

Education SUNDAY 2004

8 FEBRUARY 2004

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

Putting out into the Deep

God invites teachers and learners to put out into the deep. The invitation carries a challenge! We shouldn't be satisfied with paddling in the shallows of knowledge and understanding. Rather we are urged to reach out to new learning experiences. This will involve tackling more difficult concepts and issues. God encourages us to learn more of his complex world.

As learners and teachers it is not always straightforward to move from the easy to the complex. We

often fail in our initial attempts. However God, through the Holy Spirit, challenges us to take risks to fulfil our God given potential and not to be discouraged by failure.

As we learn more we realise our dependence upon God. His transforming grace enables us to grow in understanding. We then discover the joy of learning and grow in self-confidence as we think more deeply.

Are we now ready to trust and obey God's call to put out into the deep?

Prayers

O Jesus

Be the canoe that holds me in the sea of life.

Be the steer that keeps me straight.

Be the outrigger that supports me in times
of great temptation.

Let thy spirit be my sail that carries me through each day.

Keep my body strong,

so that I can paddle steadfastly on,
in the long voyage of life.

*A new Hebridean prayer from
The Oxford Book of Prayer edited by George Appleton*

Disturbing stranger,

You call and we follow.

You call, and we leave behind

the nets of our past lives;

the things that bound and held us;

our old selves and our regrets.

For calling and disturbing,

for surprising and making new,

for nurturing us towards wholeness,

we thank you, Lord.

Father,

we do not find it easy to retain our enthusiasm

for growing and learning,

for searching and discovering.

Rekindle our desire to seek your truth.

Father,

We do not find it easy

to listen for wisdom

in other cultures and traditions,

in the words of playwright and poet,

in children's dreams,

or old folk's memories.

Open our minds to receive your truth.

*Reproduced from The Word in the World compiled by Donald Hilton;
with the permission of Christian Education (formerly NCC)*

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 8 February why not use some of the ideas on another occasion?



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.

Suggested Hymns

- Be thou my vision
- Will you come and follow me
- Be bold, be strong
- Lead us heavenly Father lead us
- Will your anchor hold
- Wide, wide as the ocean
- When I feel afraid
- In heavenly love abiding

Prayer Points

- Young children going to school for the first time
- Children moving from primary/middle schools to secondary schools
- Students going on to further and higher education
- Adults embarking on new learning experiences

Lectionary Readings

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Psalm 138 | Luke 5: 1-11 |
| Isaiah 6: 1-8 | 1 Corinthians 15 : 1-11 |

Seed thoughts for sermons/talks

Isaiah 6:1-8

The call of the prophet

The reading begins with praise and thanksgiving to God – Holy, holy, holy... The first thought of the reluctant prophet is that of unworthiness of the call for both personal reasons and because of the cultural situation in which he finds himself. However, God's power to cleanse and purify symbolized by the live coal enables the conversion of heart and submission to God's will – here I am. Send me. His lips are cleansed, not his eyes or hands, for the ministry of proclaiming God's word.

1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

Paul speaks of the Good News

Here we have the tradition of a creed – not in formal statements of belief but in the shape of the paschal mystery. The creed has two historical statements and two statements of faith. Paul's response is in faith and in consciousness of God's grace.

Luke 5: 1-11

The disciples leave their nets

The Gospel tells of a powerful experience, an experience of Jesus as the Son of God for Peter and the other disciples – their initial fear is followed by words of assurance from Jesus and finally, after the great catch, words of commission which take them into a new world and a new way of life.

Put out into the deep is a practical invitation from Jesus to the disciples to proclaim his kingdom after they have heard his preaching and seen the fruit of his words in action/symbol.

From now on indicates a real turning point in the lives of the disciples – called in the ordinary circumstances of their daily lives, they now will cast a different kind of net and put out into a new deep. They will become the followers of Jesus.

INVOCATION

After three days they found Jesus in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
Luke 2:46

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 should be celebrated in all parishes and the service should actively involve Christian teachers. It should be an occasion when the clergy speak on the vocation to teach and the value the Church places on the work of Christian teachers in all schools.

Extract from *The Way ahead* chapter on 'Teachers, Teachers, Teachers'

Resources

Resources in the form of an outline for a Children's Address and meditations based on the readings from Luke and Isaiah are available from the websites listed below.

Other suggested resources

The Way ahead: Church of England schools in the new millennium Church House Publishing.

The Challenge of a Lifetime video (presenting *The Way ahead*), available from The National Society.

Pocket Prayers for Teachers by David W. Lankshear, National Society/ Church House Publishing.

Churches Serving Schools by David W. Lankshear, National Society/ Church House Publishing.

Pillars of the Church – supporting chaplaincy in further and higher education Church House Publishing.

Governing and Managing Church Schools by David W. Lankshear and John R. Hall, Church House Publishing.

Taking on the World by Ellen MacArthur, Penguin.

'It's a Challenge' from *52 easy-to-use Assemblies for middle and secondary schools* compiled by Janet King, published by Monarch Books.

Linking Churches and Schools published by Churches Together in England.

It's your move published by Scripture Union.

Ready, steady, school published by Scripture Union.

Leading Education with Christian Purpose

The National Society is a Church of England and Church in Wales education service. It was founded in 1811 to provide education for all. Today The National Society aims to support everybody involved in Christian education and the teaching of Religious Education. The NS works closely with Diocesan Boards of Education, teachers, headteachers, school governors, Church school inspectors, chaplains and clergy, providing information, training and advice.

This leaflet is produced by The National Society. It is also available on The National Society's web site www.natsoc.org.uk.

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Your support is vital to enable the Society to continue its valuable work in the field of education in the twenty-first century.

Support us:

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

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The Association of Christian Teachers 94a London Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1NX www.christian-teachers.org

Baptist Union of Great Britain Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8RT www.baptist.org.uk

The Catholic Church Catholic Education Service, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX www.catholiceducation.org.uk

The Church of England and The National Society
Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ
www.natsoc.org.uk

Student Christian Movement University of Birmingham, Weoley Park Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6LL
www.movement.org.uk

The Salvation Army Schools and Colleges Information Service, UK Territorial HQs of the Salvation Army, Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BN www.salvationarmy.org.uk/schools

The Methodist Church Education Office, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JP www.methodist.org.uk/sundays

The United Reformed Church 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT www.urc.org.uk

**And next year... Education Sunday will be
23 January 2005**