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## Use social media

Can people check in to your church via social media? Why not set up a new location on Facebook which enables them to do that – and so let their friends know where they have been? Include an entry on TripAdvisor under Churches and Cathedrals to encourage people to visit, and allow them to leave reviews.

## Offer the unexpected

What can we offer that is unexpected, and may provoke a comment or reaction in a constructive way? In Kirkby Lonsdale church, for example, there is a Rocking Horse. What might you introduce into your church that will cause people to stop and question – and that may then point them towards God? Don't feel that you need to give a justification for why it is there – provided you think that it is likely to help people connect with God.

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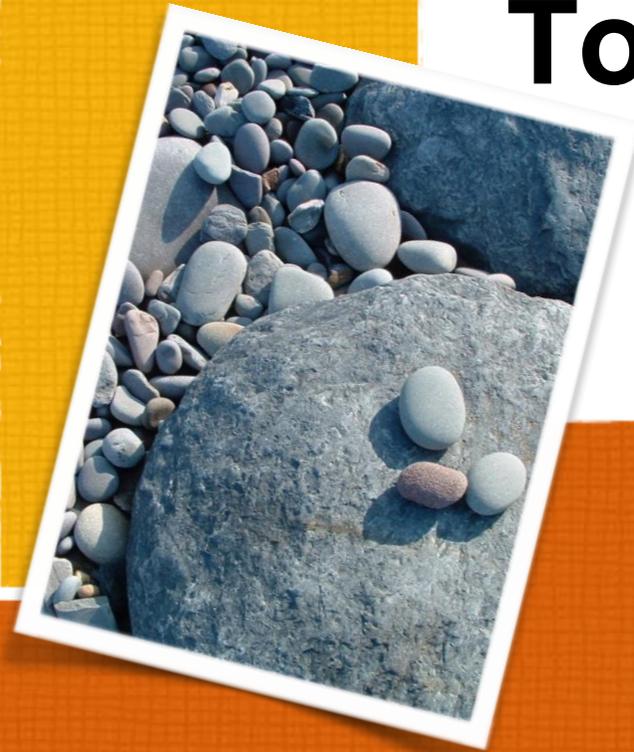
## Provide for children

What provision is there for children? Can you find (or produce) age specific material that might help them engage with the building, and the story that it tells, and which enables them to discover more of God? Perhaps set up a treasure trail through the church that has them looking for different aspects. Even having some good quality toys and a craft table which children can use is helpful in welcoming tourists.

## Check your literature

Are notices up-to-date, clear and tidy? Do the posters in the porch invite people to discover more of God, or deal with church structures? Are times of services for the following month clearly shown? What about ensuring that you have plenty of copies of **The Way** available, along with a warm invitation to take one? Do your church guides help people discover God through the various parts of the building, rather than just talk about its history?

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# Hints & Tips

## Tourists

Me reach  
In reach  
Out reach

# Tourists

As part of the **God for All** vision to help everyone across Cumbria discover more of God and God's purpose for their lives, how can we engage with the thousands of tourists who visit many of our churches each year? Drawn by the history, or setting, or a particular person with whom the church has links, they may not have a sense of God at the forefront of their minds. Yet once they have arrived, people can be attracted by the peace and space that they discover there with the opportunity it presents of connecting with God. How might we be able to help them move beyond the expected to glimpse the unexpected and perhaps to journey forward in their discovery of God? What follows are some suggestions and ideas, drawn largely from those who work in churches with a significant tourist footfall, to help develop the opportunities that they have of discovering God.

# 1

## Assess the Welcome

It is helpful to see ourselves through the eyes of a visitor. Why not invite someone who is not yet a Christian to visit your church on a weekday, and report back on their impressions? Or perhaps ask for a neighbouring parish to send a 'secret visitor' at some point to assess the welcome, engagement, invitation etc. In the light of their report, what one step can you take to help visitors feel more welcomed?

## Develop the Welcome

Put an A-board with a printed sign outside church to let passers-by know that it is open. If you have a loo, why not advertise that visitors are welcome to use it, or (if they are a wet walker) that it is a dry space where they can have a picnic? Even if the church isn't staffed, putting a kettle at the back with tea and coffee making facilities, and a note telling people to help themselves, will provide a feeling of warmth and generosity.

# 2

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## Measure the footfall

People enter churches for a wide variety of reasons. Why not count how many people pass through the church in one month (or one week)? How many are children or young people? Ask them why they come, and what they value or enjoy about the building in order to gain a feel for what their interests are. That may then help shape where you focus your resources.

## Tell stories

Stories help a place come to life, as they add colour and texture. What are the stories that you could easily tell of the church and its people? Why not produce mini posters of local Christians telling their stories, and especially how their faith, nurtured in the building, helps shape their everyday life outside of it? One way of doing it might be through a simple question and answer format – and include a photo!

# 4

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## Engage them in experience

Having prayer candles to light, or music playing, helps. What about a mirror to look in, or a place to wash their hands and feet? Using these as prayer stations, with a small instruction card next to them, may intrigue people to think about God. Invite people to place a stone in a bowl of water, watch how the water transforms the stone and pray for God's transforming love to be seen in the person or situation they have in mind.

## Encourage prayer

People may want to pray, but can be unsure how to do so. Why not offer a simple ABC guide on How to Pray, and supplement that with books of prayers, which they could perhaps take away – SGM Lifewords has some helpful literature that can be used in this way. Or produce bookmarks with two or three simple prayers on that can also be taken away.

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