

# Growing Gifts



A new programme of **training and formation**  
for **leading worship or preaching** on an occasional basis

## Guide for Incumbents\*, PCCs & Ministry Teams

*A Guide to locally authorised ministry and the formation available*

### **What does it mean to be locally authorised to lead worship or preach on an occasional basis?**

All disciples, both lay and ordained, share a vocation from baptism, and gifts from God to offer in the building up of the Church and the service of the world. Those who are locally authorised to lead public worship or preach on an occasional basis will be lay people who are active in the life of the local church and have been identified as having a particular gifting, vocation or calling to lead worship or to preach, and to do so collaboratively alongside their Incumbent and wider ministry teams. They are nominated by their Incumbent\* and PCC for formation and training. Authorisation lasts for 3 years after which time it can be reviewed, updated and renewed.

### **How does discernment and selection for locally authorised ministry happen?**

Locally authorised ministry is based on a collaborative model of ministry and is therefore not based solely on an individual sense of calling but also on a community discernment. Those who are locally authorised do so in a specific local context and with a mutually agreed Role Description. As such, any nominations for taking part in the Growing Gifts formation and training programme must meet the diocesan selection criteria and represent the expressed desire of the wider church community as the Incumbent, individual and PCC discern and respond to God's call together.

### **What is the role for the Incumbent and Ministry Team in formation and training?**

The Growing Gifts formation and training programme seeks to support someone's development as a leader of worship or preacher alongside supervision and mentoring locally. Participants will need the opportunity to lead worship or preach during the programme (in months 3 & 4), and receive feedback. Participants would benefit from being accompanied by a locally identified mentor, though this is not a requirement for taking part Growing Gifts.

### **What is the difference between this and being a Reader / Licensed Lay Minister?**

The Office of Reader is a lay ministry in the Church of England nationally accredited, episcopally licensed and governed by Canon Law. Reader Ministry is one of teaching faith, enabling mission and leading in church and society. Readers are trained and formed through a nationally recognised training programme and are licensed by the Bishop. Readers are therefore, in one sense, deployable, and can work across parish boundaries, when invited to do so. Those who are locally authorised share in an agreed collaborative ministry role within a specific parish context. The formation and training programme is much shorter and is specifically focussed on either leading worship or preaching. In recognition of this, those who are locally authorised cannot work across parish boundaries without explicit permission and must have a higher level of supervision and support. Each period of authorisation is for up to three years.

*\* We are using 'Incumbent' as a short-hand / umbrella term for Incumbent, Priest-in-Charge, Local Minister or Chaplaincy Lead*

## Starting the journey: What are the steps?

As this is a collaborative form of ministry, collaboration should be represented in the way that a church community goes about the discernment and selection process. The following steps are an example guide of how the discernment and selection process should work.

### Step 1: Initial Enquiry or Approach

An individual approaches their incumbent or a member of the ministry team expressing their interest in leading worship or preaching on an occasional basis. Or, an individual is identified as having a particular gifting, vocation or calling to share in this ministry and is approached by their incumbent/member of the ministry team and asked to consider this.

### Step 2: Prayer and Discernment

The individual is encouraged to meet with their incumbent to pray together and explore this sense of calling further. It may be that as well as a conversation with the Incumbent, a conversation with another member of the ministry team, or a churchwarden would be useful. If further guidance is required with this process then contact can be made with the Ministry Development Lead (Lay) [catherine.grylls@cofebirmingham.com](mailto:catherine.grylls@cofebirmingham.com)

### Step 3: Guidelines and Application Checklist

If it has been agreed by all involved in the discernment process that this feels like 'a good fit', then the next step before application is for the individual and Incumbent to get together and go through the Guidelines and Application Checklist. This can be found on page 5 of this Guide.

### Step 4: Application Form and Growing Gifts Enrolment Form

If all involved in the discernment process feel that the individual and the parish meet the diocesan criteria then an **Application Form for locally authorised ministry** and a **Growing Gifts Enrolment Form** should be completed. These can be downloaded from the diocesan website and should be filled in initially by the individual applicant and the Incumbent. Drawing up a draft Role Description is a vital part of the application process, as it helps to provide a degree of clarity of expectations right from the start. The application form also includes an assurance that all the steps needed to satisfy the PCC's safer recruitment policy have been completed. **The enrolment form should be submitted as soon as possible to the Growing Gifts team.** The process for completing the Application Form will take longer.

