



## Ministry Development Team: God's Reconciliation

This document contains information for the Ministry Development required by the priest and AMD Advisor (or, occasionally, another facilitator).

### **Date, location and participants**

It is anticipated that the Ministry Development Team will take place about two weeks after the Clergy College. It lasts about 90 minutes and should be held in a comfortable environment.

The Ministry Development Team involves a core group, normally of between 6 and 12 people, from the parish, for example, clergy, Readers, Local Worship Leaders and Pastoral Workers, plus Church Wardens. The priest identifies and invites participants.

When the priest and AMD Advisor have agreed a convenient date, the priest should confirm the time and venue with invitees.

### **Aims of the Ministry Development Team**

Recall that the aims of the Ministry Development Team are:

- to form a bridge between the learning that takes place during the Clergy College and Ministry Development; and
- to form a group around the clergyperson that is aware of the theme to be addressed in Ministry Development and is therefore able to support the priest in its delivery.

In addition, the very fact of meeting together will help foster collegiate relationships within the parish.

### **Content of the Ministry Development Team**

The structure of the Ministry Development Team will usually be as follows:

- A. Welcome & Prayer – 5 minutes (led by priest, facilitator or others)
- B. Outline of Ministry Development and discussion led by facilitator – 25 minutes
- C. Input by priest on a topic from the Clergy College and discussion – 25 minutes
- D. Appreciative Inquiry of the church with respect to the relevant theme (i.e. God's Reconciliation) led by facilitator – 25 minutes
- E. Summary of Issues & Concluding Prayers – 5 minutes

The following pages contain further resources for each of these sections.

### **A. Welcome & Prayer**

- Depending upon the time of day it may be good to provide suitable refreshments.

- Arrange the room so that everyone can participate in the conversations.
- If the priest wishes to present using powerpoint, or other visual aids, please ensure everyone can see properly.
- Welcome:
  - ❖ explain that this is the second of several Ministry Development Teams
  - ❖ check that everyone knows each other (especially important if churches have recently started working together and/or new people are involved)
  - ❖ outline the aims of the Ministry Development Team (as above, namely):
    - to form a bridge between the learning that takes place during the Clergy College and the Parish Programme; and
    - to form a group around the clergyperson that is aware of the theme to be addressed in the Parish Programme and is therefore able to support the priest in its delivery.
  - ❖ outline what will happen during the session (as above, namely):
    - Outline of the Parish Programme (discussion led by facilitator – 25 minutes)
    - Input by priest on a topic from the Clergy College (plus discussion – 25 minutes)
    - Appreciative Inquiry of the church with respect to the relevant theme (led by facilitator – 25 minutes)
    - Concluding Prayer (priest or others – 5 minutes)
- Prayer:
  - ❖ please use an appropriate form of prayer
  - ❖ you may like to use the following prayer:

Reconciling Lord  
 Show us your paths  
 Enable us: to bring peace  
           to forgive  
           to speak truth  
           to seek justice  
           to show mercy  
 So your glory might be known  
 In Jesus  
 Who reconciles all things. Amen.

## **B. Outline of the Ministry Development Team**

- State the theme: 'God's Reconciliation' and that we will broach it by looking at the Parable of the Prodigal Son.
- Read Luke 15:11-32

Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup> A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup> When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup> He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired

hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." <sup>20</sup> So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe-- the best one-- and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup> for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. <sup>25</sup> "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup> He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup> Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup> But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' <sup>31</sup> Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup> But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

