

Blackburn Diocese Vision 2026 Course - Video Outlines

Session 1 - Healthy Churches

<Bishop Julian>

<High Street> – **Over the last few years shops have had to adjust to many changes in society, particularly with the development of out of town retail parks and on-line internet shopping. Shops have had to adapt to face these significant challenges.**

<Kat>

<Church on the High St> – **The Church also faces significant challenges and it needs to change and adapt to continue to have a place at the heart of a community. God calls his church to make known the Kingdom of God in words and action in each generation.**

<<Bishop Julian>>

Presenting an unchanging gospel in a changing culture is a real challenge but it's one that the church and our diocese needs to respond to. We need to respond with prayer, energy, enthusiasm, commitment and also vision.

<opticians>

<<Kat>>

In order to make the Good news of Jesus known to the people of our diocese we need vision. We need to see clearly what God is calling us to be and to do.

<<Bishop Julian>>

Our diocese has taken time to develop a clear vision which we believe God is calling us to work at, as we prepare to celebrate the centenary of our diocese in 2026. This vision is Healthy Churches Transforming Communities.

<<Kat>>

This study course has been developed to help us explore our vision of Healthy Churches Transforming Communities and our three mission priorities of: Making Disciples, Being Witnesses and Growing Leaders for Jesus Christ.

<walk down the road>

<outside a gym>

<<Kat>>

In this session we focus on Healthy Church. So, what does a healthy church look like? What qualities does a healthy church have? – <walk into a gym>

<<Bishop Julian>>

All kinds of research has been done in recent years and many books have been written, and it has been discovered that there are six features of what makes a healthy church.

<<Kat and Bishop Julian>>

So let's take a look at those six qualities that make a healthy church:

- 1. Worship**
- 2. Vision**
- 3. Community**
- 4. Outward looking focus**
- 5. Positive leadership and**
- 6. Discipleship**

<<Bishop Julian>>

Let's look at each of these in turn

Worship - <Multigym (arm bar)> – **As we gather to worship we reach up to God in praise and prayer. In whatever church tradition we belong to; that all kinds of worship should connect people with God. Through its quality and richness, worship draws people deeper into a closer relationship with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. That worship also needs to be accessible so that those new to the life of the church can also be drawn into the worship offered in the churches of our diocese. We need to live lives of prayer both as individuals and as churches constantly reaching up to the living Lord to be refreshed, renewed and restored by Him.**

Leadership – <corridor> - **Good leaders are a positive and encouraging example to other people. They give clear direction and encourage others to get involved in the life of the Christian Church.**

<<Kat>>

A good leader won't just tell people what to do but will also carefully listen and work collaboratively to make the best use of the gifts and skills of others.

<<Bishop Julian>>

In a healthy church positive, and collaborative leadership is vitally important.

<<Kat>>

Discipleship <coaching badminton> **The word disciple means learner and we're all called to be disciples of Jesus, following his example and learning from him. A healthy church will make time to nurture and develop the faith of people.**

<<Bishop Julian>>

It will regularly run enquirers courses to give people opportunities to explore the Christian faith for themselves. It will create opportunities for people to become Christians, to grow in prayer, to study the Bible, to serve in the community and the church, and to offer their time, talents and money in the service of God's Kingdom.

<<Kat>>

Like learning to play a sport, discipleship develops over time, so a healthy church will offer learning opportunities for people of all ages to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Vision - <swimming pool – goggles>

In the Bible we read in the book of Proverbs chapter 29 v 18, 'Where there is no vision the people perish.' We need a clear sense of vision so that we can see where God is leading us and to be able to identify the next steps that we need to take in our faith journey. Vision enables us to set priorities and gives us a clear purpose to the life of the churches in our diocese. <get in and swim>

<<Bishop Julian>>

Community – <people in a bar afterwards> **A healthy church will have a strong sense of community with warm loving, honest and open relationships at the very heart of the church.**

A strong sense of fellowship with pastoral care and support being offered to all people and all ages.

<<Bishop Julian>>

This warm sense of community will reach out beyond the congregational members and rather than being a closed clique, a healthy church will seek to build relationships with people on the fringe, and into the communities and networks that it is called to serve.

Outward looking focus – <noticeboard advertising a 5k charity run>

Archbishop Temple said that “the Church is the only organisation that exists for the benefit of those who aren’t its members.”

<<Kat>>

Healthy Churches are outward looking, not obsessing about its own internal agendas, but rather looking outwards to the wider community and to the world to make known the Good News of God’s Kingdom through words and actions.

