

# Education Sunday

27 JANUARY 2002

The ninth Sunday before Easter is traditionally set aside by all the Christian Churches as Education Sunday



## MOVING ON

Moving on is a fact of life. Times change, people change, situations change. Whatever our age, at school, at home, in the workplace we experience changes that move us forward.

Moving on can offer opportunities for children and adults to live life to the full. Consider some changes we all experience: going to school, progressing through the key stages, starting college or work. Opportunities to move on can be exciting and stimulating. On the other hand, for many people, times of change can be daunting, painful, even frightening.

Moving on can be by choice; sometimes it is unexpected. Mostly it is inevitable. Moving on can be celebrated as an opportunity to embrace new challenges and widen our experiences and relationships. As we grow through the different stages of life how can we help each other face and respond to this challenge? Throughout His ministry, Jesus encouraged people to take risks and to move on, challenging them to recognise their potential. By offering reassurance and encouragement He helps us to acknowledge our self-worth and gives us the courage to move on. On Education Sunday we acknowledge Jesus the teacher as the inspiration at every stage of our life.

*These paragraphs are produced by an ecumenical sub-committee of the Churches' Joint Education Policy Committee and agreed for use by all the Churches on Education Sunday.*

## A Prayer

Eternal God  
you call us by your voice,  
as once you made us by your word.  
We are clay in your hands,  
ready to be moulded.  
We are a canvas,  
ready to be painted.  
We are raw material,  
ready to be fashioned.  
Be potter, artist and creator in our lives.

Open our being to the influence of your spirit,  
so that ears and eyes, heart and mind  
may be alert to your presence;  
ready to learn,  
open to change  
and responsive to truth,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*This prayer is from Seasons and Celebrations. Compiled by Donald Hilton (reproduced by permission of NCEC)*

For well over a hundred years there has been an annual recognition of Education Sunday in England and Wales. It is a national day of prayer and celebration for everyone in the world of education. The theme is devised by an ecumenical steering group representing different Christian denominations.

For some years it has been celebrated on the ninth Sunday before Easter. The ideas in this leaflet are intended to be used as a springboard for a variety of events on or around Education Sunday. If you feel unable to devote a whole service to the theme on Sunday 27 January why not use the prayers then, or use some of the ideas on another occasion?



# Education Sunday

## Suggested notes for an Education Sunday talk/sermon/address

The lectionary readings for the Principal Service for the day explore the process of moving on through change and transformation — see 1 Kings 17.8-16 and John 2.1-11.

In the Old Testament reading, the widow is encouraged to use what is left of her meagre resources. The flour and oil are made into bread, providing enough for all the family. These simple ingredients, that seemed inadequate, were taken and transformed into sustaining bread.

The Gospel reading is another story of transformation. The wedding celebration at Cana was the setting for Jesus' first miracle when water was turned into wine. Jesus expresses his reluctance to intervene but finally agrees to respond to his mother's challenge to help. This first miracle opens the door to a new way of being; one that involves risk and danger; there will be no looking back.

In each reading, things that were available, every day foods of oil, flour

and water, were taken and transformed. The widow, in obeying Elijah's instructions, dared to risk all she had. Jesus may have been comfortable with his role as the carpenter's son but by performing this miracle he is now acknowledging his call to be the Son of God.

Education is also a vehicle for change and spiritual growth that begins with what the person has to offer and builds upon this to encourage them to move on in life. The relationship between teacher and student needs to be one built on trust. Through the education process, teachers guide their students to live life to the full. This can involve encouraging them to recognize their potential; challenging them to make connections between knowledge and life; recognizing that what we have is not for us, but for others.

All the world's faiths recognise the unique and significant work of the teacher. When reflecting back on school days it is often people who are remembered rather than facts learned at the time. Many find if they look back on their own life experiences, the significant people have been those who have taught and guided them in school, in church or in the workplace.

For Christians there is a lifelong commitment to teaching and learning following the example of Jesus. The vocation to teach lies at the heart of the Christian tradition.

## Some ways of thinking about teaching and learning in your community

Explore together the ways in which education is a two way process; for example, consider some of the ways in which we are all learners and some of the ways we are all teachers.

Ask a pupil in their first year of secondary school and/or a student in their first year of college/university to explain

- Before moving on what they were looking forward to and what they were apprehensive about?
- Was there anything that helped them in this moving on?
- How things are now?

Ask people who teach to share some of the joys and some of the challenges of their work. What is their motivation to teach? What sacrifices have they made in order to do the work?

Remember the many different areas of education, for example, parenting, children's and youth work, school, university.

Teaching is a Christian vocation. Consider the ways in which the vocation to teach can be supported in your community. Remember teachers in your prayers and support them in their ministry. (See the resource list for details of the National Society's new publication, *And Some to Teach* )

## Ideas for music

	CAH	MP
I am trusting thee Lord Jesus	223	258
I do not know what lies ahead	--	269
Lord, for the years Your love has kept and guided	310	428
One more step along the world I go	405	--
Through all the changing scenes of life	516	702

CAH — Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New  
MP — Mission Praise

# Education Sunday

## Something to celebrate together

Using this liturgy on Education Sunday is one of the ways in which teaching and learning can be supported and celebrated in your community. Teaching and learning take place in many different ways and in a variety of settings and so the following framework has been designed to be adaptable. It could, for example, form part of an order of service, following the sermon and ending with the Peace.

