



The Role of a Parish Lead

About *Some Definite Service*

The Archdiocese of Southwark is being called to be a missionary and evangelising Archdiocese. Each Catholic in Southwark is, therefore, called and invited to play their part.

Developed by the Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis, the *Some Definite Service* vision document outlines support for parishes in their efforts to evangelise, to catechise and to form adult disciples.

There are three fundamental elements to *Some Definite Service*: the parish plan; the volunteer network and prayer for diocesan, parish and personal renewal.

About the Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis

The Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis exists to serve the parishes of the Archdiocese of Southwark in terms of Evangelisation, Catechesis and Formation.

The Agency comprises a team of highly-trained advisers whose role is to encourage and help in the development of each parish's own plans; the training and formation of a volunteer network, as outlined in *Some Definite Service*, and the recommendation and creation of resources and courses for parish and individual use.

For more on the Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis, please visit our website: aec.rcaos.org.uk or follow the Agency on our social media channels: [@aecsouthwark](https://twitter.com/aecsouthwark)

'God has created me to do Him some definite service.
He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission... I shall do good; I shall do His work.'

St John Henry Newman, Meditations on Christian Doctrine, 1848



What is a Parish Lead?

A Parish Lead is a key member of their parish community who has accepted their Parish Priest's request to be a principal point of contact in their parish for either Evangelisation, Catechesis or adult Formation. They are part of the wider volunteer network, supported by the Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis, and are committed to the teaching and spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Chosen from within their parish, the Parish Leads will have a key role in supporting the renewal and growth of their parish. Indeed, many people may be fulfilling such a role already.

A Parish Lead needs to be someone who is:

- A practicing Catholic who strives to live according to the truth that is taught by the Church and who has a deep love for Jesus Christ.
- Available and willing to support other volunteers in their parish, with the assistance of the Deanery Mentors and diocesan team.
- Enthusiastic for the Gospel and open to the Holy Spirit.
- Willing to grow and be taught as well as eager to help others to develop and learn. The Agency will provide training for our Leads.

Some Definite Service expects that each parish (of which there are 175 in Southwark) will have a Parish Lead for Evangelisation, a Parish Lead for Catechesis and a Parish Lead for Formation - who will support their Parish Priest and who will be expected to share their wisdom with each other, their fellow parishioners, and with others in their deanery.

There will be a total of around 525 Parish Leads supported themselves by Deanery Mentors, our clergy and the diocesan advisory team.

Why might I be asked to be a Lead?

Parish Leads are selected by their Parish Priest. In many instances, the Parish Lead appointed by their priest will be serving in a similar capacity already, e.g. as a coordinator of catechesis or leading adult faith formation programmes in the parish.

The kind of person that our priests are looking for will be faithful to Jesus and his Church, available and supportive to others, contagious in terms of their enthusiasm and teachable. The role is very important and may vary slightly from parish to parish.

Here are the six core responsibilities of a Parish Lead:



Collaborate with your Parish Priest, other members of the parish team and your fellow Leads in the development of bespoke parish plans relating to your specific area of Evangelisation, Catechesis or Formation.



Support 'people and initiatives' at the grassroots



Fully participate in periodic training (online or in-person) particular to the role of Parish Lead.



Maintain regular contact with your Deanery Mentor who will be looking to help you to help the people in your care.



Be attentive to the importance of safeguarding and the right of access of all people - no matter their ability or stage of life - to Christian formation.



Pray regularly that the gift of faith which we all receive in Baptism may realise fruitfulness across the Archdiocese.

'The Lord calls us to put out into the deep and let down our nets. He bids us spend our lives in his service. Clinging to him, we are inspired to put all our charisms at the service of others.'

Pope Francis, Gaudete et Exsultate, 130



How will I be helped and supported?

It is the goal and intention of the Agency and the diocese to invest time and energy in all involved in *Some Definite Service*. Your effort and gifts will never go under-appreciated.



