**How to Connect with your local school**

August 2022

Many churches know there is great value in working in partnership with their local schools. We have something positive and relevant to offer schools as they plan and deliver their curriculum in RE, Personal, Health, Moral and Social Education.

Schools are often very welcoming of churches who assist with delivering collective worship. Each school and church are different so take time to build contacts and relationships to find out how you can best support your local schools.

The Church of England has started the Growing Faith initiative which aims to find ways for churches, schools and families to work together in supporting the faith development of children and to celebrate and recognise their place as fellow disciples in God’s family. They have produced resources to share and projects have been piloted in several Diocese. Please follow the website for the latest news or talk to the CYP team as we continue to discern what Growing Faith will look like in our Diocese.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform/growing-faith>

Here are some resources you may find useful as you consider working with your local schools. Not every resource is useful for every ministry so take a good look at all the resources available here, online and see which best fits you, your schools and your ministry. Many churches have had great experiences working with their local schools so please contact the CYP team for further information or advice.

**Education Sunday**

Education Sunday is annually celebrated on the 2nd Sunday in September. This year Education Sunday is on September 12th 2021. Resources are used by churches, schools, colleges, individuals and groups. It is a great way of celebrating both students and staff as they look ahead to another academic year.

[www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234838/Home/Resources/Education\_Sunday/Education\_Sunday.aspx](http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/234838/Home/Resources/Education_Sunday/Education_Sunday.aspx)

**Assemblies**

A wide range of downloadable assembly outlines. Updated regularly.

* [www.assemblies.org.uk/index.php](http://www.assemblies.org.uk/index.php)

​​Barnabas resources are tried and tested in schools and are free to download

* ​[www.barnabasinschools.org.uk](http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk)

 Ready-made, downloadable, customisable acts of Collective Worship supported by multi-media presentations.

* ​[www.collectiveworship.com](http://www.collectiveworship.com)

A range of resources for assemblies, freely available

* [www.spinnaker.org.uk](http://www.spinnaker.org.uk)

**Tales From the Miracle Book**

A collection of fun and engaging short films, designed for the teaching of RE & PSHE in Primary Schools, with assemblies/lesson plans and cross-curricula worksheet resources. Alongside films they have created a host of top-quality interactive assemblies/lesson plans & resources for Collective Worship and RE lessons to help unpack these memorable stories for Key Stages 1&2.

**iSing Pop**

Classroom Worship from iSingPOP is an exciting resource designed to unite the whole school in Collective Worship, even though children may be in smaller bubbles or learning from home.

These once-a-week 20-minute sessions involve almost no preparation in advance and are differentiated for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 where necessary. Each act of Collective Worship will include:

- An animated Bible story

- A reflection on the theme

- An interactive prayer activity

- An iSingPOP dance routine to learn and practise

​- The Lord’s Prayer

<https://www.isingpop.org/schools>

**Open the Book**

Open the Book is a project under the auspices of the Bible Society which offers primary school children an opportunity to hear stories of the Bible, from a team of Christians from local churches, who present the stories during assemblies/acts of Collective Worship. Each presentation takes around 10-15 minutes and can be incorporated into a wider school assembly, or can stand alone. It is a three-year rolling programme with an additional, but optional year of material based on Christian Values.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/?source_code=99012_openthebook.net>

**Prayer or Reflection Spaces**

​Prayer Spaces in Schools enable children and young people, of all faiths and none, to explore life's questions, spirituality, and faith in a safe, creative and interactive way. This would be an excellent way of supporting our schools as they help their children process recent events. [www.prayerspacesinschools.com](http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com) is an excellent website with many downloadable ideas for creating spaces for children to breath, reflect and pray in schools.

The CYP team also have resources to lend and experience of running these events so please contact us for resources and advice.

**Bibles For Children**

There is an organisation that will help you give a Bible to each child in your local school (maybe one year group at a time). They ask for 50p donation per child but there is a choice of 3 good age-appropriate Bibles which each child will get to keep.

http://www.biblesforchildren.org.uk/

**Pastoral Support for Staff**

Consider offering some time at the start of one school day per half -term to bless the staff of your local school. Mindfulness activities, stillness and bless them with tasty refreshments and maybe a small gift to take away. Do ask for more details as this has been run successfully in a local school and we can put you in touch for more information.

