

**The Shared Discernment Process**  
**Invitation to join the *Discernment Cohort Programme***

Thank you for completing your *Ordained Ministry Enquiry Form* and the associated paperwork and returning it to the DDO Office. The next step in the process for you is to join the *Discernment Cohort Programme*.

One of the joys of Christian ministry is that it is a team effort. We work as one body, with Christ as our head and everyone playing a part according to their gifts, passions and opportunities. Within the context of a church that lives, learns and serves together, discerning and exploring our vocation should also be a shared activity. In the Diocese of Canterbury, our *Discernment Cohort Programme* creates a small group of people who will walk with you on your discernment journey.



**Schematic diagram of the new ‘Shared Discernment Process’  
With Diocesan Components**

The diagram above shows how the local and national stages of the process fit together. The *Discernment Cohort Programme* is an eleven-month process, working with a small group of other candidates for ordination and two of the DDO Team. This group will meet monthly, following the programme described later in this document. Each month you will be required to prepare a short presentation, report or discussion-starter and the session itself will build on your preparatory work as you learn together as a group.

This eleven-month programme prepares you to attend *stage one* of the national process. This is a morning or afternoon meeting where candidates will participate in six conversations and activities, each lasting 15 minutes. The feedback from these conversations will be used to plan more focussed work which you will need to undertake before attending the residential *stage two* assessment. Depending on the time of year that the cohort begins to meet, it could take between eighteen months and two years

## Qualities Grids

These grids begin to explain how the six qualities (on the left-hand side) would be seen in the four domains (along the top) for both a Distinctive Deacon and a Priest. All stages of the local and national process will unpack, explore and assess the 24 statements which occur in the intersections between the six qualities and four domains.

<b>Distinctive Deacon</b>	<b>Christ</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>World</b>	<b>Self</b>
<b>Love for God</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Is reliant on God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and lives out an infectious, life-transforming world-focussed faith	Is rooted in scripture, the worship of the Church and the living traditions of faith	Whole heartedly, generously and attractively engages with God's world	Is prayerful and studies the Bible
<b>Call to Ministry</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Responds to the call of Christ to be a disciple	Understands the distinctive nature of ordained diaconal ministry	Is committed to being a public and representative person of the Church in the forgotten corners of the world	Articulates an inner sense of call grounded in diaconal service
<b>Love for People</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Welcomes Christ in others, listens, values and respects and has a special care for those in poverty and the marginalised	Builds relationships which are collaborative and enabling	Shows God's compassion and care in the world in multifaceted contexts and with social agencies	Has empathy and is aware of how others receive them
<b>Wisdom</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Is inquisitive, curious and open to new learning that connects church and world	Shows instinctively collaborative leadership that enables healthy churches to be bridge-builders in their communities	Is robust and courageous in reflecting the world to the Church and the Church to the world	Is a mature and integrated person of stability and integrity
<b>Fruitfulness</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Embraces the different and animates others to be witnesses and servants	Shows the capacity to exercise diaconal sacramental and liturgical ministry and effective and enabling teaching ministry	Is a storyteller of God's love and agent of God's kingdom of justice	Has resilience and stamina
<b>Potential</b> <i>The candidate has potential to...</i>	Grow in faith and to be open to navigating the future in the company of Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit	See the big picture in their context and, within it, enable a Christian community to serve	See where God is working in the world and to read the signs of the times	Be adaptable and agile

<b>Priest</b>	<b>Christ</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>World</b>	<b>Self</b>
<b>Love for God</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Is reliant on God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and lives out an infectious, life-transforming faith	Is rooted in Scripture, the worship of the Church and the living traditions of faith	Whole-heartedly, generously and attractively engages with God's world	Is prayerful and studies the Bible
<b>Call to Ministry</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Responds to the call of Christ to be a disciple	Understands the distinctive nature of ordained priestly ministry	Is committed to being a public and representative person	Articulates an inner sense of call grounded in priestly service
<b>Love for People</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Welcomes Christ in others, listens, values and respects; cares for those in poverty and the marginalised	Builds relationships which are collaborative and enabling	Shows God's compassion for the world	Has empathy and is aware of how others receive them
<b>Wisdom</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Is inquisitive, curious and open to new learning	Shows leadership that enables thriving and healthy churches, handles conflict, and can lead in mission	Is robust and courageous and prepared to take risks	Is a mature and integrated person of stability and integrity
<b>Fruitfulness</b> <i>The candidate...</i>	Embraces the different and enables others to be witnesses and servants	Shows the capacity to exercise sacramental, liturgical and an effective and enabling teaching ministry	Shares faith in Christ and can accompany others in their faith	Has resilience and stamina
<b>Potential</b> <i>The candidate has potential to...</i>	Grow in faith and be open to navigating the future in the company of Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit	Manage change, and see the big picture	See where God is working in the world and respond with missionary imagination	Be adaptable and agile

