

A parishioner wants to explore ministry. What do I do now?

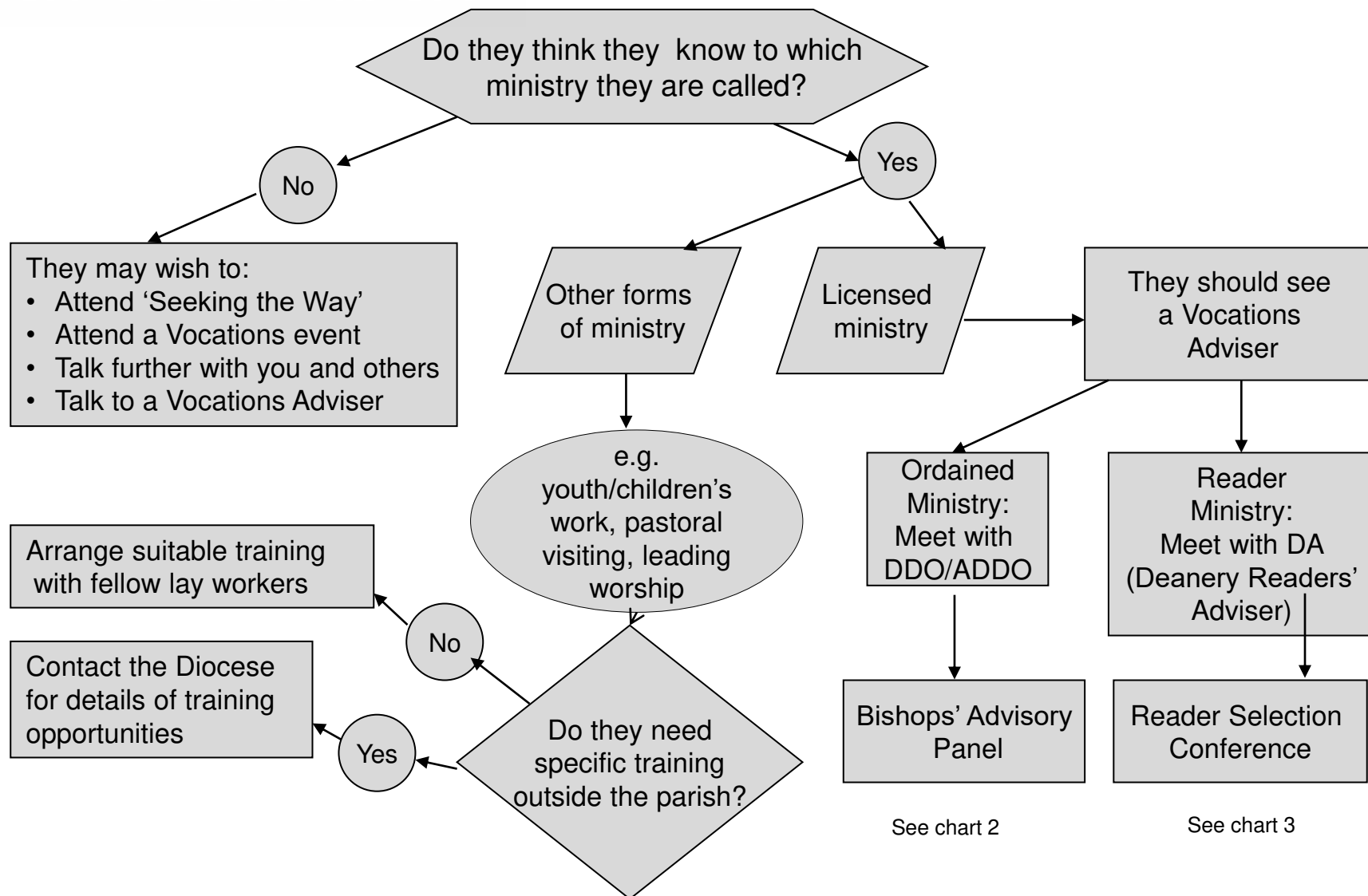
A practical guide for clergy

Vocations Team
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Introduction

- ❖ As Christians we are all called to **minister**. This guide is aimed particularly at ministry which requires some formal training (and selection) outside the parish context, usually ordained or Reader ministry. It shows you what the various processes entail and provides useful contacts.
- ❖ The flow charts are intended to provide a clear guide to the **discernment** process. In doing so they inevitably simplify what is often a gradual and iterative exploration which may take months or even years. While all the steps will need to be gone through at some point, this is a guide and not a set of rules.
- ❖ While the various Diocesan Officers mentioned in the process play important roles, the key person in helping someone to discern and nurture a vocation to ministry is very often their parish priest or chaplain. Your insight, prayers and **support** are crucial in helping them to understand what God is calling them to do – and sometimes, what God is not calling them to do.

