



# READERS



## Called to Reader Ministry?



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Manchester

CHURCH  
FOR A  
DIFFERENT  
WORLD

# What is a Reader?

Readers are lay people who have been trained for ministry and licensed by the bishop to preach and teach, to lead worship, and to assist in the pastoral, evangelistic and liturgical work of the Church in the parish or area where they are licensed.

Readers come from a wide diversity of occupations and backgrounds and serve God in a variety of situations; in parishes, schools, prisons, hospitals, hospices, factories and shops, among seafarers and in the Armed Forces, with children and young people, the elderly, housebound and bereaved, and with those preparing for baptism, confirmation and marriage.

Some Readers find that their main ministry is in their place of work or in the local community. Others are also involved in pioneer ministries and 'fresh expressions' of ministry.

## Exploring Reader Ministry

There is no single profile for a Reader; they can be men or women, almost any age and come from all walks of life.

If you think God is calling you to Reader ministry you should:

- **Pray**  
**for God's guidance to help you discern your calling.**
- **Discuss**  
**your sense of call with your incumbent, family and trusted friends.**
- **Reflect**  
**upon the demands this ministry and the training for it will place upon your life.**

## Selection

If it seems right to take your sense of calling further the first step is to seek your incumbent's support in going forward for selection for Reader ministry. Because Reader ministry is a 'local' ministry, it is important that both you and your incumbent think through carefully how Reader ministry might 'fit' within your parish and its needs, ministry and vision.



The next step is for you or your incumbent to contact the Diocesan Director of Vocations who will guide you through the process and talk with you about your sense of calling. This will normally involve filling in an application form.

Once forms have been returned to the Director of Vocations, interviews will be arranged for the candidate with each of the two Archdeaconry Reader Chaplains (one who is a Lay Reader and the other a member of the clergy). Each chaplain is asked to provide a report detailing their views of the candidate's vocation and readiness to train as a Reader.

Once you are ready to proceed, the next step is for you to have an interview with the Warden of Readers who will make the final decision on whether to put you forward for training

It's important to be aware that you are being selected at this stage only for *training* for Reader ministry; the process of discernment goes on beyond the selection process and into the training period.

It is important to remember too that the discernment process is not a way of 'testing' or 'examining' you, but rather an opportunity for you prayerfully to share your sense of call with others who will help you to discern God's leading for you.

## What are the selectors looking for?

Above all else they are looking to get to know you a bit, see the real you and try to discern what God is doing in your life and how you are responding to that. So it's important to try to be yourself – the person who God is calling!

Selectors are looking for people of potential, not for finished products. The selectors base their reports on the national criteria for Reader ministry which you can find at **[www.readers.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org)** or from the Warden of Readers at **[wardenofreaders@manchester.anglican.org](mailto:wardenofreaders@manchester.anglican.org)**



## What happens next?

If you are recommended for training you will usually begin training in the September following selection. All candidates for Reader ministry from Manchester Diocese train for ministry with All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry.

If you are not recommended for training, you will be offered support by the Archdeaconry Chaplain in seeking to move forward.



## Further information

For more information about selection and training please see the leaflet **Training for Reader Ministry**.

Our leaflets can be downloaded from the Readers' pages of the diocesan website **[www.manchester.anglican.org](http://www.manchester.anglican.org)**, which also gives contact details for the Warden of Readers, the Rt Revd Mark Ashcroft, Bishop of Bolton, as well as your Archdeaconry chaplain.

There is also useful information on the central Church of England Readers website: **[www.readers.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.readers.cofe.anglican.org)**.

To explore Reader ministry further and the training involved, please contact Nick Smeeton, Director of Vocations, at **[nicksmeeton@manchester.anglican.org](mailto:nicksmeeton@manchester.anglican.org)**.