## Discernment Cohort Programme

The purpose of this programme is twofold. The first purpose is *formational* – the group is there to help you develop your understanding of ordained ministry, your own call and to help you inhabit the qualities, attributes and characteristics associated with those who will be ordained deacon or priest. The second purpose is to gather evidence showing how you do inhabit the six qualities which will be assessed during the two national stages of the process. This will be used by your group conveners to write the *sponsoring papers* which will accompany you when you meet the Bishop and when you attend the Stage Two Assessment. The sponsoring papers will focus on how you have developed over the programme, rather than where you were at the start.

The outline below gives an indication of the structure of the eleven-month programme. Each of the individual assignments will be explained in detail at the preceding meeting and you should allow enough time to prepare properly for each meeting. All candidates are invited to keep a journal during the discernment process, and this would include your own reflections on the presentations, discussion and shared learning during the meeting.

All the links to resources are active in the PDF version of this document. If you are working from a printed version, these links can also be found on the Diocesan website at <https://www.canterburydiocese.org/ministry/discernment-cohort-programme/the-discernment-cohort-programme-downloadable-resources.php> or via the QR Code at the end of this document.

### **Month 1: Cohort Meeting: Welcome and Introductions – 1000 Words**

- Content:** Worship and introduction from the DDO team.  
Getting to know each other using *1000 Words* (see below).  
Explanation of the programme and briefing for session 2.  
Closing worship and setting dates for future meetings.
- Preparation:** Please take two black and white photographs (on a phone is fine) and have them ready to share with the group. Photos can be e-mailed to your group facilitators or displayed on your own shared screen during the Zoom call. One photo should illustrate an aspect of ***how you see and experience God at work in your life***. The other should illustrate ***how you understand your vocation at this point***. Please give both of your photos a title and a short caption. There are two short videos which explain the *1000 Words* project on [www.share1000words.info](http://www.share1000words.info) although please be aware that the subjects of the photos you are being asked to take are different to those mentioned in the videos. If you find it more tangible, you can take photographs of a significant object that you keep with you during the programme.

### **Month 2: What is a Priest/Deacon I – The Ordinal**

- Content:** Each group member will give a five-minute presentation on an aspect of the Ordinal and then facilitate a five-minute group discussion about what they have presented. Presentations can be spoken, pre-recorded and include any media that you are able to share over Zoom.
- Preparation:** Please read the text of the relevant ordination services, paying particular attention to the section entitled 'Liturgy of Ordination' (candidates for priesthood can choose from either the deacons' service or the priests' service). Choose a segment which particularly speaks to you (minimum segment size is one word, maximum size is one paragraph) and prepare a five minute presentation unpacking that segment in the light of scripture, your own experience and your understanding of your calling. As a guide, most people will take five minutes to say 500-700 words. Please be prepared to facilitate the group as they ask questions and discuss what you have presented.

To avoid repetition and to help with programming, please let your group convener know which section you have chosen ahead of the group.

Resources: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/ministry/common-worship-ordination-services>

Services for Deacons and Priests are both included on this page.

**Month 3: What is a Priest/Deacon II – Widening our Interpretation.**

Content: Each group member will give a short review of a book on the reading list (or other appropriate book agreed with your group convener). The group will then have a general discussion about the ideas presented from the books.

Preparation: Read at least one book from the reading list and write a short book review (500 words) explaining its main argument and anything you found particularly helpful as you think about your own vocation. To avoid repetition, you will be asked to say which book you will review at the previous meeting.

Resources: A suggested reading list will be provided for priests in advance of this session and is available to download here:

<https://www.canterburydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/exploring-a-call-to-priesthood-reading-list.pdf>

For the Distinctive Diaconate, please see:

<https://cofedeacons.org/resources/some-useful-books-and-papers/>

**Month 4: Individual Meetings with ADDO.**

Content: Conversation exploring aspects of your vocation, including talking through significant life events and how you have found the first three group session.

Preparation: Please come having filled in the *significant life events* chart and the *three spheres of ministry* diagram.

