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With a deepening of focus, keen preparation, attention to the path below our feet, and respect for the destination at hand, it is possible to transform even the most ordinary journey into a sacred journey, a pilgrimage.

Phil Cousineau

This leaflet is designed to help your church explore the opportunities pilgrimage offers for mission, discipleship, and community engagement. Use it to spark conversation, reflect on your context, and identify simple, practical steps you can take to invite others to journey, discover, and encounter God in new ways.



GOING FURTHER

Pilgrimage has been part of Christian mission and discipleship for centuries, and is as much a part of our ministry today as it ever has been.

With our partners in **Faith in the North**, you can register your church as a 'Pilgrim Place', enabling visitors to explore your buildings, engage with the stories they tell, and enhance their own journey through life.

Within the Diocese of York, a range of supporting resources has been developed to help your church reflect on how pilgrimage can enrich its mission and outreach. These include a practical toolkit and a small group resource, both available free of charge via the QR code below.

dioceseofyork.org.uk/pilgrimage



Diocese of York, Amy Johnson Way, York, YO30 4XT
Charity no. 244976 | Company no. 225234



Exploring

PILGRIMAGE

FOR CHURCHES



INSIDE SACRED SPACES

Church buildings can themselves become places of pilgrimage - a sacred journey traced step by step within their walls. The layout, architecture, and furnishings are not just features to admire, but markers along a path that tells the story of faith. As pilgrims move through the space, our stone, wood, and glass all become companions on the journey, inviting prayer and reflection. By mapping a route through the building, churches can invite visitors to walk, notice, and engage - stopping at particular points, following prompts, or taking part in simple acts of prayer. In this way, the building itself becomes a guide, leading pilgrims not only through physical space, but deeper into the story of faith it holds.



How might we help visitors notice and reflect on the story our building tells?



What route could we create through our building to help visitors journey and pause?



Where could we create spaces or prompts for prayer, stillness, and encounter?

GOD'S WIDER CREATION

Pilgrimage in God's wider creation is often simpler than we imagine. It may begin with noticing the paths already around us, and the people already walking them. Your church might sit quietly on an existing route, ready to offer a place of rest and welcome. Sometimes the most meaningful step is to recognise what is already there and make it visible. There may be an opportunity to link with nearby churches to shape a shared walk across your benefice or deanery. With a little thought - a clear waymarked path, a simple map, a place to pause - ordinary journeys can become prayerful ones, where people find space to reflect, to talk, and to encounter God in the world around them.



Is our church on an existing walking route, and how could we better welcome those who pass by?



Who might we partner with to develop and share local pilgrimage routes?



What is one simple step we could take to make our church visible and welcoming to visitors?

CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS

Pilgrimage can also unfold through creativity. Music, visual art, poetry, and storytelling can guide reflection in church, at home, or in everyday spaces. These approaches offer accessible ways for people to engage spiritually, whatever their circumstances. For those who are less mobile or whose lives are pressured, a pilgrimage of the imagination can be just as meaningful - journeying inwardly through prayer, creativity, and reflection. You might begin with something small - a sequence of images, a piece of music, or a short set of reflections. With a little planning, these can form a clear and accessible pathway for pilgrimage, helping people pause, reflect, and pray within the rhythm of daily life.



How could we use music, art, or poetry to support reflection in our church or wider community?



What simple creative resources could we offer for use at home or in daily life?



How might we make this accessible for those who cannot easily travel?