### Step 5: Final Agreement and Sponsorship by PCC

Before a copy of the Application Form can be sent to the Growing Gifts team it must be approved by the PCC, in accordance with the PCC's Safer Recruitment policy, and signed off by the Incumbent and PCC on behalf of the wider church community. This is an important step in the process because for a PCC to sponsor a person to this ministry, they must be fully

satisfied that this application meets the selection criteria, that the applicant will share in ministry appropriately, that they have been 'safely recruited' in line with the PCC policy and that the PCC will commit to supporting the individual during their training and in their future ministry.

#### **Step 6: Submission and Acceptance onto the Growing Gifts programme**

Once the Application Form has been submitted it will be acknowledged by the Lay Ministry Development Lead (Lay). In most cases this will be via a short phone conversation.

#### **Step 7: Announcement, Prayer and Support**

Once participation in the Growing Gifts programme has been agreed, it is good practice to celebrate and announce what is happening to the wider church community, with the prior agreement of the person concerned, so that the wider church community can both be aware of and support the individual. Where appropriate it would also be good to pray for the individual and, if required, tell the wider church more about this ministry.

#### **Step 8: Growing Gifts Formation and Training Begins**

For more details on what happens during Growing Gifts, please see page 6 later in this document.

**Almighty and everlasting God,  
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church  
is governed and sanctified:  
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,  
that in their vocation and ministry  
they may serve you in holiness and truth  
to the glory of your name;  
through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Common Worship Collect for 5th Sunday after Trinity*

## Guidelines and Application Checklist

The intention of these criteria for suitability for locally authorised ministry and participation in Growing Gifts is that they will sit alongside the wider processes of prayer and discernment in helping you to make sure that this is the right pathway for all involved.

The person is someone who

- **loves God** and has a sense of **calling** to share in this ministry
- **loves others** and is **fruitful** in how they live out their faith
- is **wise**, open to new learning and has the **potential** to adapt and work with others.
- is a respected and active member of the church community and respects the authority of the Incumbent within the Church of England
- has a solid foundation of prior Christian learning and exhibits a passion and enthusiasm for mission and discipleship.
- has been a worshipping member of the local church for at least six months.

All involved (including the wider church community)

- have a good understanding of the nature of this ministry, its local focus, how it functions, and also how it differs from other forms of ministry e.g. Reader (Licensed Lay) Ministry etc.
- have a mutual understanding that this ministry is built upon a collaborative model of ministry and that the applicant will be required to work alongside their Incumbent and the wider Ministry Team, recognizing that the Incumbent shares with the Bishop responsibility for the conduct of worship within the parish.
- will take a proactive interest in the person's selection and training and will work together to actively support, develop and respond to their ministry.

In addition:

- Key members of the local church community have identified that the applicant has a gifting, vocation and calling to share in this ministry.
- A draft Role Description has been drawn up and agreed
- The current local church context is stable enough to be able to sufficiently support and oversee the person during their participation in Growing Gifts and beyond.
- There are no obvious or foreseeable health issues or wider concerns related to the person's ability to be able to engage fully with their training and subsequent ministry within the parish.
- There are no known reasons or concerns that the person would not meet all current Church of England safeguarding requirements and perform their duty appropriately

## Formation and Training

### What does it involve?

Growing Gifts is a 10 session programme, completed over a period of 5/6 months. In the initial two months sessions are fortnightly, and resume monthly for the final two months, with a 'pause' in the middle. An indicative timetable is reproduced below. The programme will be facilitated by a team of Authorised Lay Ministry Enablers who are drawn from the Readers within CofEBirmingham.

Growing Gifts will run initially at the following times:

June - Nov 2024

Jan - June 2025

Sept 2024 - Feb 2025

### Role Descriptions, Quiet Morning and Authorisation

During the final month of the programme participants will work alongside their incumbent to finalise their Role Description, which must be agreed and approved by the PCC. At this point a date is identified for the authorisation to be marked during worship. The final sessions of the programme include retreat time to help participants to prepare for this new stage in their discipleship and ministry.

