

MYRIAD



Who Plants Churches?

MYRIAD GUIDE

Myriad inspires and
serves everyday
people to form new
church
communities.

Introduction

This guide is for the hub leader, the oversight minister or for any other Christian leader who may be discerning whether an individual has the potential to plant a new church community and is suitable for the learning pathway.

Fundamentally, the process of discernment occurs within a context of prayer, however, this guide offers further tools to help discern the calling of a planter.

This guide includes:

- A definition of a planter
- Minimum requirements for joining the Myriad planting pathway
- Characteristics of a potential planter
- A guide to recognising a potential planter
- If you are discerning as a hub leader, your experience of the planter may be more limited. In these cases, it will be important to talk with others who have previously worked with the planter, in order to gain a fuller perspective.

Planters present in a variety of forms: Some are people utilising existing patterns of worship, to create a new church community. Others may be contextualising new forms of meeting and worship. Many will not yet have discerned their pattern of worship and will be in the developmental stages, however all will be seeking to engage new people with the good news of Jesus and nurturing new believers. In the learning pathway, planters will largely be lay people.

For clarity, we understand that different dioceses around the country will use different terms to describe planters. In this handbook, we define a planter as someone who has a calling to develop and establish a new church community. These churches will vary in size from small micro-churches to larger church communities. These **new church communities** will be developed locally, will engage and disciple new believers and will be under the oversight of an existing parish priest / senior leader.



Minimum Requirements for entry to the Myriad Learning Pathway

In the discernment process, potential planters will present on a spectrum ranging from an initial sense of calling, to a strong sense of calling and already operating as a planter in some capacity.

Consequently, it is essential to establish some minimum requirements for acceptance to the learning pathway. These minimum requirements are:

The most important factors for discernment of a potential lay planter.

Do they have:

A conviction or calling to try something new?

A champion who will support and provide oversight?

A commitment to building a planting team?

At the discernment stage, it is not required to articulate a clear planting vision, however, the planter should be able to communicate a sense of calling to a place, community, culture or people group.

An expectation to establish a new church community, not a ministry to a group of people. The learning pathway is not to develop a ministry area or a mission activity but to establish new church communities. (As part of the training process, we will explore what we mean by 'church').

An understanding that the planter is the leader of this new church community. There will be a team gathered around them but they will be the leader.

To meet with their mentor once every two months between each gathering.

A commitment to making new disciples of Jesus.

A commitment to gather a team; and to have identified at least one member of that team before they can begin the process. The Myriad learning community is based on a team model (Jesus sent his apprentices out as a team, or at least one other person – Luke 10.1).

To attend all of the 5, six-monthly gatherings.

To create a working agreement with their oversight minister, which will be given to the hub leader and stored by the learning hub. a template of this agreement can be accessed from the learning hub.

To engage with the prayer rhythms and network developed within the learning hub.

3 Characteristics of a Potential Planter

The following characteristics will not all be fully formed and some aspects may not seem present at all. They are shared to enable discernment conversations rather than as a 'tick list' for qualification as a guide.

A Clear Faith

It is essential that planters have a living faith in Jesus Christ and that the work of planting will be sustained by their own relationship with God.

Prayerful

A potential planter will lead from a place of personal prayer and will recognise that prayer is central to the effectiveness of mission.

A Contagious Faith

Potential planters will be people who have a deep desire to see others come to a faith in Jesus and can naturally communicate their faith to those outside of church.

A Team Builder

It is essential that the planter is relational and has an ability to gather others. They will need to lead and envision a planting team, as well as gather a community of people in a new place. The effectiveness of the planting team will rely on the ability the planter has to train and equip others, both in the team and in the wider community.

Teachable

Does the potential planter demonstrate a willingness to learn from others and be under the authority of others?

Committed

Being part of the learning community will require a clear commitment to the training pathway that will involve

- A regular mentor meeting with action goals
- A six-monthly overnight gathering
- Preparation work in between gatherings
- Being responsible in prayer for the call and vision they have

There are no formal assignments and the pathway is neither passed nor failed, however, the learning community approach and individual mentoring will require a significant time commitment. All training planters will need to commit to the whole process.

Teachable

The potential planter may not have previously considered leading a new church community, however, they are highly motivated by the desire to reach a place, a new group or community that is not connecting with existing models of church.

Trustworthy

Both the oversight minister and the diocese need to be able to trust the planter in this position of leadership. The ability to win the trust of others will also be an essential characteristic when gathering and establishing a planting team.

Courageous

Willingness and boldness to attempt something untried and the faith to proactively lead others towards that goal, without the full revelation of what is ahead.

