

EducationSunday

31 January 2010

CALLED TO SERVE

Knowing God's calling has been an important component of the Christian life throughout history. All Christians are invited to explore their calling as an inherent part of discipleship. It may arise out of a very specific experience or be part of a growing awareness of God's working in our life. However it is always rooted in the concept of service and arises out of the Christian responsibility to develop and use our God-given gifts as co-workers with God in building his kingdom. Following our calling will always be demanding and requires perseverance and resilience, which has its source in our relationship with God through Christ.



Photo: Richard Hanson

Christians discern and develop their understanding of their calling as they continually learn throughout their lives, both within formal education and beyond. This process can begin in childhood, like it did for Jeremiah, and continue into adulthood. This is both a personal and community responsibility, where each Christian explores with God their own gifts and how these can be used, developed and fulfilled through personal reflection and in fellowship with other Christians. When someone has engaged in this process and has a clear sense of their calling within the purposes of building God's kingdom, then we say they have a vocation. And our experience of education plays a crucial role in the discovery of that vocation.

Education Sunday in 2010 is an opportunity to explore and celebrate Christian vocation in two ways. Firstly we can give thanks for, pray for and offer support to those who exercise their vocation in education including teachers, governors, pupils and students. This is an opportunity to affirm the distinctive Christian contribution they make to teaching and learning. Secondly we can support those who are at that stage in their education when they focus on their future working life, as well as those thinking about a career change. On Education Sunday it is particularly appropriate to encourage those who feel called to the world of education, as teachers, governors, support staff and in other roles.

Jenny Baker, *Transforming Lives*

SUGGESTED HYMNS & SONGS

- Beautiful Lord (The Potter's Hand)
- From heaven you came helpless babe (Servant King)
- Go do something beautiful
- God's Spirit is in my heart
- I the Lord of sea and sky
- Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me
- Take my life, and let it be
- Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Songs for children

- I'm working out what he means (The calculator song)
- One more step along the world I go

More suggestions available at www.educationsunday.org

LECTIONARY READINGS

- Jeremiah 1:4-10
- Luke 4:14-30
- Psalm 71:1-6
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Education Sunday is a national day of prayer and celebration for everyone involved in the world of education. For more than 100 years there has been an annual recognition of Education Sunday in England and Wales, traditionally on the ninth Sunday before Easter.

The ideas in this leaflet are designed to help you prepare for your own celebration on or around Education Sunday. If you feel unable to devote a whole service to celebrating the theme, you may want to use some of the ideas on other occasions, such as at the start or end of the academic year, either in your church, or in local schools, colleges and universities.

Next year Education Sunday will be on 20 February 2011.

PRAYER

A prayer to be faithful to the callings God has given us

Creator God

Like Anna who waited to greet the Christ child

Show us where you are at work in the world

Like Bezalel, anointed as an artist in the temple

Equip us with skills to glorify you

Like Jeremiah who heard the sound of your voice

Help us to respond to your call on our lives

Like Daniel who refused to eat food that was tainted

Give us courage to be faithful to you in our world

Like Lydia, a worshipper as well as a business woman

Help us to put you first in our lives

Like Jesus, your son, our teacher and example

Help us to worship you in all that we do

Amen.

FILM CLIPS

Two film clips are available to use in church services, house groups or youth group sessions. To show the clips you will need a computer, a data projector, a PA system or some means of amplifying the sound, and a screen.

Clip one: Christian teachers transform lives

This clip explores the impact that a Christian teacher can have on the lives of pupils. It includes the views of Christian head teachers and talks about vocation and the challenges that teachers face. It concludes with Joel Edwards talking about teachers as frontline ministers and encouraging churches to offer them support.

Clip two: Why I became a teacher

Ben Slater talks about what inspired him to become a teacher. This is a good clip to show on the theme of discovering your vocation. Ben talks about the advice he was given by people at church. Oliver Smith also reflects on what drew him to teaching in an FE college.