### Illustrative Timetable for Growing Gifts

*Please note that dates, times, and venues are for illustration only. Venues and timing will be identified in response to interest across Church of England Birmingham.*

Sat 11 Jan	Introductions and Setting the Scene
Wed 15 Jan	The Anglican Way: Scripture, Prayer, Theology and Discipleship
Wed 29 Jan	Getting Prepared: Planning Worship / Preparing a 'sermon'
Wed 13 Feb	Elements of Worship / Elements of preaching
Wed 26 Feb	The art/science of leading well / preaching well
Thurs 6 March	Safeguarding and Safe Practice in Ministry
	<i>PAUSE and time to 'have a go'</i>
Wed 7 May	Tools for Reflection
Wed 4 June	Worship / Preaching 'outside the box'
Sat 12 July	Quiet morning, Sustaining and Growing

*All sessions will take place in the evening, 7.30pm - 9.00pm at St Martha's, ABC Heath except Session 6 which will take place at John Cadbury House, Birmingham City Centre, and possibly Sessions 9&10, which may take place in a venue more suitable for retreat time.*

## **Expectations for participation in Growing Gifts**

It is good for all involved to be aware of these.

### **Participation**

To be considered as having completed the programme all participants must be present for at least 8 of the sessions, which must include the Safeguarding Training session, session 6. To help participants get the most out of each session they will be given linkwork to complete between each of the sessions. The linkwork may be a few simple questions to think about, a short podcast to listen to or some basic preparation work for the next session. Each linkwork is intended to take no longer than 20-30 minutes. Each session will be participative but no-one will be 'put on the spot'.

### **Learning Journal**

During the programme we encourage all participants to keep some form of learning record or reflective journal. This is intended to take no longer than 10 minutes at the end of each session and is part of developing the skills of reflective practice. Participants will be given further support and guidance on this and will not be asked to share what they have written unless they are willing to do so anonymously on the Pathways learning platform.

### **'Going Deeper'**

There is no expectation for course participants to do a lot of extra reading / research. However, for those wanting to delve a little deeper there will be suggested resources some of which will be reading, some video and some podcast. Participants may also wish to borrow books or other resources from their Incumbent or members of the Ministry Team, if this is possible.

### **Experience of Worship in another church community**

As part of reflective practice and personal development, we ask that all participants arrange at least one visit to another church during their training and formation that is different from their own in terms of patterns of worship or preaching. Guidance and support on this will be provided.

### **Group Worship**

Participants will be invited to share in the planning, preparation and leading of short reflective acts of worship at the beginning of the later sessions. Guidance and support on this will be provided.

### **Responsibilities of the local church**

Participants will need the opportunity to lead worship or preach during the programme (in months 3 & 4), and receive feedback. Participants would benefit from being accompanied by a locally identified mentor.

## **FAQs**

### **Does the training involve any assignments, tests or assessments?**

There are no assignments, tests or exams. The ethos of the course is focused on group conversations, reflective practice and real-life application. However, for those wanting to take things deeper, there will always be suggestions for further reading, resources and ongoing development.

### **How much does the training cost?**

All the costs of Growing Gifts are met by Church of England Birmingham but PCCs are invited to support participants if help is required with basic costs such as travel expenses. Where finances are a barrier to participation, Incumbents are encouraged to contact the Ministry Development Lead (Lay) for further advice and support.

PCCs do need to pay for a Basic DBS Check for those who do not have an Enhanced Check for another role.

### **Does Growing Gifts have an age limit?**

Participants need to be 18 or over, an “adult” in legal terms. There is no upper age limit.

### **What does ‘occasional’ mean?**

The Bishop is not defining ‘an occasional basis’ by frequency but rather by the place of this ministry within that of the wider Ministry Team. Those who lead worship or preach regularly do so with appropriate formation and training and hold a licence to do so from the Bishop. It is unlikely that ‘an occasional basis’ will mean more than 5/6 times a year for Sunday Morning Worship in the parish church. In a monthly Messy Church setting, for example, someone might lead worship more frequently, but not on every occasion, and never alone.

### **Is it possible to be locally authorised to both lead worship and preach?**

As this is a collaborative form of ministry, and locally authorised, it will only be possible to either lead worship or to preach. Where worship takes place in the parish church (or other building licensed for worship), or its grounds, the Bishop expects either a licensed minister or Churchwarden to be present when those locally authorised lead worship or preach. Where worship takes place in a community setting this is not required, but those who are locally authorised will not be the sole representative of the local church to lead worship / preach there.

### **Is it possible to train for both leading worship and preaching?**

No. the Growing Gifts programme has two ‘streams’ within it, and it will only be possible to participate in one ‘stream’. This is a collaborative ministry and authorisation is for either leading worship or preaching.

