern of life – what does the parish do, when and with who?
- Understand who is who – meet with churchwardens to gather information on key people (including people on the margins who have influence);
- Governance – do PCC meetings tell you about how healthy the systems are and what decision making has focused on?
- What does the parish say about itself in documents/websites – what is its stated vision?

When you arrive in post

- Listen to a range of views – key people, marginal people, long-stayers and new arrivals. Much of this can be done by hanging around chatting and listening and asking open questions over coffee after worship. You might want to arrange one-to-one sessions with a few people, or meet a group e.g. flower arrangers, choir, parent and child groups.
- Listen to how they tell their story individually and in groups – for more information see Elizabeth Jordan's paper on conversational analysis.
- Listen for key words and behaviour which will tell you how people are feeling – the Rollercoaster of Change graphic and Managing Change graphic analyse mental states in times of change. Can you make a rule of thumb assessment on the basis of your conversations about where people are? Even angry and resentful people need to be heard and could provide key information about the temperature.
- Get others to help you in the process of analysis – e.g. Congregation System Analysis is tool from North America which uses a questionnaire, and can be undertaken with the PCC or Standing Committee (although the language might be a bit alien and off-putting)

The whole process of engaging, listening and analysing is a healthy change-making process, as it includes people at the centre as well as those who may have been on the margins; it helps the system to reflect on itself; and it starts information flowing in the system in different ways. In doing so, these methods can start to change the relationships in the system and kick-start a new dynamic. The information gleaned from these early processes will start to inform the objectives of the Interim Ministry process. At the conclusion of your initial analysis, you may want to revisit and adapt the objectives in consultation with the PCC and archdeacon/bishop.



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Transition Teams – ‘a council of advice’

It has become common business practice (certainly in the USA) to gather a core group of people who will support the process of change in an organisation. This is a model which is used in the Episcopal Church to support Interim Ministry or change processes.

It has been likened to ‘a council of advice’ or sounding board for IM. Its work ensures the process is ‘owned’ by the congregation and that the IM process is grounded and effective.

Role and composition of a Transition Team

The model is to draw together a small team: 5-9 members are suggested, depending on the size of the church. The role of this group is to assist and advise the IM throughout the process. This ensures the work of the IM is grounded in the congregation and is well informed by people who are trusted and know the organisation well.

It is suggested that this is not a pre-existing group (such as a PCC or standing committee) as these committees will have enough to do already, and extending their agenda and responsibilities may impose further strain at a difficult time. Furthermore, PCCs may be functioning with unhelpful power dynamics which it is useful to avoid. It must be stressed that the Transition Team is ultimately powerless, it does not carry any authority or decision-making power within the parish, it is simply advisory so should not be a threat to existing structures.

The Transition Team should consist of those in good standing (regular worshipper with a record of serving the parish); they should be committed to giving time to the role (and may have to put down some other responsibilities for a while to facilitate this); they should be a team player who is capable of working for the good of the parish and not in a partisan manner; they need to be able to ‘speak the truth in love’ both to the IM and congregation; and be willing to listen to people without becoming defensive or anxious; they should be open to change and willing to be creative and supportive.

The team should consist of not more than two members of the PCC – one of these should liaise with and report to the PCC; team members should not be related to one another; as far as possible, team members should be chosen to reflect the diversity of the congregation. In larger churches it is not advisable that staff members sit on the transition team, to avoid the perception that staff

members might be controlling the process. In larger churches, a chairperson may be needed to plan and organise meetings, make notes and keep others up to date.

When should it start working?

A transition team needs to be established as quickly as possible – or even planned before the IM starts work - so that it can support the IM through the early discernment process of reviewing and analysing the needs of the parish. It could help the IM understand context, culture, power systems and core values, and help ascertain whether the objectives set at the outset of the IM process are correct or need revision.

At the outset the commitment is likely to be twice a month, but slowing down as the IM process gets underway.

As the process progresses, the Transition Team may be able to take on planning and delivery of some of the congregational meetings.

If there is time and capacity to training team members in listening skills and conversational

analysis, they would become additional eyes and ears for the IM in discerning the temperature and climate of change in the congregation and in the wider parish.

Towards the end of the Interim Ministry they could help with the process of planning the exit, farewell service of celebration and handover, and contribute to the development of a parish profile.

Exodus 18.17-23: Jethro's Advice to Moses

‘Moses’ father-in-law said to him, ‘What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.... You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace.’



Antenna, Unsplash

Exploring our History Workshop

What is our history and how does it influence now and the future?

The purpose is

To explore the church's history, identify significant moments and people; explore their negative impact; agree what we carry forward and what we leave behind.

I Biblical reflection Deuteronomy 30 19b-2031.6-8

The last words of Moses to the people of Israel:

I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.... Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the LORD your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you.'

Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel: 'Be strong and bold, for you are the one who will go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their ancestors to give them; and you will put them in possession of it. It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.'