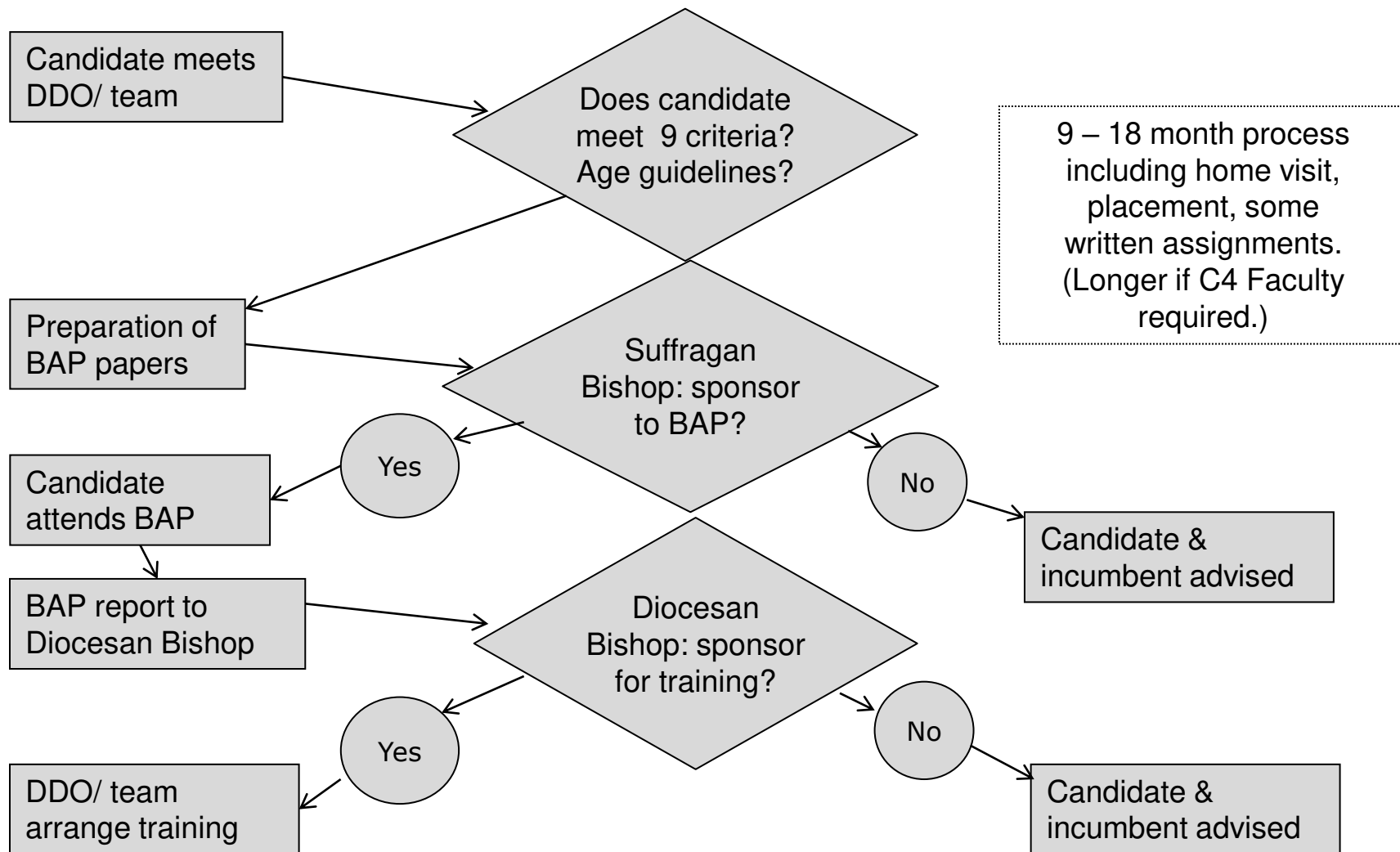
Chart 1: Discernment



Notes to Chart 1

- ❖ The Vocations Adviser will meet individually with the person to help them **explore** their vocation and discern the next step, through discussion and personal reflection. The VA is not involved in the formal selection procedure.
- ❖ Reader Ministry. The Deanery Readers' Adviser (DA) will have a more **specific** discussion about Reader ministry and the demands that training will make. The DA will be asked to provide a report for the selectors, as will the candidate's incumbent.
- ❖ Ordained Ministry. The Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) or a member of the DDO's team will have a series of meetings with the candidate over the course of 9-18 months in which they will explore the candidate's **suitability** for ordination and prepare him/her for the BAP (Bishops' Advisory Panel)
- ❖ Details of 'Seeking the Way' and other Vocations events and courses will be found on the Vocations pages of the Diocesan website.

Chart 2: Ordinand selection procedure



Notes to Chart 2

The 9 criteria

A useful summary may be found on the C of E website
Search: Church of England
Understanding selection

Vocation	Personality & character	Faith
Ministry within the C of E	Relationships	Mission & evangelism
Spirituality	Leadership & collaboration	Quality of mind

Age guidelines

- ❖ Age limits for ordination training are set at a Diocesan level. In this Diocese we operate with a guideline **maximum age at ordination** of 53 (stipendiary) or 58 (self-supporting). Readers may be licensed below the age of 70.
- ❖ Training costs for ordinands are allocated on the basis of an ordinand's age. Those who are 40 or over at the start of training will normally train on a part-time course.

C4 Faculty

