Faith in Action: Loving Our Neighbour, Sharing Our Hope

A four-week discipleship journey exploring how social action and sharing our faith fit together, shaped by the values of the Diocese of Monmouth.



Diocese of Monmouth
Esgobaeth Mynwy
Yr Eglwys yng Nghymru
The Church in Wales

PUBLISHED BY

The Diocese of Monmouth
in the Church in Wales

Diocesan Office , 64 Caerau Road, Newport, NP20 4HJ

Email: monmouthadministration@churchinwales.org.uk

Phone: 01633 267490

monmouth.churchinwales.org.uk

USE OF THIS MATERIAL

Permission is granted to adapt, reproduce and/or share this material for use within your local ministry area or parish.

To seek permission for any other purpose, please first contact us.

INTRODUCTION

One of the Branches of our Diocesan Vision is Social Justice and across the diocese, social action is one of the clearest places where our values become visible - love expressed, generosity shared, joy discovered, humility practised, courage strengthened, and integrity lived out.

This course invites you to explore how social action and faith-sharing belong together. Across the Diocese, thousands are supported each week through compassion, welcome, and presence. These relationships are also places where faith can be shared naturally, gently, and with integrity. I hope the course will encourage, inspire and maybe occasionally challenge, but it's important also that you enjoy it!

You will notice that there are suggestions for opening and closing worship, but you are very welcome to arrange your own if you would prefer. There are also some notes for leaders at the end of the booklet.

Ian Rees
Archdeacon of Monmouth/
Diocesan Director of Mission: Social Responsibility

WEEK 1 - Compassion as Identity: Why Social Action Matters

Linked to the values: Love • Generosity • Humility • Integrity

Opening Worship

Short Reading - Micah 6:8

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good… to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

Opening Prayer

God of compassion, open our eyes to the needs around us and open our hearts to respond with love. Shape our Ministry Area with generosity, humility, and integrity, so that our actions reflect your justice and mercy. Amen.

Core Message

Social action is the visible shape of love and generosity. It expresses humility as we walk alongside others, and integrity as we live what we believe. Compassion opens the door to gentle, relational faith-sharing.

"Compassion is mission in its most grounded, relational, Jesus-shaped form."

Bible Passages

Matthew 25:31–40

31 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the
throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people
one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the
sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 Then the king will say to those at his right
hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from
the foundation of the world; 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you
gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you
gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited
me." 37 Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and
gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you
a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw
you sick or in prison and visited you?" 40 And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as
you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Luke 4:16–21

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on
the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah
was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’ 20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

1 John 3:16–18

16 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us - and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. 17 How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? 18 Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

Reflections on the Readings

- Where do these passages show love and mercy as essential to faith?
- How do they call us to humility and integrity in our actions?
- Where do we see generosity expressed through presence, care, or justice?

Reflections on Your Ministry Area

- Where have you seen love and generosity becoming part of our MA’s identity?
- How does compassion create natural openings for hope-filled conversations?
- What would it mean for our MA to be known for justice, mercy, and hope?

Personal Reflection

Recall a moment when compassion changed you.
Which diocesan value was present in that moment?

Challenge for the Week

Offer intentional, quiet help to one person - an act of love, humility, and integrity without expectation of thanks.

Closing Worship

Short Reading - 1 John 3:18
“Let us love not in word or speech but in truth and action.”

Closing Prayer
Lord, send us out as people of compassion. Help us notice the person who needs encouragement this week, and give us grace to serve quietly, faithfully, and with joy. Amen.

WEEK 2 – Seeing People as Jesus Sees Them: Relationships at the Heart of Mission

Linked to the values: Love • Joy • Humility • Integrity

Opening Worship

Short Reading - Psalm 139:1

"Lord, you have searched me and you know me."

Opening Prayer

Jesus, teach us to see people as you see them - with love, dignity, and kindness. Fill our conversations with joy and help us show humility in every interaction. May our presence today reflect your presence. Amen.

Core Message

Mission begins with seeing people as Jesus sees them - with love, humility, and integrity. Relationships formed in warm hubs, toddler groups, food banks, and cafés often become places of joy and gentle faith-sharing.

"People are being seen and valued… and in that moment, a relationship begins."

Bible Passages

Luke 19:1–10

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. **2** A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. **3** He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. **4** So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. **5** When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' **6** So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. **7** All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' **8** Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' **9** Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

Mark 1:40–45

A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, 'If you choose, you can make me clean.' **41** Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I do choose. Be made clean!' **42** Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. **43** After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, **44** saying to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what

Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’ [45] But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Galatians 6:2

[2] Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Reflections on the Readings

- Where do we see people met with dignity, kindness, and love?
- How is faith shared through presence, humility, and integrity?
- How do acts of compassion become joy-filled signposts of the Kingdom?

