



THE GROWING FAITH FOUNDATION

Learning Hubs

Application Guidance for 2024-25.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1: Growing Faith Foundation Learning Hubs – A Funded Development Opportunity for 2025-2027:

- Vision and the story so far - p.2
- Moving forwards - p.3

Section 2: Funding options available for our 2025 Hub Intake - p.4

Section 3: Hopes and expectations from the Hubs - p.5

Section 4: What are we looking for in an application? - p.6

Section 5: Your commitment as a Learning Hub - p.8


Section 6: Our commitment to you as a Learning Hub - p.10

Section 7: Further considerations:

- How the funding may be used - p.11
- Duration of your Hub commitment - p.12

Section 8: The application process - p.13

Appendix: The application process:

- Marking criteria - p.14
 - Model answer examples - p.16
- 



GROWING FAITH FOUNDATION LEARNING HUBS – FUNDED DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR 2025-2027

Vision and the story so far.

Growing Faith is the movement that exists to put children, young people and families instinctively at the heart of all the mission and ministry of the Church by changing the culture of the Church of England. To find out more about the Growing Faith Foundation, scan the QR code at the top of this page.

It comes from the vision set by the House of Bishops and endorsed by General Synod in 2019. It involves churches, schools and households working together to help children, young people and families have life in all its fullness.

The Growing Faith Foundation seeks to benefit children and young people, helping them create the world they want to live in, specifically through the lens of the Christian faith.

The Growing Faith Foundation is developing work in four main areas: Networks, Learning Hubs, Programmes and Research.

Across 2023 and the beginning of 2024, **we funded 11 Learning Hubs**, with a **further 6 Hubs** being funded through generous additional funding from the **Maurice and Hilda Laing Trust, Kirby Laing Trust** and the **Bishop Radford Trust**. These 17 Hubs are located across the country, in different Dioceses. Some are Diocesan wide, some are based in deaneries or Multi-Academy Trusts, while others are based in parish and benefice contexts, one is also based in a Theological Education Institution.

GROWING FAITH FOUNDATION LEARNING HUBS – FUNDED DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR 2025-2027

Moving forwards.

We are now seeking to **resource a further 12 Learning Hubs** across the country. They will continue to act as strong developmental communities of practice from which other school and church leaders (both regionally and nationally) can learn.

The Learning Hubs will become **centres of innovation**, where schools/churches are resourced to further **embed creative practices** that build the **strategic partnership** between school, church and home. Hubs are **creative spaces**, with an emphasis on **imaginative approaches** that champion the **voices of children and young people** as we seek to double the number of children and young active disciples in the Church of England by 2030.

The Learning Hubs will be funded with an annual grant, which will support Hubs' further development in placing children, young people and families instinctively at the heart of their mission and ministry. Successful Hubs will be given reporting mechanisms and review meetings to determine whether objectives have been met.



Pupils from one of our current Hubs in Backwell, Diocese of Bath and Wells, taking part in a chaplaincy training day. The team at this Hub are growing an already-successful pupil chaplaincy programme, producing resources to enable other schools to start their own programme, and supporting their current pupil chaplains during their transition to secondary school.

FUNDING OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR OUR 2025 HUB INTAKE

For our 2025 Hubs, we can offer two funding options:



Option 1:

2 year model with an annual grant of £10,000 over a 2 year period (£20,000 in total)

Option 2:

4 year model with an annual grant of £5,000 over a 4 year period (£20,000 in total)

This money will support Hubs' further development in placing children, young people and families instinctively at the heart of their mission.

For this round of Hubs, we are keen to see applications that demonstrate a clear commitment and strategy for supporting **faith at home** and empowering children and young people as **leaders and decision makers**.



HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS FROM THE HUBS

Our Learning Hubs will:

- Empower children and young people to shape their work and be **key decision makers**.
 - Help **change the culture** of the Church of England by placing children and young people instinctively at the heart of our mission together
 - Help the Church of England become **younger and more diverse**, by committing to make young active disciples of Jesus.
 - Be **innovative and creative spaces** that model Growing Faith in the intersections of church, household and school.
 - **Inspire and encourage other leaders** on their Growing Faith journey through sharing learning and outcomes through reports and videos.
 - Be a **key point of contact** for the Growing Faith Foundation to gather stories and working models to share more widely.
 - **Participate in the Growing Faith workstreams** as appropriate.
 - Commit to **contributing to the work of their Diocese** and **communicating with them effectively**.
- 



WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR IN AN APPLICATION?