Regular contact and support from your Deanery Mentor (depending on your specific area as Parish Lead: Evangelisation, Catechesis or Formation).



Being part of a large and highly-skilled, diocesan-wide team, seeking to bear fruit for the glory of God in Southwark. Ministry can often be isolating, *Some Definite Service* seeks to address this in a meaningful way across the Archdiocese.



Access to workshops from the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University, thanks to the Agency's institutional relationship.



Various training opportunities and gatherings for formation, prayer and social reasons.



Access to all Southwark diocesan courses, including the highly-respected Archbishop's Certificate and discounted access to our basic online and short-form courses.



Experiencing the real joy of seeing the faith come alive in the hearts of people in the parishes; knowing that what you do has eternal value.

Becoming a lead:

aec.rcaos.org.uk/sds-lead

What will be asked of me?

3 years

Your term for a Parish Lead is at the discretion of your Parish Priest, however, the Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis recommends a 3-year term.

The principal aspect of the Parish Lead's role revolves around the development and fulfilment of the bespoke parish plan, drawn up by the Parish Priest and key parishioners, in collaboration with the Agency.

Your particular responsibilities in the parish, will vary depending on your specific area and the needs of your parish – for example, the Parish Lead for Catechesis may spend time debriefing their Confirmation catechists about that week's session or the Parish Lead for Formation may work with a small team planning a series of Bible Studies.

8 hours

In addition to parish responsibilities, the time commitment will be around **8 hours minimum each month** (2 hours per week) which would include a Mentor meeting as well as work with those on the ground and collaboration with the Parish Priest and parish team.

You will be asked to undertake a period of initial training, and will be given further opportunities to develop your knowledge, skills and attitudes in your role.

The task of a good Parish Lead is to help those respectively involved in Evangelisation, Catechesis and Formation to have a meaningful impact on those they serve at a grassroots level. Similarly, the Deanery Mentors, will be helping you, as Parish Lead, to bear fruit for the Kingdom.

'I dream of a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's ways of doing things can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world.'

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 27



I think I'm a good fit. What do I do?

Glad to hear it! As Parish Leads are appointed by our Parish Priests your first step would be to speak with them about your interest. Be aware that they may have someone else in mind or are still holding the matter in prayer.



Continue to pray for personal, parish and diocesan renewal (you may consider using the prayer on the back cover).



Once your Parish Priest has made his decision, he will contact the Agency and you will be invited to an introductory discussion with your Deanery Mentor.



Next comes a period of discernment and training (duration 6 weeks) which will include participation in a faith study group with other nominees as well as opportunities to explore the mission of the Agency and deepen your understanding of the role of Parish Lead.



When you and your Parish Priest are both confident in moving forward, you will be given a letter confirming the appointment for an initial period (typically 3 years).



Training and support is available to you at every stage.

We would like to invite you to email aec@rcaos.org.uk should you wish to discuss any of this further.

Becoming a lead:
aec.rcaos.org.uk/sds-lead

Almighty Father,
in every age you call people to love you and to serve your will,
in every age your people face challenges to this call.
I pray for your Spirit to unbind us all from these challenges
and to breathe new life into our diocese,
into our parishes and into each one of us.

I pray for the Archdiocese of Southwark:
that it becomes the missionary and evangelising Archdiocese
that it is being called to be.

That every organisation, agency and commission
embraces and embodies the mission to learn,
teach and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

I pray for our parishes:
that they truly become and remain
places of creativity and fellowship,
beacons of light, hope and growth in faith.

For me: that I truly accept your call to be a disciple
of your Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ.
That I grow in holiness and be ever more determined
to share the Gospel with others.

I make this prayer through Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Lady Immaculate, pray for us
St Thomas of Canterbury, pray for us
St Augustine of Canterbury, pray for us

Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis

website: aec.rcaos.org.uk

social media: @aecsouthwark