

Inviting others to campaign

Our global neighbours remain locked in poverty by unjust systems and structures: from unfair trade rules to tax dodging and climate change. These are big issues – and big issues need us to stand together to deliver big solutions. This guide can help you encourage your church and community to get involved in your campaigning and help bring about a better world.

Together we're powerful

Think about who holds power in our world – who comes to mind? Often, we think of those in high office, or with huge fortunes, or significant influence. It's unlikely you thought of the person sitting next to you at church. But each of us has the power to influence decision makers through our voice and through our actions. When we stand together, we can decide what practices we will no longer tolerate, and what kind of world we will build.

When you campaign with Christian Aid, whether on your own or as a group, you are joining your neighbours across the world as part of a movement for dignity, justice and equality for all. But how about your neighbour at church? Everyone has a part to play in creating a better world.

Sometimes it can feel difficult to ask others to campaign with you. But we must be courageous if we are to achieve the vast changes our world needs. We need as many voices, talents, and experiences with us to build a stronger, more just world. When we do ask others to get involved, we aren't asking them for a favour but inviting them to be part of an amazing opportunity and be co-creators in the kingdom of God we long for.

To help you get more people involved in your campaigns, this guide covers:

- **How to start**
- **Making the ask**
- **Following up**

'What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.'

Luke 13:18-19

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How to start

Tell a story

When you invite others to campaign you need to convince them that something urgently needs to change, and that they have a part to play in making that happen.

One of the best ways to persuade them is to present your case in a way which weaves together your personal story, your shared beliefs, and the change you are hoping to see. It's this story that will help inspire others to act.

Ask yourself the following questions to help form your story:

- Why are you passionate about campaigning to end poverty? This is your chance to share why you care and what motivates you to act.
- We are all part of multiple networks through family, hobbies, faith, and work. What shared beliefs and values link you to your communities? Why is the issue of poverty their concern as well as yours? How can these values inspire others to act?
- What is the problem you are trying to solve and what specific action can you take? Share how this problem challenges the values you've

celebrated in your personal story and shared beliefs. You should show a vision of the world as it will be if we fail to act, and how it could be if we do act.

By linking these three elements together into one coherent story, you can help bring the issue alive, help people understand why this issue is important to them, and, most importantly, inspire them to act.

Remember, when you are asking for action, don't be apologetic! You're inviting people to be part of an opportunity to build a better world, not asking them for a favour.

Who to ask

You can reach more people with your campaign ask if you are tactful about who you approach. Begin by thinking about what your church is like: who is involved? What are they interested in? By identifying the individuals and groups in your church, you can work out who is key – perhaps because they'll care about the same things, or encourage others, or give you permission to act as a church.

The power of asking

In 2012, around 60,000 people started a 300km march from the city of Gwalior to Delhi. Made up of mainly Dalits (members of the lowest caste) and tribal Indians, they marched together to call on the Indian government to guarantee access to land and livelihood resources for all, regardless of wealth or caste. Eight days in, the government agreed to their demands.

