

One2Four

harnessing energy

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Introduction

One2Four is a four session course that focuses on harnessing the energy and resources of parishes and Church communities to become the Church God has called them to be. The course encourages parishes to identify and move towards the vision they have for the people of God in their own locality. One2Four seeks to find ways not to add to the burdens of people who are already stretched, and spreading resources thinly, but rather to help them to focus on the best place to invest time and energy. The key focus is on exploring the ways in which each parish is uniquely the body of Christ in its own community.

The course can be run in small groups, for example the PCC, or with wider groups in the parish. The focus of the course is on taking stock, letting go, and moving forward. Each of those stages can be challenging and difficult; it is important to allow enough time for that process really to take place and to support each other through a period that may include some significant changes, or at least plans to change in the future.

This process can be used as preparation for producing your *Mission Action Plan (MAP)*. There is a section at the end with pointers for formulating a Map.

This course is not so much about content (what you read or learn) but about process (what you do). It requires an honest engagement and a willingness to work through a guided process of evaluation and vision setting. The 'proof' of this process is what comes afterwards, and whether the momentum to move towards your goals is maintained.

Session 1

GOALS

The aims of this session are:

- To give an overview of the GROW model and to look at what we will be doing over the course of the four sessions
- To think about what it means to set goals
- To state our visions and dreams for this Church
- To translate those into attainable goals.

1. Introduction: GROW model

Goal
Reality
Opportunity
Way Forward

The GROW model is a four step plan for establishing goals and making them a reality. It is widely used in coaching, and we are adapting it to help us focus on the sort of Christian community God is calling us to be. Part of this process is making a realistic assessment of what we are like now, and setting a vision for how we could be. The One2Four programme gives us chance to focus on what God is calling us to in this particular place, with these particular people, and to put our energies in the right places to bring growth to the Kingdom of God.

In every parish, growth will mean something different, and part of this process is to think about the type of growth you would like to see in your own parish.

What growth would be appropriate to the gifts and strengths of this congregation?

Over the course of the four sessions, we will look at all the good things that already happen here, and have chance to think about what we might build on, as well as whether there is anything we need to let go. We will then move towards thinking about how to make our dreams for this this community a reality; what steps can we take towards reaching our goals.

Proverbs 29:18 (in some versions!) states that “without vision the people will perish”.

Living the Christian life is about living both in the reality of the world, and also in the reality of the Kingdom of God. This means we constantly have to look to see where the Kingdom is growing and where the Holy Spirit is at work in our world. Even more than noticing it, the call to follow Jesus in an invitation to join in this work – to participate in the building of the vision which Jesus gives us for a life based on the values of his kingdom.

2. Dreaming Dreams and Seeing Visions

“I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.
Even on the male and female slaves,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.
Joel 2:28-29

The prophet, Joel wrote of a time when the Holy Spirit would be upon all people and they would prophesy, dream dreams and see visions. Even the very lowest people of the society would receive this outpouring of the Spirit. The dreams and visions inspired by the Spirit, are pictures of God's kingdom; radical ways in which it will transform and redeem our broken world and fragile lives.



3. Goal Setting

Dreams and visions give us a goal. They provide a picture of where we want to be. But we have to do a bit more work to translate them into attainable goals. Our visions and dreams give us a general direction to move towards, but we can feel that we are so far away from there, that it would be impossible to bridge the gap between where we are now and where we dream of being. This is why goal setting is important.

One way of thinking about this is to use **SMART** goals.

Goals should be: **Specific**
Measurable
Attainable
Realistic
Timely

Specific about the who, what, where, when and how. Rather than stating general aims, a specific goal explains what is to be done and how. For example, a general goal might say we want to start a youth club. A Specific goal would be: in 12 months time we want to have a group for 11-15 year olds, meeting once a week.

In order to make sure the goal is **Measurable**, we might also add that we want the youth group to have four leaders and at least twelve teenagers by this time next year. In two years from now, we want it have 8 leaders and 24 teenagers.

