

Wesleyan Reform Union : Home Missions



Church - Mission Action Planning Tool

7. A place of Serving and Transforming - Salt and Light

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

You are the salt of the earth... (Matthew 5:13)

As Jesus ascended to heaven he promised his disciples they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses. Their witness would begin where they were in Jerusalem and would ripple out through Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Our mission begins in our local community - but it cannot finish here.

Growing churches are often actively engaged with those who might not go to church or are outside the existing community. Looking outward is central to mission and many growing churches are those who engage with their local community, some providing social services (including Luncheon clubs, Food Banks, Debt Counselling, Mums and Toddler groups).

Starter for 10

With a score 1 - 10 (1 completely disagree - 10 fully agree) how do you rate the following statement?

Our church makes a difference to our local community and at least one other community beyond.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Completely disagree Fully agree									

Questions

- Does our community know that we are here; do we have a good reputation as a faith community?
- Do we find ways of listening to the particular issues that grieve our individual church members about the world they live in, at least once a year?
- Are we involved with initiatives that make our community a better place to be?
- Are we sufficiently involved with our local school(s)?
- Do we actively support any Christian agencies or mission partnerships in or outside the UK?
- In general do we challenge and equip people to be witnesses to Jesus where God has called them to be and to bring the gospel to those who have never heard it before?

YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO
YES	NO

Action

What is the one thing we could do over the next 12 months to help our church make more of a difference in our community or further afield?

Has our discussion suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we help people engage with the world beyond the walls of the church?

Having discussed this area, we conclude that our Starter for 10 score is:

YES	NO
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What's in this guide?

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2. A place of Worship and Prayer
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Get the best from Your Mission Action Pack

Growth doesn't happen overnight and this is not a quick fix. Think like that and you will quickly discourage yourselves. This pack has been designed to be discussed by a small group; overseen and reviewed by the church meeting.

You need to include as many people as possible in your church without getting bogged down in meetings and discussions. So give permission and freedom for a small group to journey with this framework and help steer your church growth.

Using the Framework - a Step-By-Step Guide

If you are new to this document it may look intimidating. Don't panic. It's been designed as a tool to make it easy for you to reflect on growth.

First : get a small group together

This can be a leadership team, standing committee, shared ministry team or simply people you feel have something to offer. It will work best if you find people who represent all parts of your church life - not just from one congregation. They should have your Church Members' Blessing.

Second : hold a meeting to work through the right sections of the framework

This meeting should take no more than two hours. We have found the most helpful way for this meeting to work is for each member to read the whole booklet through before you work through each section in turn. Every section is laid out with an introduction, Starter for 10 and individual questions with summary form at the end.

Starter for 10 Questions

Before the meeting, each member should just answer the Starter for 10 questions. Do this instinctively to get a feel for the relative strengths and weaknesses of your church in that area. When you meet, use your Starter for 10 scores to start discussion. Find out what everyone has scored and then try to come to a single score that all can agree with for all eight questions. Not the average score, but one that recognises and reconciles any difference of opinion. Try to get a sense of agreement.

Individual Questions

Once you have agreed your Starter for 10 scores, work as a group to answer the individual questions for each section by:

- Ticking YES or NO to each question
- Looking at each question in turn and deciding
 - Do you have any problem areas important enough for special action over the next year?
 - Could any of your strengths be built on?
- Recording in the action box a single - SMART - action you can take

Being Smart

You need to avoid the risk of becoming too ambitious or general. A statement like “Get lots more families into church” sounds more like hope than an action. If you want more families then how will you do it? A new service? A different pattern of service? Becoming a Child Friendly Church?

To help achieve this you might like to think of taking SMART actions. These are:

- Specific** - something you can clearly gauge the success of, e.g. numbers coming to a service.
- Measurable** - something you can clearly gauge the success of, e.g. numbers coming to a service.
- Achievable** - something that is realistic rather than a pipe dream.
- Relevant** - something that is related to the section you are looking at.
- Timed** - something you have put a deadline on.

If you follow some SMART actions then you are more likely to push yourself to make it happen.

- Deciding if you need to carry out a more wide-ranging review of this area. (if you do, we recommend that this is one of your eight actions)

Summary Form

Having completed and agreed scores, questions and actions for each section, then complete the MAP Summary FORM by transferring:

- The Starter for 10 scores to the Statement table.
- The agreed actions to the Key Action table.
- Any Areas for Wider Review.

