The Church of Scotland

InTogether Perth Presbytery

THRIVING CHURCH LAB

3

PODCAST

Resource pack for groups and individuals

THE CONTEXT WHO HAS BEEN EXPERIMENTING?

InTogether is a Perth Presbytery Mission Initiative of the Church of Scotland under the governance of Perth North Church. They have operated as a part-time, volunteer led initiative for three years sharing the difference God's love can make with families who have children with additional support needs. They do this through direct provision of specific community services and are developing new and existing ecumenical worshipping communities that meet the spiritual needs of the whole family.

THE LEARNING HOW THEY ENCOURAGED GROWTH...

HOW? A Sense of Call

InTogether believes that we are all called to share the good news of Jesus in the everyday spaces we find ourselves in, not just people with ministerial accreditation, beyond church buildings and services.
"Who does your heart ache for?" – this became their sense of call, their purpose, their why.
Lynsey prayed for some time about the sense of call she was experiencing and then when she found Anne it started to click

HOW ... to Start

> They got a little bit of money to rent some space and try something out. Putting a time limit on the trial made buy in accessible, people felt they could give it a try without long term commitment

> They reached out to people they trusted to join them as a leadership team, people with integrity and relevant experience that they could ask for guidance and help them to ask good questions

> They began by listening – listening to the community they felt called to. They continued listening through a consultation. All they learnt really shaped what InTogether became.

> Their first volunteers were found easily because they also felt called to support families with additional support needs, through lived experience or connection.

> InTogether is a Presbytery Mission Initiative, this is a way for a motivated team to start a project without it being part of the parish system and without it being led by a minister.

GET CURIOUS...

Sometimes they had too many ideas so they asked, "Is this a good idea or a God idea". As a team the reflected on this and kindly challenged one another.

The LEARNING HOW THEY ENCOURAGED GROWTH...

HOW... to Continue

> They try to notice the 'God moments': Instances where things just seem to come together unusually easily
> They try to model healthy leadership – a balance between ministry, personal relationship with God and our relationships with family and friends
> They think carefully about capacity. They look across all their expressions and ensure they plan across the board, balancing input into outreach and into deeper discipleship opportunities too

When looking for a way forward they used these methods:

- Take a pause and in a month ask - is this still a good idea?
- Are we in agreement – so we all feel this is a priority?
- Will this damage our own relationships with God or with each other because "God is more interested in that than any one ministry"

LAB LEARNING:

They noticed if they had a missing skill set in the team and they asked God to bring the right people to them.

"When you have a relationship, you have a bridge to be able to make connections to share. Sometimes when people evangelise, they go in with their four-ton message over a bridge that only could take one ton! Whereas when you build relationship, you can chunk up your message into one ton messages that build over time"

HOW... to talk about Jesus

Although InTogether is place for anyone – all faiths and none – they are very open about their Christian roots and equip their volunteers to be able to talk about their own faith if asked

"as a leader it's not good to be a lone ranger"

Knowing when to talk about God is rooted in relationship

- knowing someone's vocabulary and noticing change
- being open to an inquiry that has a faith element
- offering personal Christian reflection as an invitation for further conversation
- stopping sharing faith if it feels uncomfortable but continuing a loving and connecting conversation
- ongoing relationship allows faith conversations to be 'chunked'

GET CURIOUS...

At InTogether they try and work at Gods pace and at the pace of the whole team...

REFLECT:
Who's pace am I currently working to?
God's? Mine? Team?
How is that feeling?

InTogether provides expressions that have 'high contact, low content' a place for relationships to build but also invites people into spaces with more faith content.

At InTogether the team work together to create a space where significant faith conversations can occur "together we are a body, not everyone is the mouth but somebody needs to be"

THE EXPLORING

HOW MIGHT YOU TRY THIS WHERE YOU ARE?...

YOUR LAB QUESTIONS:

- Who does your heart ache for – what people group are you always thinking about? Who do you notice that is missing from your church community?
- Explore if we do all agree that everyone is called to share the good news of Jesus. Does our context look like that or do we rely on our ministers, elders and leaders? How do you feel about you being involved in sharing the gospel? Who might God be showing you that you have a unique opportunity to connect with and witness to?
- If you had to build a leadership team to support and challenge you who would be on it?
- What skills do a leadership team need to have?
- How could you listen deeply to the people you want to connect with? Do you have any confirmed data that could help shape your thoughts? How could you ask them about their perspective and experience?
- How can you find other people who share your call to an issue or a people group? How do you share a vision big enough for other to want to join you?
- Are you missing a crucial skill set in your team? How could you motivate people to pray about that?

Do you have too many ideas?... perhaps these questions can help you filter:

  - Is this a God idea or just another good idea? Where do we agree? Can we do this and maintain good relationships and healthy balance? How would we plan our capacity across the whole project?
  - Where are things coming together surprisingly easily: Where are the God moments?
  - How does your idea fit with your vision and values?

- Are your volunteers equipped and enthusiastic about sharing their faith? Do you tell stories about how you shared your faith with others an encouragement to others?
- Lynsey shared that sometimes a fear of personal rejection can stop us from talking about God, is this true for you?
- Look up the Engel Scale and think about the funnel analogy: Do you have invitational pathways for people to move from 'high contact, low content' spaces to places with more of a faith focus?

THE EXPERIMENTING

EXPAND YOUR RESEARCH...

You will hear our podcast guests sharing tried and tested resources, that supported their learning! You can find these in our Lab Library, or by scanning here...

About this Podcast Series

Thriving Church Lab is a brand new filmed podcast series from the Church of Scotland exploring what God is doing in congregations and projects that are seeing signs of creativity, growth and renewal in their local context, and discovering how they got there…

We love to learn and appreciate your stories, feedback and insights!
Share with us at: mission@churchofscotland.org.uk

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