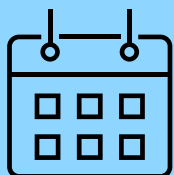


There are hundreds of ways to connect and support your local school, so we have broken them down into areas to make it easier to find your way around. All these ideas are leading you towards the goal of inviting families and young people into the life of your parish community.

IN WORSHIP, FAITH & SPIRITUALITY

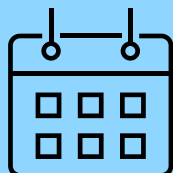


- Find out the prayer needs of the school and commit to praying for them. Monthly/termly.
- Share worship songs & music.
- Prayer walks around the school grounds & local community by parish members.
- Make the most of 'Education Sunday'. Resources can be found at the 'Churches Together in England' website.
- Provide support with collective worship.



- Encourage musicians and worship leaders to support with musical activities at school
- Gather a team who can deliver 'Prayer spaces in schools, either in school or in church and invite them to come in class groups. See attached documents about setting up your own Prayer Space. www.prayerspacesinschools.com
- Offer Godly Play sessions in school.
- Find a team to offer 'Open the Book', See attached documents about setting up your own 'Open the Book'. www.openthebook.net
- Work with children so they can plan and lead worship—
www.worshipworkshop.org.uk
- Set up a prayer walk around school & grounds to enable children to pray for their school and community.

- Set up a prayer walk around school & grounds to enable children to pray for their school and community.
- Develop a group who will visit school and speak about their faith story
- Help set up and run projects like 'Labyrinth' -
<https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f209069c4808/content/pages/documents/1582216715.pdf>
- Invite schools to take part in/lead special services, monthly services on a Sunday.
- Provide 'experience' events either in school or in church.
www.gloucester.anglican.org/welcome-2/schools/jumping-fish-publications
- Provide welcome services during the school week for new pupils eg Reception, Y3, Y7, Y12.
- Provide services for school staff regularly – even once a year.
- Organise a service to welcome a new headteacher.
- Create story sacks for Bible stories – perhaps including some knitted characters
See Bible Storybags: Reflective Storytelling for Primary RE and Assemblies by Margaret Cooling and www.biblesongsandmore.com/2016/10/18/story-bag.



- Support the school in the use of liturgy in worship, church calendar, saints & special days, and seasons. www.worshipworkshop.org.uk
- Help meet the needs of the RE curriculum creatively and appropriately.
- Work with schools to develop an improving community approach to worship
- Develop Eucharistic services for the school or staff
- Support the teaching of RE by talking to pupils about personal faith and how it impacts upon daily life.
- Offer Godly Play sessions in school: www.godlyplay.uk
- Offer Messy Church in school www.messychurch.org.uk (see our 'How to set up a Messy church' Document)
- Run a Big Questions club www.bosburyprimaryschool.co.uk/Enrichment or www.youthscape.co.uk/store/product/artcards or www.cofebirmingham.com/news/2018/10/24/fruitbowl
- Provide chaplaincy, or be a known presence around the school for pupils, staff, and parents.

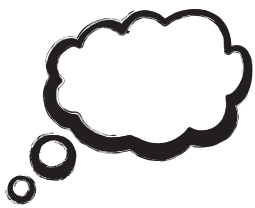


IN PRACTICAL WAYS

When we recognise the gifts and skills of our parish members who are ready to serve the team grows wider and stronger. There are lots of ways to become involved in the life of your local school through practical help and events, have a look at these ideas.

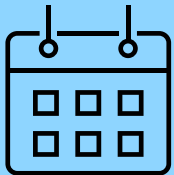


- Include information about the school in church through notices, notice board, parish magazine.
- Collect supermarket vouchers or tokens for the school.
- Identify a person who will coordinate links with the school.
- Share the school values in church.
- Attend school events.
- Have a stall/presence/display at school events.
- Include a link to the school website.

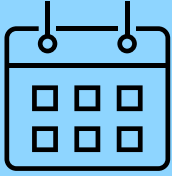


- Seek opportunities to engage with community learning initiatives – such as family literacy or parenting courses.

Offer to volunteer in schools, asking what needs to school has. Here are some ideas for volunteering.



- Help with 'Golden time' activities.
- Accompany groups on school trips.
- Cheerlead at sports day.
- Bake and take in cakes and offer prayer and support through times of Ofsted and SIAMS inspections.
- Share a Bible story in book week.
- Serve refreshments for those organising the school fete.
- Be a lifeguard for school swimming.
- Listen to readers.
- Help schools develop 'wild', 'spiritual' or 'food' gardens in their grounds or offer parts of church grounds/gardens for this.



- Offer a lunchtime or after-school club for any children.
- Supporting or coaching sports clubs
- Let school staff know about 'Alpha' or other courses on offer at the church.
- If you are qualified, get involved in mentoring young people.
- Offer a Work Experience placement in church.
- Where appropriate, encourage church members to offer work experience at their businesses.
- Provide mentors for pupils.
- Provide hospitality for staff and parents at parents' evenings.
- Take in cakes/biscuits for school staff – particularly during inspections.
- Volunteer to go on school trips (you will need to have a valid DBS certificate).
- Encourage pupils at sporting events.
- Pray for school staff and governors by name.
- Pray for pupils who are ill (for longer than a week!) – and possibly send a card or small gift for the school to pass on.
- Provide a gift when pupils start or leave the school (bookmark, pencil, Bible).
- Sponsor school uniform items for families who may be struggling financially.
- Offer financial support for particular events.
- Value the contribution of church members who are involved in school life – consider commissioning them in a service.