- ❖ An Archbishop's faculty will be required for any candidate who has divorced and remarried, or whose spouse was previously married.

Chart 3: Reader selection procedure

(This process is run by the Reader Selection Secretary (RSS), who should be contacted at the outset.)

The candidate meets with:

- The Vocations Adviser
- The Parish Priest, who will be asked to provide a reference
- The Deanery Readers' Adviser, who will be asked to provide a report to the selectors

The candidate obtains an application form from the RSS and completes it, giving three referees

The candidate attends a pre-selection evening followed by an all-day selection conference

The selectors' recommendation goes to the Warden of Readers for a final decision

If the candidate is recommended for training, the parish priest is contacted for formal approval from him/her, the PCC and the congregation

A short reading list

Francis Dewar, *Called or Collared: An Alternative Approach to Vocation* (SPCK, 2000)

Jonathan Lawson & Gordon Mursell, *Hearing the Call: Stories of Young Vocation* (SPCK, 2014)

John Pritchard, *The Life and Work of a Priest* (SPCK, 2007)

Magdalen Smith, *Steel Angels: The Personal Qualities of a Priest* (SPCK, 2014)

Liz & Andrew Barr, *Jobs for the Boys? Women who became priests* (Hodder, 2001)

Cathy Rowling & Paula Gooder, *Reader ministry explored* (SPCK 2009)

Useful websites and social media

St Albans Vocations Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/Stalbansvocations/>

The **Church of England** website has a Vocations section with an extensive reading list and a summary of the criteria for selection for ordination. <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/vocations>

The Church of England has a **Young Vocations** facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/cofeyoungvocations/>