

Faith And Society Files: Re:focus - Preparation

Re:focus is an updated, more flexible version of the BUGB Mission Consultancy scheme developed in 2003. It has been developed in modules to make it suitable for a wide variety of churches. User-friendly, it assumes two external facilitators will work with each church on the re:focus journey that may take 6 to 12 months. This resource contains the modules to assist churches in preparation for re:focus.





celebrating who you are and
developing your **crossing**places

Introduction

re:focus is a journey to help your church:

- focus on its life as a Christian community
- develop new and existing *crossingplaces*
- share the Christian message in actions and words.

Using a selection of the **re:focus** modules, the church will:

- listen to each other and to God
- be guided by experienced external facilitators

Should our church go through re:focus?

Many churches find themselves in changing circumstances. People move on to live elsewhere; sometimes the community changes around where the church meets. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, living life as children of God and impacting the community in the power of the Holy Spirit is the ongoing task. But the task may need to be done differently. Using **re:focus**, facilitators will help you look at your church and community realistically. They will guide you in setting an Action Plan for the next few years.

By wisdom a house is built,
and through understanding it is
established;
through knowledge its rooms
are filled with rare and beautiful
treasures.

Proverbs 24:3-4

What are *crossingplaces*?

People you meet regularly who are not Christians provide your *crossingplaces* opportunities. These people may be antagonistic towards hearing about your faith, but more likely they are spiritually open and somewhere on a journey of faith. **re:focus** will help you develop your personal *crossingplaces*. It also helps build on the *crossingplaces* activities your church undertakes.

What will happen?

There will be a couple of months of preparation during which five sermons need to be preached and five sessions of small groups run for adults, young people and children. All the notes are provided. In this time the minister(s) and leaders and everyone in the church completes a questionnaire. This leads on to the main meetings for the leaders and then the congregation with the facilitators. From this information and the mission issues and opportunities charts drawn up together, the facilitators report back and then help make the Action Plan.



re:focus

Who will help us?

Your Baptist association or network will provide experienced facilitators to journey with you through this process. Ministers and church leaders will be involved throughout. Importantly the whole church is fully involved at key points. The journey of discovery and discernment may last from six months to a year. The **re:focus** modules provide the preparation, various discovery tools, as well as guidance about resources. These are listed at the end of this document. The facilitators will discuss the timetable with you early on.

What helps re:focus work well?

Although there is much talking and listening to each other, **re:focus** is only effective if you also talk and listen to God. Pray about whether to do **re:focus** and, as you move ahead, keep on praying. Throughout, commit to being open about the church and the community of which it is part. Don't insist on personal agendas. If you have gone through a process similar to this in recent years, go through **re:focus** now before the previous benefits diminish.

Does re:focus work in a small church?

re:focus works equally well in all sizes of church. It is flexible to suit each individual church. The experienced facilitators will guide you in this. However for smaller churches (say up to 40 to 50 members) there is an additional resource called *LIFEsize* that can be undertaken as a five-week small group study and which will provide an excellent beginning. Electronic copies can be obtained by contacting the Faith and Society Team on faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk

How much does re:focus cost?

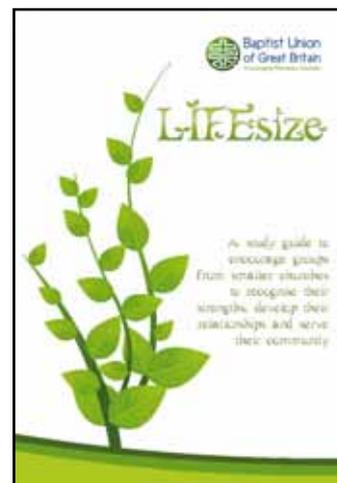
All the material required is free and can be downloaded from the BUGB website. The church should offer hospitality to the facilitators on their visits and cover their travelling costs. Facilitators give their time freely, so a parting gift is appropriate. Check with your association about any registration fee they may require to cover some of their administration and training costs for **re:focus**. This is a small financial outlay across a year.

What should we do next?

When you have decided to go ahead with **re:focus**, contact your association. The association will provide you with appropriate facilitators who will contact you to sort out a timetable with you and answer any further questions.

The church went through a full consultancy six years ago. But life doesn't stand still and there have been changes ... so we have welcomed the opportunity to review our church life and mission again and see what God is saying to us right now.

*Fleet Meadow Baptist Church,
Oxfordshire*



It was helpful in showing us as a small church not to overstretch ... they didn't come to beat us down but came to encourage us ... all in all we found it useful.

*Becontree Avenue Baptist Church,
Dagenham*

crossingplaces

A church that commits to giving its time to the surveys and sessions, to participating and to praying, will gain a renewed mission focus and a deeper level of discipleship.

Kathryn Morgan - BUGB Mission Adviser and facilitator (retired)



re:focus modules

1 **Sermons:** To provide five weeks of preparation for **re:focus** in services

Preparation

- 2 **Small Group Studies:** To provide five weeks of preparation for small groups. Separate courses for adults, youth and children (to 11yrs)
- 3 **Leaders' Questionnaire:** To enable the church leaders to provide useful information to the facilitators
- 4 **Congregation Questionnaire:** To enable the church congregation to provide useful information to the facilitators

Main Meetings

- 5 **Main re:focus Meeting with Leaders:** To reflect on the history of the church and explore its hopes for the future
- 6 **Main re:focus Meeting with Congregation:** To go through a process together to discern the local mission issues and opportunities
- 7 **Crossingplaces:** To help develop people's *crossingplaces* and to discover how the church might support them
- 8 **Exercises for the Main re:focus Meetings:** To provide a variety of exercises, in classified groups, which the facilitators can select

Action Plan and Resources

- 9 **Developing an Action Plan:** To give help the in creating an Action Plan that will guide the next 3 - 5 years
- 10 **Sowing, Reaping, Keeping:** To provide a way of developing a framework for mission in the church
- 11 **Local Community Research:** To offer ways to understand the community better through research
- 12 **A Welcoming Place:** To ensure that the building is welcoming, suitable for the mission of the church
- 13 **Resources:** To point to Baptist and other resources that will resource *crossingplaces*
- 14 **Evangelism Resources:** To suggest resources suitable for evangelism for different stages of the faith journey
- 15 **Discipleship Resource: LIFE MOT:** To offer a personal discipleship scheme to be promoted in a church

Suggested books:

Resourcing Mission by Helen Cameron

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