Reflections on Our Ministry Area

- What does it mean to “see” someone with Jesus-shaped love?
- Which MA activities create the deepest relationships - and why?
- How can volunteers recognise the spiritual value of simple conversations?

Personal Reflection

Imagine Jesus entering one of your MA’s social action projects.
Which value does he embody first - love, joy, humility, or integrity?

Challenge for the Week

Slow down in one regular interaction and offer love, joy, and humility through deep listening and presence.

Closing Worship

Short Reading - Galatians 6:2
“Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you fulfil the law of Christ.”

Closing Prayer
God of relationship, bless the encounters we will have this week. Slow us down, deepen our listening, and help us notice the person who needs to be seen. Let our simple conversations become places of grace. Amen.

WEEK 3 – Faith Shared Gently:
Why Evangelism Belongs in Social Action

Linked to the values: Courage • Integrity • Love • Joy

Opening Worship
Short Reading — 1 Peter 3:15
"Always be ready to give the reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and respect."
Opening Prayer
Lord Jesus, give us courage to speak honestly and gently about the hope we carry. Let our words be shaped by love, our tone by integrity, and our hearts by joy. Make us ready for the opportunities you will give. Amen.

Core Message
Sharing faith is part of loving our neighbour.
It takes courage to speak of hope, integrity to be honest, love to share gently, and joy to offer good news.
Social action without the Gospel is incomplete; evangelism without compassion is unconvincing.

"We're not ashamed of why we're doing this - so why not share some good news."
"Social action without sharing our faith is like giving someone a lifeboat but never telling them how to reach the shore."

Bible Passages

Romans 10:14–17
But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? **15** And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' **16** But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' **17** So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

1 Peter 3:15
but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you;

John 6:26–35
Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. **27** Do not work for the food that perishes, but for

the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' [28] Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' [29] Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' [30] So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? [31] Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."' [32] Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. [33] For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' [34] They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'
[35] Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Reflections on the Readings

- Where do these passages call us to courage and integrity in sharing faith?
- How do relationships create natural opportunities to speak of love and hope?
- Where do we see joy in the sharing of good news?

Reflections on Our Ministry Area

- How has your faith brought joy, courage, or hope to your life?
- Why do many Christians feel nervous about sharing faith?
- What does gentle evangelism look like in our MA's social action spaces?

Personal Reflection

What is one sentence about your faith that feels honest (integrity), gentle (love), hopeful (joy), and brave (courage)?

Challenge for the Week

Pray each morning:
"Lord, give me one opportunity today to speak of you with gentleness and courage."
Then watch for that opportunity.

Closing Worship

Short Reading - Romans 10:17
"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."
Closing Prayer
Holy Spirit, guide our conversations this week. Help us recognise the moment when hope can be shared, and give us the courage to speak simply and truthfully. Keep us gentle, keep us joyful, keep us rooted in you. Amen.

WEEK 4 – Faithful Presence:
Becoming a Church of Hope, Courage, and Witness

Linked to the values: Courage • Integrity • Generosity • Joy • Love • Humility

Opening Worship

Short Reading - Matthew 5:16

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Opening Prayer

Faithful God, help us show up in our communities with courage, generosity, and love. Clothe us with humility and integrity, and let your joy be visible in all we do. Make our presence a quiet witness to your goodness. Amen.

Core Message

We shape the world not by force but by faithfulness - showing up with integrity, courage, generosity, joy, love, and humility.

Every act of service can become a doorway to discipleship.

"We don't shape the world by force; we shape it by faithfulness."

"Volunteers are the beating heart of ministry."

Bible Passages

Matthew 28:16–20

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed
them. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and
said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and
make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of
the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And
remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Matthew 5:13–16

'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

14 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one after lighting
a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the
house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good
works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Colossians 3:12–17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. **13** Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Reflections on the Readings

- Where do you see faithfulness shaping the world in these passages?
- How do volunteers embody love, generosity, humility, and integrity?
- What difference would it make if our MA's mission were more intentionally rooted in the Gospel?

Reflections on Our Ministry Area

- What does faithful presence look like in your community or workplace?
- Which diocesan value do you most want to grow in?
- How can our MA become more intentional about invitation, discipleship, and follow-up?

Personal Reflection

Imagine your MA five years from now.
What would it look like if every act of service offered a doorway to faith - an act of love, generosity, joy, humility, courage, and integrity?

Challenge for the Week

Choose one MA project and ask:
"What is the next faithful step?"
It might involve courage, integrity, deeper generosity, or renewed joy.

