



Mini Media Training

February 2023

This Guide support the Mini-Media Training. It covers storytelling, media tips and tricks and includes links to useful resources and frequently asked questions...

Mini-Media Training – telling proactive stories

Feb 2023

In a crisis its often about the managing the crisis rather than talking about the good news. Some quick ways to highlight what you and your congregations are doing; how to handle media attention if you get it and how to focus on hope rather than fear.

Communication is foundational to mission, outreach and community and our vision of a safe, diverse, growing, intergenerational church at the heart of each community, working alongside our chaplaincies and schools in living and proclaiming the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. Working with the media is a great opportunity to share what we are doing; sharing our point of view; and highlighting the God that we know in the Church life that we are part of.

Storytelling.

Storying telling is not an artform, everyone tells stories - they can surround us, and they help us connect with others. However, we don't always see that we do it – often it comes to us unconsciously and as a result we forget to share these experiences proactively.

Can you think of a story that you have told today, this week, this month?

Why did you tell it? Was it to share hope, fear, joy or find common ground with other people? Did it cheer someone up, pass along a moral, share an experience with someone else who couldn't? Do you remember the facts and detail because of the story?

Stories are a collection of experiences that help us understand us, help us reach out to others, pass down experience, behaviours and remember.

Jesus was a master storyteller, he knew that people remember stories, he knew to keep his message simple, to speak to different people differently and that actions speak louder the words. The Bible alone has between 600-800 stories – how many do you remember and translate into your life now?

So what makes a good story?

Especially in times of crisis, we crave good news. Often these can be small snippets of news but they stick in our mind because they sum up our experiences or appeal to our tastes.

- Something new
- Something different or out of the ordinary
- Something local
- Something personal or about a person
- Something visual



Content and design © 2013 abc copywriting - abccopywriting.com
Design and illustrations by wendy chan - wendychandesign.com
For a full discussion of the ideas and research summarised in this infographic, please visit abccopywriting.com/goodstory
Free to reproduce, but please link to original page or abccopywriting.com

ABC Copywriting

<https://www.abccopywriting.com/2013/12/10/what-really-makes-a-good-story>

Some examples from our Diocese- but have we told these stories locally?

- Keeping a night shelter open or running a food bank for your church
- Setting up a phone tree to get to those who are not able to use the internet
- Delivering food to your neighbours
- Virtual choir set up that anyone can join
- Involving the whole congregation in a digital service
- Sharing a parishioners poem, words of wisdom or artwork
- Fundraising for a local charity that would otherwise not survive?

These are all small but wonderful little things that will resonate with people at this time

Developing your content

How do you start.....

- Write down the facts
- Write down the detail
 - Who is involved?
 - What is happening?
 - Where is it happening?
 - Why is it happening?
- How has it impacted those people involved?
- How do people or an individual feel about this?
- What do we want the reader or listener of the story to know, feel or do?

What do you actually say....

1. What are the three points you would like to get across?
2. What would you like the headline to be for your story?
3. How can you simplify your language?
4. Give examples to support your three points – anecdotes, analogies, metaphors, imagery or symbols – embrace what Jesus did.

How do you tell your story?

There are many different way to tell a story....

Audience (group of people)	How to tell the story
Congregation	In a sermon Share it to your Facebook page In your Parish Magazine On your Website
Wider Community	Tweet about it with a hashtag Contact your local media with a press release

	<p>Send a photograph and small paragraph to your local media</p> <p>Offer to do an interview with a local journalist or radio station</p> <p>Share details on your website – in your news section, community section, on the homepage</p> <p>Share with your partner organisations</p>
Diocese	<p>Share with the Diocese Communications team</p> <p>Share it to the Diocese Facebook page or include @cofeguildford on twitter</p>
Church of England	<p>Share it on twitter and copy @churchofengland;</p>
Nationally	<p>Discuss the Diocese of Guildford Communication team on best approach</p>

While above lists some of the ways you can interact with different people, **this manual focuses on media.**

The Media

Writing a press release

When you have an important news story a press release can be the best way to share it widely with local media. Local media can help you reach people who would otherwise never interact with your church. Being in the news (on your terms) helps to raise your profile and set the tone of how your role in the community is. 9 tips on writing for the press.

