



Deane Church  
Meet Jesus, walk with Jesus, share Jesus

# Our Church, our mission and evangelism. Blueprint announcement 2023

## Aims

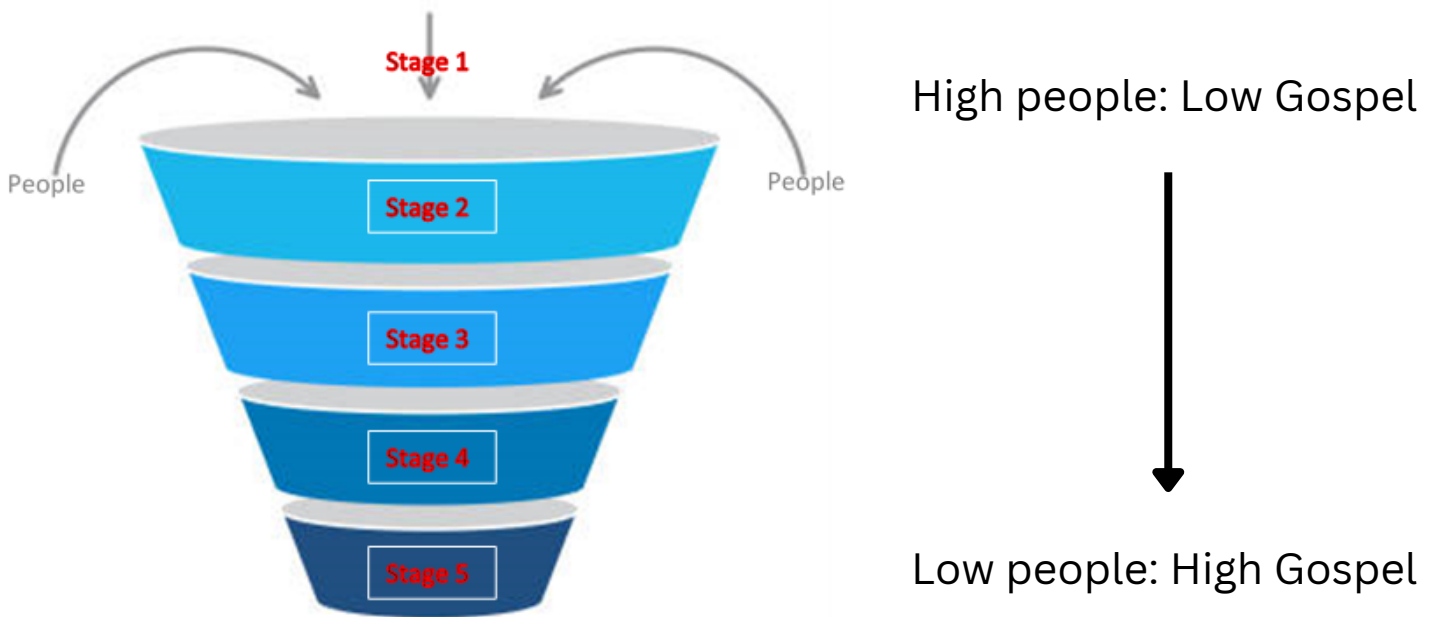
**Aim 1:** Engage with and bless people from the community around us more.

**Aim 2:** Give those who are interested to learn more about the Christian faith a clear and intentional way to do this.

**Aim 3:** Show us as church members what part we can play in the church's mission, big or small, by empowering us to use our natural gifts, passions and personalities.

Following on from the video announcement, we wanted to send you this document which explains the blueprint, namely, the funnel system idea in more detail. It is a framework which offers us the ability to reflect on the mission and good work we already do as a church, as well as identify the gaps, and enable us all as church members by identifying our roles within our wider mission. It also intentionally joins up evangelism, mission, and discipleship in our church.

# The funnel system



As you can see from the diagram, the 'funnel system' involves several stages. People from outside the church potentially move through different events which occur at different stages. Each stage represents events or ministries that church members are passionate about and want to run.

