



Welcome to the Vision Course!

After a great deal of prayer, reflection and consultation our diocese has developed a shared vision 'Healthy Churches Transforming Communities' which will be our primary focus taking us to 2026 and the 100th Anniversary of the Diocese of Blackburn. The vision of Healthy Churches Transforming Communities has three mission priorities:

- Making disciples of Jesus Christ
- Being witnesses to Jesus Christ
- Growing leaders for Jesus Christ

Healthy Churches Transforming Communities is not 'my' vision, it's 'our' vision; a vision behind which we can all gather to make a difference to the people of Lancashire.

This vision course contains five sessions, each focussing on a different aspect of our diocesan vision:

- Session 1 - Healthy Churches
- Session 2 - Transforming Communities
- Session 3 - Making disciples of Jesus Christ
- Session 4 - Being witnesses to Jesus Christ
- Session 5 - Growing leaders for Jesus Christ

The course has been produced to assist local churches in applying the diocesan vision to their local context. I am sure you will find the course enjoyable, thought provoking and encouraging. It is designed to be biblical, prayerful and will work across a wide spread of church traditions. I very much hope that through this course each church will be able to discover a local response to the vision.

Through a process of discussion and discernment I pray that you will be able to identify practical steps that you are able to take to help create 'Healthy Churches Transforming Communities'.

Every Blessing

Rt. Revd. Julian Henderson, Bishop of Blackburn

Course Leaders Notes:

As you work through the course material you will find that each session follows a similar format:



Welcome:

An opportunity to welcome people to the group and put them at their ease.



Opening Worship and Vision Prayer:

Beginning the session in prayer and helping people become familiar with the Diocesan Vision Prayer.



Getting Started:

Introducing the theme for the session and beginning to explore ideas within the group.



Bible Passage:

Exploring Scripture together and discovering Biblical teaching related to the diocesan vision.



DVD Teaching input:

A short DVD programme which provides introductory teaching input.



Application exercises and discussion:

These come in two forms. The tick list icon represents materials which is designed for those who learn best through factual based material.



The magnifying glass icon represents material for visual learners. In each session we have included material to suit these different learning styles.



Our Priorities:

Helping your church identify practical steps it can take to express our diocesan vision in the life of the local church.



Prayer Reflection:

A closing devotional activity.



Take it Away Materials:

A Bible verse and prayer activity designed to help group members continue to reflect on the session.

Within each session you will find suggested timings for the material. The material has

been organised to allow 1 hour 15 minutes for each session. If you are able to meet for 1 hour 30 minutes then you will have more space for discussion and reflection. Please be flexible about the timings, if a particular discussion is proving very fruitful then feel free to allow extra space for this. It is also worth trying to work with these timings so you leave enough space for the materials later in the session in particular the practical application exercise which enables your group to consider how to apply the discussions the vision course has generated to their local setting.

Special thanks to 'Leading your Church into Growth' for their kind permission to reproduce material from their publications 'Moving On' and 'Leading your Church into Growth *local*'

Revd Canon David Banbury – Parish Mission Support Department Leader and course writer

Welcome to the Youth Companion

The youth companion has been created to encourage churches to discuss the diocesan vision with young people aged 11-18yrs. It is not a separate course to the Diocesan Vision Course but instead is a collection of additional resources to help young people to engage with the course material. These materials may be used in sessions of existing youth groups or you may wish to form a group specifically to go through these sessions.

In the leaders' notes for each session the Youth Companion is laid out in table format. The left hand column shows the original Vision Course and the right hand column shows the Youth Companion. It's important when using the course material with young people that you think about the group, their knowledge, experience, faith development and preferred learning styles/approaches. You may decide that your group will engage well with the vision course material for adults and in fact you may be able to run an intergenerational course with people present aged 10-100! However, you may decide that your group would engage better with some of the alternative activities suggested in the youth companion.

In any one session you do not have to do all the activities on the left or all the activities on the right, for example, in the same session you may use the Bible passage discussion prompts from the left and the prayer activity ideas from the right. You can pick and choose based on your knowledge of the group.

We're also aware that many youth groups don't meet for an hour and a half each week so you may wish to use the material over more than five sessions or prioritise some aspects of the material over others. We would recommend prioritising the Bible passage, the Application exercises and discussion and the Prayer reflection.

We hope that you and your group enjoy using these course materials. If you would like to use these materials with your group but you are unsure how to adapt them to their needs please get in touch. Please also get in touch if you would be interested in follow-on materials for youth groups (get in touch by emailing youth@blackburn.anglican.org).

Kat Witham
Diocesan Youth Officer