Resources: Pro-forma sheets for the life events chart:

<https://www.canterburydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/life-events-table-for-vocations-1-2-1.doc>

and three spheres of ministry diagrams:

<https://www.canterburydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/three-spheres-of-vocation-to-the-priesthood.docx> (priests)

<https://www.canterburydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/three-spheres-of-vocation-to-the-distinctive-diaconate.docx> (deacons)

**Month 5: The Five Marks of Mission**

Content: Each participant will present a five-minute video filmed in the context of their sending church's ministry. This will show how the church applies ONE of the *Five Marks of Mission*.

Preparation: Choose one of the *Five Marks of Mission* and plan and film a five-minute video showing how that mark is applied in the ministry of your sending church or another placement. The group will be interested in the content, not the quality of production, so you can film it in one take on a phone or use video-editing software to bring clips and images together. Videos should be sent to your group convener at least 48 hours before the meeting. They will arrange an efficient way of doing this with you nearer the time.

Resources: <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx>

**Month 6: A Place of Welcome**

Content: Each participant will give a ten-minute presentation about an aspect of inclusion. This could explore issues around: race, disability, sexuality, gender, age, income or

- class; welcoming those who are non-neurotypical, Deaf people, have learning difficulties or are housebound; working with refugees, homeless people, older people, survivors of abuse, ex-offenders - or any other aspect of inclusion.
- Preparation: Use a combination of reading, self-reflection and conversation to explore one of the aspects of inclusion listed above. Present your conclusions to the group in a ten-minute presentation, which must include quotations from your conversations with the people we hope to welcome. In the previous session your group convener will run over some of the safeguarding issues raised by interviewing children and vulnerable adults.
- Resources: A suggested reading list (books, articles and websites) can be downloaded here <https://www.canterburydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/a-place-of-welcome-reading-list.pdf>

### **Month 7: Relationships and Living with Difference**

- Content: A discussion introducing aspects of personal and professional relationships and how being a public minister might impact on how we view them. This session will also brief candidates for the individual conversations in the following months. ***This session may take place in person if this is possible for the whole group.***
- Preparation: Please download the documents: *Promoting a Safer Church*, *The Five Guiding Principles* and *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy* (2015) and begin to skim-read them.
- Resources: Five Guiding Principles: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1063>  
Promoting a Safer Church: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf>  
Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/Clergy%20Guidelines%202015.pdf>

### **Month 8: Individual Meetings with ADDO.**

- Content: Conversations exploring relational aspects of the six qualities and any issues or areas of work which may have arisen from the group sessions. These conversations may continue over several sessions.
- Preparation: Please come having read all four of the documents introduced in the previous session and be ready to have an in-depth conversation that will unpack aspects of your relationships and personal history.

### **Months 9/10: Theological Reflections on an Aspect of your Current Context**

- Content: Over two sessions, each participant will present a twenty-minute theological reflection about a time when they worked as part of team engaged in a missional activity in a local church.
- Preparation: Before this assignment there will be a workshop session for all cohorts introducing the type of theological reflection you will encounter in Practical Theology teaching in theological colleges and on courses (download the handout here: <https://www.canterburydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/theological-reflection-training-preparation-for-month-9-10.pdf>). You will also be asked to read Chapter 6 of Pete Ward's 2017 book, *Introducing Practical Theology* or Andrew Dunlop's 2022 Grove Booklet, *How to Do Theological Reflection*. After attending the session, use one of the methods you have been taught (or any other which you discover and find helpful) to reflect on **a time when you worked as part of team**

**engaged in a missional activity from a local church.** You will need to think particularly about the purpose of the activity, your role in the team and how you judge the overall impact of the activity. Please agree the subject of your reflection in advance with your group convener, who will also be your first port-of-call should you need any further help as you prepare. This reflection can be edited and used as a written piece of work for stage two of the national process.

**Resources:** There is no need to do additional reading before getting started on your theological reflection, but the handout from the training session will suggest books that will provide resources if you want to think more deeply about Practical Theology and theological reflection. A number of journal articles are also listed on the handout and these have been chosen to give you scholarly examples of theological reflection based on empirical research and to introduce you to academic writing in the field of Practical Theology.

**Month 11: Preparation for Stage One of the Shared Discernment Process**

**Content:** This session will be structured around the needs of the group as you prepare to attend the *Carousel Conversations*.

**Preparation:** Writing up the paperwork required for stage one of the national process.

**Resources:** A proforma for the *stage one* papers will be sent to you nearer the time.

Document Revised 12/08/25  
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Links to all resources can be found by scanning the QR Code below

