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# Christian Vocation: Ordained Ministry

*A candidate's perspective*

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— DIOCESE OF —  
**LONDON**

# The Starting Point

*The starting point for the vocational journey is Baptism.*

At the heart of our faith we believe that through baptism all Christians are called to fulfil their Christian Vocation in the world. Throughout our lives this can take many and various forms; vocation is not a static concept but forever changing and developing as God calls new things out of us. But importantly vocations can be expressed in driving a bus, being an accountant, cleaning an office or in missionary work (not just in the so-called caring professions of medicine, nursing, teaching, social work, etc.).

Alongside this primary vocation and calling to be God's holy people in the world, Christians are also called to support and be active in their local churches. This calling will include everything from washing up after a church social to reading

or administering communion in services, to undertaking positions of leadership as Churchwarden or as a Licensed Lay Minister.

And finally (at the bottom of the heap!) God calls some of the Baptised to follow a vocation in ordained ministry or the religious life. Sometimes this is seen as the peak of vocational calling, but even a simple examination of the Gospel and Christian tradition will remind us that such ministries are fundamentally about service, following Jesus who calls us to serve (Matthew 20:25-28).



*The purpose of this document is to outline the discernment process for ordained ministry so you know what to expect as you explore your vocation. Our starting point is where you have articulated a sense of vocation and wish to pursue it firstly with your vicar and then if referred with an Area Director of Ordinands (ADO).*

### ***Discerning a vocation...***

There are currently 9 criteria for selection for ordained ministry of which the primary one is Vocation as summarised:

