

How to run a Listening event

Get people talking

- Get everyone to think of something they like, sacred or secular. This could be a hobby, an interest, or an event they have been to.
- In pairs, get them to decide who will be the Speaker and who will be the Listener first time around.
- Get the Speaker to talk for a minute about their chosen subject – the Listener listens without comment.
- Stop them after 90 seconds, pause and ask them to swap over so that the Listener becomes the Speaker and vice versa. Repeat.
- Ask them how they found the experience.
- Then ask them to find a new partner to repeat the process. but this time get them to talk about what they really like about their church family and what the church is doing.

Imagine the Church

- Give everyone a piece of paper and some coloured pens, and ask them to imagine the church working at its absolute best – what would it look like?
- Get them to draw what their brilliant church looks like.

The key is to allow space for the Holy Spirit to open their eyes to what God is already doing and encourage them join in.



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

Draw things together

- In huddles of four to six, ask people to listen to each person in turn as they explain their drawing/notes to others.
- Give the groups three post-it notes each and ask them to write down what they think are the most important things they have heard. Suggest they put one idea on each post-it note.
- Bring the groups together and ask them to discuss their group outcomes and see if there are five things that they are all agreed on.

Feedback

- Use a flipchart and ask groups to share their perspectives with the wider group.
- Ask people to highlight which two are the most important by sticking on stars or dots.

Conclude

- Thank people present for their perspective.
 - Explain that the Growing in God Working Group will take note of what has been said and come up with a draft set of priorities for the next three to five years.
 - Tell them that the draft plan will go to the PCCs for discussion.



Sample Timetable

10.00 Welcome

Open in prayer and then explain how the session will work and where you expect to get to.

10.05 Get people talking

In pairs encourage people to talk about something they like and enjoy to create a positive outlook and release energy. Repeat once or twice.

10.25 Imagine the Church

Ask people to prayerfully imagine what the church could be. Get them to draw it however badly.

11.00 Listen together

In groups of four ask people to explain what they have drawn. Notice any common themes.

11.20 Feedback

Get each group to feedback what they have discussed. Record their comments on a flipchart, grouped into themes.

11.50 Conclusion

Summarise what has been said and explain what will happen next.

12.00 Close in prayer



- Use somewhere with flexible seating.
- Provide flowers, sweets and refreshments.
- Celebrate what you are already doing by setting up a display about the Benefice.
- Ask for responses over an extended period.
- Invite people to respond by email, phone or letter.
- Get families and young people involved.