Attainable goals have a clear plan attached to them. They might include stages along the way to the overall goal, and they will specify some of the clear steps that need to be taken to reach the goal. For example, setting a night for the youth club, recruiting leaders, advertising etc.

A goal has to be **Realistic** if it is any use at all. However, there is a balance between keeping it realistic or possible, and watering down your dreams because you think it can't happen. A realistic goal can still be highly ambitious, or very different to the current situation, as long as you have some ideas about how you might move towards it.

Goals should be **Timely** both in the sense that now is the right time to move towards them, and in the sense that a time frame should be outlined in which to achieve them.

GOAL- SETTING

Rogers and Hammerstein, in the song *Happy Talk* wrote “you gotta have dream. If you don’t have a dream, then how you gonna have a dream come true?”. It’s a good point! You have to set a goal, if you are to have any chance of achieving it. Coaching experts say that you are unlikely to achieve goals that you formulate if you never write them down. Achieving your goals requires focus, and writing them down helps to clarify, and focus on goals.

**Where would you like your Church to be in:
One year’s time?**

My SMART goal(s) for the next 12 months:

Three year’s time?

My SMART goal(s) for the next 36 months:

Session 2 REALITY

The aims of this session are:

- To assess where we are at the moment
- To celebrate all the good things that are happening to serve God in this church and community
- To reflect on where most of our energy is used
- To discern areas that are not a good use of our energy

1. Taking Stock

In order to work out where we want to go, and how to get there, we need to have a clear sense of where we are now. When we have been involved with people and events over a long period of time, it can be difficult for us to make a realistic assessment of where we are. It can be very useful to have someone from outside the situation offer their perspective on what we are doing and not doing, and what we are doing well and not so well.

What are three things your parish does really well?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

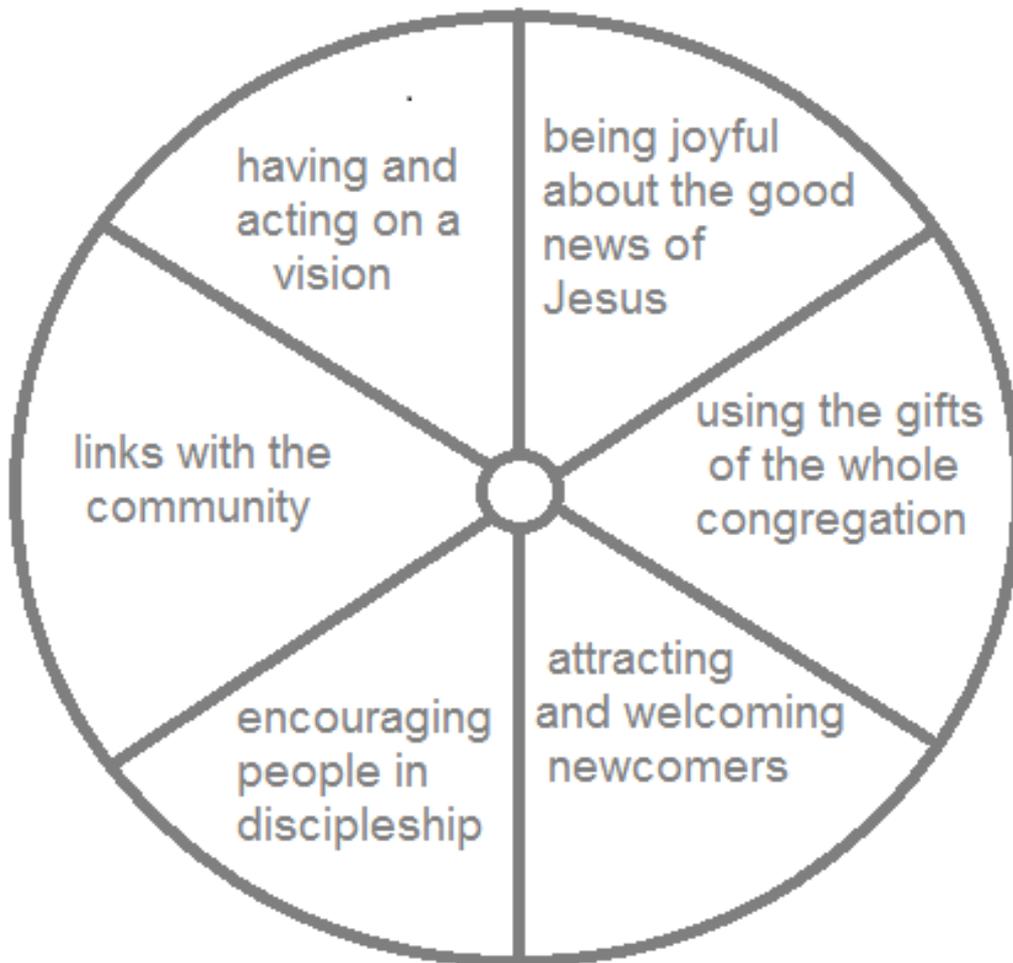
What are three things your parish does not so well, or doesn't do at all that you would like to see happen, or happen better?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