USING THE RE CURRICULUM

Schools will often enjoy input from the parish when it comes to aspects of the RE curriculum. However, when you are working with RE always begin by talking with the school about what their needs are and what areas they would like to speak into.

Once you know the topics or areas then here are some places you can go for inspiration and resources.

REinspired—www.reinspired.org.uk REinspired is a Christian charity based in Reading, they say 'We act to advance religion through education by enabling churches to support school communities in the religious education and spiritual development of their pupils. Our aim is to see creative engagement with people of faith enhance pupil's spiritual development and RE.'

Energize from Urban Saints offers a wealth of material on a variety of topics—
www.energize.uk.net

It's Your Church is a 16 page A4 booklet aimed at 8 – 11 year olds who are visiting a church as part of their RE syllabus. It offers an opportunity for churches to connect with their local schools as they invite children to visit their building and community. The booklet contains generic information about churches that can easily be applied in many different denominational settings. Children are invited to become TV presenters, finding out information that they can present back at school.

Scripture Union – It's Your Church | Families, Children and Youth Blog (wordpress.com)



CHRISTIAN UNIONS

One area you can offer to help in is to offer a lunchtime meeting for Christian children or young people to explore Christianity these are often places where children and young people feel it is a safe space to be a Christian in school.

Here are some resources to get you started:

- Starting a Christian Union— www.schoolswork.co.uk/blog/entry/starting-a-christian-union
- Youthwork ready-to-use meeting guides— www.youthworkresource.com/ready-to-use-session-plans
- Urban Saints offer 'Energize'. Great material across age groups from 3-18—
energize.uk.net

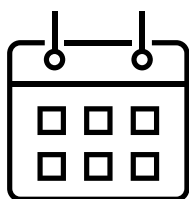
FESTIVALS

Festivals are a great opportunity to celebrate with the children and young people in schools, they are also great opportunities to invite families and young people to services and events we are running, giving them space to think and reflect on the Christian meanings of these festivals and the potential impact God could have in their lives.

Have a look at these ideas to get your thinking going.



- Invitations to your Christmas/Easter services,
- Invitations to any Christmas fayres, Easter Egg or Light Trails you are putting on, Make sure the dates don't clash with anything the school is putting on. (see Missional ideas for more information about running your own Light Trail)
- Invite school families to your themed Messy or Muddy Church meeting (see the document in the folder about how to run your own Messy /Muddy Church)



- Christingle—There are many resources for offering Christingle-themed services, assemblies and workshops in Church, after-school and youth clubs, primary and secondary school assemblies & classroom workshops, and worship. Christingle is a key fundraiser for the Children's Society and an opportunity to talk with children & young people about a range of issues concerning their peers. Further Information at www.childrenssociety.org.uk/how-you-can-help/fundraise-and-events/christingle/what-is-christingle



- Jumping Fish: Jumping Fish Ltd® publications support RE teaching, spiritual development, values education, and collective worship in schools, and help churches to promote links with their local schools. All-age worship materials are also available, to help churches be more “family-friendly”. Experience Christmas and Experience Easter plus Harvest, Pentecost, and more.
www.gloucester.anglican.org/welcome-2/schools/jumping-fish-publications/
- Barnabas RE Day. Resources to help you teach the subject found on the RE curriculum around these festivals. www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/barnabas-re-day-themes/
- Run your own ‘Christmas: Through The Keyhole’, retelling the nativity story through an interactive trail – click here for full instructions and links to downloadable resources in this award-winning manual.
www.encounterchristianity.co.uk/resourcebooks/cttk £10

SCHOOL VISITS TO CHURCH

We have worked together with the Education Team to create this resource and it's their wisdom and insight that we bring into this section more specifically. As we begin to look at Collective worship and schools asking to use your church building for a service, the education team has some great pointers as to where to start and how to make our church buildings into welcome and safe spaces.

Here are some things to consider if the school is asking for a service.

- Work with the school on this as an act of worship rather than a performance or ‘show and tell’.
- Think through the Christian language being used, so it is invitational for those not of the Christian faith.
- Communicate with the school about the role of clergy/lay/church workers in leading, speaking, and hosting services in the church.
- Include members of the congregation in welcome and worship.

- Open early & offer refreshments to parents/ carers/supporters attending services while they wait for children to arrive from school.
- Be aware of how the practicalities of the building will impact children's ability to participate. For example, the time it takes getting in and out of pews, gathering at the front, sightlines behind pillars, and so on.
- Where possible ensure microphones and sound amplification equipment is available and properly used.

Things to consider if the school are asking for an educational visit:

- Liaise with the school over exactly what the visit is intended to achieve.
- Unlock, open the door and turn on the lights and well heat the space. Have welcomers present.
- Be hospitable & generous.
- Provide refreshments.
- Show 'church' as a living community; let pupils see the work of faith - prayer lists, charitable work, deanery/diocesan connections, community events, mission links - anything including the worldwide church will be especially helpful.
- Use symbols in your building to open up the mystery of God. Encourage wondering about God in the colours, light, icons, crosses, and other features.
- Use understandable and appropriate language. Beware of assuming knowledge, being 'churchy' or patronising.
- Give the children time and space to think, reflect or pray.
- Make sure everyone can hear you—use a microphone if it helps.
- Give warm goodbyes.

The Education Team have put together a more in-depth document, so if you want more ideas and resources please go to the 'Hosting a school visit' PDF

If you want any helping thinking any of this through, please do contact Emma Sargeant at emmas@cofebirmingham.com