The final Summary Form should be read by the Members of the Church and a meeting of the Church Members and the Sub Group should then look to implement the actions.

Home Missions support

We are NOT expecting you to feed your findings of this Toolkit back to Church House or General Committee, this is for your church's eyes only; **but having said that, members of the Home Missions committee and / or the DOC (Development and Outreach Consultant) would be very happy to meet with you (in confidence) to support you through any stage of the process. Please email doc@thewru.co.uk**

1. A place of welcome and belonging

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)

The most direct route to growth comes from members inviting and welcoming family, friends and acquaintances, but when people visit our church for the first time, how do they find the experience?

It is often said that people who attend a service of worship will decide within minutes whether or not they will come back. This is much more than a handshake on the door or a quick “hello” at the end of the service before we go off to talk to our friends. A cross look or “excuse me, you’re sitting in my seat” translates to “go away, you’re not welcome here”. Welcome and hospitality is not the job of a few people on the welcome team, it’s the job of the whole church family.

Starter for 10

With a score 1 - 10 (1 completely disagree - 10 fully agree) how do you rate the following statement?

We give a really warm welcome to our church and people want to come back

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Completely disagree

Fully agree

Questions

1.	Does our welcome and hospitality help people to quickly feel comfortable and encourage them to come back?	YES	NO
2.	Does everyone in our church play their part in welcoming people and in helping them belong?	YES	NO
3.	Do we help newer people find their way around church and know what various activities are going on?	YES	NO
4.	Do our church members use every opportunity to invite family and friends along?	YES	NO
5.	Do we notice if people stop coming and follow this up?	YES	NO

Action

What is the one thing we could do over the next 12 months to make our church a place of greater welcome and belonging?

Has our discussion suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we welcome and help people feel they belong?

YES

NO

Having discussed this area, we conclude that our Starter for 10 score is:

2. A place of Worship and Prayer

When He was at the table with them, He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, and He disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:30-32)

To worship is to change. Worship opens our eyes and our hearts to the kind of encounter with God that changes our perspective, then changes our lives. Congregational worship needs to offer our wider community an open and accessible route to such an encounter. Its first concern is for transformation and its focus therefore should always be more mission-shaped than simply church-shaped.

Being intentional in your chosen style of worship is another factor linked to growing churches. "Style of worship, and where a church places itself in terms of its theological tradition, appear to have little or no significant link with growth, so long as there is consistency and clarity and the chosen style and tradition are wholeheartedly adopted." *

Starter for 10

With a score 1 - 10 (1 completely disagree - 10 fully agree) how do you rate the following statement?

The worship in our church is attractive, inspiring and inclusive.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Completely disagree					Fully agree				

Questions

1.	Does our regular worship draw people into the presence of God?	YES	NO
2.	Does our worship and teaching draw in and engage those who may have never worshiped in a church before?	YES	NO
3.	Is our worship child-friendly with appropriate safeguarding in place?	YES	NO
4.	Do we review the pattern and delivery of our worship on a regular basis to keep it fresh and transformational?	YES	NO
5.	Does prayer play a central part in the life of the church and in our worship	YES	NO
6.	Do we have an annual focus on prayer e.g. Prayer Day or Weekend?	YES	NO
7.	In general do we challenge and equip people to make regular time for personal prayer and Bible reading?	YES	NO

Action

What is the one thing we could do over the next 12 months to further develop our regular worship and prayer life?

Has our discussion suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we worship and pray?

YES

NO

Having discussed this area, we conclude that our Starter for 10 score is:

3. A place of Nurture, Discipleship and Vocation

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)

Christian growth and maturity doesn't just happen. Nurture and discipleship are core challenges for any church in every generation. We need to address the idea that discipleship is only for the new believer! As Christians we must realise that discipleship and growth is for the whole body of Christ, and that we are all responsible for our own and each other's growth.

Just as in a family home we cook for each other and possibly encourage one another to exercise, so we should look after each other spiritually in the church. Just as we read of Jesus as a child, sitting in the temple discussing spiritual and eternal issues with the elders, so we of all ages and positions in the church should be grappling with the current issues of the day with all ages; ready to learn from one another. Reading books, our Bible and encouraging one another in prayer and evangelism.

Starter for 10

With a score 1 - 10 (1 completely disagree - 10 fully agree) how do you rate the following statement?