One 2 Four

The circle below can be used as a tool for reflecting on what we are doing as a church in six different areas.

Score each segment of the circle out of 1-10 to represent how good you think your Church is at that aspect of its life. Be as honest as you can!



Note the highest and lowest scores.

What happens (or doesn't happen) in these two areas that have led you to score them that way?

Taking stock is not about being bogged down in the negative. It is about being realistic about where we are, and taking brave decisions about what we should build on and what we should let go.

*Let us thank God for all that is good in this parish:
For all the ways in which we share God's love,
For all the signs of the growth of the kingdom,
For all the people who serve Christ and one another,
For all of the gifts and blessings we receive.*

2. Using our Energies Effectively

Energy is a precious and limited resource. It is one of the gifts that we are given for service of the Kingdom of God and it is important that we use it wisely. The tricky thing about energy, is that it is not always obvious where it is actually going.

There can be all kinds of things that absorb our energy, without leaving much to show for them. Think for example of worrying: when you are really worried about something it can use up all of your energy, but there isn't much to show for it at the end. In church communities, we can find that our energies are going into things which may be peripheral to our core mission and purpose. Inevitably, this means that there is less energy left to focus on the primary business of building the Kingdom and receiving and sharing the love of God.

We have energy both individually and as a group. Some activities energise us – give us even more energy and some drain us of energy. The things that energise some will drain others and vice versa. Everybody needs to do some things that energise them, or they will quickly become worn out; they will use up their stocks of energy without replenishing them.

What activities seem to energise the parish?

What activities seem to drain them of energy?

When we begin to think about what creates a buzz, and what induces sighing and complaining, we get some clues as to how our energies are used up.

Where do you think most energy is used in this Church?

It can be difficult to answer this, as energy can be absorbed invisibly with nothing to show for it. It is also possible that an event has used up a lot of 'behind the scenes energy' and we are totally unaware of the effort that has gone in to it. It might be easier to think about:

How do you use your energy in Church?

Which of these uses are effective, and which are not?

Many clergy and parishioners report that they feel tired; that they have used up their energy and have no more to offer the church. It is essential that the church is an energising environment as well as a place where energy is expended. There are times when people may need to come to church and be nurtured, without being asked to give anything in return. This is part of our duty of care, to value people as God values them. God doesn't love us because of what we might do for God, but just because we are.

A hamster running on a wheel uses a lot of energy, but doesn't get anywhere!



3. Pruning

The Bible talks about the idea of pruning. In gardening, we accept that in order for a tree to flourish, there may be bits of it that need to be cut back. This is exactly the image Jesus uses to talk about remaining close to God and being an effective bearer of fruit.

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes- to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed - by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15: 1 - 5



Gardeners do not ask *if* any pruning will be required in their garden each year; rather they try and work out *what* needs pruning and when would be the best time to do it.



