



Profile Sheet:

The Diocesan Evangelisation Team - Hexham & Newcastle

Formation of Team: A group of 15 people – 6 priests, 6 lay people, 1 permanent deacon and 2 sisters were called together in 2005 by the then Bishop to give structure and importance to the work of evangelisation in our diocese as **the** work of the Church. We are representative of various areas: catechesis, education, media, adult spiritual formation, parish life and development, chaplaincies, and justice and peace. After six months in spiritual preparation including a discernment weekend with Mgr Paul Watson, we have met monthly for prayer and reflection, sharing ideas and discerning the way forward. For any particular activity we form sub-groups as the need arises; e.g. to prepare diocesan days, prepare resources, specific events etc.

Our Goal

1. To own our Gospel call to evangelisation and to raise awareness of this in our diocese, in every area of life – education, parishes, catechesis, families, work places, daily living etc.
2. To explore the 'new evangelisation' – reaching out to the baptised who have never known the person of Jesus and to those on the fringes of the church including the non-practising
3. To find ways of developing an evangelising spirit in our diocese and to support those already working on the ground.

The Beginnings 2005 - 2006

Evangelisation Made Easy: - a day repeated in 5 areas of the diocese

To raise awareness, to allay fears and affirm people in what they were already doing
To share our stories and see how God is active in our lives
To inspire, equip and offer creative ways of evangelising

Development 2006 -2007

In response to specific feedback and requests from these days, we developed a programme of

- Deeper spirituality
- Scriptural formation
- Ways to meet the challenges of our culture

This led to diocesan days: ***Time Apart – Spirituality for Evangelisers***
How Jesus evangelised: the power of the Word
Connecting with our culture

These day events were repeated in different areas of the diocese touching over 1,000 people. They were planned and presented by Team members working in sub-groups except for the day on culture which was given by Kevin Higham from *Blowing Your Cover* - an inspirational speaker

Intensification 2007-9

While it was useful to put on Diocesan Days which enthused many people, the next step was to concentrate on setting up Deanery Teams of more committed people which we would form, train and then resource and support. The diocese was moving towards clusters of parishes and trying to develop a sense of working as a deanery so this was in keeping with diocesan strategy.

We concentrated on two deaneries of 12 parishes each, and following the Church's Year, we worked with groups of about 30 people, first in spiritual formation (personal conversion), then in training with simple practical tasks and resourcing them to reach out to others. Not all stayed the course but we did

get two enthusiastic and committed deanery teams (both of 15 members) who would work at local level while supported by the Diocesan Team. We are currently working on a third team.

The two teams were commissioned and embarked on local Outreach to Non-practising Catholics. To date, both teams are operating well and both are enthusiastic. They have prayed together, done street evangelising at Christmas, had many worthwhile encounters which have led to some going on to RCIA programmes, and currently are bringing Christ into Easter, producing cards for distribution in public places and have taken their message into the local primary schools, enrolling children as natural evangelisers.

While working intensively with local deaneries, we tried to maintain enthusiasm across the diocese with the help of CASE and Clare Ward in particular. Large one-day events were held in 2008: *Proclaiming the Good News* and *Be Herald of the Gospel* and in 2009 – *Fanning the Flames*. *The Year of Paul* in 2008 gave us further opportunities for evangelising with weekly gatherings to study the *Letters of Paul* and a weekend given by the Northampton Diocesan Team on *The Secrets of Paul*

Progress 2010 -2011

In 2010, we made full use of all the evangelising opportunities provided by the Beatification of Blessed John Henry Newman – a Diocesan Day called *Lead Kindly Light* and several local ecumenical evenings. The visit of Pope Benedict too (with the help of material from the Home Mission Desk) was rich in evangelising activity and engendered much interest which we tried to use positively.

The follow-up celebration to distribute candles and pictures blessed by the Pope was a highlight – filling our Cathedral to capacity. The Team (helped by the Deanery Teams) organised and presented a beautiful service of *Sending Forth to be Lights in our World*.

2011: A Diocesan Welcome Back Campaign. We have made Outreach to Non-practising Catholics our priority for 2011. The Bishop has agreed to have a *Welcome Back Sunday* on Pentecost Sunday every year and we have prepared a Parish Pack of befriending and welcome material plus Invitation Cards for distribution in parishes as well as a booklet *Take Another Look* for a small group to use in parishes to help returning Catholics to integrate.



Useful Resources

Online, we have developed a monthly e-Newsletter and have an on-line Seeker Centre (www.rcdhn.org) We have used all the materials provided by the Home Mission Desk, previously CASE, and are currently trying to develop the Legacy priorities

We have found programmes from the US very inspiring; e.g. Proclaiming Christ; Catholics Come Home, www.MyCatholicFaith.org and Awakening Faith from www.PNCEA.org

Alpha and Cafe have served us well.

We have developed many of our own resources; e.g. 10 Steps to Evangelisation and Everyday Evangelising

Blowing your Cover and *Mind the Gap* have been useful for small groups as has J John.

Sr Michael, Co-ordinator of Diocesan Evangelisation Team, Hexham and Newcastle
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