In small groups pick out significant words and phrases and share in plenary.

2 Timeline

As a group create a timeline of the church from what can be gathered from history, memory, recalling special moments (weddings, baptisms, special services, projects, events) and people and parish stories.

Share and record on a long timeline (using roll of IKEA paper or blank wallpaper lining paper) and use post-its or similar to mark the significant events and people on the timeline.

Review together (or in pairs/small groups) and reflect:

What does this tell us of our history – what do we learn about ourselves?

What is negative?

What is positive?

What patterns of life do we have?

What is our culture?

Do we want to change some things?

What would we like to stay the same?

What is most appealing about who we are?

How do we reflect the love of God here?

3 Resolution

What attributes of our Christian life, values, and history do we want to carry forward into our future, and what do we want to leave behind?

For a model meeting plan for a History Workshop, see next page.



Mick Haupt, Unsplash

Context

What is our history and how does it influence now and the future?

Resolution

Pray and Explain Explain the process Explain your brief Explain your role in these sessions – the hat!	Rational Aim What we will do today To explore the church's history, identify significant moments and significant people; explore their positive and negative impact; agree what we carry forward into the future and what we leave behind.		Experiential Aim How this meeting should feel We will review the journey this church has been on in living memory, and acknowledge the past - both good and bad - to share our feelings and agree what is important and worthwhile for the future.	
	Biblical Reflection Deuteronomy 30 19b-20, 31.6-8 5 minutes		Our History? Group work 20 minutes	
Any questions, reflections or comments on what I have said so far?	Discuss In Pairs/Threes What is significant? Key words and phrases? How does it speak about our situation now?	As a group Who has been here longest? What is your earliest memory of this church? When was it? Establish start and end points	Understanding Significant Moments/People 20 mins In Pairs/Threes Talk together about why these moments and people were significant. What were the positive and negative aspects?	
			Resolve 15 mins Step back and review together. How did that process work? Anything missing? Any extra post-its?	
Do we think our focus/aims are appropriate for now?	As a group Share words and phrases? Significance for this time?	In Pairs/Threes Jot down some significant 'watershed' moments; people, events On giant post-its. Put a date on them. Put them on the timeline. Don't worry about duplicates.	In Pairs/Threes Jot down some reasons on smaller post its. Put + Positive aspects Put – negative aspects	
			What are we surprised by? What are we most curious about? What makes us feel anxious? Where do we feel most excited?	
Happy to move forward?	As a group What are the lessons we learn from this text about the journey we are on?	As a group What do you notice? What are significant moments? Who are significant people?	As a group Share and place on timeline. What aspects of the past are good and healthy? What aspects of past are negative and unhealthy? Talk about our feelings about these times.	
			In what ways will we build on/let go of history? What changes will we need to make? What implications will that have? Summarise our results our history here is one of XX; for the future we will need to XX and XX.	
Behaviour What values shall we hold here? E.g. Being honest with one another; listening; accepting different views; confidentiality; commitment to pray afterwards?	Put words on flip chart	Back into Pairs/Threes	As a group What do we hold onto? What do we need to build on? What do we let go of? Put words on flip chart	
			Future sessions Outline where we are in process. Agree Next Meeting – e.g. Our Identity Pray and Give Thanks	

Exploring our Christian Identity Workshop

Who are we under Christ? How do we live here? And what do we hope for?

What we will do

- Explore our Christian identity
- How we live as Christians together
- Share our hopes for this community for the future

How it should feel

- We'll share our experience of parish life together
- We'll develop a sense of what's important to us
- We'll start to look ahead with hopefulness

I Exploring the Word

Ephesians 4: 1-7, 11-16: Unity in the Body of Christ

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all...

...But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up [the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Consider in small groups or pairs

What are the significant words and phrases in this passage?

What is important to our life here? (Which is another way of asking what are our underlying values?)

What do we learn from this about our vision for the future?

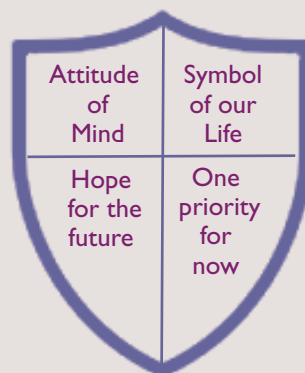
2 Shields of identity

This exercise will enable small groups to work together creatively and collaboratively to produce Shields of Identity as a visual symbol of their 'ideal' Christian identity. Rather like a 'Coat of Arms' symbolised the values and achievements of great families historically, what would our Coat of Arms say about us as a Christian Family.

Working in small groups, allocate a sheet of A2 flipchart or similar sized paper to each group with a set of pens.

Ask them to design a shield (as creatively as they wish). The shield should be divided into 4 quadrants with each quadrant representing the following:

- An attitude of mind that we feel we share in this Christian community – a few words or a picture.
- A symbol of our Christian life which we all agree is important - lots will use the cross but encourage them to think about distinctive local symbols!
- Our hope for the future – how would we symbolise our hope for our Christian community in a few words.
- What is one immediate priority which will really fulfil our sense of Christian Identity?