Closing Liturgy for the Faith in Action Course

Gathering

Leader:
We have journeyed together through compassion, relationship, gentle faith-sharing, and faithful presence.
We have listened for God in Scripture, in one another, and in the life of our communities.
Now we gather our learning, our hopes, and our calling before God.

Silence is kept.

Thanksgiving

Leader:
God of love, we thank you for every act of compassion that has revealed your heart, for every relationship that has deepened trust, for every conversation where hope has quietly surfaced, and for every moment of faithful presence in our Ministry Area.
All:
Thanks be to God.

Reading

Colossians 3:12–14
"Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience…
Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

Prayer of Commitment

Said together:
Lord Jesus Christ, send us out as people shaped by your values: love that welcomes, generosity that gives freely, joy that lifts weary hearts, humility that listens deeply, courage that speaks hope gently, and integrity that lives the Gospel in everyday life. Make us faithful in presence, gentle in witness, and bold in love. Amen.

Intercessions for the Ministry Area

Leader: For our communities, that they may see in us signs of your compassion…
All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For our volunteers, that they may serve with joy, courage, and hope…
All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For our Ministry Area, that every act of service may open a doorway to faith…
All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For ourselves, that we may notice the opportunities you place before us…
All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Sending Out

Leader: As we go from this place, may Christ go before us in every conversation, Christ beside us in every act of service, and Christ within us as hope for those we meet.
All: Amen.

Blessing

Leader: May the God of compassion strengthen us, the God of hope inspire us, and the God of love guide our steps.
And may the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always.
All: Amen.

Leaders Guide

This guide is intentionally light and reassuring. You don't need to be an expert. You don't need to prepare a talk. Your role is simply to hold the space, read what's provided, and encourage gentle conversation. The suggestions that follow are just suggestions! If you feel more comfortable doing things differently, then please do that.

1. What Each Session Looks Like (60–75 minutes)

1. Welcome & Opening Worship (5 min)
2. Core Message (read aloud) (5 min)
3. Bible Readings (10–12 min)
4. Group Discussion (25–30 min)
5. Personal Reflection (10 min)
6. Challenge for the Week (2 min)
7. Closing Worship (3 min)

Everything you need is already written in the course booklet.

2. Before You Begin

- Arrive a little early.
- Set chairs in a circle or around tables.
- Have Bibles available.
- Remind yourself: You're not teaching - you're guiding a conversation.
- Take a breath. God works through simplicity.

3. How to Lead Each Part

Welcome & Opening Worship
Read the short reading and prayer provided for that week.
You don't need to add anything.

Core Message
Read the Core Message slowly.
This sets the tone for the whole session and helps people listen to the Bible readings with the theme in mind.
You don't need to expand or interpret it.

Bible Readings
Each week includes multiple passages.
You can:

- read them all yourself,
- or ask different people to read one each.

After the readings, simply say:
“Let’s hold a moment of quiet before we continue.”
No explanation or teaching is needed - the reflections come later.

Group Discussion
This is the heart of the session.
Choose two or three of the reflection questions (from either section).
Invite people to share.

Helpful prompts if conversation slows:

- “Tell me more about that.”
- “Where have you seen that in our Ministry Area?”
- “What difference did that make?”
- “Does anyone see it differently?”

If someone talks too much:
“Thank you - let’s hear from someone else.”

If there’s silence:
“It’s fine to take a moment - there’s no rush.”

If conversation wanders:
“That’s helpful - let’s link it back to the passage.”

Personal Reflection
Read the reflection for the week.
Keep 30–60 seconds of quiet.
No one needs to share unless they want to.

Challenge for the Week
Read it aloud.
Say something simple like:
“This is something small and gentle we can each try this week.”
No pressure.

Closing Worship
Read the short reading and prayer for the week.
End simply.

4. Helpful Reminders for Leaders

- You don’t need to know all the answers.
- You don’t need to fill silence.
- You don’t need to make people talk.
- You don’t need to “teach” anything.
- You don’t need to be perfect - just present.

Your job is to hold the space, read the material, and trust the Spirit.

5. If Things Feel Difficult

If discussion wanders:
“That’s helpful - let’s link it back to the passage.”
If someone gets emotional:
“Thank you for sharing - we’re here with you.”

If you feel unsure:
Pause. Smile. Breathe.
Then simply read the next section.

6. Ending the Whole Course

Use the Closing Liturgy provided in the booklet.
It’s designed to feel gentle, hopeful, and communal - not formal or heavy.

7. Final Encouragement

Leading this course is not about expertise.
It’s about creating a warm space where people can explore compassion, relationship, gentle evangelism, and faithful presence.
If you can read aloud, listen well, and smile - you can lead this course beautifully!