Our church is a place where everyone grows and matures as a disciple of Jesus.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Completely disagree					Fully agree				

Questions

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | Do we regularly see people coming to faith in our church? | YES | NO |
| 2. | Do we have effective ways of helping people mature in their faith and their walk with God? | YES | NO |
| 3. | Do we have things in place each year that cover these three stages of discipleship? | | |
| | ➤ SOWING - offering the gospel to those on the outside of the church | YES | NO |
| | ➤ NURTURE - a regular nurture course for enquirers or new Christians offered at least once a year, e.g. Alpha - Christianity Explored - The World We All Want | YES | NO |
| | ➤ DEEPENING - growing, maturing and deepening in the faith, e.g. small groups, study groups, social acts of service | YES | NO |
| 4. | Do we help people talk about and live out their faith day by day, beyond the walls of the church? | YES | NO |
| 5. | Do we actively seek to identify and encourage people who God may be calling to lead worship, teach or pursue a particular ministry? | YES | NO |

Action

What is the one thing we could do over the next 12 months to further develop our regular worship and prayer life?

Has our discussion suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we worship and pray?

YES

NO

Having discussed this area, we conclude that our Starter for 10 score is:

4. A place with a Clear Mission and Purpose and Good Collaborative Leadership

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. (Colossians 1:28-29)

“The calling of the ordained is not to do the work of ministry for the church, but to enable and lead the ministry and mission of the whole church.”

In *From Anecdote to Evidence* the leadership qualities that stood out as being significant in relation to growth included:

- Having a vision for growth and doing new things to make it happen
- Motivating others
- Ability to train people for ministry and mission
- Having the ability to engage with outsiders and newcomers

Starter for 10

With a score 1 - 10 (1 completely disagree - 10 fully agree) how do you rate the following statement?

Our church is well led, enabling people to identify and grow their God-given gifts and talents.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Completely disagree

Fully agree

Questions

1.	Are we committed in principle and practice to involving the church family in leadership and leading worship?	YES	NO
2.	Do we have a clear vision for the future of your church and is this owned by the members of the church?	YES	NO
3.	Are we prepared to welcome and embrace change if change is required to make our vision a reality?	YES	NO
4.	Are we making good progress in developing our Mission Partnership?	YES	NO
5.	Are we committed to the wider church family in our local area and the Wesleyan Reform Union of Churches?	YES	NO
6.	Is teaching on stewardship and Christian giving done annually?	YES	NO
7.	Is there a moment in the year, or a gift day, to pray about your budget for the next year and invite people to review giving to the vision of the church?	YES	NO

Action

What is the one thing we could do over the next 12 months to develop and empower collaborative/shared ministry and leadership?

Has our discussion suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we share and empower people in leadership?

YES

NO

Having discussed this area, we conclude that our Starter for 10 score is:

5. A place of Empowerment and Involvement for your whole church

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

An ancient Christian writer called Irenaeus once said, “The glory of God is man or woman fully alive.” God not only calls his people, he also grants us gifts and abilities, which are not restricted or constrained by age, gender, or ordination. God’s gifts are to be used in his service in our church certainly, but also in our place of work, our home and our leisure.

In *From Anecdote to Evidence*, research shows that lay involvement and good quality lay leadership is linked to growth.

Making disciples is foundational to all of this, so we must make this a priority in discipling all those who believe and trust in The Lord Jesus Christ, children, young people and adults. We are the priesthood of all believers.

Starter for 10

With a score 1 - 10 (1 completely disagree - 10 fully agree) how do you rate the following statement?

Our church is a place where people grow their gifts and flourish and vocations are nurtured.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Completely disagree					Fully agree				

Questions

1.	Do we encourage all our people to discern their gifts (spiritual and practical) and to have confidence in using them in the service of the Kingdom?	YES	NO
2.	Do we have have a clear plan in place to make and grow disciples of Jesus?	YES	NO
3.	Do we have an on-going network of small groups to support each other in our personal discipleship growth?	YES	NO
4.	Do we encourage everyone in the church family to be actively involved in mission, ministry and leadership?	YES	NO
5.	Do we regularly share roles to allow others to develop gifting?	YES	NO
6.	Do we help our volunteers and the church family to get the appropriate level to training and support if they require it?	YES	NO
7.	Do we support Christian discipleship in the world of work, including those in our church with leadership responsibilities outside the church?	YES	NO

Action

What is the one thing we could do over the next 12 months to help us to recognise and release more lay people as volunteers and leaders?

Has our discussion suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we share and empower and release people in leadership?