## People

Stage 1, the top stage, involves events that gather as many people as possible. Some people will move onto Stage 2 events, but there will be less people than at Stage 1. Some from Stage 2 will move onto Stage 3 events, but there will be less people than at Stage 2, etc. This is why the bottom stage is the smallest part, as it involves the fewest people.

High people: Low Gospel



Low people: High Gospel

## Gospel

Stage 1, the top stage, also involves ministries and events that have no Gospel presentation or discussion about Jesus and the Christian faith. However, Stage 2 events have a bit more than the previous stage, Stage 3 has more than the previous stage, etc. Stage 5 events have the most Gospel discussion included.

This is the overall theory and framework of the funnel system, but understanding the events and how they all link up is best explained by using two examples.

# Example A



A church in Sheffield used the funnel system to enable their church members to engage in evangelism, discipleship, and grow in confidence. They applied this framework to a senior gatherings group, and this one group used each stage of the funnel system within the same ministry (unlike example B).

1



The church members ran a weekly drop in café. It was purely a social event, where people who did not go to church could come, find a community, and chat to others. The people who ran it said they were Christians and part of church, but there was no Gospel presentation or discussion about Jesus. This meant non-Christians felt safe and did not feel 'tricked' into attending a 'religious' event. But the leaders said prayer was available if people wanted it. This stage was about gathering as many people as possible.

2



If people came along one week and said they wanted prayer, church members took them into a different room and prayed with them. This is important because those in the main room would not feel awkward or forced into 'religious stuff'. Also, it meant if people wanted more Gospel, there was a clear way to access it, but the decision was in their hands.

3



Once a term the group put on a 'evangelistic Bible study' session. People from Stage 2 (and 1) would be invited along. This was at a different time to the main drop in café, and people were invited but not forced to go. Here, Jesus was talked about openly. This again meant there was an intentional path to 'more Gospel', but people did not feel tricked into it, and they controlled when they took up the invite.

4



At the session, they said if anyone wants to 'become a Christian', they should talk to the leaders. This gave people a chance to make an intentional response and follow Christ. Again, this was an invitation, and people were reassured that they did not need to do it. The leaders prayed with those who said yes and arranged a follow up chat with them too.

5



This is when people start coming to church and join weekly church Bible study groups. It is where ongoing discipleship happens.

**Two noteworthy points are: firstly, some people became Christians through this ministry but ended up joining different churches, that is fine. Secondly, by Stage 5, there are far less people than at Stage 1, and this is to be expected.**

# Example B

Other churches apply this framework, but dozens of different ministries and events feed into the funnel system. Therefore, each event aligns clearly with a different stage, instead of one ministry overlapping several stages (as seen in example A). As a result, many complementary ministries come together.

1



This again is all about attracting people and has little or no Gospel involved. Those who run the events say they are Christians who go to church, but that is it. No one who comes should be caught off guard by unexpected 'religious stuff'. Lots of different ministries and events are run to attract people from outside the church. E.g., A weekly sports activity, like a 5-a-side football match, or a board games night, or an art class, or a refugee English class, or a dog walking group. The possibilities are endless, it all depends on what church members are passionate about and what they want to do. It is about the gifts of the individual/ team, and not about a pre-set agenda.

2



All of these groups from Stage 1 mention that the church runs other events for those who are interested in hearing more about God. Stage 2 groups therefore can include events like a 'curry night' or 'quiz night', (depending on church members' passions again), which involve, for example, a testimony slot from someone at church. The point is, the invite is clearly there for those who want it from Stage 1, these people know in advance it will contain 'more Gospel', and there is an intentional route for people to take if they wish. Stage 2 events are run less frequently than Stage 1, and don't need to be run by the same leaders from Stage 1.