Each group should allocate two people to come and hold up the shield and explain it to the rest of the meeting. The group should be encouraged to clap and celebrate each presentation.

3 Spiritual Gifts and Spiritual Needs

Looking at the shields in the light of our reading from Ephesians 4: 1-7, 11-16, where do we identify spiritual gifts – what gifts we already have? Where do we identify spiritual needs – gifts we need more of?

In pairs/threes capture these on post it notes/pieces of paper – **Pink for spiritual gifts** and **Green for spiritual needs**.

These can be brought forward and placed on a flip chart paper divided into two columns.

4 Concluding reflections

As a group ask people to reflect for a few moments on these shields and Post-its alone and consider:

What do they see? – What are they observing?

What is most striking? What do they note?

How do they feel? – What memories or questions do these raise for them? What makes them laugh?

What makes them surprised? What makes you concerned? What gives them hope? What is most exciting?

What is the significance? – What is the importance of this for now? What hidden issues is this revealing? What kind of changes will we need to make to live like this? What other things do we need to consider?

What does this mean for the future? – How does this affect what we hope to do? What would we like to do differently? How do we see that happening? What would the next steps be? Who is committed to these?

Planning Sheet for this workshop is on the next page.



Keem Ibarra, Unsplash

CONSENSUS WORKSHOP PLAN

Context

Who are we under Christ, how do we live here (live a life worthy of the calling) and what do we hope for together?

Resolution

Explain the IM process Explain your IM brief Where does this workshop fit in? Explain your role in these sessions as facilitator.	Rational Aim <i>What we will do today</i> To explore who we are (the Christian identity of the parish), (the reality of) how we live together as Christians, and share our hopes for the future (as preparation for exploring our vision).	Experiential Aim <i>How it should feel today</i> To share our experience of parish life together, and our sense of what is important to us as a parish, and start to look ahead to the future with hopefulness (have a clear idea of who and where we are before moving on.)		
Happy with process?	Biblical Reflection Ephesians 4: 1-7, 11-16	Who are we?	Capturing Identity	Resolve 15 mins
Any questions, reflections or comments on what I have said so far?	In Pairs/Threes Discuss: What is significant? Key words and phrases? How does it speak about our life here?	In Pairs/Threes Think about time you first came to St X. What attracted you? What made you come back?	In Pairs/Threes Looking at our Shields: What are the best features of life at St X which make it an attractive Christian community? What gifts of the spirit do you think we have? – Pink	Step back and review together Any surprises? Do we feel this captures us?
Do we think our focus/aims are appropriate for now?	As a group Share words and phrases? Significance for life here?	In Pairs/Threes Jshields of Identity Think about life of our parish. Come up with a shield that describes our Christian identity to others? Put them on the timeline. Don't worry about duplicates.	In Pairs/Threes What are the features of life here at St X that you struggle with? What gifts of the spirit do we Need more of? – Green Be honest, be kind! Listen carefully to each other!	Where are we now? What changes will we need to make?
Happy to move forward? Introduce yourself to neighbour – name, where from in (Town/Area), how long worshipping St X. 5 mins	As a group What are the lessons we learn from this text about our Christian life at St X? What difference does that make for the future?	Shield I shared attitude of mind I symbol of our life together I hope for the future I priority for now	Put Spiritual Gifts on Pink Post-its Column of Pink: We thank God for our gifts of: Put Spiritual Needs on Green Post-its Column of Green: We pray for more:..... Ask participants to read out the list	Where are we now – most surprised? What barriers/opportunities for future? Evaluation Best bit, worst bit, best hope, biggest question
Discuss Shields as a whole group: Any questions/ Clarifications? Celebrate.				

Values Exercise –

a collaborative process to explore core values

Every organisation has values, and often two sets – a set of values through which it idealises how it would like to be; and a set of values by which it lives, which is seen in behaviour and structures.

Core values are deeply held beliefs about who we are. In church these are central to our Christian identity. Helping a parish to discover, articulate and communicate its core values is an essential part of the IM task.

When we live in accordance with our core values, it shows in our behaviour, and we have integrity.

One exercise which can help discern core values is story-telling.

STORY-TELLING EXERCISE

Each person in a (small) group tells a story about an everyday act in their church which touched them or made them feel admiration in some way. After all the stories are told, reflect for a few moments on the values at work behind each story. Work in small groups to name the values.

This can be twinned with a biblical exercise to explore different passages and the values they demonstrate.

This process can be twinned with Appreciative Inquiry.

It can be a group exercise to come up with a list of values.

A collaborative group process (e.g. congregational meeting) can be used to cluster values and name a core value which arises from the cluster; or to name a way a church would like to frame its values.

This exercise may also throw up examples of where negative behaviour is undermining intended values, which is an important point of discussion and transformation.