<<Bishop Julian>>

We’ve looked at six qualities that indicate the life of a healthy church. Its time for you to reflect on the life of your church or churches, and do a health check.

Walk away from the <gym>.

Session 2 - Transforming Communities

<outside the St Philips, Nelson> Bishop Philip and Jamila Hounslow

<Bishop Philip>

Welcome to the Grassroots centre here in Nelson.

<Jamila>

Grassroots is one of the many examples of local churches and Christian groups in our Diocese making a real difference in their local communities.

<walk into the building and sit at a table having a brew>

<Jamila>

Our diocesan vision speaks of Healthy Churches Transforming Communities.

<Bishop Philip>

In the gospels Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God, where lives and communities are transformed as God's gracious rule is expressed in this world.

<Jamila>

In his teaching and ministry Jesus showed extraordinary compassion and concern for the poor, the marginalised, the outcast and stranger.

<Bishop Philip>

Throughout the diocese different churches and organisations working in partnership are demonstrating the transforming power of God's Kingdom.

<Voice over with cut away shots>

There are food banks and job clubs, <Bishop Philip>

lunch clubs and youth work, <Jamila>

family support and work with prisoners and their families .<Bishop Philip>

There are churches who help create learning opportunities for adults. <Jamila>

Christians who seek to build good relationships with other faith communities.

<Bishop Philip>

Groups who take seriously God's call to care for the environment <Jamila>

<Bishop Philip>

Through all these endeavours and many, many more we see a sign of God's Kingdom. A Kingdom which speaks of transformed lives and communities.

<Jamila>

Working in partnership with others, God's people stand out against injustice and seek to live out their lives in God's kingdom.

<Bishop Philip>

God's kingdom is about transformation, change and hope.

<Jamila>

As Christians we are called to play our part in seeing God's Kingdom become a reality in this world.

<Bishop Philip>

I invite you to consider how you and your churches working with other organisations can play a part in making a difference in the world.

<Jamila> CHAPEL

God's Kingdom is not just about social action and social justice, it's about lives transformed by entering into a relationship with Jesus that develops and grows.

<Bishop Philip>

Here are three stories of transformation:

Denise is a lone parent struggling to bring up her son on a large local authority housing estate. Denise had been in a difficult relationship and had finally separated from her partner. Through the support of a local church Denise was able to sort out her debt problem and make a number of positive changes in her life. The love and support of the church encouraged Denise to go to church and attend a Christian Enquirers' course. Denise has become a committed Christian and is now actively involved in supporting others in her community in similar situations.

<Jamila>

Michael is a successful businessman running a manufacturing company. He and his family enjoy a comfortable life. Michael was asked by a friend at work to be his guest at a Back to Church Sunday service. Michael went to the service with his family. Even though he had never been to church for a Sunday service before, Michael felt like he had come home. Michael started attending worship regularly with his family and enjoyed the family feel of the church. The parish priest met up with Michael and helped him begin to read

the Bible and to pray. Michael says that his journey into faith has been a steady and gradual process. He feels that the good life that he has, been made even better by coming to know Jesus. As a result of his new found faith Michael has become involved in the work of Street Pastors.

<Bishop Philip>

Amy is a young girl with a long term health problems which require regular visits to hospital. Through the local church school and the local church Amy and her family have received a range of help and support. Amy now attends Messy Church with her Mum and brother. Amy says ‘that sometimes when I’m in hospital I can feel sad and lonely, but now I know that Jesus is always with me.’

<Jamila>

The stories of Denise, Michael and Amy are wonderful examples of lives being transformed. These stories speak of hope, new life and Jesus’ love made real in practical ways.

<+Philip>

In our diocese we have committed to vision of Healthy Churches Transforming Communities; to see God’s Kingdom expressed in many different ways in many different settings.

<Jamila>

The transforming power of the gospel makes a huge difference in the lives of individuals and local communities.

<Bishop Philip>

As you work through this vision course session we invite you to consider practical ways that you can be healthy churches transforming communities.

Session 3 - Making disciples of Jesus Christ

Sue Penfold and Archdeacon Michael plus James Gwyn Thomas from Buckshaw
<Sue parks car and she and Archdeacon Michael get out>

Welcome to Session Three of the Diocesan Vision Course. Today we are visiting a Bible study group here in Buckshaw Village.

<Michael>

We have come to see how the diocesan commitment to Making Disciples of Jesus Christ is expressed in this community.

<James appears riding his scooter L Plates – Gig bag with a guitar> -

<Michael>

As we discovered in session one of this course, Discipleship means being a learner.

