



# How to be a Close to Home Congregation

*Stories from congregations who have used the resource  
in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*

Following discussions in the previous 2 to 3 years about the value of covenant theology in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the new resource “*How to be a Close to Home Congregation*” was launched in September 2016. It is a 7 session video and Bible study resource which can be used flexibly in any congregation in a variety of contexts. An encouraging number of congregations have already used the resource in different ways, and others are considering it for the future. To help those considering using it, stories of 3 different congregations in the denomination were captured on video to find out how they had used the resource and what kind of impact it had.

## Contexts

These films were made in 3 quite different congregations:

- Templepatrick Presbyterian Church, a congregation of 355 families set in a rural area in County Antrim;
- Wellington Presbyterian Church, with 767 families, is situated in a heavily populated part of Ballymena;
- Trinity Presbyterian Church, Boardmills, a rural County Down congregation with 177 families.

In this video, the respective ministers of these 3 congregations share how they used the resource in their context and, along with various members of their congregations, outline what impact this made. Templepatrick used the resource in their home groups and in morning services. Wellington split each of the 7 sessions over 2 Sunday morning services, also studying it in their midweek and home group meetings between each service. Trinity Boardmills used the resource quite differently, as part of a Sunday morning breakfast Bible class for teenagers and adults together. In each case, the people involved share the following in 3 sections:

1. How they used the resource practically
2. Which of the sections impacted them particularly
3. What impact it is starting to have in their context

In the final section of the video, various participants give their thoughts on what makes a “Close to Home Congregation”.

This video can be used for personal reflection if considering using the resource, or can be shown in a group context such as a Kirk Session meeting. It could even be shown to a wider group as an introduction before the resource is used.

## Further information

Information on Close to Home can be found at [www.presbyterianireland.org/closetohome](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/closetohome).

This includes a promotional video, details of how to order the “*How to be a Close to Home Congregation*” resource, a guide to using the resource and various supplementary materials.

## Credits

Many thanks to Rev. Richard Kerr, Rev. Alastair Bates and Rev. James Hyndman for facilitating the making of this film and the members of their congregations who shared their stories and helped in so many ways.