- **Write a good headline** - this might be the only thing that entices a journalist to read what you have written
- **Write down the facts** - Write down the details of what you know - the first draft is never the last but this helps you gather your thoughts.
- **The First paragraph** - is essential. It should be a summary of the story and should answer some of the important 'Who', 'what', 'where', 'why' and 'when' questions.
- **Length** - A news release should be less than a side of A4 long (400 words). Three or four short paragraphs and a quote is ideal.
- **Quotes** - They should provide a personal view and take on the story – not information about the church.
- **Notes for Editors** - useful to include information at the end that helps provide context but not part of the story.
- **Images** - a picture tells a thousand words - provide a good resolution one but in the notes to editors reference a higher resolution is available.
- **Remove jargon** – the Church of England does love an acronym!
- **Provide clear contact details** - make sure you are available for interviews and follow up enquiries. If you aren't make sure you have identified someone who could do this in your absence.

Media interviews – why do them?

While writing a press release or sharing an image with a caption is often the simplest and most effective way to share a story with journalists. They are time pressured and under resourced so they may often print it word for word. However, an interview allows a journalist to dig into the details and find an angle on the story that is new.

Preparing for an interview

Preparation is everything

If you accept an interview, make time to prepare.

- Ask Questions - How long will you have? Will there be others interviewed at the same time, can they interact with you?
- Do Research - Who will listen to, watch or read this? What will the journalist be interested in, what questions will they ask?
- Think Big - What are the difficult questions you don't want to answer?
- Practice – your 3 main points and back up

Types of media interview and the key things to consider

Press interviews	Television Interview	Radio Interview
Will it be published today?	Will it air today?	Will it air today?
Is it part of wider feature so not time critical?	Is it part of wider feature so could be published in 2-3 weeks?	Are there others to be interviewed?
Who else is being interviewed (if appropriate)?	Is it live or pre-recorded?	Is it live?
What does the journalist want to talk about?	Is it in a studio or from your own location?	Do you have a clear phone line?
Ask the journalist if they need any background before the interview	What will be your background image be (especially relevant when you are working from home)? Be aware of where the light is coming from, how blurring the background is	Ask what the first question will be?
Ask to read back quotes	Clarify what the first question will be	Tell the presenter what you intend to talk about (if you can) before you go live
Repeat your key points	Can you provide any imagery ahead of the programme or links	Stand up -it helps enthusiasm
Smile, talk slowly and enjoy		
Be aware of your body language		

Media 101 – tips and tricks

What happens if a journalist shows up at your Church?

Welcome them in, find out what they are interested in and why, help them settle somewhere while you either go and find out the answers; take a moment to prepare or find someone who can help. You never need to answer something on the spot but you do need to demonstrate your Christian values at all times.

What happens if a journalist calls you?

This is great – these interactions present opportunities to inform and share afresh the love and saving power of Jesus Christ, both being good news and proclaiming good news to viewers, listeners and readers.

If you receive a call from a journalist, you do not need to respond to their questions straight away, simply ask for their contact details and deadline and explain that you or someone else will respond as soon as possible. **Prepare.** Ring back or find the right person to ring back. The Diocese Communications Team is here to help.

What makes a good spokesperson – common sense is key....

Spokespersons behaviours should	Spokespersons should avoid
Demonstrate knowledge	Avoid using I (unless personal story) think 'we'
Convey empathy	Avoid speculation and gossip
Demonstrate competence and expertise	Avoid making promises you can't keep
Communicate openly and honestly	Avoid Jargon and Acronyms
Be credible and trustworthy	Avoid becoming defensive
Be sensitive and responsive	Avoid blaming others
Stay calm under pressure	Avoid repeating misinformation or negative allegations

What is your natural behaviour and body language?