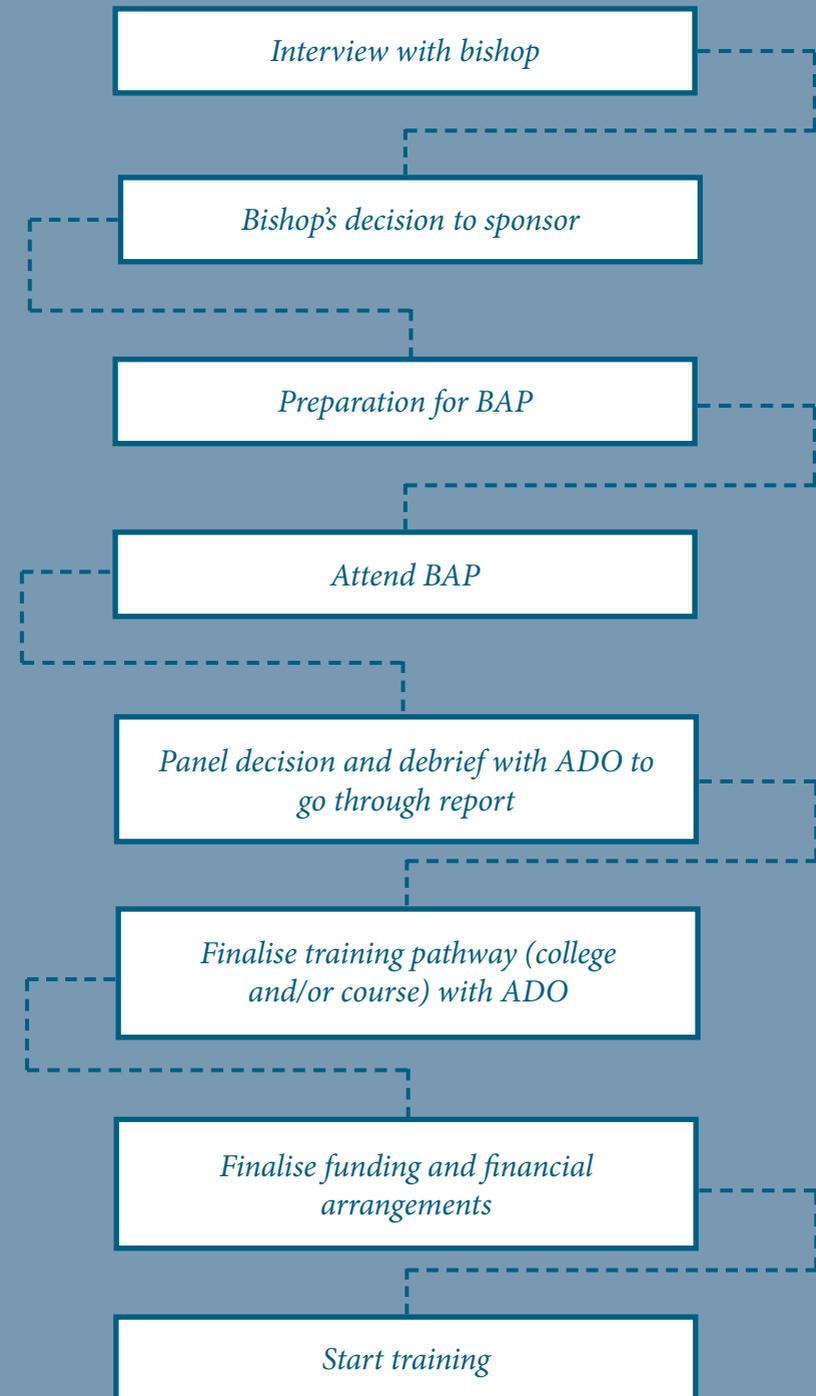
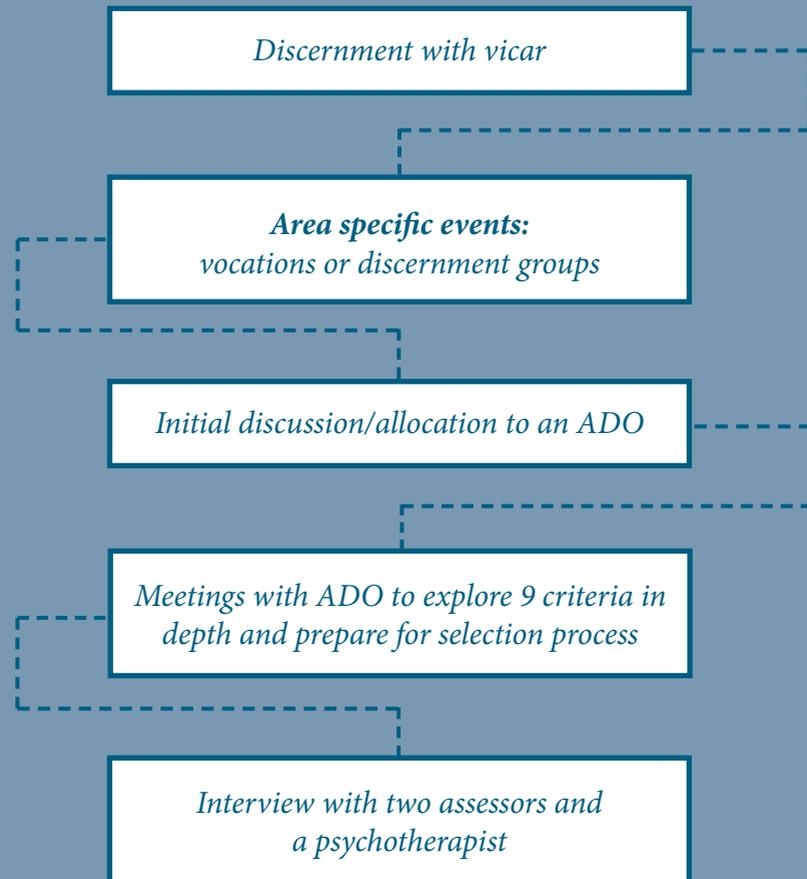
“Candidates should be able to articulate a sense of vocation to the ordained ministry and reflect on the effect of this on their life. They should be able to speak of the development of their inner conviction and the extent to which others have confirmed

it. They should be able to show an understanding of what it means to be a deacon or a priest. Their sense of vocation should be obedient, realistic and informed.”

The first stage of the process is to work with your vicar principally on this criteria. You will follow a programme of discussion and reflection to look at each of the key elements of this criteria and this stage will be complete when they are satisfied that you would be able to articulate in your own words the story of your calling. They will also be satisfied that you understand the discernment process in outline and are ready to be referred to the next stage with an ADO.