Resilient

Planting will inevitably involve disappointments and frustrations. Does the potential planter have a track record of facing setbacks with resilience and faith?

Character

Both character and competence are essential for the potential planter. However, godly character is more important at the discernment stage because competence will develop through the supported learning pathway.

Capacity

Embarking upon the journey to start a new church community is demanding. It will take time, energy and emotional input (Luke 14.28). Planters will need to weigh the potential impact planting will have on family and work life.

Recognising a Potential Planter

Initially, it may seem difficult to identify a potential planter; however, there are ways that potential planters may present within church life that may help to discern someone who could lead a new church community. Not all potential planters will fit these profiles but they may aid in recognising planters within existing church communities:

Yearners

They often express a yearning and sadness that a particular group of people do not know Jesus or that they might feel excluded from the church. They may already have begun to imagine different forms a new church community might take.

It is important to differentiate this yearning from any personal disillusionment with faith or the church. Jonny Baker (CMS) explains that the evidence of 'getting things done' or setting things up in another context, will distinguish the 'dreamers' from those likely to deliver concrete plans

Wise builder

An ability to hear from God and then put it into practice (Matt 7) – a potential planter may be someone who can articulate their commitment to prayer and then action. This may have been demonstrated in a secular context.

Holy Discontent

Someone who frequently and easily interacts with people outside of the church - they may be someone who often brings new people to church and as a result may express a frustration that Sunday Church does not always effectively engage these people. They carry a sense of 'holy discontent' with the current and the need for something new to accomplish God's mission.

This is different from being merely frustrated by church for themselves - they are frustrated for others. However, be aware of people who speak badly of their previous experience of church and have a critical character.

Marginals

These are people who may be less involved in church activities but who are actively doing things on the 'edges' or outside of church. They easily build rapport with people on the fringes or outside of church and may demonstrate an 'empathetic spirituality', where they can interpret spirituality to unbelievers. It can be more difficult to identify these potential planters, as church leaders may not know them as well as others.

Entrepreneurs

People who have an established record of starting new things, either in ministry or in other secular contexts.

Nascent Vision

An individual who expresses a clear sense of calling to a particular place, community or group of people. They may be unclear how to develop this calling but a vision may be germinating.

A 'Sticky' Person

Someone who so enjoys being with and loving people, that they easily draw new people around them and create a growing community.

Place Connectors

These are people who may have been in the local community for a while and seem to know everyone, and most people know them or of them. They have a deep connection with the place and may be involved in many community focused activities as a result.

Being a Sending Community

Sometimes the impetus for people discovering their calling to establish a new community can come from their church. As the Priest or PCC begin to notice who is not present within their worshipping community it can cause them to begin to ask and pray - what can we do to address this and / or, who might God be calling to lead our response?

From this point, conversations with potential planters can help to discern if God is calling them or the process of involving the wider congregation with this issue can cause people to engage. As they do you can then use the guidance notes above to discern who might lead the development of this.

Inheritors

Sometimes a planter has nee part of an area of ministry or an activity which has naturally led to a new plant of the opportunity for a plant. A missional activity such as a new chaplaincy or event may lead to a group coming together of which the planter is part and they almost inherit or inadvertently are conscripted as the leader.

What Next?

If you believe that you have someone who displays some of these characteristics, then the Myriad learning pathway may be beneficial for them, and you.

1. Send them the 'Am I called?' document to consider
2. Meet with them to explore the questions presented in 'Am I called?'/ you may also use the questions in the next section as a framework for that conversation
3. Ask them to speak with their minister or the person responsible for them in their church community. This may be yourself.
4. Invite them to attend the taster event.

Checklist

Character

- What type of person are you?
- What helps you to reflect and grow?
- How do you handle stepping out into new things?
- How does prayer feature in your life?
- Describe your faith in 5 words.

Then consider:

- What is their level of emotional/spiritual maturity?
- What is their ability to reflect and grow?
- Any unresolved issues/hurts?
- Are they courageous to step out?

Context and Calling

- What has led you to this point?
- What are your motivations/passions?
- What is your long term plan?

Chemistry

- How do you get along with others?
- What is your experience of working in a team?
- In what ways have you gathered people or brought them together?
- How and where do you relate to people outside of church?

Chemistry

- How do you understand the commitment of the learning pathway?
- Are you available to give the plant and the learning sufficient time/energy?
- Do you have a plan for how they are going to create space for this learning and development?

Competency

- What life or ministry skills and experience do you bring with you?
- What's your experience and hope for learning on this pathway?

Conviction

- What do you sense God is saying about the possibility of you joining the learning community and planting with a team?

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