

Running Growing Leaders in Gloucester city centre

We have now finished the second *Growing Leaders* Course.

We are an inner city multicultural area with about 40% folk from Afro- Caribbean background.

The majority of our folk are not school achievers and those who work have unskilled or semi skilled jobs.

The first course was with our Local Ministry team and others with quite a wide range of folk. Looking back over what has happened since we can see how much more confident many of the members have become. For some it was a helpful revision course, while for others it released them into ministry.

All are more confident in taking responsibility in worship and other areas of Church life. Two have taken the responsibility of restarting our Church Magazine but with a wider focus. Another has become Church Warden, two have been invited by the Congregation to join the Local Ministry Team and others have joined the Church Council.

One member particularly was very wary of being involved in case he was asked to do things - he now contributes in worship, and is thoroughly involved using his main gift, organisational, practical and pastoral

Their confidence has enabled others to see their potential and help them realise it. This support and affirmation by the wider Church Community gives them to confidence to initiate and take responsibility for new initiatives - we are looking to start Messy Church in the autumn.

This year's course has just finished and we are noticing the same change in those who were generally not in leadership roles.

They have grown in faith, awareness of their gifts and confidence to develop and use them. This is seen in the leader of our Senior Citizen's Group, and the Co-ordinator of the men's Group and in a desire by others to be involved in something called 'Open the Book' delivering school assemblies etc.

There is a new willingness to be involved in wider community life and a readiness to take leadership there.

We are now recruiting for year 3.

We find the material excellent.

With last year's and I suspect this year's group we only use the basic material as this is what is appropriate.

I would recommend and have unhesitatingly recommended this course. It has made a great difference to our Church.

Robert Simpson

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