The term **teacher** is intended in its broadest sense to include those involved in working with people of all ages and in both statutory and voluntary education.

### Invocation

After three days they found Jesus in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Luke 2.46

### Profession of Faith

*Leader invites all gathered to profess the faith of the Church*

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who made all things?  
**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world?  
**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God?  
**We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.  
**This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

### Commission

*Leader invites teachers to stand or to come forward:*

Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all knowledge and truth, give to all who teach, wisdom, strength and compassion in all they undertake, and

grant that all who learn may be open to your transforming power; for your sake. **Amen**

The Lord is our teacher.  
Will you promise to offer all those you serve a vision of life inspired by the example of Jesus?

**With God's help, we will.**

As Christians we are required to promote the values of the Kingdom of God.

Will you foster justice and equality within our community?

**With God's help, we will.**

Will you strive to offer, by word and deed, a Christian example to those you serve in our community?

**With God's help, we will.**

*Leader addresses all present and invites them to stand.*

As part of our mission and ministry, we are all called by God, to teach and to learn together. Will you pray regularly for each other as learners and teachers?

**With God's help, we will.**

In recognition of our calling, we all say together:

**In darkness and in light,  
In trouble and in joy,  
Help us, heavenly Father,  
To trust your love  
To serve your purpose,  
And to praise your name,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

*Teachers return to their seats.*

### Intercessions

God of all time and wisdom, through the power of your spirit, enlighten us all as we teach and as we learn that we may discern your word and find your truth.

Lord, by your spirit:  
**Bring in your kingdom.**

God our inspiration, uphold all those who exercise their vocation in education whether as teachers, leaders or helpers. In our community we pray for

Lord, by your spirit:  
**Bring in your kingdom.**

God our anchor and support, we pray for all those who are responsible for education planning, policy making and administration. In our community we pray for

Lord, by your spirit:  
**Bring in your kingdom.**

God of healing and wholeness, we give thanks for all the educational opportunities made available to us.

Protect and sustain all those who are denied access to education or training. In our community we pray for

Lord, by your spirit:  
**Bring in your kingdom.**

God of renewal and growth, give us all, learners and teachers, children and adults, ears which are eager to listen, eyes which are quick to see, hands which are sure to do, and hearts which are always open to learn more of your love.

Lord of the Church  
**Hear our prayer,  
And make us one in heart and mind  
To serve you with joy forever.**

The Peace is then shared.

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# Education Sunday

## Resources

*Lean on Me*, a sketch by Dave Hopwood from *A Fistful of Sketches*, NS/CHP, 2nd edition, 2001. Price £7.95.

*It's Your Move!* for anyone moving on to *Secondary School*, Scripture Union, 2000. Price £2.99 each or £10.00 for 10 copies.

*Music on the Wind* (meditations and prayers based on the life of David) by Eddie Askew, The Leprosy Mission, 1998.

*The Way Ahead: Church of England schools in the new millennium*, Church House Publishing, 2001. Price £7.95.

*And Some to Teach* a handbook to resource *Christian vocation*, National Society (to be published in January 2002). A handbook of information for parishes giving material to support those exploring the possibility of a career in teaching and affirming Christian teachers already in the profession.

*Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New*, Kevin Mayhew, 2000. Mission Praise, Marshall Pickering, 1990.

This leaflet is produced by The National Society and devised by Alison Seaman, the Director of the National Society's RE Centre in London. It is also available on the National Society's website (for address see below). Let us know about your Education Sunday celebrations or any ways in which you used some of the ideas in this leaflet. If you have any comments, or if you would like to know more about the work of The National Society, please ask for an information pack from:



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For information about resources contact:

The National Society's RE Centre Telephone: 020 7932 1190/1191  
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Your support is vital to enable the Society to continue its valuable work in the field of education into the twenty-first century.

- support us by becoming a member of the National Society
- support us with your prayers
- support us by making our work more widely known
- support us by regularly giving or by donating a collection for Education Sunday
- support us by leaving a legacy to the Society.

## And next year Education Sunday will be 16 February 2003

Baptist Union of Great Britain, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8RT [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)

The Catholic Education Service, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1 1BX [www.catholiceducation.org.uk](http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk)

The National Society (Church of England) for promoting Religious Education, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk)

The Salvation Army, Schools and Colleges, Information Service, UK Territorial Headquarters of the Salvation Army, Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BN [brian.haylock@salvationarmy.org.uk](mailto:brian.haylock@salvationarmy.org.uk)

The Methodist Church Education Office, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JP  
[www.methodist.org.uk/sundays](http://www.methodist.org.uk/sundays)

The United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT [www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk)

Feed the Minds, Albany House, 67 Sydenham Road, Guildford GU1 3RY email: [feedtheminds@gnapc.org](mailto:feedtheminds@gnapc.org)