What is your church great at? What support would your congregation like to grow in faith, share their faith and serve their local community? The Church Development Tool can help you find out and then point you to simple, tried and tested resources that will help you act on what you discover.

The Church Development Tool is a short anonymous survey you ask your worshipping community to complete. You then get a simple report that gives you a clear picture of demographics, discipleship and evangelism in your church.

The survey results help you to look at your community with fresh eyes and find the opportunities for growth. This could be by building on strengths or addressing gaps. We then match you with resources that will help you with your chosen area of focus.

If you want, you can contact your diocesan staff for discipleship or parish support for help interpreting the results and choosing what to focus on.

Overall, the tool helps you look at depth as well as breadth, helping you understand how people are living out their faith and growing in discipleship. This can complement other statistics such as attendance numbers.

**Webinar: Getting started with the Church Development Tool**

Watch a recording [our webinar](#), ‘Getting Started with the Church Development Tool’.

**How could it help? Some examples**

“The PCC has discussed the results and is using them for refreshing our Mission Action Plan, which is excellent.”

*Feedback from user of Church Development Tool in 2021*

If the survey results reveal that people in your church have a strong interest in engaging in wider community activities, this could help your planning because it might mean you could consider offering space to incorporate more of these activities into your church’s mission work.
If the survey results show that not everyone agrees "I know how my faith connects with everyday life" then you might think about if you want to consider how this could be talked about more, or consider following an Everyday Faith journey together (from the Church of England's new Everyday Faith portal).

There is a question about whether respondents are involved in leading small groups. If you see several responses of "no, but would like to" you could think about how you could support people to come forward as small group leaders and how you could train or mentor them to help with this.

How it works
This year’s Church Development Tool survey has now launched and is ready to use.

Church leaders can log into AChurchNearYou.com as an editor, and choose ‘Church Development Tool’ from the editor menu. There you will be able to find a choice of ways to invite your worshipping community to respond:

- a link to email people, to ask them to complete the survey online
- a printable PDF poster with a QR code to the survey, to display for people to scan with a smartphone to respond online
- a printable PDF of the survey, for people who prefer to respond on paper

We will also supply suggested text and slides to help you explain about the Church Development Tool to your worshipping community and invite them to take part, to use if you wish.

Surveys completed online are automatically counted. Someone at your church will just need to input results from any paper surveys into AChurchNearYou.com - anyone who is an editor for the church on AChurchNearYou.com can do this.

Once the responses are in, AChurchNearYou.com then generates a report for you with graphs, that you can view on screen, download as PDF or print.

Full instructions for AChurchNearYou.com editors.

**Get a demonstration**

Watch a recording of our webinar ‘Getting Started with the Church Development Tool’.

If you are not already a registered approved editor on AChurchNearYou.com, sign up now so that you will be able to use the Church Development Tool.

Please note: People won’t need to be an AChurchNearYou.com editor to answer the Church Development Tool survey.

**Frequently asked questions**

What are the questions?

There are questions about demographics, for example asking about age group.

There are questions about evangelism and discipleship, for example, Do you believe the following to be an important way to express your faith? with a list of options to choose from.

There are questions about interests and what activities or volunteering people currently do with the church or would like to.

See a sample preview copy of the questions (This includes all the questions.)
How can I gather responses?

Itâ€™s up to you how you do it, but we know people are more likely to respond when there is a dedicated time for filling out the survey during or immediately after your usual activities.

For example, you could talk about the Church Development Tool at one Sunday service, with paper copies available to fill in there and then and QR codes displayed so people can complete on mobile there and then. Alongside this, you could leave the survey open for an additional week, during which you can circulate by email, invite midweek group leaders to share the survey with their group, and give anyone who wasnâ€™t there on the first Sunday a chance to contribute.

We will provide a range of resources you can use to help explain about the survey to your congregation and why youâ€™re doing it, available to use if you want, including text you can include in notices and newsletters, template Powerpoint slides and printable information sheets.

How do I get started with using the tool in my church?

This yearâ€™s Church Development Tool survey has now launched. All editors on AChurchNearYou.com will be emailed to announce this very shortly. We recommend watching our webinar, Getting started with the Church Development Tool.

Church leaders can log into AChurchNearYou.com as an editor, and choose 'Church Development Tool' from the editor menu. There you will be able to find a link to the survey to share, or a printable PDF of the survey.

If you are not already a registered approved editor on AChurchNearYou.com, sign up now.

Please note: People won't need to be an AChurchNearYou.com editor to answer the Church Development Tool survey.

Is there a time period in which the survey has to be completed?

You can collect responses anytime that suits you between the 2022 launch and the end of November 2022. We recommend choosing a time period of just 1-3 weeks to collect responses from your church, so you get a snapshot in time.

Who gets to see the results?

The results can be used by you and your PCC, and if you choose to, you can present the results back to the wider church, and engage the whole congregation in planning for the future. Your diocese will also be able to see the results.

How will individualsâ€™ data be protected?

We donâ€™t ask for name or contact details of respondents. The report gives the total picture of your church, not what individuals have said.
Why are you including the demographic questions, what about census data, doesn’t that already tell me about the demographics of my congregation?

Census data for parishes, already gives you demographic information about your local area. What it doesn’t do is tell you how the profile of your church community compares with your local area. That’s where the Church Development Tool comes in.

Taken together, the census information and your Church Development Tool information can help you spot your strengths and opportunities for outreach.

For example, in your Church Development Tool report, the age demographic of your church from the data provided by respondents, is presented in graphical form against the spread of age for your parish area.

Will this cost us anything?

No. All you need to use the tool is to be an editor on AChurchNearYou.com and if you are not yet an editor you can register free.

In the questionnaire - how do you define ‘regular’ and ‘occasional’ attendance?

As a guide, regular attendance usually means monthly or more frequently. Occasional attendance relates to anything less frequently than that.

Can the survey be done for a multi-parish benefice?

A. Yes. To do this, set up the Church Development Tool for just one of the churches but share the link to that with all the churches in the benefice. All editors of the church you set the survey up through will be able to see the results and can share the results with the other churches.

We are sorry that with this method you won’t be able to see the breakdown of the results church by church. This is complex and not something we were able to build in 2022. Now that the Church Development Tool is launched, we would like to improve the functionality for multi-church benefices for 2023.

How often do you recommend running the survey?

It is up to you whether you use this tool or not, and how often you do. However, if would like to track changes in your church over time, we recommend you do the survey once a year.

How long will the tool be open for?

It will be open until the end of November 2022. It will reopen again in 2023.

Source URL: https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/church-near-you/church-development-tool