These film clips are from the *Transforming Lives* Toolkit for Churches which is available free of charge from transforminglives@stapleford-centre.org. The DVD and Toolkit includes more film clips and materials to help you and your church explore teaching as a vocation and give you ideas as to how you can support Christian teachers in your congregation.

IDEAS FOR ALL-AGE WORSHIP

Stand Up, Sit Down

Invite everyone to stand up. Then invite everyone to sit down if...

- they last went to school over 50 years ago
- they last went to school over 30 years ago
- they last went to school over 10 years ago
- they last went to school over five years ago
- they last went to school over one year ago
- they last went to school this week

Point out at the start of the activity that 'going to school' means in any capacity – as a teacher, parent, teaching assistant, not just as a pupil.

The people standing at the end should all be currently involved in schools – as pupils, teachers, parents, schools-workers and other members of staff. (You will of course need to alter the last line of the activity if you are doing this during a school holiday.)

You could use a roving mike to find out which school people go to, or how they are involved in education. Try to show the breadth of involvement in education that your church has.

As an alternative, use the statements in the reverse order. You'll be able to see who is currently involved in school when the first lot of people sit down. You'll be left with the older members of the congregation. You could interview them to find out their memories of school, or which teacher made most impact on them and why.

Special Offer!

Supporting Christians in Education by Trevor Cooling and Mark Greene

Published by the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, this booklet is a practical tool for church leaders and youth workers to help them to envision and resource teachers, pupils, parents and governors.

This highly readable but insightful book lays out a compelling vision for Christian involvement and mission in education. Supporting Christians in Education is normally £5, but Education Sunday participants can buy multiple copies at major discounts for distribution to teachers and others involved in education in their congregations.

- Less than 20 copies £3 each
- Between 21 and 100 copies £2 each
- Over 100 copies £1 each

To order copies visit www.licc.org.uk/shop/books or telephone 020 7399 9555 and mention Education Sunday.

Grove Books

On November 5th 2009 Grove Books are launching a new series on Education that will provide an invaluable resource for church leaders wanting support for their church's work in education.

See www.grovebooks.co.uk for more information.

For those wishing to read further, we recommend that you use the library on the *Transforming Lives* website <http://www.transforminglives.org.uk/more.php>

FURTHER RESOURCES

Further resources including prayers, sermon outlines, more ideas for all-age worship, school assemblies and youth group outlines are available from the Education Sunday website. They can also be obtained by contacting any of the following churches and organisations which may also produce supplementary material:

Association of Christian Teachers

94a London Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1NX
www.christians-in-education.org.uk

Baptist Union of Great Britain

129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8RT
www.baptist.org.uk

The Catholic Church Catholic Education Service

39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX
www.cesew.org.uk

The Church of England & The National Society

Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ
www.natsoc.org.uk

Churches Together in England

27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH
www.churches-together.org.uk

The Methodist Church Education Office

25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR
www.methodist.org.uk

The Salvation Army Schools & Colleges Unit

UK & Ireland Office, 101 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BN
www.salvationarmy.org.uk/schools

Student Christian Movement

Unit 308F, The Big Peg, 120 Vyse Street, The Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham B18 6NF
www.movement.org.uk

The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
www.urc.org.uk

The *Transforming Lives* Project is an ecumenical organisation endorsed by the churches and working on their behalf to support the work of Christians in education, particularly teachers. For information, ideas and resources on being a Christian in education go to www.transforminglives.org.uk.

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The Education Sunday 2010 theme was devised by an ecumenical steering group co-ordinated by Churches Together in England representing the following Christian denominations and organisations: the Association of Christian Teachers, the Baptist Union, the Catholic Church, the Church of England and the National Society, the Methodist Church, The Salvation Army, the Student Christian Movement and the United Reformed Church. The material in this resource was written by members of the *Transforming Lives* Project and the Education Sunday team. All worship material in this publication may be freely copied for single-occasion use as part of Christian worship. Any organisations or individuals wishing to reproduce this material in any other circumstances should seek prior permission from the Education Sunday Steering Group, Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH.