Pruning might seem like a harsh activity – the results can look quite drastic, but over time it becomes clear that it has brought more life and fruit into the garden. It is difficult to thin about pruning in terms of our Church activities, because often we have become very attached to things that we do, even if they use a lot of energy and bear very little fruit.



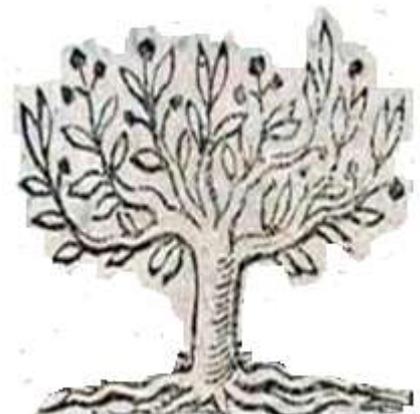
In order to answer this question, we need to be really honest about where we are at, and brave enough to see the possibilities for an abundance of fruit in the future.

What needs pruning in this Church?

When would be the best time to do it?

What new fruit might be enabled to grow?

Where should we no longer exert our energies?



Session 3

OPPORTUNITIES

The aims of this session are:

- To identify opportunities for growth
- To consider the risks of responding to opportunities
- To recognise that opportunities are provided by both our strengths and weaknesses
- To distinguish between circles of concern and circles of influence
- To establish how we might make the most of our opportunities in this church

1. Opportunities big and small

One definition of 'opportunity' is "A good chance for advancement or progress". We are always looking for opportunities in all aspects of our lives, to help us move forward. The difficult thing about opportunities, is that they can be tricky! They may appear to be something they are not and lead us down the wrong path; or, they may be difficult to notice amidst all of the other aspects of our lives.

**America is sometimes called 'the Land of opportunity'.
Why do you think this is?**

This term stemmed from the time when it was possible to go to America and stake your claim on a piece of land, farm it and actually own it. Many people did this and so made the most of the opportunity that was presented. We often overlook the fact that much of this type of settlement was at the expense of Native Americans –the opportunity was perhaps not all it seemed.

In this case, a big opportunity was offered, and people who travelled from other parts of the world to avail of it, took great risks and gave up a lot to take up this opportunity.

Can you think of an opportunity you have had – big or small?

Did you take it up?

What was the consequence of your choice?

It is important to reflect on the risks and rewards of opportunities. The experiences people have had in their own lives, may well influence the attitude they take towards opportunities that the congregation are given. If their own risks worked out well, they may be much more willing to take further risks. If they have always turned away from opportunities, they may advocate this approach for the whole Church.

2. The Greatest Opportunities

The greatest opportunities we have are not provided by shows like the x-factor, or a talent scout who may walk past us and instantly recognise our potential! Our biggest opportunity is to live as God wants us to, and become the person we have been created to be. For most of us that does not mean international recognition and great riches. But it does mean constant opportunities, no matter how many times we don't take them or they don't work out.

Our commitment to the Gospel and the gifts we have been given to serve the Kingdom of God are a massive opportunity, and this is just individually. If you add together every person's gifts and commitments, even amongst this group, there is a huge opportunity to do exciting work for the kingdom of God.