A great candidate for becoming a Growing Faith Learning Hub will:

- Be a community where there is already (or where there is clear evidence of a strong intention to be) a **strategic relationship between school, church and household** (this could be at an individual parish/school level, or in a more regional grouping – for example a deanery, cluster of schools or MAT).
- Be a community where the voice of children and young people is **instinctively at the centre of thinking and practice** and where those children and young people are enabled to be leaders and ‘agents of change’.
- Demonstrate a clear **commitment to equity, diversity, belonging and inclusion**, with proactive engagement of under-represented groups.
- Have a **local Hub steering group** to move Growing Faith forward, which could include – children and young people, a church leader, primary school leader, secondary school leader, parent/carer, a representative for children’s work, a representative for youth work, a school chaplain, a representative from the Diocesan support staff, representatives from key stakeholders in the local community e.g. local council, uniformed groups, local clubs, local businesses etc.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR IN AN APPLICATION?

- Demonstrate a commitment to **servicing the wider Church** of England
- Have a **strategic relationship with their Diocesan support staff team**, e.g. through a Diocesan youth or children's adviser or member of the senior leadership team.
- Have **outlet/s for sharing stories regularly** e.g. newsletters, website, podcasts, social media channels.
- **Collaborate** with other churches, parachurch organisations, their Diocese or have a commitment to explore this.
- **Commit to pray** for the children, young people and families within the Hub and beyond.





YOUR COMMITMENT AS A LEARNING HUB

If your application is successful, we would ask you to adhere to the following expectations:

Sharing at a local and national level:

- To find **effective ways to regularly share stories and insights** with the wider Church, key stakeholders and young people themselves. This may include presenting at events/conferences, website updates, blogs or through social media channels.
- To **communicate and share regular updates** with your Diocesan Support Staff team, including your Growing Faith Champion.
- To **produce termly (x3 a year) reports and an annual video** for the Growing Faith Foundation, which will be shared locally and nationally (guidance will be given to successful Hubs).

Partner with the Growing Faith Foundation:

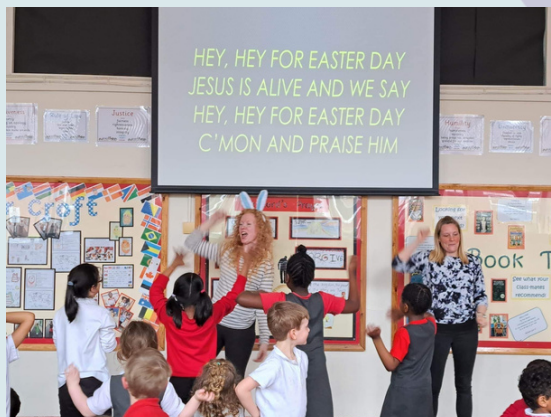
- To **be key valued partners** of the Growing Faith Foundation and work together with us to shape the direction of travel for Growing Faith nationally.
- To **identify a key person to be the point of contact** for the Growing Faith Foundation.
- To join all relevant events, whether online or in person.

YOUR COMMITMENT AS A LEARNING HUB

- To be a **'go-to contact' and place of welcome** for diocesan and national Growing Faith events including hosting visits for participants on the Strategic Leaders' Programme, hosting Growing Faith Big Lunches' and contribute in other ways where required.

Learning:

- Complete a **2-year or 4-year** (depending on whether you have opted for funding Option 1 or Option 2) **learning and development project** and **present impact and outcomes** to the Growing Faith Foundation when your time as a funded Growing Faith Hub concludes.
- To put the voice of children and young people at the heart of your Hub.
- To **pilot projects that are transferable to other contexts** and consider how you might share them more widely.
- To **contribute to research projects** being completed as part of the work of the Growing Faith Foundation.





OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU AS A LEARNING HUB

If your application to become a Growing Faith Learning Hub is successful, we can offer you the following support:

We will:

- Provide an **introductory session** and **ongoing support** for Learning Hubs as required.
 - Provide **termly (x3 per year) structured opportunities** to bring Learning Hub leaders together to **share learning and experience**.
 - Support the Learning Hubs' **local training activities** with speakers and resources.
 - Provide **access to networks and programmes** within the Growing Faith Foundation.
 - **Visit** your Learning Hub annually and **host an annual review session**.
 - Be a **sounding board for ideas and suggestions** and **connect Hubs to others** around the country.
 - **Resource each Hub with an annual grant** of £10,000 over a 2 year period or £5,000 over a 4 year period.
 - Commit to **pray for your Hub**.
- 



FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

If your application to become a Growing Faith Learning Hub is successful, you might choose to use the funding:

- For **access arrangements** for children and young people.
- For **video production**, social media and **design** work.
- For **resourcing pilot projects** that could be **developed and replicated** in other settings.
- To **buy in expertise** from different fields to **deepen practice and thinking**.
- To **form partnerships** with other organisations.
- Towards **travel expenses**.
- To **host training sessions, gatherings** for the working group and **other Growing Faith events** locally e.g. venue hire, refreshments and resource production.
- Towards **staff time**.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Will you be classed as a Growing Faith Learning Hub forever, or for a fixed period of time?

In the first instance, the commitment to being a GFF Learning Hub is for a **two year** or **four year period** (two years with £10,000 per year, four years with £5,000 per year), although annually, we will **review the progress of the successful Hubs** through a SWOT analysis to see if it is appropriate to move into the following year.



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

How can you apply to become a Growing Faith Learning Hub?

To apply to become a Growing Faith Foundation Learning Hub for 2025-27/2025-29, please go to [this link](#) and complete the application form. This needs to be submitted by **14 July 2024**. The applications will be assessed **objectively according to the evidence presented** (See the following Evidence Base section used for selecting Hubs).

Following this, Hubs will be confirmed and **awarded their designation** by **30 September 2024**, and welcomed to the training and development programme overseen by the Growing Faith Foundation national team.

For any questions, please contact growingfaith@churchofengland.org





APPENDIX: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Evidence Base with Examples

Applications will vary considerably depending on context. Please [visit our website](#) for more information about our first round of Hubs which launched throughout 2023 and 2024.

The following pages outline the marking criteria for applications.

A score of 5 - Excellent

The response answers the question in full, successfully meets all the criteria, and presents proposals that exceed or enhance the Foundation's requirement.

Full and relevant evidence is provided to enhance the response.

Demonstrates a comprehensive level of knowledge, experience, capability, or capacity and demonstrates that the potential Learning Hub can meet the requirement in full and to a high standard.

A score of 4 - Good

The response answers the question in full and successfully meets all the criteria.

Full and relevant evidence is provided to support the response. Demonstrates a good level of knowledge, experience, capability, or capacity and no concerns or omissions are identified.



APPENDIX: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

A score of 3 - Satisfactory

The response answers the question and meets the criteria to a satisfactory standard but may lack some clarity or detail in how the proposed solutions will be achieved.

Relevant evidence is provided to support the response. Lack of clarity and any missing evidence or detail is only minor. Demonstrates a satisfactory level of knowledge, experience, capability, or capacity and any concerns or omissions are not considered to represent a risk or could be reasonably resolved.