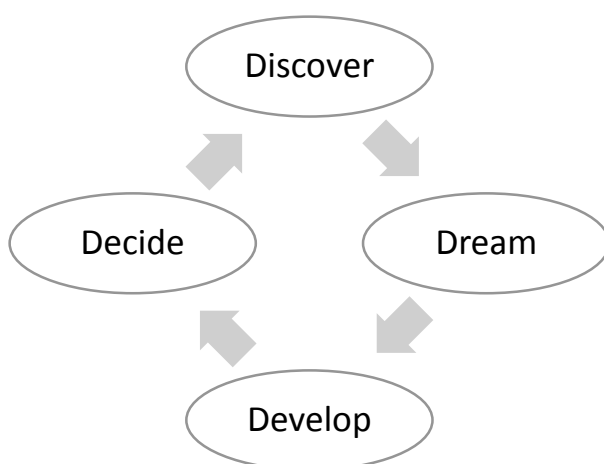
- ❖ Divide the group into three and get each group to take a different character
    - Take 5-10 minutes to investigate the motivations for each of the character's behaviours and responses, asking "Why did they do this?" and "Why do they react in the way they do?"
  - ❖ Each group to present their characterisation
    - Leader of the session (priest or accompanier) to record reactions on flip chart (?) – one word responses = preferable
  - ❖ Leader to summarise
    - Say that issues that require reconciliation arise from complex, conflicting and varied responses: there is not usually a simple picture of right or wrong which can easily be resolved by an easily understood act of justice.
  - ❖ In the same groups (or if the number is comparatively small, do this as a plenary) examine the actions of the father in the story
    - Ask "What is his approach to both his sons?," "What risks does he take in doing this?" and "How necessary is this?" In other words, "if he had not done this would reconciliation have been possible?"
  - ❖ Conclude this section by saying:
    - Reconciliation is not about going back to the way things were but is about establishing a new relationship. It is about being risky and being uncertain about the outcome. It is not about imposing a solution onto others but about giving them the space to accept, or refuse, what is being attempted. It is a continuous and continuing process. It is about trying to allow the peace of a forgiving Christ to flourish in places of distorted and broken relationships
- This should lead nicely to the priest's input.

### C. Input by priest

- The priest should have selected a topic that really interested him/her at the recent Clergy College.
  - ❖ It can be anything from the Clergy College, not necessarily something relevant to the theme of God's Reconciliation.
  - ❖ Please provide any learning resources you require; feel free to copy anything provided at the Clergy College if that's helpful to the group or take an idea from the Parish Programme resources, e.g. a video or website story or something that you would wish to do with the youth or children.
- Present the topic for a maximum of 10 minutes
- Discuss the topic and its relevance for the church
  - ❖ You may like to suggest questions for the group to discuss or ask them to participate in a creative activity—remember that different people have different learning styles, so even if you decide to focus upon discussion this time, think about another way to present your topic at the next Ministry Development Team.
- Conclude the discussion, etc. after 15 minutes.
  - ❖ Try and conclude on a positive note, which will lead well into 'Appreciative Enquiry'.

### D. Appreciative Inquiry

- Appreciative Inquiry is a way of asking questions that helps people focus upon what has been good about the past and the positive aspects of our present. It thus leads a group to think about building upon what has worked well rather than becoming preoccupied about what's going wrong.
  - ❖ If you are interested in finding out more about Appreciative Inquiry the Accompanied Ministry Development team can suggest some resources, although the following website: [www.clergyleadership.com](http://www.clergyleadership.com) contains a useful summary
- There are various elements to Appreciative Inquiry. Typically they are:
  - ❖ Discover – Appreciate what is present when things go well
  - ❖ Dream – Imagine the features of a flourishing future
  - ❖ Develop or Design – Identify what you will do
  - ❖ Decide – Create this future
- The cycle looks like this:



- As part of the Parish Programme Launch churches will concentrate upon the 'Discover' element of Appreciative Inquiry; the other elements could be very suitable topics for PCC meetings, for example.
- The structure of this part of the Ministry Development Team is as follows:
  - ❖ If there are more than 6 people present, divide into groups of about 4 so that everyone has an opportunity to speak (if you think that not everyone will want to speak—although don't be surprised if your assumption turns out to be incorrect!—you may wish to stay in a larger group).
  - ❖ Ask people to reflect for 2 minutes on their experiences of 'successful' reconciliation, both in the church and more widely.
  - ❖ Try and think about how the people who were able to forgive / be reconciled might have felt at each stage of their experience. Ponder what might have been hard or easy, what might have helped or hindered, and how God might have been involved. In other words, try and get people to empathise with those in the story.
  - ❖ Ask people what God thinks about reconciliation.
  - ❖ Come together as a whole group.
  - ❖ In the light of what has been said, ask everyone to give two hopes for the future of your church [5 minutes]

#### **E. Summary and Concluding Prayer**

- Thank people for coming
- Conclude with prayer for the church and each other (and any other pressing issue in the community / world)