# Three Things: A Parish Guide to Mission Action Planning (MAP)

Helping your church take faithful, practical steps forward

## 1. Start with Listening

Before deciding what to do, take time to listen together:

* To God – through prayer, scripture, and worship.
* To your community – what are the needs, hopes, and challenges?
* To your congregation – what gifts and passions are present?

Keep the Three Bold Outcomes in mind as they’re to help us all grow as a Church. Use tools like the MAP [Reimagining Mission Guide](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fd3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net%2F5f209069c4808%2Fcontent%2Fpages%2Fdocuments%2F3-things-thinking-broadly-guide.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) to help widen your perspective. Look at the [Toolkit](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fd3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net%2F5f209069c4808%2Fcontent%2Fpages%2Fdocuments%2F3-things-parish-toolkit.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) to see if there are already some resources available in the areas you want to work in. (If there aren’t the tools you need, that’s something your MAP could highlight.) You might also explore parish data (e.g. census, deprivation, attendance) to understand your local context more deeply.

## 2. Choose Three Things

Once you've listened well, gather your leadership team and PCC and ask:

* What is God calling us to focus on now?
* What would make a real difference in our parish?
* What can we realistically commit to over the next 12–18 months?

Your “Three Things” might include:

* A new way of connecting with families
* A commitment to deepen prayer life
* A partnership with a local school or charity

Keep it simple. These are not your only activities—they’re your intentional priorities. But make sure your “Three Things” are SMART. There’s more on how this can help in the box below.

## 3. Share and Act

Write your Three Things down in a way that’s clear and encouraging. Share them:

* With your congregation (in services, newsletters, noticeboards)
* With your deanery
* With your wider community, where appropriate
* With the diocese by [submitting your MAP here](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=2ipAtT_abkqatcNfFXJwxjxbFzuAHwpOiwblqhQtSNhURUVTTzhUWUNOSVhOSlJKNDJISDY2VDFaMyQlQCN0PWcu) or emailing it to threethings@diocant.org

Then begin. Celebrate small steps. Review progress regularly. Pray together. Adjust if needed. The goal is not perfection—it’s faithful movement forward.

**SMART planning**

When we act it helps if our actions and goals are SMART. This helps us do what we intend. It also helps us honour those we are working with, by doing what we say we will, and doing it well.

* **Specific** – actions should have a desired outcome that is clearly understood.
* **Measurable** – they should be quantifiable so that we can track progress. Decide how to measure the goal and how to collect that information.
* **Achievable and Accountable** – goals should be realistic, so we have a sense of progress. Challenging goals are good, but it is helpful to break them down into smaller, bite-sized chunks and claim some easy wins. Here we should name a person who is authorised to lead on the action and who they are accountable to (e.g., N is authorised to do this by the PCC, to whom she will report back in January and July).
* **Relevant and resourced** – goals should be properly discerned. In this way they will be expressions of the church’s mission vision, and aligned with the Three Bold Outcomes, rather than just ‘good ideas’.
* **Time-Bound** – goals should have a deadline to help us measure our success and discover what move to make next.

**4. Review how you’re doing.**

Regularly look at how your “Three Things” are doing. Celebrate what’s going well. If something’s not working, pray and look at what you’re being told – is this the right thing or are you going about it in the right way. It might mean tweaking something or looking to do something else. If something has been completed, look for what the next “Thing” is going to be.

Review all your “Three Things” every year – Mission Action Planning is a continuous process and if we’re all working together to discern where God is working with us, we’ll move together towards the Church God calls us to be. Don’t forget to share your new or revised “Three Things”.

## Encouragement for the Journey

Every parish is different. Your Three Things will reflect your story, your people, and your place. This is not a competition—it’s a shared journey of hope.

“The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:24 For help talk to your archdeacon or email threethings@diocant.org.

*12/09/2025 Diocese of Canterbury*