The Catholic Diocese of Nottingham



Go make disciples

A Little Handbook of Digital Mission

for parishes and chaplaincies of the Diocese of Nottingham

Photo: CMcG

Go
make
disciples

“

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.

MATTHEW 28:19

Contents

A word from Bishop Patrick 5

Part One · The call The Mission Plan in brief · The digital parish 6

Part Two · The craft Twenty-five principles from Nottingham Cathedral 12

Part Three · The themes 14

Part Four · The Digital Mission Lab What the Lab gives you · What we ask · Being commissioned 30

At the back Key contacts and links 36



A WORD FROM

Bishop Patrick McKinney

Bishop of Nottingham

Photo: Luke Potter for the Diocese of Nottingham

A word from Bishop Patrick

Dear Digital Missionary,

Since our diocesan Digital Missionaries work began with some of you on Ash Wednesday this year, I've been struck by your creativity, your innovation, and your genuine ability to communicate the life of your parish to those who may not yet be in our pews. While I've shared the vision for our Diocesan Mission Plan, I know that for it to truly resonate with people, I need communicators like you to bring it to life in your local context.

So I invite you to come alongside me as a Diocesan Digital Missionary: to put your creativity at the service of the Mission Plan, and to take its central themes of Encounter, Discipleship and Mission into the digital spaces where your community already gathers. St John Henry Newman wrote that "God has created me to do Him some definite service." Our Mission Plan hopes that each of us will come to understand that the gifts and charisms we bring are an essential contribution to the building up of the Body of Christ. Digital mission is one of those gifts, and the Synodal process has asked the Church to recognise it as a new charism, emerging in our own time. You're not volunteers helping out the communications office. You've a gift from the Holy Spirit, and this diocese needs it. You're also, in a real sense, my eyes and ears. On a given Sunday I see the people who are in church; you see the people who are not.

Our goal is to take the spiritual foundation of the Mission Plan "off the page" and into the daily lives of our people. Grounded in the Eucharist and the power of the Holy Spirit, your task is to show that our faith is visibly alive. This handbook has been designed to support you in that mission. Within these pages, you'll find ideas, prompts and liturgical hooks intended to spark your imagination. I encourage you to use these as a springboard for your own authentic storytelling, using your unique "local accent" to share the Gospel. Please don't try to sound like the Diocese, and certainly don't try to sound like me. Sound like you, and like your local people.

I firmly believe that by working together, we can create a digital culture of encounter that leads others to a life-transforming meeting with Jesus Christ and so to the heart of the Church. Thank you for your "yes", for your generosity of spirit, and for your willingness to help our diocese grow as a community of missionary disciples. Before you get busy again with your phone, I'd love you to pray this little prayer I give to young people at Confirmation: "Lord, what today are you and I going to do together?"

+ Patrick
Bishop of Nottingham

PART ONE

The call

The Mission Plan in brief · What the Bishop is hoping for · The digital parish

The Mission Plan in brief

Bishop Patrick's five-year Mission Plan, Go, Make Disciples, is built on three spiritual themes, underpinned by two realities that make them liveable.

Encounter: experiencing God's love. Every person is helped to encounter, ever more deeply, Jesus' love and to choose personally to follow Him.

Discipleship: supporting ongoing conversion. Every person is supported in growing daily as Jesus' disciple; there are prayerful and reverent liturgies and clear discipleship pathways, both at the parish level and in small groups.

Mission: nurturing witness of life. Every person is enabled, through greater openness to the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to give witness to the power of Jesus' love and mercy and to help others to know and follow Jesus.

The Holy Spirit and **the Eucharist**: we are enabled to live out these three themes by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual nourishment of the Eucharist.

Every post you make sits somewhere in that picture. The Plan is at the heart of everything we do; how you bring it to life in your parish is yours to choose. Think of it as freedom within a framework. Sometimes you will name the theme, and naming it helps people build a shared vocabulary and recognise the Plan as a living thing rather than a document. Often the strongest post will never use the word; the choice of what to point the camera at will carry it. Both are right. The vocabulary is one tool among several.

The Mission Plan is written down in full at dioceseofnottingham.uk/missionplan, and we encourage you to read it. It has been at the heart of everything the Digital Missionaries pilot has done. Part Three of this handbook gives you a snapshot of it, quoting the Plan at the head of every chapter, so that you can orientate your own communications and storytelling within it.

Reading the signs of the times

The Church has always been called to read the signs of the times: to notice where people actually are, and to go and meet them there. It is what she has done in every age, learning the language of a new culture so that the Gospel can take flesh within it. Today one of the clearest signs is simply this: people, and the young most of all, now live a great part of their lives in the digital world. It is not a side room away from real life. For many, it is where life happens.

THE SIGN OF THE TIMES

6h 20m
The time 18–24s spend online every day
Ofcom, Online Nation 2025, December 2025

60%
of UK adults get news through social media and video platforms
Ofcom, News Consumption in the UK 2026, September 2026

74%
of UK adults online use WhatsApp every day
Ofcom, Online Nation 2025, December 2025

1 in 5
UK adults now use AI tools to get their news
Ofcom, News Consumption in the UK 2026, September 2026

78% of adults preparing for baptism in France said social media played a part in their journey
Famille Chrétienne and Aleteia, survey of 900 catechumens, April 2025

The space

The Synod has named what many of us already had a sense of. The digital world is not merely an area of activity or a set of gadgets to be mastered; it is a culture, with its own dynamics, languages and ways of relating. And a culture is not a noticeboard to keep updated. It is a land to be inhabited and loved, its language patiently learned, the way missionaries have always done.

> *"The digital environment is not merely a set of tools to be mastered; it is a culture."*
>
> **The Synod's Study Group on the Mission in the Digital Environment, 2026**
>
> So your account is not an optional extra or a noticeboard. It is a place the Church is now sent.