<Sue Penfold>

Ah, unlike learning to drive it's not just a case of passing a test and that's it. It's more like learning a musical instrument practicing and striving to develop - there's always more to learn and discover.

<people entering the house serving drinks etc.> <James takes guitar out of the gig bag>.
<cutaway shot of housegroup happening – people singing James playing guitar>

<Sue>

In the diocesan vision of Healthy Churches Transforming Communities one of our three priorities is 'Making disciples for Jesus Christ.'

<Michael>

The vision speaks of knowing the Scriptures better through reading, teaching, preaching and study.

<Sue>

We invite you to consider how, your local church can be more familiar with the message of the bible.

<Michael>

The vision also encourages us to be praying with greater depth and urgency for the Kingdom of God to come.

<Sue>

How do we help people to grow in their life of prayer in our local churches?

<Sue and Michael>

Perhaps quiet days, retreats or local prayer groups, prayer partnerships or study courses on prayer might help? Pilgrimages either on your own or with others, celebration events such as New Wine or Soul Survivor, Greenbelt or Keswick.

<Sue>

What about intercessions in our services? How can we capture the vibrant sense of God's transforming power at work in his world?

<Michael>

But discipleship is much more than praying and reading the Bible. It's about the whole of our lives being dedicated to God.

<Sue>

So we are giving generously of our time, talents and money to the cause of Christ.

(James) <folk running a crèche, other acts of service>

<Michael>

At the end of Matthew's Gospel Jesus gives the great commission to his followers to go and make disciples of all nations.

<Sue and Michael>

So we also need to consider how we can help others to discover faith in Jesus. Perhaps through serving in our local community, inviting people to a Christian outreach event, or perhaps to come to church with us or encouraging someone to join an enquirers' course.

<saying goodbye at the door, walking to the car>

<Sue>

Christian Discipleship is a lifelong journey of discovery and exploration, learning how we can best follow Jesus and serve him in his world.

<Michael>

Discipleship can be expressed in many different ways, the important thing is that we continue to grow and develop in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

<Sue>

So it's over to you to explore discipleship in your group, and to work out how your local church can help people to move on in their journey of faith, so we can make Disciples of Jesus Christ.

Session 4- Being witnesses to Jesus Christ

<reading a paper in a café looking at news on a tablet Sky News or BBC news 24 on the TV>

<Rebecca>

The media often focusses on bad news but at the heart Christian faith is about the Good News of Jesus Christ

<David>

We are visiting Shireshead to find out more about our diocesan commitment to being witnesses to Jesus Christ.

< Bishop Geoff>

Our diocesan Vision encourages us to share the Good News of Jesus with others.

<Rebecca>

Which leads to the question - What is the Good News?

< Bishop Geoff>

The best way of answering this question is to look at the cross

<Walk out of café> <Walk up the road>

Here in the old graveyard at Shireshead stands this stone cross. The four parts of the cross help to illustrate the good news.

<David and Rebecca>

Firstly, God created us and loved us.

Secondly, all of Humanity, all of us turned our backs on God and that separated us from God's love

Jesus' act of self-giving love overcomes that separation from God

Through Jesus we are able to enter into a loving relationship with God.

< Bishop Geoff>

The cross demonstrates God's passionate concern for the world. There is the bad news of humanity's rejection of God, killing the innocent Son of God. The good news of course is how much God has shown his love for us, how much he is for us.

<walk to vicarage> <sat around table >

Each person who is a disciple of Jesus Christ has their own story of their journey into faith.

<Rebecca, David and Bishop Geoff>

A story of Jesus, and what He means to us today.

It is a story which will be different for each one of us.

It might be gradual story developing over many years.

Or a key moment of faith came alive for us

Perhaps we had a faith in our youth, but lapsed, but came alive for us later in life.

< Bishop Geoff>

As we think of about being witnesses for Jesus Christ sharing in a relaxed, natural and helpful way, the story of our faith journey can be a great way of telling the Good News of Jesus.

<Rebecca>

For many people hearing the difference that Jesus makes in another person's life can raise all kinds of questions. Questions about life, its purpose and meaning. Questions about what do I believe? What's important to me? And who is this Jesus?

<David>

Running enquirers' courses like Alpha, Christianity Explored, Start or perhaps Pilgrim, or even writing your own short course are great ways of helping people explore the Christian Faith. We encourage churches to regularly run an enquirers course, at least one a year, to help people discover Jesus.

< Bishop Geoff>

Being a witness to Jesus Christ isn't just about words. It's about our actions, our attitudes and indeed the whole of our lives. The church is called to live out the Good News, it is called to get involved, indeed to get our hands dirty.