A great video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPHFIE1xoX0>

Positive Body Language	Negative Body Language
Eye Contact	No Eye Contact or persistent looking to the side or away
Tone supports what you are saying	Stumbling over words or clearing your throat
Alert posture, open arms	Slouched posture, folded arms
Hands in sight	Hands hidden or frequent distracting hand movements

Facial expressions responsive	No Facial expression or reaction
Body movement responsive and mirroring (as appropriate)	Persistent movement – hands, feet, head
Dressed appropriately – for men (blue shirts and a plain tie) women (pastel tops and no eye catching jewellery).	Distracting clothes, colours/patterns, jewellery or props

Ask yourself – what do you do without noticing – film yourself answering questions and look for those normal reactions – are they good or bad? Being aware of what you do naturally will help you when you are under stress.

Preparing for a TV interview

Before	Just Before	During
Rehearse and practice	Remind yourself of your key point	Breath and pause
Seek feedback on your body language, voice, conviction, delivery of message	Be positive	Be aware of your body language and mannerisms
Practice	Accept fear and harness energy	Talk slower, and louder
	Avoid stimulants such as caffeine	Show enthusiasm and smile

Techniques you can use to get back to your key message

Bridging

Typically used as part of the ABC model – Acknowledge, Bridge, Contribute.

When bridging goes wrong - <https://youtu.be/78yigV0GYGQ>

- Acknowledging the question is arguably the most important part of bridging. It shows the journalist that you understood the question and that you will answer it to the extent that you can answer it.
- Bridging is the use of a phrase that signals the fact that you will change the scope of your answer. "What is important here, is..." or "We shouldn't forget that...", "We have always said that..."
- Contribute: This is the part of the answer that follows the "bridge"

Flagging

By starting a sentence with one of the following you can signal what you want someone to hear

- We should never forget.
- The three main points are

- The most important point is....
- In summary...

Hooking

You provide information that leads your interviewer on to a different subject. This could be an example, a fascinating fact or a new perspective.

Using these techniques with difficult questions (some fictional answers)

Example 1 - Sensitive information that is being talked about publicly

'Is it true that funerals numbers are still limited which is preventing families from properly mourning?'

A – Government guidance has stipulated the current size of funerals in order to curb this disease and protect the vulnerable. We are following guidance carefully.

Bridge – However, we are working together with leaders of other faith organisations to establish bereavement support across Surrey for those of faith and none.

Message with back up – we have clergy in all our 162 parishes across the Diocese who are willing to provide support to those who need it, regardless of whether they are part of the vicar's congregations.

Example 2 - Information you can't give because its sensitive

Question 'How much money has the Diocese of Guildford lost due to COVID-19'

Response – It is too early to tell at this stage, like everyone this is an evolving situation.

Bridge – What's important here working with our parishes to understand those parishes most affected so that we can help each other and preparing for different scenarios.

Message with back up – Amazingly we are seeing some parishes pay their whole parish share in advance as they can. A symbol of Christian togetherness.

Example 3 - Information you genuinely don't know or have to hand

Question – There is a rise in reported incidents of x what are you doing about it?

Response – Unfortunately I don't have that information, it is not part of my role, but I can direct you to someone after this interview to investigate it.

Bridge – What I can say though, in general terms is that x is a significant priority to the Church of England.

Message with back up – we have dedicated resources in the Diocese and at each of our 162 parishes, and this month we launched new guidance to help our communities continue to thrive in lockdown while protecting those most vulnerable among us.

Types of Interview techniques https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtwRS2_94JU

1. *Hypothetical questions* - When you are asked something that hasn't happened. Response - Well that's just speculation or hypothetical at the moment – lets look at what we know..
2. *Exaggerated questions* - When the journalist exaggerates the numbers. Response - Let's be clear, there are x funerals not 1000's
3. *Paraphrasing questions or statements* - When the journalist summaries what you said but its slightly

incorrect. Response – that's not accurate, lets look at this again

To sum up

1. **Stories are everywhere – enjoy it.**
2. **Preparation is key**
3. **Enjoy it – its fun**