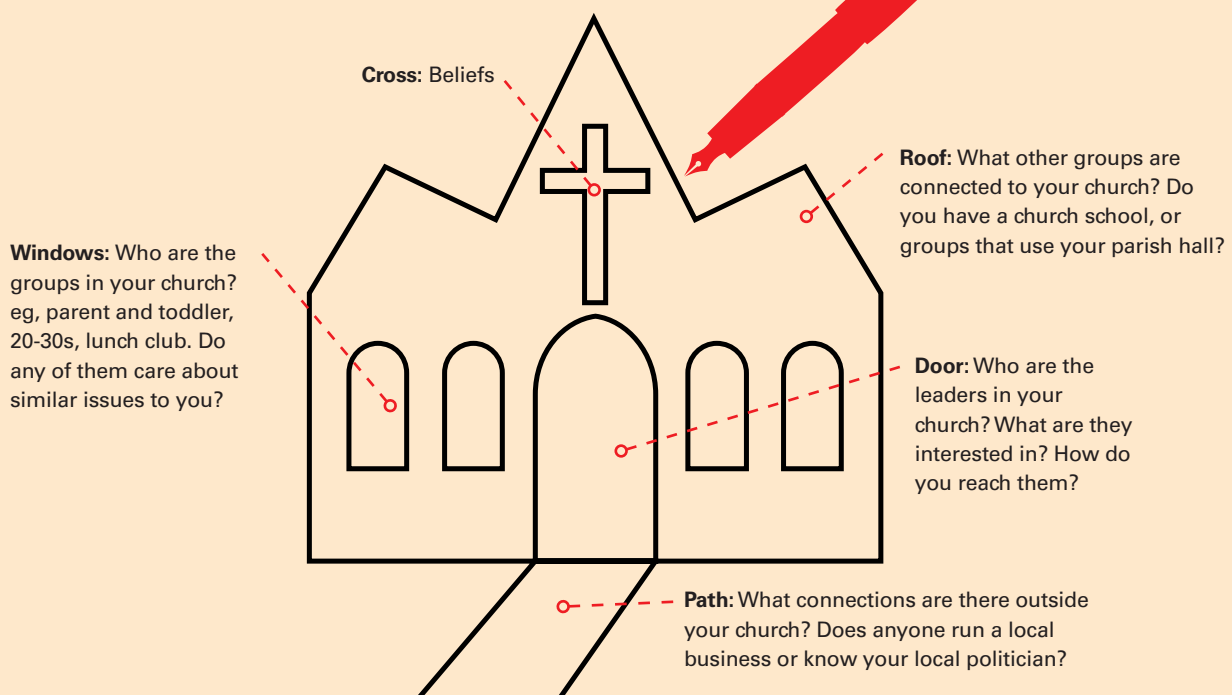
How did 60,000 people end up on the road to Delhi? Someone asked them to act.



Church reflection

This activity will give you the opportunity to reflect on the make-up of your community and identify key contacts. It will take around 20 minutes to complete.

1. Start by drawing a picture of your church. Make sure it's big enough to write on because we're going to use the elements of the church building to think about the community it houses.
2. Place your finger on the door to the church and think about: Who are the leaders in your church? Are they mainly formal leaders or informal leaders? Who knows everyone in the community? What are they interested in? How do you reach them? Write your thoughts in the door.
3. Now place your finger on the window(s) of your church. What groups are involved in church life? (eg, lunch club, Messy Church, 20-30s). When and where do they meet? Do they have any connection to the issues you are campaigning on? Note your thoughts in the window(s).
4. Place your finger on the roof of the church. What other groups are connected to your church? (eg, church school, groups that use your church hall). How do you reach out to your local community? Write your responses in the roof.
5. Place your finger on the path to your church. What connections do church members have outside the church? Where are their groups of friends or family? How do church members relate to the local community? Is anyone a local businessperson? Add your answers to the path.
6. Place your finger on your church's cross. What does your church community believe? What do they stand for? How do they currently speak out in your local community and the world? How does your campaign with Christian Aid connect to your church's vision? Write your thoughts in the cross.
7. Take a look back at all the connections, groups and individuals you have written down. Have you missed any? Are there any that are not always obvious?
8. Decide who might be useful to approach. Think about who has a connection to the issues you are campaigning on, who has the ability to get more people involved, and who has the time and commitment to fulfil your campaign aims. If you wish, colour in these groups or individuals on your church drawing.



Have conversations

Now you've thought about your community and decided who might be best to invite, you need to shape the opportunity you are offering.

By having a conversation with members of your community, you can find out what issues they care about, what activities they like doing, and what time or skills they can offer. This will help you understand the best way to invite them to join your campaigning.

Remember, although this is a conversation with someone you might chat with every week, this conversation has a purpose: to find out if they would be interested in campaigning with you and what they might like to offer. So ask questions but remember it's not an interview!

Some of the questions below might help you shape your conversation:

- How long have you been part of our community? What do you like about it?
- What are you involved in outside of this community?
- What does your normal week look like?
- What do you do for work? How do you feel about your job?
- What are your hobbies and interests?
- How does your faith impact other areas of your life?
- What is important to your faith?
- What makes you angry?
- If you spent another hour a week on your faith (outside of church services) what would you do?