The core values which emerge can be used for preaching and teaching. The challenge is to really live with these values for a period and try to inhabit them. What difference do these values make to the way the church communicates about itself and how it plans mission and activities?

Here is a set of core values which can be used, or alternatively a group can generate its own list.



Acceptance
Equality
Health
Morality
Stability
Beauty
Excellence
Humility
Belonging
Adventure
Courage
Honesty
Financial security
Nurture
Hope
Serenity
Pleasure
Diversity
Respectfulness
Play
Self-control
Humour
Change
Joy
Love
Respect
Freedom

Continuity
Peace
Witness
Past
Ambition
Dignity
Compassion
Inner peace
Learning
Safety
Heritage
Teamwork
Power
Challenge
Forgiveness
Welcoming
Inclusivity
Community
Excitement
Integrity
Knowledge
Spirituality
Children
Quiet
Helping
Harmony
Caring

Creativity
Technology
Laughter
Passion
Purposefulness
Security
Rationality
Helping
Personal growth
Music
Service
Growth
Family
Fun
Mission
Growth
Success
Friends
Action
Future
Now
Companionship
Self-esteem
Independence
Loyalty
Responsibility
Strength
Tolerance
Belonging
Consensus
Environment
Intimacy
Achievement
Healing

Power Analysis –

analysing who holds power and influence

Anyone joining a new congregation will be conscious that different people hold power in that community for different reasons. Sometimes that can be quite hard to read and understand. But it is important to know who has power and why in order to bring change. Power Analysis helps us discover who holds power, why they hold power and what difference that makes to the change process.

The Power Analysis explores different types of power

Coalitional Power when I am part of a support group within a bigger system that has the capacity to influence the system e.g. the PCC, Pastoral Care Team. (the flower arrangers!)

Biblical examples Exodus 32.1-6 – The Golden Calf; 1 Samuel 8.1-9 – Israel demands a king; Luke 23.18-23 – Jesus condemned to death.

Reputational Power I have power because the organisation knows and trusts me from past experience (e.g. former churchwarden, old parish family, local dignitary)

Biblical examples Exodus 18.17-27 – Moses appointed trusted men as judges to assist him; Job 1.1-5 – Job's good reputation; Matthew 8.5-13 – The centurion whose servant is healed by Jesus.

Communicational power I have power because I have access to information e.g. treasurer, secretary.

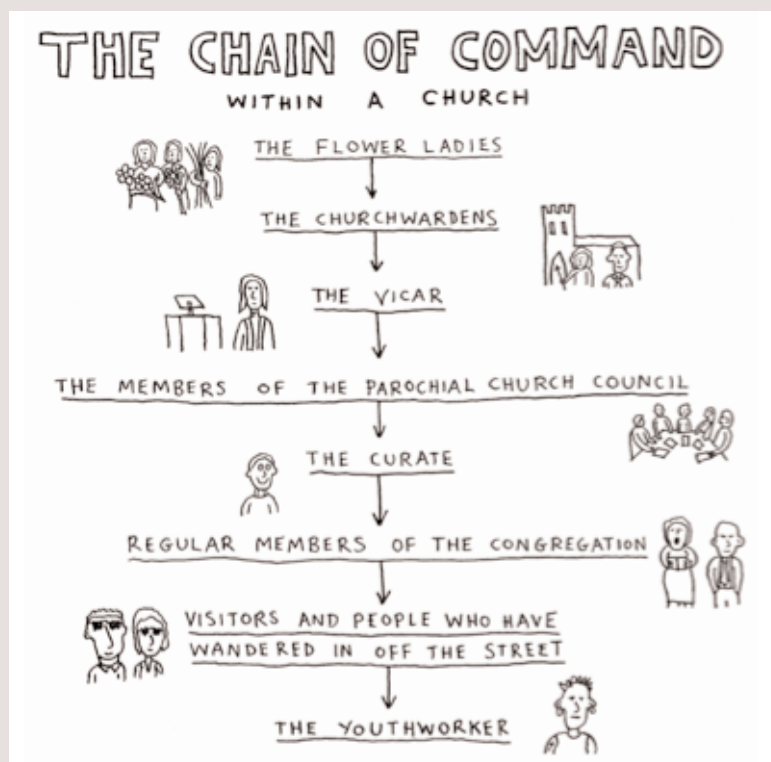
Biblical examples Exodus 4.10-17 – Aaron speaks on behalf of Moses; Judges 16.10-19 – Delilah uses information against Samson; Luke 3.7-18 – John the Baptist proclaims the coming Messiah.

Structural Power when I have influence because I occupy a role or position of authority in an organisation e.g. churchwarden, patron.

Biblical examples Genesis 45.4-5 – Joseph's power and authority in Egypt; Matthew 16.15-19 – Peter is pronounced the rock of the church; Acts 5.33-39 – Gamaliel influences the Sanhedrin to the benefit of the disciples.