Because it is a culture, the Church now recognises it, in the words of the Synod's Final Document, as "a crucial dimension of the Church's witness… and an emerging missionary field". This is not something a parish takes on if it happens to have a spare volunteer, but rather it is a field we are sent to, and a calling. The Synod's study group names digital mission "a real vocation" and asks the Church to recognise it "as a new charism within the life of the Church".

The people

It is a missionary field that is full of people. The Synod is emphatic that digital spaces are "as real as the physical environment in which we also live", and that people go there not only for distraction but to search, genuinely, for God, for belonging, for meaning and purpose. The next generation is already there. They are, quite literally, "born connected". They are not a demographic to be captured. They are persons, loved by God, many of them quietly seeking, some of them wounded.

> *"… go wherever there is a heart that waits, seeks, and is in need."*
>
> **Pope Leo XIV, to digital missionaries, July 2025**
>
> The people you are sent to are already there, already searching. You are not interrupting; you are answering.

This is why the measure of the work is never about the number of followers. Behind every account is a face. Cardinal Parolin put it starkly to the digital missionaries: every person is "a face, not a profile… their history is a sacred history, not simply a collection of data". Mission online is the same mission as mission anywhere: to love the person in front of you, especially the one on the edge, and to help them encounter Jesus Christ.

> *"Always look for the 'suffering flesh of Christ' in every brother and sister you encounter online."*
>
> **Pope Leo XIV**
>
> Behind every profile is a person. Go, as the Good Samaritan did, toward the wounded and the overlooked.

The call

So what are we sent to do? Not to broadcast, and not to win arguments. To be present: to be a prayerful, hope-filled presence in a space that is often neither. To make the first, gentle proclamation, and then to build a bridge, because the point of a post is never the post. It is the person who reaches for something real in their own parish and walks in. A faith met only on a screen, Pope Leo warns, risks staying "disembodied", never rooted in the sacraments or in real relationships. Everything in this book, and everything in our Digital Missionaries network, is aimed at helping people through that door.

> *"Renew your commitment to nourish Christian hope in social networks and online spaces."*
>
> **Pope Leo XIV**
>
> You are sent to carry hope into these spaces. It is a real vocation, not a hobby.

We are not sent alone. The Church asks bishops to walk with their digital missionaries, and dioceses to gather them into networks so that no one does this in isolation. In Nottingham, Bishop Patrick has been at the heart of our Digital Missionaries network since it first began to emerge, and over the past year the Diocese has been cultivating it. Part Four sets out what it offers you through the Digital Mission Lab. The Pope even gives it its name.

> *"Our mission, your mission, is to nurture a culture of Christian humanism, and to do so together. This is the beauty of the 'network' for all of us."*
>
> **Pope Leo XIV**
>
> Done together, not alone. The network you are joining is the Church's own instinct.

With our eyes open. The same Synod names the darker realities honestly: platforms shaped by algorithms that "can isolate us in echo chambers and manipulate us", that monetise attention and can foster division rather than communion. We go into the digital environment rooted in prayer, the sacraments and real community. We keep our eyes on Jesus, who gives our mission its sense and meaning, and its focus on the person walking through our doors, digital or in person: never just the numbers on a screen.

What the Bishop is hoping for

When the Digital Missionaries pilot began in Lent 2026, Bishop Patrick invited parish communicators to put their creativity "at the service of the Mission Plan". In his words, the aim is "to take the spiritual foundation of the Mission Plan 'off the page' and into the daily lives of our people", and "to create a digital culture of encounter that leads others to a life-transforming meeting with Jesus Christ and so to the heart of the Church."



Photo: Liz Gutierrez for the Diocese of Nottingham

The digital parish

A parish is the Church's presence in a given territory, and that extends to its digital footprint. Today, people quite literally inhabit this space; it is part of who they are, how they view the world and how they do life. So where and how is the parish present in this reality? How is the parish present and responsive in the digital homes and realities of its sons and daughters? How do we begin to think of our digital presence as a digital parish?

Pope Francis wrote that the parish "is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach."

The Synod's study group says the same. "At its best, digital engagement does not replace in-person encounters but can instead lead to them." It asks that digital mission be recognised as part of parish life, and that parishes "extend that hospitality to those who engage online". Digital and in-person, it says, "should be intertwined".

Nottingham Cathedral has seen what that looks like. Its handbook describes a parish's accounts as "a non-threatening, safe digital doorway" into the community: a bridge people walk over, from a first look online to an in-person experience of faith. Its Journey in Faith group now comes from across the city and well beyond. Some travel past several other Catholic parishes, through what the handbook calls a "digital desert", because the Cathedral is the parish they met online and where they feel at home.

The shift is from parish accounts as an extension of the newsletter to the digital parish as a privileged place of encounter and engagement with those not yet in our pews. There are people in your local area waiting to hear the gospel, and your digital ministry could open the door for them into a life lived with and for Christ in the heart of his Church.

And if you have a heart for mission and a mobile phone, you are ready to get started.

"It is not simply a matter of generating content, but of creating an encounter of hearts."

