

Emmaus in a Rural Church

There is no better tool for evangelism, nurture, and generally helping churchgoers to grow in their knowledge of Christ than *Emmaus*. For our parish of small rural communities, I find it has several distinct advantages.

Easy on the pocket

For one thing, it has a very low-cost entry point. All you need to get started is an Introduction book and Stage 2: Nurture. Total price? Less than £25. There are no workbooks or videos to buy, because *Emmaus* doesn't need them. This is important as, like many rural parishes, we have few financial resources, so that more expensive programmes are beyond our budget. *Emmaus* offers us a unique blend of quality with economy.

Interactive learning

Most of my parishioners would struggle with a workbook approach to learning. They have learned their life knowledge by experimentation, exploration and improvisation. So the interactive and discovery-led ethos of *Emmaus* fits into that style of learning perfectly.

Highly flexible

In my rural parish, I've also found *Emmaus* to be flexible enough to fit the season-driven lifestyle of my parishioners. It's very easy to arrange the course around things like lambing, shearing and haymaking. That's because, unlike other programmes, it's not linear. You don't have to start at page one and press on until you reach the last page. So it's OK to stop for a few weeks during the key agricultural seasons, then start again afterwards.

What's more, you can dip in and out. So, for example, I used the *Emmaus* material on Holy Communion to help my parishioners understand the switch from the traditional prayer book style of Holy Communion to the Common Worship approach. Also, when I asked a group of recently confirmed adults what subject they most wanted to understand better, they responded with "Prayer". So I used the *Emmaus* short course on prayer to extend and enrich their understanding.

Life-long discipleship

The other advantage of *Emmaus* for a rural parish is that it is the most complete resource for discipleship exploration currently available. That means that, having purchased a complete set of the material, I find I have virtually everything I need. That's a real advantage when the nearest religious bookshop is a 40 mile round trip. And because *Emmaus* is so flexible, I know that I can supplement it from other resources when necessary or appropriate.

In fact, *Emmaus* is a uniquely complete resource for a rural church. I commend it to you.

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