<David>

It might mean getting involved in a social action project in your area, like supporting a foodbank or getting involved in a local community group.

<Rebecca>

In session two we looked at transforming communities. In what ways can the church be good news to the people it is called to serve?

You might like to being involved in a project that cares for the environment, or help to develop relationships with those of other faiths.

<David>

There are many ways of being a witness to Jesus Christ. Perhaps you could identify two or three practical ways you could help transform your community?

<Bishop Geoff Baptising a baby>

<Rebecca>

For many people baptism marks the beginning of a faith journey.

<David>

As families contact us for baptism, it is important that we offer thorough and accessible Baptism preparation. Baptism can be a key moment as families come into contact with the Christian church and with the good news of Jesus Christ.

<+Geoff>

We have an immense privilege and responsibility to give baptism contacts the opportunity to explore the Christian faith, and to understand the promises and commitments that they are making.

<outside church door>

This church has been here for over 125 years.

<Rebecca>

The media often tell bad news stories of congregations shrinking and churches closing.

<David>

Our diocesan vision contains the ambitious target of planting or renewing 50 new strategic congregations.

<+Geoff>

This may mean church planting in new housing areas, starting up new congregations within an existing church building, maybe creating fresh expressions of church, or a wide range of other possibilities.

<Rebecca>

Jesus called us to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. It's an amazing call, and privilege to be, and to share the good news with others.

<David>

It's time for you to talk in your groups how you can be witnesses for Jesus Christ

Session 5 - Growing leaders for Jesus Christ

<filmed outside museum of Lancashire>

<Fleur>

Here at The Museum of Lancashire there are many fascinating glimpses into how life used to be in the North West.

<Stephen>

The museum gives us impressions of life in Lancashire over many years, and how changes have developed over the decades.

<enter museum><classroom>

Here in this classroom we are reminded of how education used to be; rows of desks, pupils working on slates and the only technology visible are the electric lights – not a computer in sight!

<Fleur>

Adapting to changes in society and living in an ever changing world can be difficult for people to face. But one thing that the church and the world of education can't afford to do is stand still and let these changes pass them by.

<Stephen>

Coping with change can be difficult. But the key to doing change well is good positive, and collaborative leadership. It's not about one person doing it all but a committed united team working together for the best outcome.

<Fleur>

One of Our Diocesan vision priorities is Growing Leaders for Jesus Christ.

<Stephen and Fleur>

Leaders don't ignore change, or pretend that it isn't happening. Nor do they put on rose tinted spectacles and look back longingly to the good old days. Leaders rise to the challenge of change, they work creatively with others. They consult widely and communicate the change well and adapt their plans as circumstances develop.

<Stephen>

Through our amazing network of church schools we need to continue to develop and encourage teachers with strong Christian commitment, and a

desire to offer children and young people the very best experience of education and learning.

<Industrial section>

<Fleur>

Here in the museum we have lots examples of our industrial heritage. In particular the place of cotton and the cotton industry in our county.

<Stephen>

Over the years some traditional industries have declined. Whilst other new industries have developed.

<Faith section>

<Fleur>

We want missional leaders, both lay and ordained to work collaboratively in all of our local parish churches.

<Stephen>

The picture in the Bible of the church as the body of Christ is wonderful illustration of people working together to use their gifts and abilities to build the Kingdom of God.

<Fleur>

Who in your church may have a vocation to be a priest, youth or children's worker, reader or teacher or any of the other ministries?

<Stephen & Fleur>

In days gone by, much greater numbers of people used to go to church, people grew up with an experience of worship and had a basic understanding of the Christian faith. Today the picture is very different. We live in a society where many people have almost no experience of Church or Christian worship. And nowadays most people know very little about the person of Jesus. It's very easy to look back nostalgically or to blame schools for not teaching Christianity. But the responsibility for helping people become followers of Jesus rests on us, the members of the church.

<Stephen>

In order to grow the church it is important that we vary the patterns of worship; Sunday and midweek, in order to welcome all kinds of people, especially the newcomer.

<Fleur>

Research has shown that 80% of people who are committed followers of Christ made their faith commitment before the age of 20. Therefore as a diocese it's important that we focus work among children, young people and schools to create a new generation for Christ

<Stephen>

The Museum of Lancashire has provided us with a nostalgic look back on life in the North West.

<Fleur>

As we look forward to Vision 2026; Growing Leaders for Jesus Christ ensures that the Christian faith has a bright future in Lancashire.