Pope Leo XIV, to digital missionaries
29 July 2025

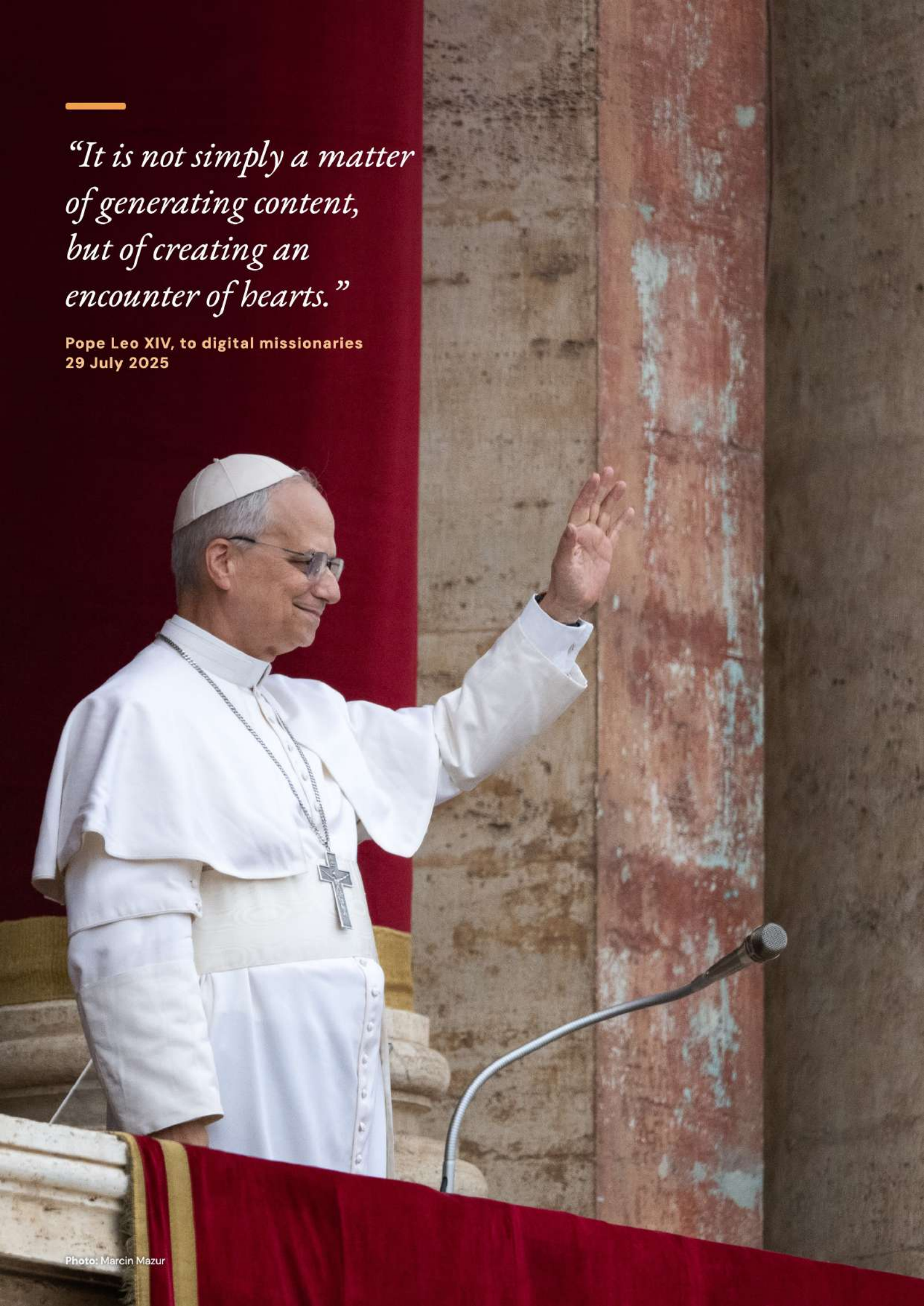


Photo: Marcin Mazur

PART TWO

The craft

Twenty-five principles from Nottingham Cathedral's Little Handbook of Parish Social Communications, the companion to this book. The Cathedral is a parish too; where it says "parish", read "yours".

Getting started · Content creation and curation · Review and keep building · Final thoughts

Twenty-five principles

Three years of trial and error at Nottingham Cathedral, boiled down to twenty-five principles. Here they are at a glance; the handbook gives each one its story, its practical tips and a real example.

1 · GETTING STARTED

1. **Getting started**
   Pause and pray about your purpose before you post.
2. **Think about your why**
   Social media is a tool for mission, never an end in itself.
3. **Define your audience**
   Speak to the Curious; talk to everyone and you reach no one.
4. **Shape your offer**
   An offer, not an ask. No strings attached.
5. **Pick your platform**
   Choose one, and be there well.
6. **Work with your website**
   Get Google and Mass times right first; a link page bridges the gaps.

2 · CONTENT CREATION AND CURATION

7. **Follow your favourites**
   Borrow good ideas, then make them your own.
8. **Pick your content pillars**
   A few themes that free you rather than fence you in.
9. **An invitation to an experience over an infographic**
   Show people what it feels like to be there, not a poster.
10. **Invest in good visual content**
    A good photo is the first welcome through the door.
11. **Craft compelling captions**
    Pair every caption with an easy next step.
12. **Drop the jargon**
    Use the words of the people you hope to reach.
13. **Use key words**
    Searchable captions carry you beyond your followers.
14. **See your parish as a social actor**
    Join the local conversation, and keep the comments open.
15. **Work with what you've got**
    Your real parish is enough. Own it.
16. **Plan ahead**
    Look at the month with the Ordo; batch the coming week on Sunday.
17. **Done is better than perfect**
    Consistency is key: just keep showing up.
18. **Breaking news**
    When something big happens, journalists check their socials first.
19. **Use of paid adverts**
    A small, well-targeted spend can fill a carol service.
20. **Use of AI in content creation**
    Keep it human: real connects more than polished.

3 · REVIEW AND KEEP BUILDING

21. **Pay attention**
    Watch what reaches non-followers, and who walks in.
22. **Incremental development**
    One platform, one audience, one offer. Then grow.

4 · FINAL THOUGHTS

23. **Enjoy it!**
    Stay rooted in the joy of knowing Christ.
24. **Be patient**
    The first year is the hardest. Trust the process.
25. **Build community**
    We were made to do mission together.

NOW READ THE BOOK

These are the headlines. The stories behind them are where the learning is: the photo of the Bishop that beat the poster, the plain-English invitation that filled Journey in Faith, the rural parish whose Evening Prayer went from five to twenty. **Nottingham Cathedral's Little Handbook of Parish Social Communications** comes with this book. Read it with your phone in your hand.

PART THREE

The themes

Five chapters, one for each theme of the Mission Plan. Each opens with what the Plan says, so you know what the Bishop is asking; then what it looks like in a parish; then ideas. Use them in any order, in any month.