A score of 2 - Poor

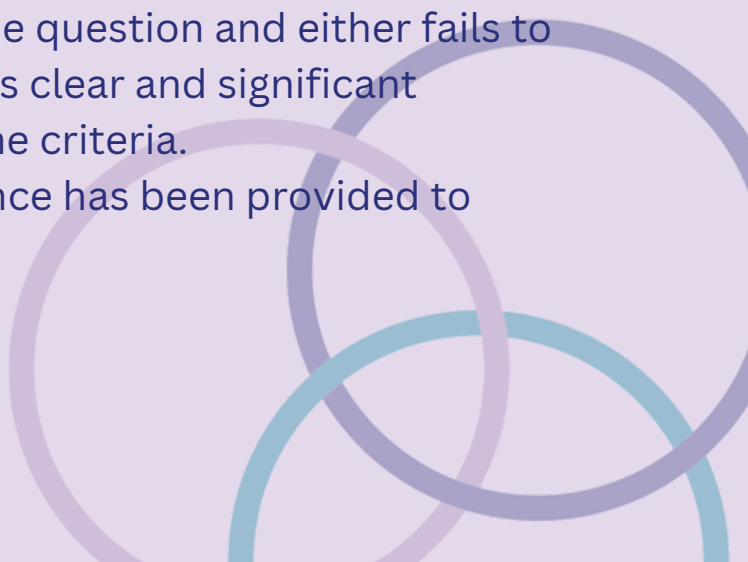
The response does not answer the question in full and either satisfies only some of the criteria or exhibits omissions regarding meeting the criteria.

Some evidence is provided to support the response but is lacking in sufficient detail in one or more areas.

Demonstrates a lack of knowledge, experience, capability, or capacity and presents concerns or omissions that are considered to represent a risk or would have an impact on service delivery that would require significant external intervention to manage or resolve.

A score of 1 - Very Poor

The response does not answer the question and either fails to meet a number of criteria or exhibits clear and significant omissions with regard to meeting the criteria. Inadequate or no supporting evidence has been provided to support the response.





APPENDIX: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

(Score of 1 - contd.)

Demonstrates a lack of knowledge, experience, capability, or capacity and presents significant concerns or omissions that are considered to represent an unacceptable level of risk and/or would have a detrimental impact on delivery.

A score of 0 - Unacceptable

The response is absent or incomplete and/or the proposals are not relevant to the Foundation's requirements. The response does not meet the Foundation's requirements.

Model application examples:

Example 1:

A town centre church has formed a group consisting of the vicar, the youth worker, the RE leader at the local primary school, two volunteers from the church with a vested interest in youth and children, the local Baptist minister, two parents and a member of the town council. The group are meeting monthly to pray, plan and discuss how they might work together to provide opportunities for children, young people and families to explore faith. So far, they have run Youth Alpha, started a Messy Church that takes place in the primary school, delivered It's Your Move Sessions for the Year 6s, with the youth worker who runs a CU in a local secondary school, and at the school's request, organised a school leavers' party in the church building. Each half-term the group invite some young people to share with them what they think is going well and what they could do differently.




APPENDIX: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

(Example 1 contd.)

As a result, two young people have helped the youth worker set up a Friday night gaming club. There are ambitions to grow disciples through this group, through using a resource such as Origins Prayer Course, but having listened to parents, an awareness that they would like support in how to do Faith at Home. They have plans to run a drop in for parents and carers, one for primary school aged parents and one for secondary aged parents to understand the challenges being faced by parents and together shape the right support. The group are planning to start an ecumenical, intergenerational Fresh Expression of Church in the school which will be run by the older children and youth, with some support from adults having noticed that Sundays are often a busy day for many families. Some of the funding might be used to resource this.

There is also a passion for social justice and social action amongst the young people. After some of the young people commented on the poor state of their local park, through contacts within the town council, some of the children and young people organised a clear up project, assisted by adults and are now looking to raise money to help fund some new equipment. The working group are continually looking for ways to integrate the different groups and offer spaces and support for children, young people and families to encounter faith and grow as disciples.





APPENDIX: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Example 2:

With a successful school choir, who regularly use the church building, the school are looking to build a more meaningful, joined up relationship between the school and church choir. The Director of Music in the church would like to find ways to integrate the two things, with the priest keen to have more children and young people serving and leading within church services, in both the choir and as acolytes, as well as the school looking to involve church members in school worship. The priest regularly takes Collective Worship in the school and offers a termly mass to school staff. As a result of this partnership, they have recently started a family choir which meets in the local community centre and includes sharing a meal together. There is an aspiration to build on the family choir, forming an intergenerational discipleship group that focuses on Holy Rituals and developing early prayer habits.