**Prayer**

Include your local schools in your prayers regularly – both for staff and children. Consider being part of a group that prays specifically for a school. They can meet in a school, with permission, in a church or a home.

 [www.Prayforschools.org](http://www.Prayforschools.org)

**Communication**

Encourage a regular flow of news and connection through a school page in the Parish magazine and through church contributions to the school newsletter.

**Social Action**

Support your school as it helps students engage with social issues – consider a toy collection or Shoe-box collection. Are there organisations such as food banks which you could help the school support? Or any international links you could share?

**Church Visits**

Encouraging schools, either in classes or as a whole school to visit is a great way of helping children and staff feel comfortable and welcome in your building. This can be in the form of a service such as at Christmas or simply to use the building for a prize giving. Or offer a way to support the RE syllabus with topics like signs and symbols or Baptism which can be easily covered.

Use any of these visits as an opportunity to show children and families are welcomed to your church – think of a bright and welcoming creche area, pictures of children (with permission) enjoying church activities, examples of activities children have been involved in – prayers, pictures etc. And have a leaflet showing what is available for children and young people in your church to give to those who are interested. Make sure staff and children are warmly welcomed and help them see the living church community as well as the building.

If you would like support to put a visit plan together, please get in touch with the CYP team.

Scripture Union have a booklet that can be used for these visits. At approx. £1 each they are affordable and an excellent way of sharing lots of information in a relevant way.

**Christmas**

This is an ideal opportunity to support your local school.

Consider Christmas in a Box as a resource aimed at primary school children in Years 1-6. It can be facilitated by a local church volunteer, volunteer team or delivered to the school for a member of staff to facilitate. Contact Laura Webster for more details.

**Other events**

Are there other ways you can connect with your school?

Invite schools to display artwork- churches make great larger venues.

Consider how to include schools in outreach or pastoral plans in the community possibly through school/community surveys.

Could you hold a ‘welcome service’ for a new head-teacher.

Invite local head-teachers to take part in a new incumbent’s institution service.

Plan a day of workshops in church for children: Maundy Thursday, Shrove Tuesday, Christingle etc.

**iSingPop**  can run the Main Event in your school over 3 days followed by a concert in the local church.

Days 1-3 are teaching learning a set of catchy, fun-filled pop songs with an iSingPOP project leader. Each song is based on an important and inclusive Christian value.

Day 4 – Concert -The following week perform a live concert involving every member of the school to your local community in your church. They supply professional live production including PA, visuals and all equipment necessary for your concert.

They will leave the school and church with a set of teaching videos.

**Schools work Organisations**

**CRiBS** are based in Bexley and Dartford.

They offer schools a variety of options – including the Christianity element of the RE Syllabus for Nursery upwards. (including the Bexley Agreed RE Syllabus).

They have a play every Easter and Christmas which is taken into many schools in the weeks beforehand so that every child understands the real meaning of the seasons. (these change annually).

They also offer short term intervention groups in primary schools and a mentoring scheme in secondary schools.

These programmes need both finance and people. Would your church be able to offer to fund either lessons or the plays? Or could volunteers consider supporting the team in their local schools or as mentors? Training is given.

[www.cribsonline.org](http://www.cribsonline.org)

**Spinnaker**

Operate in primary schools in London and the South East delivering Collective Worship and RE lessons.

They value partnership and benefit richly from a wide range of contacts with churches. Maybe this could include yours?

They write their own material, creating Worship and Learning resources, both digital and non-digital, for use by their team, other schoolswork organisations, schools, parents, and churches. Much of it is freely available to access, use and adapt.

Spinnaker.org.uk

**High Hopes**

challenge and encourage children through the Christian faith. They offer Assemblies, lessons and clubs around North West Kent. Contact them to see how your church can support your local school.

Highhopes.org