Encounter · Discipleship · Mission · The Holy Spirit · The Eucharist



PART THREE · THE THEMES

Encounter

Experiencing God's love

> *"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love."*
> John 15:9

"Every person is helped to encounter, ever more deeply, Jesus' love and to choose personally to follow Him."
Go, Make Disciples, the Encounter action

What the Plan says

The starting point for everything the Diocese hopes to see is our own personal encounter with Christ Jesus in prayer, and our openness to be guided by the Holy Spirit in the daily living out of our faith. Bishop Patrick is convinced that we are each being called to place the need for an ever-deeper personal encounter with Jesus Christ at the heart of our lives, our diocesan structures, and our ways of doing things. It remains his experience as a priest, and now as a bishop, that many Catholics still need to be helped to believe that God loves them personally.

The Plan quotes Pope Francis:

> *I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them... whenever we take a step towards Jesus we come to realise that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms.*
> **Evangelii Gaudium, 3**

In practice, the Plan hopes it will become increasingly normal for Catholics across the Diocese to know personally God's love, to have a solid daily prayer time, and to turn frequently to the presence of God in the sacraments and the scriptures.

Photo: Liz Gutierrez for the Diocese of Nottingham

What it looks like in a parish

The Mission Plan describes what it hopes to see. Each of these is a place to point your camera.

The daily rhythm of prayer.
Prayer isn't just for Sundays; it's a normal, daily habit that people actually talk about. A "day in the life" snippet showing a morning prayer corner, or a quick caption: "One way my daily prayer time changed my perspective today."

The power of Adoration.
People of all ages spending quiet time before the Blessed Sacrament (Adoration: time spent in prayer before the consecrated host) and inviting others to join them. A peaceful seven-second reel of a candlelit chapel. Caption: "Found ten minutes of peace today. Have you ever tried Adoration? Come with me next time."

Mass as a life-giving anchor.
Sunday Mass is the highlight of the week, but weekday Mass is becoming a routine for busy people too. A "POV" of a fifteen-minute lunchtime or early-morning weekday Mass, and how it fits a busy day.

Faith in schools and chaplaincies.
Students and young people at Mass or Adoration, making faith a visible part of education. A photo of a school chapel or a shout-out to the chaplaincy team. (Consent first, always, for every young face.)

Scripture sharing and small groups.
People gathering to read the Bible together and seeing their lives change. A "behind the scenes" photo of a Bible study group: coffee, Bibles and smiles. Share the verse the group discussed this week.

Signposting for the journey.
Clear next steps for those wanting deeper spiritual support. A "Did you know?" post about a leaflet on prayer styles, or how to find a spiritual director.

The lens. Look for the moment grace lands on an ordinary person, then make the next step easy to find. Encountering Jesus isn't a one-off event but a continuous journey that happens in the quiet of Adoration, the community of the Mass, and the busyness of the school or workplace.

Your ideas

Space for your own prompts, notes, and what you'll try first.

Ideas to get you started

Springboards, not scripts. Take one, change it, or let it spark something of your own. They are yours for any month of the year.

The honest prayer. A photo of a half-written journal entry or a person sitting with their head in their hands (peaceful, not distressed). Caption: "God doesn't need your 'holy' voice. He wants your voice. Tell Him what you're actually afraid of, what you're actually hoping for. That is where the encounter begins."

The love letter. A close-up of a Bible open at a verse about comfort (Isaiah 43:1, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you…"). Prompt: "Read this verse slowly. Imagine Jesus saying it directly to you, using your name. That feeling? That's Him."

Wasting time with Him. An empty chair next to a lit candle, or a quiet view out of a window. Caption: "When you love someone, you don't always need an agenda. You just want to be near them. Spend five minutes today just 'wasting time' with Jesus. No list, no requests, just be loved."

My encounter story. A thirty-second video of a parishioner answering one question: "When did you first realise Jesus loved you?"

The invitation to silence. A photo of the empty church or a quiet corner. "You can't follow a voice you cannot hear." Invite people to stop for five minutes.

Love in action. A photo of a crucifix. "This is what love looks like. He chose the Cross for you. Will you choose Him?"

The why. A parishioner, on video or in a caption: "Don't just tell us that you are Catholic; tell us why you choose to follow Jesus today. What did He do for you?"

The distraction detox. "What is the one thing blocking your view of Jesus right now? Phone, worry, noise. Put it down for ten minutes."

Name your Simon. Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry the cross. "Who helped you carry yours when you couldn't? Tag the person who helped you encounter Jesus' love in a hard time."

The confessional queue. A discreet photo of the line for Confession, backs only or blurred. "The most powerful encounter with Love often happens here. Don't be afraid."

Still healing today. A candle in the Adoration chapel. "Lourdes is where people go to be healed, and the One they go to meet is just as present in your own parish. What do you need healing for today?"

The grace at home. A fifteen-second reel walking past the parish noticeboard: Confession on Saturday, Anointing on request, Mass every morning. "You don't have to travel to reach for grace. It's all right here."

The first to see Him. St Mary Magdalene came in grief and left as the first witness of the Resurrection. One honest line: "Who first told you that you were loved, and made you believe it?"

Carry it home. "A visit, a lift to Mass, ten minutes with someone housebound. Who could you carry grace to this week?"



PART THREE · THE THEMES

Discipleship

Supporting ongoing conversion

> *"If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples, you will learn the truth, and the truth will set you free."*
>
> John 8:31

"Every person is supported in growing daily as Jesus' disciple; there are prayerful and reverent liturgies and clear discipleship pathways, both at the parish level and in small groups." **Go, Make Disciples, the Discipleship action**

What the Plan says

Once a person has encountered Christ and has made a decision to follow Him, the process of ongoing conversion can begin to develop. The Plan describes a disciple in three ways: primarily the student of a teacher, who wishes to learn from Jesus and grow in relationship with Him; a co-worker with Jesus, through whom God's love, care, compassion, healing and forgiveness can be ministered to others; and a grateful recipient of God's merciful and healing forgiveness.

