



# STARTING YOUR JOURNEY

The idea that parishes and schools, 6th form or Further Educational colleges can and should work together for the benefit of children and young people and their families is nothing new. In the changing world of schools and academies, it is more important than ever that we find ways of working together to maintain the powerful connection between faith, learning, and the local community.

Since 2009, Transforming Church has been shaping our vision across the Church of England in Birmingham, guiding us to be a Church that is growing 'larger, wider, deeper and younger' – a Church that is a transforming presence at the heart of our communities. The strapline spells out its core mission: to 'grow churches at the heart of each community'.

There are seven areas of transformation and building relationships with our local schools, 6th form or Further Educational colleges, can be found in each of these areas:

**Transforming Worship:** Drawing us into the presence of the Living God. Connection with your local school: through Collective Worship and school services in our parishes.

**Transforming Relationships:** Finding healing, encouragement, and challenge through our life together. Connection with your local school: Supporting the leadership of the school or in times of crisis, walking with them through it.

**Transforming Discipleship:** Enabling us to grow as confident followers of Jesus. Connection with your local school: Through our involvement in Christian unions and clubs and Prayer Spaces.

**Transforming Leadership:** Releasing and harnessing the gifts of all God's people.

Connection with your local school: Being part of such initiatives as the Young Leaders Award in partnership with the school.

**Transforming Presence:** Living out God's love in our communities and the wider world.

Connection with your local school: Creating an Open the Book team, working in partnership with the school on projects such as a rubbish pick in the local community.

**Transforming Outreach:** Leading others to believe in Jesus and belong to his Body.

Connection with your local school: Invitations to our Messy or Muddy Church activities, as well as involvement in Light or Advent trails.

**Transforming Partnerships:** Working together with people of goodwill to see God's purposes. Connection with your local school: working side by side with the local school, not only to give but to receive from them too, and work together to transform your local community and introduce people to Jesus.

This resource offers parishes a starting point for developing and nurturing relationships that will benefit the whole community, but its key message is one of growth in discipleship and introducing people to Jesus.

We can run our Messy church groups and our Prayer Spaces but without the relationship building and invitation to find out about Jesus for themselves, these places could become a club to belong to instead of the space to explore the Christian faith and life-giving relationship with Jesus, that we all long for our communities to see.

This resource will help you think through what you are already engaged with and how you can take those events and turn them into moments of invitation to families in your local school, joining up all you already do and perhaps adding an event or service that will bring school families through the doors of your church and become part of your community.

You can work through this resource in any order and at your own speed, but we suggest you gather a group of other people who are interested in connecting with your local school, to join you as you explore how you will connect with your local school, 6th form or Further Educational college.

# SOME OPENING KEY PRINCIPLES.

The key aim of this resource is for you to create a space to invite families and young people from your local schools into your parish community, through the use of events and groups that you either already run or you set up as part of this strategy, to build lasting relationships with schools and the young people and families that attend them and ultimately introduce them to Jesus in the most appropriate way for your context and community.

So here are a few opening thoughts as you begin to think through what this will look like in your context.

Parish and school links are stronger and live longer when they are not only reliant on the Headteacher and one key person from the parish community, so this is an opportunity to think about the skills and gifts that you have in your parish and school community and the others that can be drawn into maintaining this relationship.

Nurturing parish and school links is a two-way process. Just for the parish to serve the local school without the school resourcing and supporting in return, ensures that the relationship is one way and passive, but with both parties exploring ways to engage with each other's worlds then the partnership grows stronger and more sustainable.

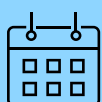
Developing relationships is ultimately for the benefit and nurture of children and young people and their families. In all situations ensure that everything is done within the school's safeguarding policy and in line with the Church of England Birmingham Safeguarding policy.

# HOW THE RESOURCE WORKS

Throughout this resource, we will offer a mixture of possibilities for ways you can connect with your local school, 6th form, or Further Educational college. They will be arranged in 3 categories:



Pick up and run with now



Takes some planning



Longer-term strategic thinking

This is to enable you at a glance to see what you can have a go at straight away and what you will need to give more time to think and plan with your wider parish community and leadership.

There is a whole range of ideas and areas to explore in the resources we have created. You have the opportunity to pick the areas that best suit your context and skillsets.

**If you have any questions at any point and want to talk things through please do get in touch with me, Emma Sargeant by emailing me at [emmas@cofebrimingham.com](mailto:emmas@cofebrimingham.com).**

# CONTENTS OF THIS RESOURCE

**These are the areas you will find resources, advice and inspiration on.**

- Ways to connect with your local school - in more depth.
- School visits to the Church and Church visits to the school,
- What are our missional opportunities?
- Parish and School working together, including Collective Worship.
- The Discipleship Pathway
- Prayer spaces in schools – all you need to run your own Prayer space with 34 theme events to choose from.
- Open the book – how to set up and run your own Open the Book in your local school.
- Messy Church - how to set up and run your own Messy Church
- Light Trail - how to set up and run your own Light Trail
- Outside Church expressions - how to set up and run your own Outside Church expression
- Kick Academy – How to get involved in the Kick Sports academy.

As part of the creation of this resource, I spoke to other Diocese to see what they are doing in this field. The Oxford Diocese has produced some helpful resources and were delighted to share them with us:

- Six things parishes can do now to connect with schools.
- A good parish-school relationship.
- Volunteering in schools.
- Questions to ask when volunteering in schools.

**You will find that the contact names and numbers on the documents are all for the Oxford Diocese, however, if you have any questions please contact me, Emma Sargeant, by emailing me at [emmas@cofebrimingham.com](mailto:emmas@cofebrimingham.com).**

Now it's time to look through the resources and consider where you will start on your journey of engaging with your local school, 6th form, or Further Educational college to begin a journey of support, mission, outreach, and community.

*The Source document for this resource is The Oxford Diocese '101 (or more) Ideas for developing and nurturing relationships between church and school communities'. It has been built on and updated by the Parish Mission Support team in collaboration with the education team of Church of England Birmingham.*