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:15-20

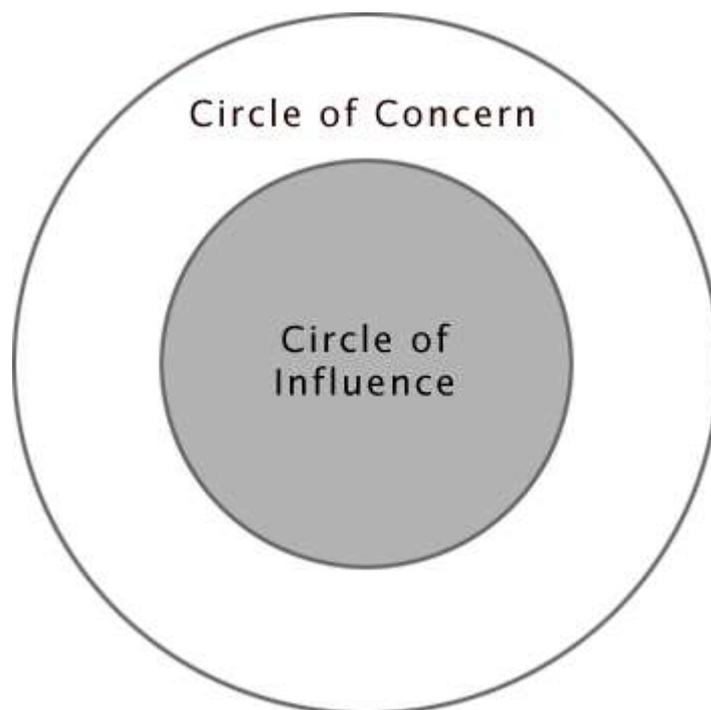
The passage from Ephesians highlights - in quite dramatic language - the contrast between using our time well and wasting it, or even worse using it destructively. Time and resources are an opportunity that we have been given. Like all of the gifts we are given, we have a choice about how to use them.

Opportunities are only useful, if they are taken. Sometimes we are so busy working at things that we miss opportunities that come our way. Sometimes we are so focussed on what we lack, that we do not notice what a great opportunity is provided by all that we can do!

3. Circle of Concern and Circle of Influence

This is from Stephen Covey's book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Covey points out that there are all kinds of things that we are concerned about, but that we have absolutely no control over. Areas of the circle of concern, are not under our influence or control. The areas of it that fall under our circle of influence however, we can have control or influence over. It is the things in this area that provides us with opportunity.

Covey says that too many of us, invest too much energy in the circle of concern. The most effective people invest their energy in the circle of influence. This doesn't mean that we don't care about anything else, we may still care about other things, but recognise they are beyond our influence at this time. We may also expand our circle of influence in order to be able have control or influence over certain situations.



What do you expend energy on that is not in your circle of influence?

What opportunities are presented by the things in our circle of influence?

4. When Opportunity knocks ...

Are there any opportunities that were presented to, but not take up by, this congregation in the past?

Has that had any lasting impact on the congregation, or indeed the people providing the opportunity?

There can be lots of reasons why we don't respond to opportunities – we may not notice them, or be suspicious of them, or feel we are already doing too many other things. It is always a process of discernment to know which opportunities we should respond to, and which to leave. But we also have to discern where opportunities are, and when we are pumping energy into something beyond our sphere of influence.

There are undoubtedly opportunities in this church and community that we have responded to, and there will also be things we haven't yet identified as opportunities.

If you were to look around with fresh eyes, would you be able to see any opportunities around that have not been taken up?

What are the biggest opportunities we have in this place, at this time?

How can we make the most of those opportunities?

Are there any barriers to responding to that opportunity?

Session 4

WAY FORWARD

The aims of this session are:

- To draw together some of the themes and ideas that have come up
- To establish clear goals for the Church and community
- To set milestones on the way to reaching those goals
- To think of ways of remaining focussed on the vision

1. Establishing the way forward

During the previous sessions, we have come up with a range of different ideas and suggestions for things we could do in this Church.

Try and remember as many of them as you can:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Which of these projects would **you** like to be involved with?

How might you share these ideas with the rest of the congregation and encourage them to be involved?

2. Making ideas a reality

In order to turn these ideas into realities, we need to establish a strategy. We need to work out *how* we might make them happen as well as *who*, *where* and *when*.

Take one of the ideas from the list above. In the first column write down all the stages that would need to happen for the situation to change from how it is now, to what we would like it to be when this idea is made a reality.

In the second column, write a date when you think this could have happened by, and in the third column, note down who might be involved in each stage.