The church and school run a joint Fete every year and aspire to do further events together, despite the limited financial and physical resources available. Becoming a Hub would give hope and encouragement to an often-struggling parish, they would be excited to use some of the funding to access resources from The Royal School of Church Music and to train people from the local estate to deliver them to inspire worship in school and church. The school would like to do a project linked to children as leaders, assessing the impact of children being worship leaders in school and acolytes in the church on faith growth. The parish would also like to set up an intergenerational advisory group to help shape their work moving forwards. Some of the funding would be used to resource this.

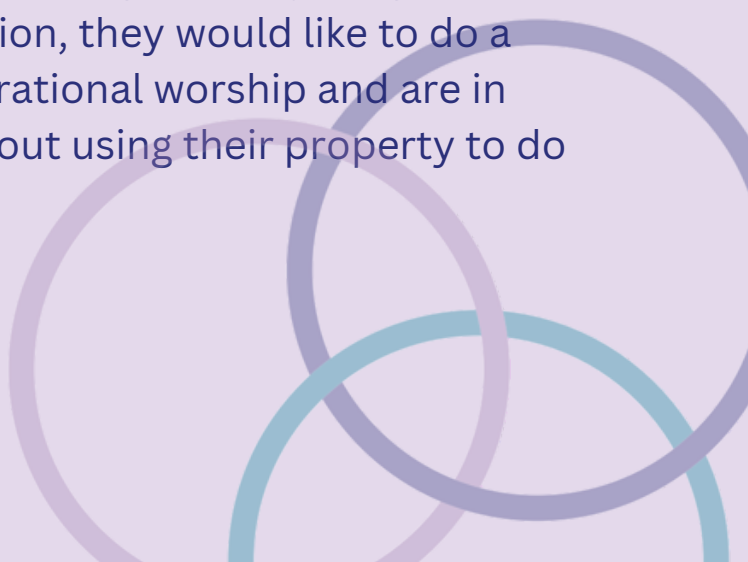


APPENDIX: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Example 3:

A rural benefice, consisting of four churches, two Church of England Primary Schools and one Community Primary School currently has an Open the Book team regularly visiting one of the schools, the vicar delivers regular collective worship in each school and they run occasional activity days for children during school holidays. The Open the Book team have worked with the school collective worship leaders to organise fundraising events to twin the toilets in the school, church and village hall, with the children leading in choosing the cause and the fundraising events they would like to organise. At the invitation of the head teachers; the vicar, a reader and two lay volunteers, met with the school councils in each of the schools and heard that children were keen to have a club in the benefice that helps them explore big questions.

The BIG club was set up in the benefice, partnering with the local Methodist church and now attracting between 10-15 children aged 8-12. In the school holidays, the churches are hosting a BIG breakfast for the families to come along to. This is a growing ministry, where the benefice is keen to expand its work with families and 13+. They are optimistic that they might be able to run Youth Alpha or similar with a small group of young people in the next term. With its rural location, they would like to do a project linked to outdoor intergenerational worship and are in conversation with a local farmer about using their property to do this.



APPENDIX: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Example 4:

A sub-urban estate, with a church, a community building and non-church primary school are currently working together to provide food and home learning support for year 5 and 6 children at a tea and toast club afterschool. The parish and school are looking to find a way of connecting more effectively with the parents and carers of the children, to help provide them with new skills and resources to cope with the current cost of living crisis. The parish want to link with Transforming Lives for Good, initially training 5 mentors and forming a holiday time Make Lunch Club for families. At present, they do not have the financial resources to do so, so becoming a Hub would help finance this.

Recently, the school have been using local football coaches, who are now offering coaching on Saturday mornings. The vicar and church wardens are working with some local parents to establish how the church might offer bacon butties for those on the side-lines, plus an intergenerational fresh expression of church either before or after to help introduce and grow faith.





THE GROWING FAITH FOUNDATION LEARNING HUBS

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR
LEARNING HUBS, PLEASE DO GET IN
TOUCH - WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

growingfaith@churchofengland.org



For general enquiries about the work of the Foundation,
please contact:

growingfaith@churchofengland.org

Or find us on social media:

Instagram: [@thegrowingfaithfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/thegrowingfaithfoundation)

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