YES

NO

Having discussed this area, we conclude that our Starter for 10 score is:

6. A Base for Evangelism, Outreach and Numerical Growth

.....praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

Being intentional in prioritising numerical growth and spiritual depth is essential. Both go hand in hand. Just as growth in nature is a sign of health and vitality, so we welcome every sign of spiritual and numerical growth in the life of a church. If it is to happen, we have to be intentional about it, sowing the seeds so that God can make them grow. Always looking beyond the horizon of where we are now.

Start by evaluating the quality and effectiveness of what's already in place, then asking what are the next steps we need to take to grow?

Starter for 10

With a score 1 - 10 (1 completely disagree - 10 fully agree) how do you rate the following statement?

Our church is committed to growth.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Completely disagree									Fully agree

Questions

1.	Do we help church members to invite others to church?	YES	NO
2.	Do we play a part in the spiritual life of our wider community? e.g. Harvest, Memorials, school and civic services	YES	NO
3.	Do we build good supportive and ongoing relationships with baptism families, couples coming for marriage, and those we connect with through bereavement?	YES	NO
4.	Do we have any specific plans to connect with and reach out to people as yet untouched by our church?	YES	NO
5.	Have we given any thought to starting an alternative style of worship or church? e.g. Cafe Church, Church Plant, All age services	YES	NO

Action

What is the one thing we could do over the next 12 months to grow our church numerically?

Has our discussion suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we help people to share their Christian faith?

YES

NO

In general have we identified and started to address our biggest obstacle to growth?

YES

NO

Having discussed this area, we conclude that our Starter for 10 score is:

7. A place of Serving and Transforming - Salt and Light

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
(Acts 1:8)

You are the salt of the earth.... (Matthew 5:13)

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1.	Does our community know that we are here; do we have a good reputation as a faith community?	YES	NO
2.	Do we find ways of listening to the particular issues that grieve our individual church members about the world they live in, at least once a year?	YES	NO
3.	Are we involved with initiatives that make our community a better place to be?	YES	NO
4.	Are we sufficiently involved with our local school(s)?	YES	NO
5.	Do we actively support any Christian agencies or mission partnerships in or outside the UK?	YES	NO
6.	In general do we challenge and equip people to be witnesses to Jesus where God has called them to be and to bring the gospel to those who have never heard it before?	YES	NO

Action

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Has our discussion suggested a need for a more wide-ranging review of the way in which we help people engage with the world beyond the walls of the church?

YES

NO

Having discussed this area, we conclude that our Starter for 10 score is:

8. A place Actively Seeking to Engage with Children and Teenagers

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. (Mark 10)

Sometimes our Churches can be very difficult and inaccessible places for children, teenagers and their families. We have to address this if the church is going to replace the existing generations of churchgoers. There is an urgent need to focus on children, young people and their parents and a challenge to identify how the church can best invest in people, programmes and strategies which will encourage young people actively to continue exploring faith. Churches that offer programmes for children and teenagers are most likely to grow.

Starter for 10

With a score 1 - 10 (1 completely disagree - 10 fully agree) how do you rate the following statement?

Our church is good at making children and young families feel welcome.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Completely disagree					Fully agree				

Questions

1. If we have children in our church, are we doing the following things to keep them into their teens and young adulthood?
 - a. Worship services designed for youth or children

YES	NO
-----	----
 - b. Youth programmes

YES	NO
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 - c. Camps and retreats

YES	NO
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 - d. Are there those in the church dedicated to youth and children ministries paid and/or voluntary?

YES	NO
-----	----
2. Do we have in place each year the opportunities for children and teenagers to explore these three stages of discipleship?
 - a. SOWING : Putting on or attending events and activities to reach the children in our community?

YES	NO
-----	----
 - b. NURTURE : Opportunities for children and young people to explore the Christian faith leading to salvation

YES	NO
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 - c. DEEPENING : Growing, maturing and deepening in the faith

YES	NO
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3. If we don't have children in our church are we trying to attract young families to church by?
 - a. Having all age / family services, perhaps once a month?

YES	NO
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 - b. Holding special child-focused services to attract families who wouldn't normally come to church? (e.g. Messy Church)

YES	NO
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 - c. Making children and families feel welcome in the main service? (e.g. children's corner/play bags)

YES	NO
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4. Are we making the most of our baptism connections?

YES	NO
-----	----
5. Are we building good links with our local schools which connect children and families with church?

YES	NO
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