Who occupies different places of power in this community? You may need help from a transition team, or trusted group/individual to analyse this.

Many people will have more than one place of power. Some may have none at all. Are there people who have good ideas and vision that are outside the current power structures? Are there people who have too much influence and limit the possibilities for change?



Your own power and credibility is also a significant factor in bringing change. The credibility that you have with people with strong corporate power in the organisation will influence the change that is possible.

POWER ANALYSIS EXERCISE

You 'test' an individual's power base by considering whether they have any influence with each type of power. A check in each box will give a power base score of 4. You test your credibility by considering

whether that person would be more likely to say 'yes' or 'no' to you – the highest credibility score is 6 and lowest is 1.

It is an exercise that can be used several times – at the beginning of the IM process and midway through to look at how power is shifting.

Discerning Vision

'For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.' **Jeremiah 29.11**

The discernment of vision in our IM parishes is one of the key tasks of IM. It is a multi-dimensional process drawn together over our whole appointment, beginning with the mutual agreement of objectives, and concluding with consent to a way forward beyond the term of our post. In the meantime, we may explore new ideas and opportunities to see if our hopes are realistic and to stimulate energy, participation and ownership.

Congregational meetings and workshops are the best way of engaging the whole community and gaining 'group' assent. But if this community is divided, work may have to be done in small groups, at a slower pace in order to get to a place where whole community activities are possible. Be realistic – not everybody will be available all the time, but the important issue is that all are invited and have an opportunity to contribute to this process.

It is important to remember that this work of discerning vision is not about our vision, or the Bishop/Archdeacon's vision, or parish reorganisation, or about appointments, but about finding a way forward which will generate enthusiasm and commitment, and which then may inform parish reorganisation and the appointments process, by forming a key part of the parish profile.

Vision

What is our best hope for our future as our worshipping community here in this parish?

What are we being called to be and do here? And who with?

History

What has our worshipping community been like in the past?

What can we learn about ourselves from that history?

What do we want to take forward into our future vision?

Identity

Who are we under Christ? What is our life here like?

How do we live out our Christian identity in our worship, relationships, activities?

Relationships

Who do we connect with and how? What is the quality of these relationships?

How can they be better developed?

This may involve relationships in church, in the community, with other churches/denominations, and also with our diocese and senior leaders. If relationships have been strained in some areas we may need to reconnect and rebuild.

Opportunities

How are we doing at the moment? Who do we partner with?

What assets have we available (not just money but people, buildings, ideas, connections?)

Vital statistics -

<https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/advice/parish-spotlights>

Group work to draw a map of missional connections

The following graphic captures this process, but totally over-simplifies it!

There may be individual elements which need to be broken down, and additional cycles which need to be added e.g, healing and pastoral conversations where there has been breakdown and hurt; worship review where the worship life of the church has become tired and lacking in energy; hospitality and welcome where this has ceased to be life-giving.

Throughout this process the IM will also need to be praying, analysing, capturing feedback, discussing progress with others and planning the next steps. The Log Frame is used to record this progress regularly (at least quarterly) and discussed with supervisor and transition team.

Individual elements will be moved round but the IM process will involve all of these.



Preparing for New Directions

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.'

Jeremiah 29.11-14

Preparing for new beginning

At some point in the Interim Ministry, usually just over half way through, there is a need to start preparing for a new direction in the life of the church. At this stage, one would hope that there is a team in place to support the IM and that work has been done to review the history, identity and vision of the parish; identity emerging mission opportunities, and there will be new shoots appearing in the form of new ministries, partnerships and leadership.

If this is not the case, then this may be an important signal that there is still more work to be done beyond the term of the current IM period, and you will need to discuss with the Archdeacon/Bishop a possible extension to the IM post. An IM post can be extended once: the maximum for each term of the post is 3 years, with one extension allowed regardless of the length of the extension. Therefore, care needs to be taken to discern with the transition team and senior staff, what might be an appropriate extension to complete the IM process satisfactorily.

Taking the temperature

Together with the transition team it will be important to establish what the mood of the congregation is, much in the same way as the IM did at the outset of the process. Graphics such as *The New Beginning* (William Bridges, Managing Transitions) and *The Rollercoaster of Change* (Gil Rendle, Leading change in the congregation) will help.

Are the majority of people indicating they are engaged, enthusiastic and energetic? Is there a flow of ideas, creativity and involvement, and a willingness to experiment and 'have a go'. Are people still confused and unsure, perhaps uncommitted – this may show in ways such as a dwindling attendance? How many people are still struggling to let go of the past, resisting change, grieving, expressing frustration and anger?

Look for creative ways of engaging people – have an extended refreshment break after worship where the IM and transition team intentionally seek views from a wide range of people; there may be a sermon and presentation about the new direction during a service, with comment invited in small groups or after worship; you may want to accompany these with simple graphics and drawings – presenting what you have done and learned so far.

