

Some learning about missionary discipleship from SDF

Overall learning points:

1. **Be intentional** – a detailed, thought through “pathway to faith” with activities for people with different needs and going beyond bringing people to faith to equipping, encouraging and enabling disciples is proving impactful and a feature of project design. Bristol and Leeds’s SDF projects have used this well, and it is a requirement for each church in Birmingham in their People and Places plan.
2. **Learning to date is reinforcing what was learned in From Anecdote to Evidence** – particularly that intentionality, small groups, prioritising young people, and collaborative and empowering leadership are markers of healthy churches.
3. **Evangelism and discipleship are interlinked** – true, authentic faith creates greater evangelistic impact, and conversely, people evangelise when they have deep faith.
4. In general, SDF isn’t prescribing a specific approach for discipleship at a congregational level – just making sure it’s prioritised, thought through and that the congregation is equipped for it.
5. Many projects have measures for discipleship indicators based on the approach they are taking, and the Church Development Tool has some example measures churches can use.

Different ways that SDF projects are approaching discipleship:

Schools of discipleship / rules of life:

6. St Nicholas Durham, funded through SDF to be a resource church in the Growing Durham Diocese project has set up a rule of life called **The Community of St Cuthbert**, with five rhythms of grace, supported through small groups: <https://www.stnics.org.uk/cuthbert>
7. Southwell and Nottingham had SDF funding towards their school of discipleship. Their Real LIFE course has three ten-week modules on aspects of discipleship, their theology, and how they relate to daily life: <https://southwell.anglican.org/real-life-questions/>
8. **Sheffield** are expanding their ‘**Lights for Christ**’ approach through use of STF to have learning hubs among churches, and a set of online resources, to help people live as lights for Christ in their daily lives: <https://www.lightsforchrist.uk/>

Children and young people:

9. **Southwell & Nottingham’s Younger Leadership College** is building young people in discipleship and leadership: <https://www.youngerleadershipcollege.org/>
10. In **Manchester’s Children Changing Places** SDF project, ethos groups have been set up in church schools to help children develop faith: [Link](#), [Link to an SDF stories interview](#)
11. **London’s Youth Minster** SDF project includes the **Spark Fund** that funds young people to run a missional project: <https://www.london.anglican.org/spark>

Deprived areas:

12. **Blackburn Outer Estates Leadership** SDF project includes both M:Power, a training hub for urban evangelists, and a ministry experience scheme in Blackpool: [Link](#)
13. **York’s SDF project includes the Mustard Seed programme** for learning communities based in Middlesbrough, Hull and coastal communities, where lay people can grow as disciples of Jesus and in their confidence and ability to share their faith within their local community. [Link](#)
14. **Exeter’s Plymouth Estate Planting** project is developing disciples on an estate by being a church with the people who are there: [Link to an SDF stories interview](#), [Link to a news article](#)

Faith and daily life:

15. **Leeds** received SDF funding to develop **Holy Trinity Boar Lane** as a hub for workplace ministry, alongside reaching the working day population.

Young adults:

16. **Internships and/or mission apprentices** are a core part of discipling young adults in different dioceses including Birmingham, Leeds and Bradford.

Rural:

17. In **St Eds & Ips, Lightwave groups** of Christians across rural Suffolk meet to pray and support each other, practically care for others, and share faith: <https://www.light-wave.org/>

Small groups:

18. **Small groups for midweek discipleship** are a feature of a large number of our projects, and often feature as one element of the discipleship pathway. In Sheffield's children and youth project, 450 young people are in discipleship groups. [Link](#)

19. Half of the worshipping communities (48%) of newly planted resource churches are in small groups for midweek discipleship. Resource churches also use Alpha as evangelism training. **KXC also has Pattern groups** – a rule of life with groups of 3-4 who seek to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did, using ancient and modern practices: <https://www.pattern.org.uk/>

Leadership development:

20. A number of SDF projects provide **training, hubs or learning communities for lay leaders and pioneers** – e.g. [Bath & Wells](#), [Leicester](#), Portsmouth, [Manchester's Antioch plants \(estates & diverse\)](#)

21. SDF projects are also sources of **vocations to ordained ministry** – e.g. across 25 resource churches, 80 candidates have been accepted at BAP within the last 5 years.

Helping churches improve discipleship:

22. **Leicester's Inter-cultural Worshipping Communities** project is helping churches better recognise and support the gifts of people from different ethnic backgrounds: [Link](#)

23. **Coventry's Serving Christ** project is using the NCD 8 Essential Qualities approach to church development, including working with traditional Catholic parishes under the oversight of the **Bishop of Ebbsfleet**. The qualities include a number which support discipleship: [Link](#)