A new Christian discipleship course for church congregations and groups of all traditions has been published today - the first time a national course has been commissioned by the House of Bishops.

Billed as offering an approach of “participation, not persuasion”, Pilgrim: A Course for the Christian Journey is published by Church House Publishing (http://www.pilgrimcourse.org/) and is part of the Church of England's focus on spiritual and numerical growth.

The core authors of the course are the Bishops of Chelmsford, Sheffield and Stockport, (Stephen Cottrell, Steven Croft, Robert Atwell) and Dr Paula Gooder, writer and lecturer in New Testament studies. Assuming little or no knowledge of the Christian faith, Pilgrim can be used at any point on the journey of discipleship and by every tradition in the CofE. The course is personally endorsed by both archbishops.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell (pictured above) said: “Pilgrim is a course for the Christian journey. For most people today, becoming a Christian is like a journey. We therefore need resources that will help turn fellow travellers and interested enquirers into pilgrims. This is what Pilgrim sets out to do. Like other courses it deals with the basics of the Christian faith. Unlike other courses it includes discipleship and is deeply rooted in a long tradition of catechesis and nurture. Drawing on a rich spiritual heritage, Pilgrim encourages you to think and pray; to be an apostle as well as a disciple. We hope its refreshing blend of old and new will enable many more parishes to develop a ministry of evangelism and nurture.”

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