When celebrating Confirmation, Bishop Patrick has been encouraging the candidates, especially the young people, to begin each day with a simple prayer: "so Lord, what today are you and I going to do together?"

In practice, the Plan hopes that over five years people are helped to live as a student of Jesus, with clear pathways so that the "next step" is easy to identify and act upon; the support of a parish community, in larger gatherings and in small groups; and reverent, transformative liturgies that strengthen those already practising their faith and which also welcome newcomers.

Photo: NDCYS

What it looks like in a parish

The Mission Plan describes what it hopes to see. Each of these is a place to point your camera.

Clear next steps and formation.
People being equipped to live their faith with purpose and joy. A "faith hack" video: a resource, a book or a practice that helped you take the next step. "Discipleship isn't a destination; it's a journey. Here's what I'm learning this week..."

The power of the small group.
Journeying together, in large parish gatherings or small faith-sharing groups. A photo of open Bibles, coffee mugs and laughter. "I don't do this alone. So grateful for this group that keeps me accountable."

Healing through Reconciliation.
Stories of freedom and new life through Confession, made accessible for busy people. Without private details, share the feeling of a fresh start. A church door: "If you're looking for freedom and a second chance, the door is always open."

Mass as fuel for the week.
Sunday Mass as something that nourishes us so we can be sent out. A "homily highlight": one sentence from Sunday's sermon that gave you a practical tool for Monday morning.

Responding to the call.
Real people saying yes to God in marriage, priesthood, religious life or the dedicated single life. A "vocation spotlight": a couple, your priest, a dedicated volunteer. "What was the moment you knew God was calling you to this?"

Living in the Spirit.
People living in right relationship with Christ and others. A "peace in the chaos" post: a moment where faith helped you handle a difficult situation with grace or forgiveness.

The lens. Look for growth and for the local: a small step, a holy place close to home, a long faithfulness. Being a follower of Jesus is a lifelong process of learning, and we are better when we do it together. Show the tools of the trade: the Bibles, the small groups, the conversations, and the joy of growing closer to God.

Your ideas

Space for your own prompts, notes, and what you'll try first.

Ideas to get you started

Springboards, not scripts. Take one, change it, or let it spark something of your own. They are yours for any month of the year.

The small group spotlight. A candid but unobtrusive photo of a prayer group, Bible study or soup lunch. "Discipleship doesn't happen alone. Join a small group this month."

The beauty of liturgy. A high-quality photo of reverence: incense rising, the priest's hands, the altar candles. "In the beauty of the liturgy, we learn how to worship."

Visualising reverence. A slow-motion video of the thurible (the incense burner) swinging, or the elevation of the chalice. "Reverence isn't just rules; it's love in motion. How does the liturgy help you grow?"

The parish pathway. A simple carousel. Slide 1: Sunday Mass. Slide 2: a coffee and a conversation. Slide 3: a small group, Bible study or the Alpha or Sycamore course. "Where are you on the path? Take one step this month."

Three ways to go deeper. A clear, informative carousel: "3 ways to go deeper at [Parish Name]": join the choir, come to Tuesday Adoration, sign up for the course.

Daily growth checklist. A story template: "Did you pray today? Did you read Scripture? Did you help someone?" People screenshot and tick.

The daily disciple routine. Ask the priest or a lay leader: "What is the first thing you do when you wake up to remember you are a disciple?" Share their answer.

Volunteer spotlight. A reader, a cleaner, a catechist. "Discipleship is a verb. Thank you to those who serve our family."

The reading list. Three books recommended by the parish team. "Disciples are learners. Pick one of these to grow this month."

A pilgrimage you can walk to. Your own parish church, a local shrine, a holy well, the grave of a holy priest. "You don't have to travel to another country to walk holy ground. Where is the pilgrimage on your doorstep?"

In their footsteps. Tell the story of one local holy man or woman, a martyr, a holy priest, or the faithful soul your parish still remembers, who answered the call to make disciples right here. "They did it in their own time and their own way. That call is ours now."

The long wait. St Monica prayed for years for a son who had wandered far from God, and he became St Augustine. For anyone praying for someone who has drifted: "Keep going. Monica did, for years. The door stays open."

The quiet disciple. St Joseph didn't say much, but he did everything God asked. "How can we model his silent obedience today?"



“Christ has no body on earth now but yours,
no hands but yours,
no feet but yours.”

Attributed to St Teresa of Avila, quoted in Go, Make Disciples

Photo: Marcin Mazur



PART THREE · THE THEMES

Mission

Nurturing witness of life

> *"When the Advocate comes whom I shall send to you from the Father... he will be my witness, and you too will be my witnesses."*
>
> John 15:26-27

"Every person is enabled, through greater openness to the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to give witness to the power of Jesus' love and mercy and to help others to know and follow Jesus. In the parish, people would be better equipped for outreach and mission into their families and into our schools, hospitals, prisons, and the local neighbourhood, and they would be helped to engage more confidently both with those who have drifted away from the Church and with those who know nothing about God." **Go, Make Disciples, the Mission action**

What the Plan says

The call to mission comes from the Risen Christ: "Go, make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). The Plan puts it this way: "the Church doesn't have a mission, the mission has a church." Our role is to bear witness to Christ in the way we live our lives, and to share our faith with others so that they too become disciples.

The Plan is honest about the difficulty. Most of us are familiar with prayer, Mass and serving our parish; many of us are less comfortable exploring questions of faith with others or talking about our own relationship with God. Some of us feel unskilled in this area. Yet Christ invites each of us to play our part.

In practice, the Plan hopes that parishes, chaplaincies, schools, small groups and families become ever-more mission-focused communities, offering "easy ways in" for people to hear and accept the Good News, whatever their starting point, and engaging in practical outreach that meets the needs of the wider community.

