

THE AMBASSADOR NETWORK

Mustard
Seed

Introduction

For many people life is tough, trying to do the best for themselves and their families, whilst struggling to make ends meet. In the Diocese of York, this is particularly true for people living in Hull, Middlesbrough and our coastal communities, as well as smaller areas scattered across the Diocese.

In these communities, where people face many challenges we want churches to be present, walking alongside people in the ups and downs of life. Providing places of welcome and support, reaching people with God's love, creating opportunities to discover faith and growing disciples of Jesus.



The Parable of the Mustard Seed

What is the Kingdom of God like? The parable of the mustard seed inspires us that even from very small beginnings, something amazing can grow!

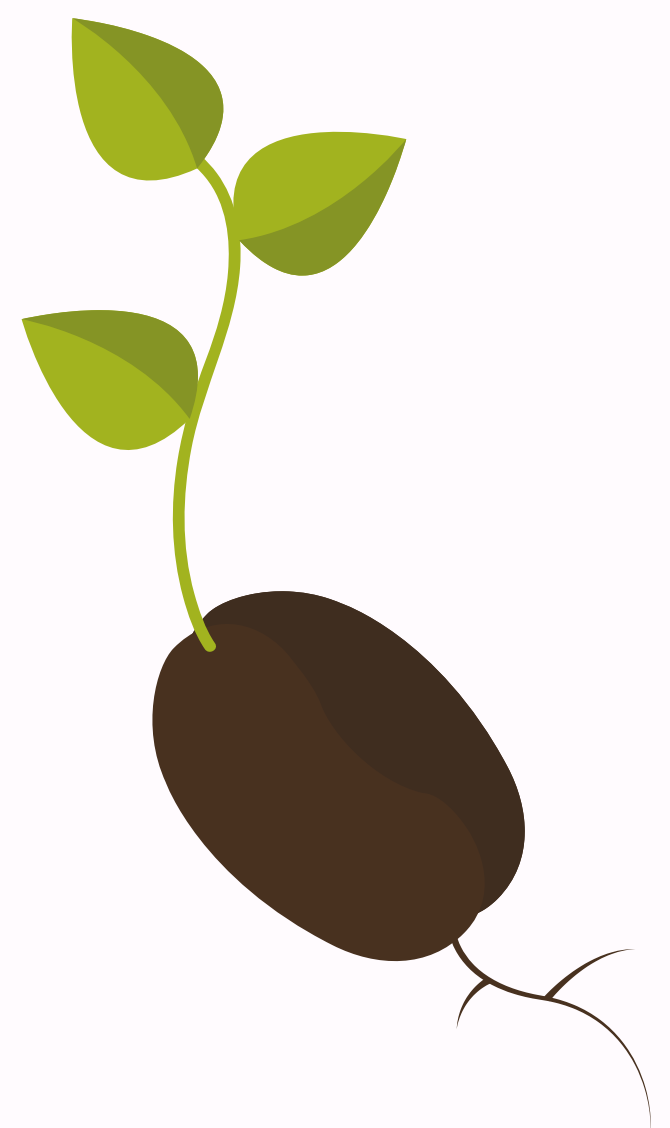
"It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Mark 4:31-32 NRSV

Growing the Vision

There are three main areas growing as part of the Mustard Seed programme:

- **Stepping Up:** learning communities where lay people can grow as disciples of Jesus and in their confidence and ability to share their faith within the local community.
- **Community Hubs:** worshipping communities developed as places of welcome, hospitality and support for local people in the challenges they face. In churches or community buildings, they provide opportunities for prayer, to experience God's love, explore faith, and encounter Jesus.
- **Ambassadors:** people from across the Diocese who have a passion to support mission in our poorest communities. They will share good news stories of 'faith where life is tough' to inspire others and create a culture of generosity.





Mustard Seed Churches

A Mustard Seed church refers to a parish that has engaged in the Mustard Seed programme by sending participants on Stepping Up. Creating the opportunity for local people to grow as missionary disciples, living and sharing Christ's story in their local community. Mission will develop and grow in each Mustard Seed parish, and Ambassadors will play a part in helping to develop and sustain this mission.

Mustard Seed Ambassadors

A Mustard Seed Ambassador is someone who recognises that being more fortunate, they have a responsibility towards 'their neighbours' and are therefore called into action. They will build a supportive relationship with and commitment to a Mustard Seed church and its community. They will be an advocate for the Mustard Seed church, understanding the challenges and opportunities, they will share news and stories in their home church, and probably beyond e.g. in their deanery and maybe the diocese.

In many cases they will contribute to the Mustard Seed church financially and/or giving their time and skills. They will be a catalyst in growing generosity of prayer, support, and financial giving towards mission in the Mustard Seed church.

Who could be an Ambassador?

The shape of this ministry means we are looking for the following gifts and qualities:

- A Christian who is rooted and trusted within their own church
- Someone with a heart for the communities we wish to support
- A person of prayer who will commit to praying for the church and community
- Someone who wants to listen and learn from the church and community
- A person of humility, who is willing to receive as well as give
- A disciple of Jesus who expects to grow in faith and discipleship
- Someone who is passionate about empowering others (not keeping power themselves)
- Someone with the capacity to commit to the task
- A person who understands the importance of safeguarding, with safer recruitment and training according to Diocesan policies.



Find out more

**If you want to find out more about the Ambassadors Network please contact Heather Black
E-mail Heather.Black@yorkdiocese.org**

A meeting with the programme lead of our Ambassador Network will help you to discuss the qualities, gifts, skills and resources you can bring to the role, with a realistic assessment of the time and capacity you can give.

An introduction pack will enable you to learn more about the role and how to develop as an effective Ambassador. You will be 'matched' with a suitable Mustard Seed church, and be invited to spend time listening and prayerfully exploring together with the church, over a period of months. This will allow time to discern if you can develop a fruitful and supportive relationship. Becoming an Ambassador will involve agreeing the role and relationship with the local church leadership, including expectations of time and commitment. This may be marked in some way to be decided by the parish e.g. within a church service, at a PCC or other meeting.