### **Once trained, how long does authorisation last?**

Authorisation will be for a period of 3 years. After this time the Incumbent and PCC a process of re-authorisation for a further 3 years may take place. This then continues on a rolling cycle.



## **Supporting a person who is locally authorised to lead worship or preach**

Once a person has been authorised they will then begin their agreed ministry within the local church. It is important that this is not viewed as the end of formation and training but the start of their ongoing learning and development as they begin to put what they have learnt into practice. It is also important that they continue to get the right support and care. Typically support can be found in the following areas:

### **Incumbent**

The direct responsibility for those who are locally authorised will always rest with the Incumbent and the Role Description should state how often they will meet and the nature of the meetings (which may be in a group). The Incumbent does not necessarily need to be the person's regular supervisor but they should at the very least be involved in an annual review and in their 3 yearly recommissioning process.

### **PCC**

Along with the incumbent, the PCC has a duty of care for the person's ongoing care, support and development. This involves meeting any agreed expenses related to their ongoing development but also a responsibility for ensuring that the person carries out their role appropriately in line with their agreed Role Description and diocesan guidelines.

### **Ministry Team**

As this is a collaborative ministry it is important that those locally authorised to lead worship or preach are made to feel part of the wider ministry team. They should be kept in the loop in matters related to worship.

### **Mentor**

As part of forming their Role Description, attention should be given to identifying an agreed mentor. As stated above, this does not necessarily have to be the Incumbent but does need to be someone that the person can meet with on a regular basis for support, encouragement, guidance and care.

### **Local church community**

As part of gaining wider support, it is really important that the local church community has a good understanding of this ministry. This can be done by locally celebrating the initial authorisation and reauthorisation but also through prayer, both individual and corporate.

### **Wider Church Community**

The greatest support may come from other members of the Growing Gifts cohort, and other lay people sharing in the Ministry of the Word. Those engaged in this ministry are strongly encouraged to form their own networks of support. Resources for learning and development are available on the Pathways learning platform.

### **Ministry Development Lead (Lay)**

The Ministry Development Lead (Lay) is the main point of contact in the Diocesan team for any issues relating to this ministry. They are there to support not only those who are locally authorised but also incumbents and PCCs.

## Further Information and Contacts

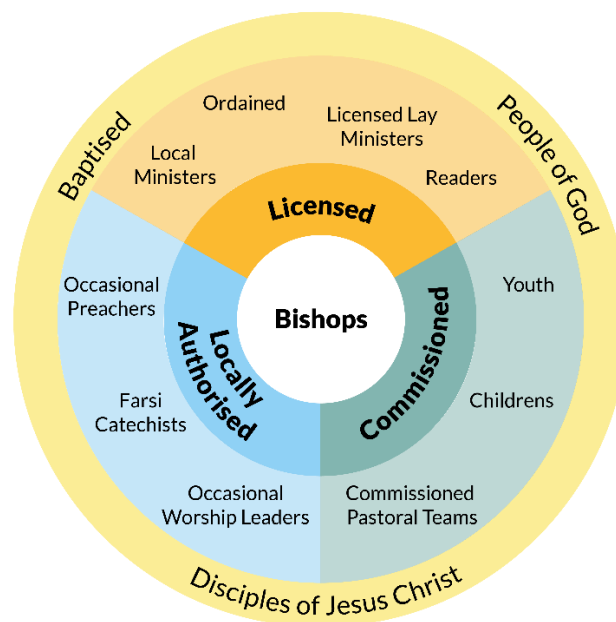
### Where can we find more information?

Further information and programme details, along with the Application Form, will soon be available on the diocesan website: <https://www.cofebirmingham.com/clergy-authorized-lay>

### Who can we contact?

You are welcome to contact Catherine Grylls, Ministry Development Lead (Lay) to talk through any matters related to the Growing Gifts programme or to locally authorised ministry.

Catherine can be contacted at: Church of England – Birmingham,  
John Cadbury House, 190 Corporation St,  
Birmingham B4 6QD  
Phone: 0121 820 9836  
Text / What'sApp: 07824 536935  
Email: [catherine.grylls@cofebirmingham.com](mailto:catherine.grylls@cofebirmingham.com)



**Almighty God,  
send down upon your Church  
the riches of your Spirit,  
and kindle in all who minister the gospel  
your countless gifts of grace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

*Common Worship Additional Collect for 5th Sunday after Trinity*