Photo: Joe Martin for the Diocese of Nottingham

What it looks like in a parish

The Mission Plan describes what it hopes to see. Each of these is a place to point your camera.

Faith in action: the everyday witness.
People living out their faith in their jobs, homes and social circles. A "day in the life" video showing how faith shaped one decision at work. "Being a missionary disciple doesn't mean moving abroad; it means loving my neighbour in the office today."

Innovative outreach to families and young people.
New, creative ways to help people discover they are loved by God. A "Pizza and Prayer" night, a youth-led social justice project, a creative school assembly.

Meeting practical needs.
Food banks, homeless outreach, supporting local families. Don't just show the work; interview a volunteer about why they do it. "We serve because Christ first served us."

Unity in the community.
Working alongside other Christians or faith groups to serve the local area. A joint walk of witness, a shared project with a neighbouring church.

Confidence to speak.
People with the desire and confidence to talk about Jesus. A thirty-second mini-testimony: "How has following Jesus changed the way you see the world?"

The power source.
Recognising that the Holy Spirit does the heavy lifting. A candle lit for the intentions of the neighbourhood. "Before we talk to people about God, we talk to God about people."

The lens. Look outward, to the open door and the easy way in for someone who is not here yet. We want to see the Church with its doors open, engaging with the world and speaking hope into difficult spaces. Show that being a disciple is an active, courageous and joyful adventure.

Your ideas

Space for your own prompts, notes, and what you'll try first.

Ideas to get you started

Springboards, not scripts. Take one, change it, or let it spark something of your own. They are yours for any month of the year.

Welcome home. For anyone who has drifted. A warm, non-judgemental photo of the open doors. "Been a while? That's okay. The door is open. Welcome home!"

Mission in the neighbourhood. A photo taken outside the church, of a local street sign or landmark. "Lord, bless the streets of [Town]. Help us bring Your light here."

The hidden mission. A pyx (the small container for taking Communion to the sick) or a hospital chaplain. "Carrying Jesus to those who cannot come to us. Pray for our hospital and prison chaplains today."

School connection. A repost from the local Catholic school, or children's artwork in the church. "Our schools are mission fields."

Mission field: the office. A laptop, a hard hat, a steering wheel. "This is your mission field. You might be the only Gospel your colleagues read today."

The uncomfortable prayer. "Pray this today: 'Holy Spirit, nudge me to speak to someone who needs You.' Then watch what happens."

The drifted friend. A gentle text graphic. "Thinking of someone who hasn't been to church in a while? Don't preach. Just text them: 'Thinking of you, hope you're okay.' Start there."

Confident witness. A fifteen-second tip on how to say grace in a restaurant without being awkward. Small acts of public witness give glory to God.

Equipping the saints. A specific call for items: rosaries for the prison chaplaincy, cards for the hospital.

Come and see. The open door of your church. "Curious about faith? You don't have to have it all worked out to walk in." Put the Journey in Faith details just beneath.

Follow me. St Matthew was called mid-shift and left everything at his desk. "It is never too late, and you are never too far in. The invitation still stands."

The Journey in Faith micro-campaign

Journey in Faith (RCIA) is the way in for anyone exploring becoming Catholic, and most parishes open a course in September. Last year the Cathedral ran a simple "no strings attached" welcome; 57 people signed up, 35 have since become Catholic, and most found their way in through social media. Any parish with a course can run the same thing locally, in five beats.

The audience. Aim at the curious person who is quietly wondering, not the already committed.

The promise. "No strings. Just come and ask." A welcome, not a form to fill in.

The spine. Start about three weeks before the course opens and build. "Welcome" first, then the invitation.

The content. Three posts across three weeks. Week one, the honest question. Week two, one real face who walked it. Week three, the clear invitation, with the date, time and place.

The one ask. A single next step: a name to message or a date to turn up. "Turn up with your questions. There's tea, and no pressure to commit to anything."

Then count the enquirers who say they saw it online. **That is the number the Diocese is watching for.**



"The Church enters digital spaces not to proselytize but to witness to the Risen Lord."

The Synod's Study Group on the Mission in the Digital Environment, Final Report

Photo: Marcin Mazur



PART THREE · THE THEMES

The Holy Spirit

The wind in our sails

> *"Do not be afraid to unfurl your sails to the breath of the Spirit."*
>
> Pope St John Paul II

"The vitality and future of our parishes, and of our diocese as a whole, and our capacity to share more fully in Christ's mission, depends very much on our desire and ability to be faithful to His call by cooperating with the Holy Spirit." **Go, Make Disciples**

What the Plan says

The first disciples, huddled together in the Upper Room, were people who had heard, spent time with, and accepted Jesus. But they were afraid. They needed first to receive the Holy Spirit so that their lives could be transformed and empowered. It was as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that the Church was born at Pentecost and quickly grew. The same is true in our own lives: that Spirit has been given to us in baptism and Confirmation, and that guidance, understood, sought and responded to, can change our lives.

The Plan is candid: "When our expectation of what the Holy Spirit can do in our lives is low, then little will happen." And it is realistic: with fewer priests and, in some parishes, fewer active parishioners, "we cannot continue doing everything we once did. But in prayer, and guided by the Holy Spirit, Bishop Patrick believes we must ask more and more for the grace to discover what God wishes to see happen in our lives and throughout our diocese."

The lens. Capture movement. Show a Church that is alive and expectant, and how the Spirit is leading a parish beyond its limitations. Look for the moment fear becomes courage.

Photo: Marcin Mazur for Nottingham Cathedral

Ideas to get you started

Springboards, not scripts. Take one, change it, or let it spark something of your own. They are yours for any month of the year.

The vitality check. A fast-paced reel of the life of the parish: coffee mornings, youth groups, flower arranging. Upbeat audio. "Alive in the Spirit. When we cooperate with Him, our community blooms."

Mary's fiat. A statue of Mary. "She gave the ultimate 'yes' to the Spirit. What is God calling you to say yes to this month?"

