

How to Connect with your local school

June 24



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 as well as supporting the school in prayer, collective worship/ assemblies and pastorally. It is also a great way to show the local families that churches are relevant and interested in them and their children and builds a sense of community.

Each school and church are different so take time to build contacts and relationships with both headteachers and RE Coordinators. Clergy are often asked to be on the Board of Governors. There are many ways we can support our schools both Church of England and Community. The best way to start a relationship is by asking the school what the church can do to help them. Once you have an established relationship of mutual trust offer to meet the head during the summer term to plan how the church and school can engage best during the next academic year.

Some community schools are cautious about church engagement, so we clearly need to be mindful of the best approach to take so please contact us for advice on how to deliver and phrase material.

The Growing Faith Foundation

Is part of the Education Office of the Church of England and 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 are working to 'change the culture of the Church of England so that everyone instinctively put children and young people at the heart of all we do.'

They have funded research which is now available as a Digest. Contact your CYP team for the link.

They have set up networks to connect those with particular interests including Chaplains, Ordinands, local schools, parachurch organisations and links to them can be found on their website.

Our Diocese has a Growing Faith Network for schools and churches to learn together and from each other. We meet each term as a Network and are keen for others to join us. Please contact your CYP Team.

[The Growing Faith Foundation | The Church of England](#)

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 in September. 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. [Education Sunday](#)



Collective Worship / Assemblies

The following websites have a wide range of downloadable outlines.

- Assemblies.org.uk
- www.barnabasinschools.org.uk
- Scripture Union
- The Diocesan Board of Education has prepared Collective Worship Resources for our church schools. Do contact them for help. [Board of Education](#)
- www.spinnaker.org.uk
- [Bible Timeline Assemblies \(SU Northern Ireland\)](#)
- Book of 10-minute assemblies - [available here](#)

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. [Available Here](#)

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 [iSing Pop](#)

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 Bible stories, 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. If your local school would be interested contact Open the Book who will train your team. You will need to gather props for the story and rehearse. [Available Here](#)



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 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/>

If you are planning to fund Bibles for children in school do consider giving them a Bible as they move into Yr3 which is theirs. If you have the same version in school as the one the children have (they could keep them at school or take them home) in the classrooms it will mean there is greater familiarity with it. Also easier to suggest reading some as homework. The risk is giving it as a leaving gift is that it will sit on their shelf at home and not get used. We have a list of Bibles on our website and some samples in the Diocesan Office to look at.

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.

Another idea is a big basket with sweet and 'smelly' treats in the staff room with a 'thank you' card occasionally.

Prayer

Include your local schools in your prayers regularly – both for staff and children. Ask them what they would value prayer for.

Consider setting up a group that prays specifically for a school. Invite parents, staff (where possible) and governors. They can meet in the school, with permission, in a church or a home. Ask for specific things to pray for (being careful about confidentiality).

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.

Maybe include feedback that children have given in Collective Worship. Contact your CYP team for where this has worked well.

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? Local families may struggle with the cost of uniforms – could you have a second-hand clothes rail for your local schools? Tie it in with family events you run and advertise it in the school.

Church Visits

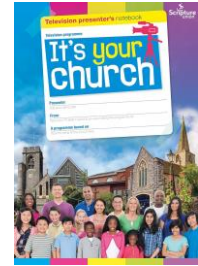
Encouraging schools, either in classes or as a whole school to visit is a great way of helping children and staff feel comfortable and welcome in your building. This can be in the form of a service such as at Christmas or simply to use the building for a prize giving. Or offer a way to support the RE 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. There are some in the office if you would like to have a look at them.



Christmas and other seasons

This is an ideal opportunity to support your local school.

Christmas in a Box is 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.

Or Christmas Unwrapped which is run by several local churches. Christmas Unwrapped is a fun, interactive, hands-on experience for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Through storytelling, hidden clues, activities and crafts, your pupils will unwrap the Christian story behind the festive celebration! Ask us for more details.

Easter and Harvest are other easy ways to support and connect with the school.

Experience Journeys by Jumping Fish (Gloucester Diocese) are a great resource to use. [Available Here](#)

Other events

Are there other ways you can connect with your school?

Invite schools to display artwork or offer to host a concert or an 'End of Year' Service/event - 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.

Encourage them to be involved in community events run at church – Summer funday 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



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. [CRiBS](#)



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 schools work organisations, schools, parents, and churches. Much of it is freely available to access, use and adapt. [Spinnaker](#)



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. [High Hopes](#)



Diocese of **Rochester**
called together