At this stage you need to ask open questions which invite honest feedback: What do you think of the progress we have made...? What makes you excited about...? What worries you....? What would you like most to see happen...? Etc It will be important to make notes of these comments and to reflect on them with the transition team.

Affirming commitment to a new direction

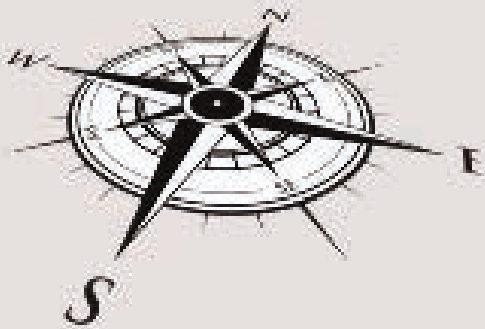
'For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish."'

Luke 14.28-30

It is important to check that the congregation is committed and prepared for a new direction, because this is about making the transition from looking backwards at the past, to looking forwards to the future and the new ministry and vision to follow, which is a key part of the IM role. It is a time of both winding down and gearing up. In facing this task, the parish can be encouraged to bear in mind the words of Jesus in Luke 14 (above).

Tasks and activities completed so far need to be recorded and noted so that a parish is aware of some 'quick wins' and can build further confidence to make change. Reviewing what has been achieved may be included in congregational feedback above e.g. produce a flipchart showing the small actions and changes which they have made so far and thank/affirm/applaud those who have led/been part of that change.

There may be some doubtful voices about the direction of travel. Unless this is widely shared, don't abandon the decisions and commitments made in previous meetings, which might just need seeing through in a different way. Previous commitments which were consensual and widely-held must be honoured, and not discarded, unless there is equally consensual and widely-held agreement to do so.



It is important not to go back over old ground at this stage, and the IM may need to give firm leadership in this, unless it is clear that there is a lingering problem. In which case, this needs to be considered by the Transition Team and IM and ways of unblocking the problem found. If it is with particular individuals, in which case, arrange private meetings to discuss. If it is congregational, it may require taking a step back in the process, and arranging focus groups or a congregational meeting to gain commitment and confidence to move forward. If there is still unresolved conflict, the diocese may be able to help with mediation – speak to your local CMD advisor.

Preparing the Way

Some essential steps of preparing the way are

Prayer having committed, it will be important to seek God's blessing on this new direction, to ask for insight and guidance on decisions, and for energy and confidence to implement. These prayers can conclude a congregational meeting/review session, and can also be included in regular intercessions, PCC and Transition Team meetings.

Lay leadership Is the lay leadership ready for this transition, do they feel they need extra training and support to prepare with confidence, or someone to come alongside them to give encouragement? Where can this be found – from the IM, diocese, Director of Lay Ministry, MMA, senior staff, or MMU/neighbouring parishes? Are new lay leaders needed, and have they been asked or encouraged? Equally, are there people who need to be given permission to step down gracefully – it will be important to honour those that do. The new leadership needs to be affirmed and supported perhaps by means of 'commissioning' at a main Sunday service.

Preparing the parish profile what elements need to be included in the profile from the IM work? Can a small team from PCC/TT be tasked to reflect and start producing some materials to assist this process? This work-in-progress can be brought back to PCC to consider and refine. An important part of this is considering what kind of ministry the parish is seeking in order to fulfil its vision for the future: what skills and gifts will be needed? What type of personality and ways of working are important? Is gender or churchmanship significant? The IM can play a role in facilitating this discussion but needs to maintain clear neutrality in doing so.

Making connections This is a time of opportunity. If this has not already started, start encouraging key people from the parish (PCC members, wardens) to start building a network of support for the parish's new direction by contacting influential parishioners, organisations and partners to discuss this way forward and explain what their hopes and expectations are. Additional ideas, offers and suggestions may be contributed.

Evaluating progress Review the objectives for the IM period, initially with the Transition Team, and consider honestly what progress has been made. The IM Log Frame is a useful tool for this – particularly, at this stage, the 'Outcomes' and 'Evidence of Impact' sections. It will be useful to include both 'qualitative' information (how something has improved or feels different) as well as 'quantitative' information (how much, how many, how often). Information from the congregational discussions on the way forward may be useful. Towards the end of the IM you could arrange a celebration event at the end of a service where people can make comments or draw pictures on a flip chart/wall chart about how they feel about the process, and how they feel about the future.

Preparing for handover We have discovered that good handover is vital. A document summarising the process needs to be prepared by the IM. This would cover context, leadership, situation which the IM encountered at the outset, objectives agreed with parish and archdeacon; the results of history, identity, vision and other meetings; a summary of progress towards vision, activities tried (successfully and failed!); leadership development; and new partnerships. This document will need to be discussed initially with the PCC to check it is fair, and also with Archdeacon, Bishop, Area Dean, MMU leaders if necessary. It should be made available to the incoming minister.