Confirmation season. The Bishop or priest with the confirmands (red ties, sashes). The future leaders of the Diocese receiving the Spirit. (Consent first for every young face.)

Come Holy Spirit. A simple, powerful graphic prayer. "We cannot do this alone. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful."

The call to vocation. A priest, a religious sister, a married couple. "How do you listen to God's call in the noise of daily life?"

The future is here. A baptism or a young family. "The vitality of our parish depends on passing the flame. Pray for our newest members today."

Co-workers with God. The flower team or the choir at practice. "We provide the hands; He provides the grace. That is how we cooperate with the Spirit."

Pentecost colours. A collage of parishioners wearing red on Pentecost Sunday. "One Spirit, many faces."

Listen to the call. An open Bible. "The Spirit speaks through Scripture. What word is jumping out at you this week? Comment below."

Spouse of the Spirit. An image of Mary. "She didn't have a roadmap, she just had the Spirit. Are you willing to trust God with your parish's future like she did?"

Your ideas

Space for your own prompts, notes, and what you'll try first.



PART THREE · THE THEMES

The Eucharist

The treasured place

> *"Become what you receive."*
>
> St Augustine

"A treasured place where we can truly encounter Christ Jesus, our Saviour; then, secondly, to see Christ himself, whom we encounter in Mass, as the one who motivates and sends us out to recognise, love and honour His presence in all the people we meet, family, friends, neighbours, and especially the disadvantaged and those most in need." **Go, Make Disciples, on the two ways of seeing the Mass**

What the Plan says

In Pastoral Letters over recent years the Bishop has encouraged people to think about the Mass in two ways: first, as a treasured place where we can truly encounter Christ; then, to see Christ, whom we encounter there, as the one who sends us out to recognise and serve Him in everyone we meet. Pope St John Paul II called the Eucharist "the active school of love for neighbour".

The Plan puts it plainly: "Christ is the WHY behind everything we each do as His disciples. It is He who motivates and sends us out from Mass into the local communities, to recognise, love, honour and serve Him in everyone we encounter each day. This inseparable connection between the Eucharist and our response to the needs of others around us, especially the disadvantaged and exploited, cannot be emphasised enough."

The lens. Capture the connection: how a heart-to-heart encounter at the altar becomes courageous witness in daily life. Show that the Eucharist is the why behind the mission, sending us out from the doors of the church.

Photo: Marcin Mazur for Nottingham Cathedral

Ideas to get you started

Springboards, not scripts. Take one, change it, or let it spark something of your own. They are yours for any month of the year.

The treasured place. A beautiful shot of the consecration (the moment the priest raises the host). "Heaven meets earth. The place where we encounter our Saviour."

Just look at Him. A close-up of the monstrance (the vessel that holds the host for Adoration). "You don't always need words. Sometimes love is just looking. 'I look at Him and He looks at me.' Join us for Adoration this [day/time]."

Becoming what we eat. A simple portrait of the missionary smiling outside the church door. "St Augustine said, 'Become what you receive.' I just received Jesus. Now I have to try to be Him to the world. A tall order for a Tuesday."

From altar to street. Video of a procession. "We receive Him in here, so we can take Him out there."

The golden minutes. From the back of the church, people kneeling in silence after Communion. "The most precious minutes of the week. What do you say to Jesus in the silence after Communion?"

The great Amen. Hands receiving the host. "When the priest says 'The Body of Christ' and we say 'Amen', we are staking our lives on it. It means 'I believe'. It means 'Yes'."

Recognising Him in the poor. The food bank collection point or the SVP group. "We saw Him in the Eucharist this morning; now we serve Him in the hungry this afternoon."

Ite, missa est. The final blessing or the exit sign. "The Mass is ended. The mission to love our neighbour begins."

The fuel. A photo of the host. "You wouldn't drive a car on empty. Don't try to love your neighbour without this."

Seeing Him. A local charity the parish supports. "We recognised Him in the breaking of the bread. Now let's recognise Him in those who have no bread."

The doorway. Looking out from inside the church doors to the street. "The most important part of Mass is the end. 'Go.' Who is the first person you will serve?"

Family as mission. A chaotic family dinner. "The Eucharist is a family meal. It strengthens us to love the people we live with, even when they are difficult."

The Sacred Heart. "His heart beats for the lonely, the sick and the disadvantaged. Does yours?"

Your ideas

Space for your own prompts, notes, and what you'll try first.

PART FOUR

The Digital Mission Lab

How the Diocese supports you, what it asks of you, and how to begin. This is your support as a Digital Missionary, and something to share with your parish priest and mission team.

Why a network · What the Lab gives you · Your first ten minutes · Being commissioned

Why a network

The Diocese is moving from a hub-and-spoke model of communications to a networked one. People trust peers more than institutions. So rather than one diocesan account broadcasting to everyone, the aim is a growing number of parish accounts, each speaking in its own local accent, with the Diocese amplifying the best of what they make. What you make locally becomes the wider story. Put enough parishes together and you have a diocesan story none of us could tell alone.

The Synod's study group asked every diocese to "train, accompany, and organize local networks of those engaged in digital mission" and to make sure digital missionaries "do not work alone, but [are] recognized, supported, and formed by their communities." This is what our diocese is trying to do.

We call it the **Digital Mission Lab**: not a course that finishes, but a place you keep coming back to for support, company and resources. It equips parishes; it does not run their communications for them. Within it, Diocesan Digital Missionaries are the committed core, sharing the life of their parishes under #GoMakeDisciplesNotts.

The pilot ran with eight Diocesan Digital Missionaries from five parishes, from February to June 2026 and on through the summer. This edition welcomes a second cohort from another five parishes. That makes ten of the Diocese's 54 parishes: one network, one hashtag.

Many more parishes are naming digital mission among their first steps on their Parish Mission Plan. In time, we hope to welcome every one of them into the network.

What we ask of you

Two pieces of original content a month. That is the whole ask. Photos, reels, TikToks or written reflections, in whatever format suits your parish and your audience. Two is plenty. More is welcome; fewer is fine in a difficult month.