*In this document we have used the term vicar throughout but of course you may also be working with a chaplain or other priest or minister.*

# The full discernment process to ordained ministry will follow the stages outlined below—



*In addition to one to one discussion with your vicar during this phase they may ask you to engage in other activities to enhance your knowledge, experience and confidence but also to give them evidence and examples to support their referral:*

- Vocation discernment groups – offered by the parish or the Area/Diocese. Contact with others going through the process formally or informally is a good idea for mutual support and learning
- Theological study – there are very good discipleship and introductory theology courses available at Area/Diocese and theological colleges as well as parish level for example the St Edmunds Course in Christian Studies
- Regular one to one meetings supplemented by conversations with members of the congregation and/or others in the leadership team. Discussion of books using a reading list
- Exploration of other churches/traditions through worship/placements to understand the breadth of the Church of England
- Experience of positions of responsibility: PCC member, group leader
- Experience of ministry activities – leading intercessions, serving, giving talks or preaching, pastoral care, baptism visiting
- Keeping a journal
- Finding a Spiritual director or equivalent
- Identification of and discussion with priestly role models and a mentor

*Your vicar's primary role is to give you supportive direction and to accompany you on the journey to the next stage. But be prepared for them to challenge you and suggest alternatives if they do not share your conviction for a vocation.*

## Referral To An ADO

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Once your vicar thinks you are ready they will refer you to the Area Director of Ordinands. The referral may be a short report in which they describe you, the candidate, your journey to date and why they

support your sense of vocation or they may also be asked for a comment against each of the 9 criteria. They will be asked to include quotes from others or examples to illustrate their recommendation.

## Next Stages

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Each Area has a team of ADOs who work individually with candidates to explore and test their vocation against the 9 selection criteria. You may also be required to attend a vocations group prior to working with an ADO. Once you and your ADO agree that you are ready you will be presented to the Area Bishop and if the Bishop is content to sponsor you then you will be booked on to and prepare to attend a Bishops Advisory Panel (BAP).

At any stage you or your ADO may decide to slow or stop the process but typically from referral to an ADO to a selection panel (BAP) will take 6 - 12 months with training beginning the following September. It is unusual for a candidate to be able to start training in September if they have not started the process with an ADO at least prior to July the previous year.

## Resources

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There are a lot of resources available from the Church of England to help you on your discernment journey as well as introductory courses at local churches and theological colleges

or work experience schemes. Links overleaf but please do speak to your vicar who is the person best placed to help you.

## *Contacts & Resources:*

### *Area Directors of Ordinands:*

**Two Cities: Alan Carr**

[ado.twocities@london.anglican.org](mailto:ado.twocities@london.anglican.org)

**Stepney: Irena Edgcombe**

[ado.stepney@london.anglican.org](mailto:ado.stepney@london.anglican.org)

**Kensington: Martin Breadmore**

[ado.kensington@london.anglican.org](mailto:ado.kensington@london.anglican.org)

**Edmonton: Marjorie Brown**

[ado.edmonton@london.anglican.org](mailto:ado.edmonton@london.anglican.org)

**Willesden: Andrew Corsie**

[ado.willesden@london.anglican.org](mailto:ado.willesden@london.anglican.org)

### *Diocese:*

**Director of Ministry: Neil Evans**

[neil.evans@london.anglican.org](mailto:neil.evans@london.anglican.org)

**Ordinands and Vocations Officer: Judy Barrett**

[judy.barrett@london.anglican.org](mailto:judy.barrett@london.anglican.org)

## *Web Based Resources:*

### *Diocese of London:*

[london.anglican.org/support/ministry/christian-vocation](http://london.anglican.org/support/ministry/christian-vocation)

[londoncallings.uk](http://londoncallings.uk)

### *Church of England:*

[churchofengland.org/life-events/vocations](http://churchofengland.org/life-events/vocations)

[churchsupporthub.org/vocations](http://churchsupporthub.org/vocations)

[churchprintheub.org/?cat=430](http://churchprintheub.org/?cat=430)

### *Introductory Course:*

[stmellitus.ac.uk/introductory-programmes](http://stmellitus.ac.uk/introductory-programmes)

[staugustinescollege.ac.uk/courses/exploring-theology](http://staugustinescollege.ac.uk/courses/exploring-theology)

### *Ministry Experience Schemes:*

[churchofengland.org/life-events/vocations/whats-your-calling/ministry-experience-scheme](http://churchofengland.org/life-events/vocations/whats-your-calling/ministry-experience-scheme)

[north-london-pastoral-assistants.org.uk](http://north-london-pastoral-assistants.org.uk)

[stepneyinterns.org.uk](http://stepneyinterns.org.uk)