3



These events again can be run by different leaders. However, people from Stage 2 are invited, told to only attend if they wish, and are told exactly what is involved. They are given knowledge and control. Nevertheless, Stage 3 involves a stronger Gospel presentation. For example, via the Alpha course, or an evangelistic Bible study group for people who want to know more.

4



As part of Stage 3, there will be a point where people are asked if they want to become Christians. For example, Alpha has a Holy Spirit day where this happens. As always, this is an invitation, and people are reassured that they do not need to do this. If they do say yes though, the leaders can then pray with them, and arrange a follow up chat.

5



This stage is the same as in example A, meaning this is when people start coming to church and join weekly church Bible study groups. It is where ongoing discipleship happens.

**It is important to note that unlike in example A, it is much less likely that the same church member will take a person through each stage, and this is fine. As long as there is an intentional framework the whole church buys into, and leaders should know how to point the interested persons to the 'next' event.**

# Important points about the funnel system

- 1. This is a framework**, meaning it can be adapted, altered, and moulded to our needs, but the underlying principles are important: We need ways to attract as many people as we can to church events. We need to give these people an intentional path towards hearing more about Jesus. However, they need to feel like they are in control of this process and not being forced into anything. Finally, we need to enable ourselves as church members to feel part of the mission and identify our roles. The funnel system blueprint allows all of this to happen.
- This shows us that **different skills and passions are valued**. Whether we like making lots of people feel welcome and spending time with non-Christians (mainly Stage 1/2) or feel more natural spending time with Christians explaining the christian faith (mainly Stage 5), each person is part of a wider mission, is needed, and adds value.
- This also **stops us feeling guilty** about what we cannot do. If we are not good at Stage 2 stuff, then we can encourage each other to volunteer for a different stage. It is about nurturing our strengths instead of making us feel bad about our weaknesses.
- Church members have limited volunteer time. But this system is not about forcing us to volunteer for things we do not enjoy or are not good at. Rather, it lets us **focus on what we are good at with our limited time**. That might be leading/ co-leading a Bible study group or leading/ co-leading a social activity. It may be starting something new or serving in existing ministries. Either way, we can focus our limited time on this whilst realising we are part of a wider blueprint.
- This system is not saying everything we run in church needs to be 'new' and what we are doing already isn't working. It is actually about adopting a framework that **joins up the current activities and identifies the gaps which need new ministries**.

**6.** This will help us to **review what is currently happening**, and evaluate new suggestions, and ask: Overall, what stages are we lacking as a church? What stage does this new/existing ministry fall into, and therefore, what is the specific aim of this event? Does this new/existing ministry fall into multiple stages, and is that okay or is it a hindrance? All of these questions will help bring focus and clarity, and avoid running projects with no clear goal, which leads to time wasting and frustration.

**7. Each event may be run primarily by an individual, or by several of us as part of a team.**

**8.** Some people from outside church may come to Stage 1 events only for years. Some might go to Stage 2 or 3 events once or twice, then only go to Stage 1 projects afterwards for various reasons. That is fine. **Serving and blessing people through what we do, who never become Christians, is still a success and what God calls us to do. Nevertheless, for those who want to know more, there is a clear invitation.**

**9. This is ultimately about people not projects.** People from outside of church who come to us feel like they are in control and get to come along to different activities and enjoy them. We as Church members get to use our skills and talents in missional ways, gaining more fulfilment and confidence in the fact that we are being used by God (in new ways) to serve a wider mission.

**10. The projects do not all need to be in the church building. In fact, some events should be out in the community.**

**11.** The plan is for André to take the lead, with wider help, and implement this funnel system blueprint. It will take a long time because church members need to be identified, or come forward, to start/keep running ministries in the church. However, **long-term, we as church members will be empowered to take the lead as we engage with and bless our community.**

**12.** Ultimately, this funnel system **enables mission and evangelism**, it brings in people from outside the church community, and points them to a clear path and hearing the Gospel (at their own pace). It also continues their **discipleship**, and disciples existing church members, as we step up to serve in and lead/ co-lead church activities.