



*Life and faith in rural Britain...*

# COUNTRYWAY

## COVID-19 Reflection Resources

In the June 2020 issue of Country Way, we shared some resources to help you begin to process your experiences of life under lockdown. Four months on, our experiences of COVID-19 and its impact on our lives have evolved and continue to evolve.

So we thought we would offer some of those resources again, to encourage you to continue to reflect and learn from those experiences, particularly as we adjust collectively to the fact that we are likely to be living under changed circumstances for quite some time to come.

As you use these resources, consider what tools you might use to help you process your responses; these are simply suggestions:

- Activities like baking or cooking, gardening, woodwork or any other familiar practical task can create space for 'mindful' reflection while our hands are occupied.
- Journalling can be a useful way of 'externalising' things that we haven't realised our brain is preoccupied with.
- Going for a walk or hike can connect us with the world beyond ourselves and give a new sense of perspective (but continue to observe any social distancing or other restrictions in place in your area).
- Sharing our reflections with others – either by working through the questions together or by sharing our own thinking at a later date – can be particularly helpful; make sure that you and your conversation partner are clear about the level of confidentiality you are committing to **before** you start the conversation. Again, you may need to chat over the phone rather than in person, depending on what social distancing measures are still in place.

### *Looking forward, looking back*

These questions are adapted from an exercise offered by the CPAS Arrow Leadership Programme.

### *Looking back...*

- What one word best sums up your experience of living through COVID-19?
- What was the best decision you made?
- What was the greatest lesson you learned?
- What was the most loving service you performed?
- What is your biggest piece of unfinished business?
- What else do you need to do or say to be complete with your experience of COVID-19?

### *Looking forward*

- What is God calling you to do or be next?

- What would you be most happy with completing during the rest of 2020 in response to COVID-19?
- What would you most like to see change?
- What about your ministry are you committed to changing and improving? (We encourage individuals to interpret this term in whatever way is most appropriate to them; it's not just ordained people and 'leaders' who have ministries!)
- Where have you flourished during COVID-19 and how will you continue to make that part of your life?
- What Bible passages have become important to you during COVID-19? Could you learn them by heart?
- What one word sums up your ongoing approach to learning and growing as a result of COVID-19?

### *Using Appreciative Inquiry*

These questions are adapted from the Appreciative Inquiry process of 'paired conversations' and are best used as part of a one-to-one conversation.

Person One asks Person Two each of these questions in turn, in the given order, and Person Two should answer each question before moving on to the next. Person One should make brief notes of the answers. Then the process should be reversed, with Person Two leading Person One through the questions and taking brief notes.

- Describe something that happened during the COVID-19 outbreak that was a positive experience for you. Why was this? What were you glad to be able to contribute?
- What have you valued about this unusual time?
- What have you found particularly challenging about the last few months?
- Following on from your answer to question 3, identify up to three things you would like to see happen in the next few months? (Don't worry if you can only think of one!)
- What immediate steps could be taken to help achieve the things you've just identified?
- What next small step do you intend taking to set things moving in a positive direction?

Find out more about Appreciative Inquiry and Appreciating Church by going to [appreciating.church](https://appreciating.church).

### *A Carer's Guide: How to...*

Hard-pressed care workers are on the front line in the fight against COVID-19. The public appreciates more than ever what a tough job they do in care homes, and when supporting people to live independently in their own homes. So, to support carers, BRF is publishing a range of booklets, drawing on the expertise of Anna Chaplains to Older People across the country.

### *Five step-by-step, ready-to-use guides*

Sally Rees is the Anna Chaplaincy lead for Wales and has been instrumental in the quick and ambitious turnaround of this project, publishing five new booklets to help staff as they offer spiritual care and comfort to residents in care homes, at a time when visiting is so restricted.

She explains, 'Care staff work round the clock so are in the best position to offer people spiritual support when Anna Chaplains, ministers and families are not able to be there. In response to these new circumstances, members of the Anna Chaplaincy network have written a series of booklets to help those on the front line – both managers and carers – to provide for the spiritual needs of those they look after.'

### *The booklets*

The aim of the new guides is to give carers the confidence and skills to enable those in their care not only to cope emotionally and spiritually but even to thrive, despite challenging circumstances. The five titles are:

- How to take care of yourself in stressful times
- How to help someone spiritually towards the end of life
- How to worship with a group of residents
- How to worship with individuals in your care
- How to have a memorial service at home when you are unable to attend the funeral

At £2.50 each, with special offers on packs and bulk orders, these guides offer excellent value and are set to become a must-have resource for care home staff everywhere. For more information and to order, go to [brfonline.org.uk/collections/anna-chaplaincy-carers-guides](http://brfonline.org.uk/collections/anna-chaplaincy-carers-guides).

### *HOPE in Uncertain Times*

Life before lockdown wasn't always a bed of roses, but it was normal and predictable... usually. Now everything seems unknown. What does the future hold? Is there a door of hope? *Hope in Uncertain Times* is a giveaway booklet pointing to hope for now and for eternity. As churches re-open it is an ideal gift to give with an invitation to join your church in person or online.

You can order the booklet from the HOPE Together website; go to [hopetogether.org.uk](http://hopetogether.org.uk) and search 'HOPE in Uncertain Times'. The website also contains an eight-minute film version of the booklet.

*This article first appeared in Country Way 85: Being Church, October 2020. Go to [arthurrankcentre.org.uk/country-way](http://arthurrankcentre.org.uk/country-way) for more information about how to subscribe.*