Saying goodbye It is important that the end of an IM process is marked and celebrated. There are liturgies available which can be inserted into a eucharist before the blessing (see Link below).

Leaving If an IM is being asked to consider a settled appointment it is important that due process is followed and that the PCC is consulted. It is important take a break to clearly mark the ending of the IM and the start of a new stage of ministry. If you leave, you may come back to visit at the invitation of the new minister (but not their licensing perhaps) and it may help them to meet you and discuss the IM process early on in their ministry.

LINK Services of Welcome and Farewell for IM
<https://www.interiministry.org.uk/resources/library>

Listening to Experience

Questions for individuals and small groups

About the listening exercise

Listening to the experience and wisdom of those in the congregation is important foundational work for Interim Ministry, especially following a period of crisis or conflict.

These questions can be used for individuals and small groups as part of a process of listening in Interim Ministry posts.

Please adapt the questions to your needs, ensuring that questions remain open (e.g. What would you like for dinner?) rather than closed (e.g. Would you like pasta for dinner?). Please also remain neutral and avoid giving your opinion, anecdotes or asking 'leading' questions which may skew responses from participants.

Ensure also you adopt good listening practice such as proposed by the Acorn Christian healing foundation: <https://acornchristian.org/event-%26-resource-info#d1d0c412-430b-bc0b-5d3aaa850384>.

It is suggested that you inform those who are taking part that their responses are confidential and will inform a general view of the parish's situation, although anonymous comments may be used for evaluation and to illustrate reports of the situation.

If you are using these questions with a small group, it is suggested that group members be asked to respect the confidentiality of the group, and not share what is exchanged outside the group. Ask people to listen to each other, respect other people's responses, and not to talk across others, or engage in 'side' conversations.

Questions

Start with a general discussion and introduction to one another

- 1 Your involvement at St X:
How long have you been involved?
In what ways have you been involved?
What attracted you to the parish?
- 2 About your experience:
When have you felt most happy there?
When least?
If you have experienced hurt, how would you see that being healed/resolved?
- 3 When you look back over your experience what do you feel has been the most significant change?
- 4 What do you think the church does best?
And what could it do better?
- 5 About your involvement:
 - a. What contribution have you been most pleased with?
 - b. Where else would you like (have liked) to be involved?
 - c. What are you most passionate about in church?
- 6 About the future
 - a. What makes you most excited about the future?
 - b. What worries you about the future?
 - c. What is one thing you would like to see in the next year
7. About your Christian journey
What excites you most about your faith?
What support and encouragement do you need on your faith journey?
Where do you see God most active in this parish?



Brett Jordan, Unsplash

Asset Mapping –

Charting the hidden riches of the parish

‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field’

Matthew 13.44.

Parishes often need the support of an Interim Minister because they have complex needs. But also, in coping with multiple challenges, they may have developed a sense of failure, hopelessness and ‘poverty’, perhaps accompanied by what is often a very real lack of resources – lack of funds to make repairs or pay parish share, for example. It is hard, in this state, for any parish to develop a positive notion of what its assets are – what pre-existing ‘wealth’ it can draw on for mission and renewal.

In fact, a focus on what has gone wrong, on blame, on loss, can lead to what has been called ‘inattentional blindness’— this is where you are so focused on one set of issues, that you might fail to notice other really significant details: the classic example is the moonwalking bear in the online attention test found here at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahg6qcgoay4>.

Asset mapping is a process through which a parish can start to collectively go on a treasure hunt, look creatively at what resources it does have (even if they are not financial resources) and therefore start to see where its real treasure lies – the people, ideas and skills, the networks and partnerships which it already has and can build on.

This works very well as a congregational exercise, because the more people who contribute, the broader and more interesting the opportunities will be; it also builds on parishioners personal interests and passions, and therefore can be a trigger to greater involvement in church life and mission activities; and also because it can generate a real sense of optimism and excitement which can be a significant turning point in the change process.

Asset mapping is also focused on real situations and contacts, so it is grounded in reality, not on imagined possibilities or idealistic wish-lists, and is therefore immediately credible and achievable. Because the ideas

and opportunities generated come from within (rather than being suggested by the ministers) there is a greater sense of ownership and investment in making sure ideas are followed through. As Jesus noted in Luke 12.34: ‘Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.’! For this reason it is very important that IM’s stand aside from this process and facilitate the hunt, rather than digging up the treasure themselves.

A good biblical parallel for this exercise might be Moses and the people of Israel during their 40 year wandering in the Sinai peninsula – they can start to glimpse where God might be at work in their midst instead of feeling like God has abandoned them in the wilderness, though the temptation is always there to hark back to that state of exile!

The parish may also need reassuring that God is always at work and can give sufficient resources in any situation. The Lord’s Prayer is always a useful reminder or texts like this:

‘God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, ‘He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.’ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.’ **2 Corinthians 8-10**



SAMPLE ASSET– MAPPING EXERCISE

Room set-up

Tables/chairs or chairs in small groups

Materials

Recording cards 3x5 inch – A4 cut in half or large post-its. 5–6 per person.