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Making the ask

Using everything you have learned about your church community, you are now ready to think about what campaigning opportunity you can offer to get people involved.

From what you have discovered, what particular angle, story or type of action will really ignite your community? For example, could you engage the church cyclists in action on climate change? Do you have a crafty action that Messy Church will appreciate? Or can you link your issue to a piece of scripture for the 20-30s group?

How to invite

When you have decided what you'd like to invite others to be involved in, you'll need to think about how to ask them. Will you invite people as individuals, or as a group?

Individual conversations allow you to carefully tailor your invitation and help the person

understand the part they can play. This is a great way to encourage people to join in. But depending on your action, you may want to ask people in a group – such as going along to a house group, or speaking during a service. This might be more useful in getting a large number of people to take a one-off or simple campaign action, such as signing a petition card.

'I wanted to get people in my church to talk to our MP about climate change... They were interested in local environmental issues, so I organised a litter pick as a way to draw them in. Afterwards we invited our MP to join us for tea and cake, and asked her questions about issues like climate change.'

Siân, campaigner in Hampshire

Act

When you've convinced your community that they need to act, you need to give them something to do!

Before you ask, think about what action might help your campaign while also suiting the experiences, talents and time of your group or church. There's more information about planning an action in our **Running a campaign action** resource.

People are much more likely to respond positively to your request if you can give them something specific and tangible to do. People get overwhelmed by lots of choice so you might want to have your top three actions in mind – ranging from one that takes less than 10 minutes,

to another which spans a whole afternoon. Don't be afraid to ask for a big commitment – you can always work back to something smaller from there.

Some examples of a clear ask might be:

- 'Join us as we meet our local politician at their surgery on Tuesday.'
- 'Sign a campaign card in church today.'
- 'Come to a meeting next Thursday to learn more about the issue and help plan our next campaign action.'
- 'We'd like to share our event online. Could you use your social media or talents in web design to help us?'

What if they say no?

When you invite others to join your campaign, it's possible that some people will say no. Don't panic! 'No' can mean a lot of different things and reflecting on how someone has responded can help you to ask them again, or make sure others

say yes. After someone has said no, it is also helpful to return to your learning stage. Are you sure you have asked the right group to complete the right action in the right way?

How are they saying no?	How should I respond?
No, not for this.	Can I change the way I'm talking about my campaign so that it fits better with their beliefs?
No, not me.	Do they know someone else who would be interested?
No, not now.	Is this the right time for my campaign action?
No, not unless...	What are their conditions and do they fit with the objectives of my campaign? What compromises am I willing to make?
No, not in this way.	Am I asking them to take part in the right type of action? What would be more realistic?
No, go away.	Thank them for their time and consideration.

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Following up

Celebrate

When you've invited others to take part in a campaign action, it's important to affirm their efforts and celebrate their achievements – especially if you want to ask them to do more in the future!

When thinking about how to celebrate your achievements together, it is helpful to take a look back at your learning stage, and what you have learned through running the campaign. Is there a clear way that your fellow campaigners would like to celebrate? Sometimes a big announcement during a church service might be suitable, while for others sharing some cake in a small group might be more appropriate.

How are you going to share your achievements with your wider church or community?

Make sure you link the success of your action back to the aims of the campaign as a whole, and let people know how your success fits into the story of your community. It's easy to share statistics (eg, number of petition signatures) but you also need to tell people how this is helping to build the world we want to see.

'Campaigning is a commitment. You have to be brave to speak out.'

Sean, campaigner in Sheffield



Marchers celebrate their land rights victory with Christian Aid partner Ekta Parishad in India.

What next

Finally, it's important to let people know the next steps. It's unlikely that a single action is going to win your campaign, but it can be an important step on the journey. Take a look at our resource **Next steps for your campaign** for advice and let people know how they can stay involved in making a difference to the lives of our sisters and brothers living in poverty.