

Getting Ready

CHURCH COUNCIL DISCUSSION GUIDE

PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION

- To introduce Church Councils to the Vision Statement of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- To consider how to begin preparations for the 2022/23 Connexional focus on the vision statement.

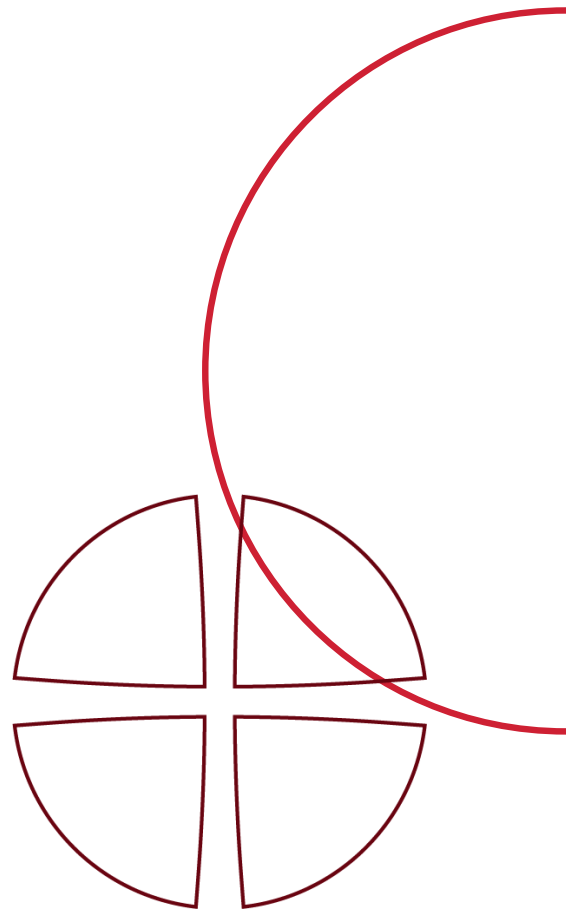
ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR USE

- Your youth leaders or Sunday School teachers could use this material when preparing their programme for the 2022/23 year. Additional resources for use with children and young people will be produced throughout the year.
- You could use this material with a church small group or youth group. Additional small group resources will be produced throughout the year.

There are two parts to the discussion – each 25 minutes long. You could include them in one longer meeting or split them over two meetings.

Ask someone to take some notes of these discussions or use a flip chart.

"Living wholeheartedly as followers of Jesus for the transformation of the world."



Part A - Getting Ready

🕒 25 minutes

INTRODUCTION

- Explain background and context of the new vision statement.
- Introduce the 2022/23 Connexional Focus.
- Explain purpose of discussion.

Background and context:

The Methodist Church in Ireland has recently adopted the vision statement "*Living wholeheartedly as followers of Jesus for the transformation of the world*".

It flows out of our history, builds on God's Mission, Our Mission and the Mission Commitments and

describes who we are and desire to be as the Methodist people in Ireland today.

The statement will be with us for many years but launching with Conference 2022, MCI is setting aside the 2022/23 Connexional Year to focus on this statement.

Purpose of Discussion:

- To introduce Church Councils to the Vision Statement of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- To consider how to begin preparations for the 2022/23 Connexional focus on the vision statement.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Ask:

"Can you describe a time in your life when you have been part of God's work and witnessed or experienced transformation?"

Invite each person to share in turn. Share the "Example story of transformation" and be ready to share your own example. Be encouraging reminding people that transformation happens every day through the ways that we care for others and the world around us.



Example story of transformation:

A delivery driver came to my front doorstep regularly to deliver parcels. Over time conversations about the weather moved to conversations about faith. I shared my story about a loving father who had changed my life. I also prayed that the Holy Spirit would use those briefs conversations. One day he appeared at the door, not bearing a parcel but wonderful news - he had given his life to God. There was such joy on his face as he declared his love and thankfulness for the sacrifice Jesus had made for him.

VIDEO & DISCUSSION

Show:

Covenant Sunday Video

Explain:

This resource video from General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Heather Morris, introduces the vision statement and serves to inspire and encourage Methodists across the Connexion, to have a faith in God that isn't limited to a Sunday, but that's lived out wholeheartedly every day, in every situation.

Ask:

"Using one word, can you describe what response watching this video evokes in you?"

Invite each person to share in turn.

Ask by name. e.g. "John, what is your response?"

(You may have already watched this – but please do so again.)



Available to download at:
vimeo.com/657827788

DISCUSSION

Ask:

"If our congregation were to take hold of the challenge to live out this vision statement, what could be different about our church life and mission?"

Encourage people to dream! Try to keep this big picture rather than getting into detailed planning at this point.

You may find it helpful to have a time of prayer and silence before this discussion.



Some ideas:

If conversation does not flow easily or people are quick to mention barriers or problems try reframing the question.

e.g. If money was not a barrier and our congregation were to take hold of the challenge to live out this vision statement what could be different about our church life and mission?

e.g. If we had a large team of volunteers and our congregation were to take hold of the challenge to live out this vision statement what could be different about our church life and mission?

FINISH

Explain:

In the next part of the meeting (or the next meeting) we will take some time to discuss initial steps to help us get ready for the 2022/23 year as a congregation.

Part B - Further Discussion

🕒 25 minutes

INTRODUCTION & RECAP

Remind those present about what happened in Part A.

Explain:

We will now take some time to discuss initial steps to help us get ready for the 2022/23 year as a congregation.

Remind your leaders about the answer to the question in Part A: *"If our congregation were to take hold of the challenge to live out this vision statement what could be different about our church life and mission?"*

Ask:

"Have you anything to add since our previous discussion?"

DISCUSSION

Explain:

The Connexional Focus on, *"Living wholeheartedly as followers of Jesus for the transformation of the world"* will be launched at Conference 2022.

This vision statement will be with us as the Methodist Church in Ireland for many years. We don't need to answer all of our questions or make all of our plans now.

At this point our aim is to help our congregations, leaders and organisations to be aware of the vision statement and to be aware of the focus on it during 2022/23.

Ask:

"How can we prepare now?"

Name some concrete actions here.



SOME IDEAS ON
THE NEXT PAGE...





Some ideas:

- Widen this discussion to your whole congregation. Consider how to include all ages – why not use this meeting plan with a group of young people and ask them to share their ideas with the whole church?
- Share the Covenant Sunday video.
- Make your youth and children’s leaders aware of the theme so that they can include it in their planning.
- Use the membership resource produced by IMYC:
irishmethodist.org/wholehearted
- Commit to pray as a Church Council and seek God’s direction – why not grab half an hour on Zoom each week?
- Get involved in the 50 Days of Wholehearted Prayer: (Even if you’re having this conversation after it begins you can still use the resources and be part of it at any point before Pentecost Sunday.)
irishmethodist.org/50days
- Share MCI social media posts to your own communication channels.



[@irishmethodist](https://www.facebook.com/irishmethodist)

NEXT STEPS

Commit to review your progress at the next Church Council meeting.