



LEAF Church Programme



A programme to help
your church grow



What is the LEAF Church Programme?

Psalm 1 says that when God's people are really focused on him, they are

**'like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither'.**



It's a wonderful image. If your church is like a tree, its roots will reach down into the depths of God's life-giving Spirit, and it will bear good fruit to nourish those who come into contact with it. The Psalm also refers to the leaves of the tree. The leaves draw in what the tree needs to develop and grow: carbon dioxide and sunlight.

What does your church need to 'draw in' in order to develop and grow?

Churches often sense that they are ready for a new stage in their spiritual growth, or in their involvement with their local communities. Both growth in spirituality and discipleship, and growth in mission and service, are pleasing to God, and we are here to help your church to grow in whatever way God has put in your hearts and minds.

We would like to help you to identify what you need to grow.

God bless you as you continue to serve him.

Church Support Team



LEAF stands for:

- ◇ Listening
- ◇ Engaging in Learning
- ◇ Acting in
- ◇ Faith



The LEAF programme is particularly helpful for churches who want to re-discover their sense of identity and mission, and who would appreciate some semi-structured advice and guidance along the way. Your church may be without a minister, or you may be approaching an inter-regnum, or your minister may be leading you to consider what God may be saying to you all at this time.

We say that we offer **semi-structured help**, because there is no vision that suits all, and we do not have a blueprint to be followed by all churches. We do not come to you with a set structure or content. We use the LEAF programme to come alongside you, and to help you to consider the possibilities for your church at this point in its life, and with the range of strengths and challenges that you face in your own setting.



We have a broad range of experience in the Church Support Team, and we will bring this all to bear on helping you with resources for you to consider in creating a learning and development journey which is unique to your needs.

This might include holding reflection sessions led by one of us, working through specialist DVDs that contain material and ideas that are appropriate to your setting, organising a church away day, etc.

There is also the possibility of some financial support during this reflective period.



The LEAF Church programme has tended to begin with four workshops designed to help a church to rediscover its sense of identity and mission, and to support it in discerning what it needs to be prepared and equipped for God's service today.

These workshop sessions have followed this pattern:

Session One: *An introduction to the programme*

Session Two: Listening *Listening to God speaking through Scripture, prayer and church meeting*

Session Three: Engaging in Learning *Looking for resources and learning from a variety of perspectives, and examples*

Session Four: Acting in Faith *Focusing on priorities and drawing up a church learning plan for the next 12 months*

However, we can approach the LEAF Church programme in different ways, as appropriate for different churches.

Churches who engage in the programme, working through to creating a learning plan, will be recognised and celebrated as LEAF Churches at May Assembly. Our hope is that these churches will become equipped and confident enough to become resource churches for other churches seeking to grow and develop.

If you would like to see some examples of what other churches have done as a result of being involved with the LEAF Church programme, or if you would like to chat about the possibility of participating in the LEAF Church programme, contact the Learning & Development Administrator, Maddy Varley, at Madeleine.varley@congregational.org.uk, or via the address below.

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