Tag and hashtag, every time. #GoMakeDisciplesNotts and @dioceseofnottingham. Without them we cannot find you or amplify you.

One number, once a quarter. The number of people who turned up to something in your parish, or enquired about something, and said they saw it online. Three questions on a short form. That is the whole of the reporting.

Stay in the room. Be in the WhatsApp group. Come to the seasonal drop when you can. Come to the gathering.

What the Lab gives you

As a Diocesan Digital Missionary, this is what you can count on from the Digital Mission Lab. It runs to a rhythm you can plan around, from the day you join to the days we gather.

1

Enter · Your welcome

WHEN YOU JOIN

Everything you need to begin.

You receive this handbook and its companion, the Cathedral's Little Handbook of Parish Social Communications, a personal welcome from Liz in the diocesan Communications team, and an invitation into the missionaries' WhatsApp community.

2

Connect · The community

ALWAYS ON

Somewhere to ask, share and be encouraged.

A WhatsApp community for Diocesan Digital Missionaries. News from the Diocese comes through the announcements channel; the group is where you ask a quick question, share what's working and cheer each other on. It is for over-18s, with two named moderators.

3

Support · Lab Hours

TWICE A MONTH

Fifteen minutes of help, whenever you need it.

One evening and one daytime window each month, in fifteen-minute slots, one issue per slot. Book your slot ahead. Bring a post that isn't landing, a platform question, or a story you want to tell but aren't sure how.

4

Align · The seasonal drop

EVERY SEASON

A look ahead, before the season arrives.

Four times a year, thirty minutes on the feasts and diocesan campaigns coming up, with a toolkit to take away: prompts, liturgical hooks from the Ordo and a dated content calendar. You get it ahead of the season, not halfway through it.

5

Grow · Together in person

TWICE A YEAR

Half a day together, to be inspired and to belong.

In the autumn, a gathering with Bishop Patrick, with vision and blessing for the year ahead. After Easter, guest speakers, time on the craft and time with each other.

What this is not

So that expectations are clear on both sides: the Diocese does not run your parish's accounts, design your posters, write your captions or manage your website. The work is yours, in your voice, and that is what makes it worth doing. What the Diocese does is put the framework around you, the network beside you, and the amplification behind you.

Two things are never for a missionary to post alone: anything grave (a death, a police matter, a safeguarding concern), and anything in the Bishop's name. For the first, ring your parish priest or your parish safeguarding representative, depending on what has happened, and always ring the diocesan Communications team too. For the second, the Diocese handles the Bishop's words.

Your first ten minutes

If your parish is starting from nothing, this is the whole of week one.

- Search for your church on Google. If it isn't there, or the Mass times are wrong, claim the listing and fix them. This matters more than any post.
- Pick one platform. For most parishes that is Instagram, cross-posting to Facebook for free. Set it up in the parish's name, with the parish priest's knowledge and a second person holding the password.
- Put a Linktree (or similar) in the bio, pointing to Mass times, contact details and the newsletter.
- Save a note on your phone with your key words: your parish name, your town, Nottinghamshire (or your county), Catholic Church, Diocese of Nottingham.
- Follow @dioceseofnottingham and the other Diocesan Digital Missionaries.
- Join the WhatsApp group and say hello.
- Pick a theme from Part Three and make one post this week. Done is better than perfect.

Pick a theme and run with it

In the pilot, the themes ran through the year in order: Encounter first, Discipleship in Lent, Mission at Easter, then the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist. Now the choice is yours. Pick whichever theme fits your parish and the season, and run with it.

Through the year, the Diocese will run its own campaigns, each built around one theme, and share them with you through the seasonal drop. Join in when they suit you. **Not sure where to start?** Encounter is where the Mission Plan itself begins.

What we are watching for

Reach and engagement matter, and the platforms will tell you those numbers for free. But the deeper measure is the person who walks in. The Cathedral counted 57 enquirers for Journey in Faith and 35 received into the Church, most of whom found their way in online. One rural parish saw Evening Prayer rise from five to twenty after a single explanatory post.

The number. Every quarter, count the people who turned up or enquired and said they saw it online. A young adult at a youth event. An enquirer for Journey in Faith. A visitor who came because a friend saw the account.

Being commissioned

Diocesan Digital Missionaries are commissioned by Bishop Patrick. It means you are not a volunteer with a phone; you are a pastoral agent, sent by your Bishop, in communion with your parish and your Diocese.

This is what the Synod's study group on the digital mission asks of every bishop: to "accompany and commission digital missionaries", putting pastoral presence first. Many digital missionaries told the Synod they wanted exactly that from their bishops: not only coordination, but guidance and accompaniment, and the chance to meet regularly.

> *"Bishops can empower, guide, and support these missionaries."*
>
> **The Synod's Study Group on the Mission in the Digital Environment, Final Report, 2026**

The same report asks that your work stays "connected to parish and diocesan life", and that you "walk in communion" with your bishop and the local Church. That is the whole shape of this network: you are sent from your parish, supported by your Diocese, and never on your own.

"And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:20

"Lord, what today are you and I going to do together?"

The prayer Bishop Patrick gives to young people at Confirmation



Photo: Liz Gutierrez for the Diocese of Nottingham

DIOCESAN DIGITAL MISSIONARIES

Join the Digital Mission Lab

If your parish would like to take up digital mission, or you would simply like to talk it through, we would love to hear from you.



TALK TO LIZ

Liz Gutierrez
Digital Disciple Maker, Diocese of Nottingham

liz.gutierrez@dioceseofnottingham.uk
0115 953 9805

BOOK LAB HOURS

Fifteen minutes with the team, twice a month. Book your slot: one issue per slot.

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

The Digital Mission Lab WhatsApp group, for over-18s. Scan with your phone camera.

From another diocese? We'd love to share what we're learning: communications@dioceseofnottingham.uk

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