Large felt-tip markers (flipchart or whiteboard)

Roll of Wallpaper cut into 2.5ft sections: or large sheets of plain paper (such as flipchart paper).

Low-tack tape/blue-tack to hang paper on walls.

Process

- Divide people into groups of 5–6 people. Place 30–35 recording cards and pens on each table.
- Allocate 3 sticky dots/stars to each person.
- Make the atmosphere as relaxed as possible (put out small bowls of sweets)
- Start with prayer and offer a positive piece of scripture for focus and encouragement.
- Explain that participants write one response per card (not all their ideas on one card!) and each response should be written in large letters and be clear to read (a phrase not just a single word).
- Everyone should initial their cards in the corner.

1 Challenge

Pick from the following opening questions and invite participants to respond on their cards:

What are the things you most like to do for fun?

What does your congregation do well/best?

What institution, association or club are you well connected to?

What would you be willing to lend or donate if needed?

What natural/community resource in this area do you have access to?

What local person/people do you have a strong connection to who

- has organising/leadership/relevant skills that they might be willing to offer if asked?
- might be willing to help, loan or share in any of the above? **10 minutes**

2 Cluster

Each group should spread the completed cards out on their table, take a few minutes to look at the cards, ask questions about the phrases if they are unclear, and then to begin to spot interesting connections and group the cards into connected clusters. **15 minutes**

3 Develop idea

After several clusters have emerged ask the group to pick their clearest/best idea and to develop that by sticking it on wallpaper sheet/flipchart paper; and cluster around it the cards showing the relevant club/institutional connections, available resources, donations/offering and people who might help.

15 minutes

4 Stock Pot

On a second sheet place all the additional ideas and resources so they are available to other groups (this is where post-its work well!). The point is to ensure no idea is 'lost' and all ideas are honoured.

5 Presentations

Invite each group to present their idea to the wider assembly – either one member of the group or the whole group could do this. If just one member presents, then ask the rest of the group if they have anything to add before moving on. Ask for general questions of the group by the assembly. Run through the list of stock pot ideas which are available to others. Place both sheets on the wall. **20 mins**

6 Voting

Give time for everybody to review the ideas and vote for their three favourite ideas using their sticky dots/stars.

7 Group formation

The most popular ideas are selected and volunteers identified to work as a group. Groups can also take other ideas/resources from the stock pot. Each group chooses a facilitator who will host/organise the first meeting and report back.

Variation

This exercise can also be used in response to a focus question, agreed in advance with the PCC or Transition Team, e.g. 'how can we develop better ministry with children or young people?'; or 'how do we engage better with people from the north side of our parish?' This Focus Question is written in large letters and placed in a prominent location where all can see it. The ideas are then a response to the focus question.

IM Reporting and Evaluation Log Frame

Project Objectives

The overall objective of the Turnaround Project is understood as being to develop the capacity of the diocese to become financially sustainable and more effective in its mission as the Church of England in Essex and East London.

Local Objectives

Locally, the objective of the interim role is (e.g. to help key parishes towards growth and transformation by addressing underlying issues of leadership, governance and stewardship; helping them make the most of their buildings as centres of mission; and, where appropriate, develop pastoral reorganisation.)

Local objectives will be defined by the local team including Archdeacon, Area Dean, Interim Minister and key parish contacts. According to the objectives agreed, the timeframe for the intervention can then be planned, and inputs agreed.

Interim Ministry	Parish: Archdeaconry:	Interim Minister: Period (from/to): License: IM Base: Supervisor:	Activity (What's being done?)	Outcomes (What's changed/changing since the last report?)	Evidence of Impact (How can you evaluate progress on objectives?)
IM Deployment					
IM Objectives					
1					
2					

B					
4					
5					
6 Additional Commentary	How are the objectives changing to respond to the situation on the ground?				
7 Next Steps					
8 Additional Commentary	What additional input/training/resources are required to make this post effective?				
9 Date/Agreement					

Interim Ministry Evaluation Sheet

Name

optional

Position

optional

How well would you say the Interim Ministry process achieved these objectives?

Please circle using a rating system where **1 is low and 5 is high**:

Objective 1 name

1

2

3

4

5

What evidence did you see of this:

What was done really well here?

What could have been done better?

Objective 2 name

1

2

3

4

5

What evidence did you see of this:

What was done really well here?

What could have been done better

Objective 3 name

1

2

3

4

5

What evidence did you see of this:

What was done really well here?

What could have been done better?

How satisfied are you with the outcomes of the IM process?

1

2

3

4

5

What are you most committed to?

What are you least committed to?

How well did the Interim Minister manage this process?

1

2

3

4

5

What evidence did you see of this:

What was done really well here?

What could have been done better?

Thank you for completing this evaluation

Alban Institute www.alban.org

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