Stages	When	Who

3. Growing the Kingdom

When we think about the way forward – making the things we have talked about become reality – it is important that we focus on *why* we want to take things forward. It is good to be proactive and focussed on the way forward, but it is also necessary to be clear that the way forward we have decided on, is appropriate to our overall aims and goals.

All of the things we do as a church share a common goal: to grow the kingdom of God. This might be by practising the values of the kingdom, or it may be through showing the love of God to people and inviting them to be part of the community.

In Luke 4, Jesus uses some words from Isaiah to describe the values of the kingdom:

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Luke 4:16-21

Jesus' claim that he had come to fulfil this Scripture, represented a new era for the Jewish religious community of the time. They had been working very hard to maintain their religious practices and to be faithful to God. But Jesus' teaching and actions showed that the way in which God would be known on earth was not quite the way they were expecting. He took the values at the heart of their religion, and reflected on them in a slightly different way.

How are Jesus' values represented in our plans for the way forward?

4. Keeping our focus

Having done all of this work, it is important not to let our energy and focus slip away. There are various ways we might do this, as a group and also individually.

Having worked through the four stages on the GROW model, what commitments are you going to make to taking this work forward?

How are you going to ensure that you stick to them?

How are you going to encourage others to harness their energy for the work of the kingdom?

*God: creator, redeemer and sustainer **we praise you.**
For the past and your faithfulness to your people **we praise you.**
For the present and your many gifts to us **we praise you.**
For the future and the fulfilment of your kingdom **we trust you.**
God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit **lead us forward into your vision for creation.**
Amen*

Thank you so much for being part of this course, and for having the energy and courage to look at the opportunities in your Church and community. As you move forward with those plans, we pray that God will richly bless all that you do in His service.

Writing a Mission Action Plan (MAP)

DEVELOPING YOUR MAP

Whether you already have a MAP or are starting from scratch, here is some 'recommended practice' to help in developing MAPs. There are many variations of approach but these ideas are a good basis from which to work.

A. THE BACKGROUND.

(This is useful but don't spend so long on this that you don't do the MAP itself.)

1. Mission Statement. If you don't have a clear mission statement, in the future look to develop one, stating (ideally in no more than 25 words) what your church is there for.
2. The context of the church. Describe your parish and the context in which you work. This may be a brief summary or a considerable document which can be the basis of a Parish Profile and Common Tenure documentation. Once done, then this only needs re-touching each year.
3. The church's activities and ministries (Sunday services, midweek services, regular activities, key areas of ministry and outreach). Again, this could be a brief summary or a longer document which again would be the basis of a parish profile. It is useful to include in this your USA figures for the past few years (the Parish Mission Office can provide these for you). Once completed, it need only be revised each year.

B. THE MAP.

- 1) Identify each key area you would like to concentrate on in the next 12 months for your MAP and fill in the table. For each area there may be several action points.

Area	Action needed	By whom	When	Review	Completed

- 2) It is helpful to look at each area in more details:
- a. Describe the present situation
 - b. Why would you like this area to develop?
 - c. What would you see as the end outcome?
 - d. What are the obstacles needed to be dealt with in order for this to be achieved?
 - e. Identify the steps needed to achieve the desired outcome.
 - f. What resources do you need – ministry, finance, etc.
- 3) Communicate the key ideas of your MAP to the whole congregation. Each parish will do this differently but it is a vital part of the whole exercise.
- 4) Also, it is useful to keep in mind the five strap-lines of the Diocesan Going for Growth policy: discovering the heart of God, growing disciples, reaching new generations, transforming communities and practising generosity. Some churches shape their MAP round these five areas but don't be constrained by them. Over a three to five year cycle each of these should be represented in some way.

- 5) Some churches prefer to develop a five year plan and break it down into
 - a. Short-term goals (the next 12 months)
 - b. Medium term goals
 - c. Long-term goalsand keep updating this document each year.

- 6) Areas to keep in mind are:
 - a. Links to Mission abroad.
 - b. Engaging with the community (e.g. local companies and local regeneration partnerships)
 - c. Training opportunities for ongoing discipleship.