(Slide 1)‘If you want to fix a hole in the roof - the first thing you have to do is dig a

hole in the ground.’ Let me repeat that - ‘if you want to fix a hole in the roof the first

thing you have to do is to dig a hole in the ground.

(Slide 2) Perhaps I need to explain what I mean. This is Canterbury Cathedral - one

of the finest medieval buildings in the UK. However if you were to go up into the roof

space of the building you would discover something terrible. The roof of the

Cathedral is full of holes. Some of them are quite large. And when it rains huge

amounts of water comes through the roof and settles in great puddles on ancient

stone work.

Clearly this is not good news and the decision was taken that the only thing to do

was to re-roof the whole of the Cathedral - that’s a huge task and will take years to

complete.

(Slide 2) When you’re thinking of doing a big job like that you have to think about all

the issues really carefully. For example - when the roof of Canterbury Cathedral is

finally fixed one of the things that is going to happen is that loads more water is

going to run off the roof into the gutters and drainpipes than is currently the case -

because at the moment a lot of the water just falls through the holes in the roof.

That fact leads to another question. If there is far more water running through the

drainpipes and gutters - are the medieval drains under the ground capable of taking

all this new water?

(Slide 3) There was only one way to find out. So before the work on the roof started

lots of trenches had to be dug in the ground to inspect and repair and enlarge the

medieval drains that run all the way around the Cathedral.

In order to fix a hole in the roof - the first thing they had to do was dig a hole in the

ground.

At some points in our lives we are faced with huge tasks - big jobs that can seem

almost impossible at the time. The task seems too big - the question ‘where on

earth do I start?’ is a crucial one. The strange thing is that sometimes the answer to

that question is that you have to start a long way back and in a slightly unusual

place to get to where you want to be at the end of the journey.

(Slide 4) This a very important term for a lot of you as you do external exams that

you have been working on for a long time. Of course the starting point for you being

prepared for and ready to do these exams is way back in your past.

(Slide 5) It started with your parents as they shared your first words.

(Slide 6) It continued as you started school and learned through play and practised

your writing and came across new ideas and concepts.

(Slide 7) It has continued throughout your life as you have developed mental

attitudes and tried hard at things you found difficult and mastered concepts and

learned patterns of working that work for you.

(Slide 8) The revision and preparation that you have done over the past few weeks

and months is the icing on the cake but your ability to do your best in these exams

started a long time ago.

As you approach any new task in your life - any new piece of work that looks large

and daunting - start at the beginning, ask questions, interrogate the answers to

those questions, ask more questions, think outside of the box. This holds true for

any area of your life, academic, physical, spiritual development. In order to become

the person that God call and wants you to be - in order for you to become the best

version of yourself that you can be you may well have to start in unusual places.

(Slide 9) And persevere - in the letter of James we read this: ‘Blessed is the one

who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive

the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.’