



## BACKGROUND

A key part of the ministry of churches, large and small, involves serving not only congregations but the communities and visitors drawn to them. Research shows clearly that many people of all backgrounds are interested in spiritual exploration and that levels of need and openness have been increased by COVID-19. There are thus great opportunities to encourage people to explore faith, but this also poses a challenge to hard-pressed staff and volunteers. The Explore project offers a simple way to provide mission and pastoral resources in the form of 'starter' prayer cards and booklets, as well as pathways to further exploration via a linked 'gateway' website.

## THE EXPLORE PROJECT

The Explore Project is a partnership between the Association of English Cathedrals, the Church of England Church Buildings Division and Mission teams, the National Churches Trust, and the Centre for the Study of Christianity & Culture, University of York. Oversight is provided by Canon Dr Paula Gooder (Chancellor, St Paul's Cathedral); Peter Graystone (writer and Lay Training Officer, Diocese of Southwark); Revd Dr Stephen Hance (CofE Lead for Evangelism and Witness); Revd Prof. Dee Dyas, and Dr Louise Hampson, with support and guidance from Dr John Inge, Bishop of Worcester; the Ven. Luke Miller, Archdeacon of London; Rachel Jordan (Hope Together), and many others. The project is funded by the AllChurches Trust, the Jerusalem Trust, the Laing Family Trusts, and the Diocese of London and is warmly supported by both Archbishops.

*The open doors of our buildings witness to the open doors of God's heart. When any person comes through our doors, we have an opportunity to witness to their creator, redeemer and sustainer who longs to connect with them. The superbly written and beautifully produced Explore resources enable this connection. They are simple, accessible and engaging. My hope is they are made available in church buildings across the land. My prayer is the Holy Spirit draws many to Christ through them, and the beautiful, transforming work of God brings grace and peace to all those who engage with them. Archbishop Justin*

## THE RESOURCES

**A7 Prayer cards** (the topics are based on research findings and include needs intensified by COVID-19): 'Feeling alone,' 'Looking for God,' 'Grieving,' 'Struggling with change,' 'Finding peace,' 'Wanting guidance,' 'Worried about someone,' 'Feeling anxious or sad,' 'Being thankful,' 'Wanting forgiveness,' 'Feeling hurt,' 'Being accepted.'

**A6 Booklets ('Big Questions from a Christian Point of View')**: 'Is God real?' (Peter Graystone); 'Am I good enough for God?' (Sophie Jelley, Bishop of Doncaster); 'Where is my life going?' (Stephen Hance); 'Why do so many bad things happen?' (Chine McDonald, Director, Theos; former Head of Public Engagement, Christian Aid); 'Is there something beyond Death?' (David Stone, former Precentor, Coventry Cathedral); 'Will anything happen if I pray?' (Peter Graystone).

**Website:** topics include Exploring Christianity; Exploring the Bible; Exploring Prayer; Exploring Churches; Exploring Pilgrimage; Exploring faith with others (including why and how to find a church near you), and links to other resources. See <https://explorechristianity.info/>. A 15-minute online briefing is available at <https://youtu.be/dfq8G8UPDhc>

While initial supplies last, any church can order a pack of 240 cards from [www.cpo.org.uk/explore-project](http://www.cpo.org.uk/explore-project) (just pay p&p) or contact Revd Prof. Dee Dyas ([dee.dyas@york.ac.uk](mailto:dee.dyas@york.ac.uk)) for a greater quantity for a large church, chaplaincy, etc. Subsequently, they will be available from CPO for a small cost.