

Biblical Hebrew, studied by trainee priests, can often pose a challenge for aspiring ministers.

Rajiv Sidhu is shown standing in front of a church holding his hands and smiling

For Rajiv Sidhu it posed more of a struggle – and led him to discover he was, in fact, dyslexic. That in turn taught him to look at how the Church communicates the Christian faith in a new way.

Despite working as a Geography teacher for 10 years, it was only through Hebrew that he realised he needed special education support.

Now, he has said that his own struggle helped him understand why others may find Christian teachings based on words, rather than symbols, can be challenging.

Rajiv, 32, was raised partly in Malaysia with his grandparents and has taught in Dagenham and the Isle of Wight.

“I had always assumed that my vocation was to be a teacher, although I now realise that you can have different vocations at different points in your life,” he said.

Supporting his local parish already, Rajiv was encouraged by his priest to consider becoming a vicar. With support from the Diocesan Director of Ordinands, Rajiv explored his calling for a year before resigning his post as a teacher and beginning theological training in Oxford. He then completed a placement with the prison ministry in Malaysia.

During his training, Rajiv studied biblical languages. He said: “It was my Hebrew tutor who suggested that I might be dyslexic, which gave me a deeper insight into myself.

“We are all created in God’s diverse image - and this applies as much to our minds as anything else. What does this look like for Church? How can we include, welcome, and celebrate neuro-diversity in Christian spaces and places? We often shy away from the images and symbols in church, though these can be the most effective teachers of the faith.”

Rajiv will, alongside six others, be ordained at Portsmouth Cathedral on Saturday, June 26.

**More information:**

- Rajiv will be ordained in a ceremony as a ‘deacon.’ This means they can wear dog collars, lead some services, and be styled ‘The Revd.’
- Others present will also be ordained, for a second time, as ‘priests.’ This means, among other things, they can lead Holy Communion services. They’ll continue their training as curates, probably for another couple of years, before they can become vicars.

