

EDUCATION SUNDAY

27TH JANUARY 2013

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

www.educationsunday.org

Believing and belonging

Martin Luther King Jr once said that “Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you’ve depended on more than half the world”. We can’t live independently of others, and there are many ways in which this happens in the world of education. The concepts of community and interdependence are fundamental to a Christian understanding of education.



St Paul’s words in the first letter to the Corinthians were addressed to the church in Corinth, where he was concerned about the divisions amongst the people. The image of a body of people being like the parts of the human body might also help us to think about how those involved in education might be part of developing better educational communities. Each person in a school, college or university is an important part of the whole body. The whole would not be the same if one part of it were taken away. There will always be those who seem to attract more attention than others – the particularly bright student, the inspirational teacher, the ultra-efficient administrator, but no community can thrive with only these people. We are told that “we cannot do without the parts of the body that seem to be weaker, and those parts that we think aren’t worth very much are the ones which we treat with greater care” (1 Corinthians 12.22-23). Jesus, in reading from Isaiah, reminds us that the Kingdom of God will turn the worldly orders upside-down. The poor and oppressed are as much part of God’s Kingdom as those who have all the appearance of success.

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As Christians, then, we have a particular responsibility for those who are outsiders, because that is what God's Law tells us. The Israelites, in Nehemiah, heard God's Law and had it explained to them. They were then told to go and share their food and wine with those who didn't have enough. In our educational contexts, we need to ensure that those who have little, and are easily overlooked, are loved and respected for their unique contribution. In the same way, perhaps we have a role in encouraging more co-operation between educational establishments; helping those with the greater success and better resources to work alongside those which might outwardly seem less promising. Being part of God's community requires us to have a new outlook and to recognise what each individual contributes to the greater body. In working together and valuing each other we are part of the outworking of God's Kingdom on earth.

LECTIONARY READINGS

for 27 January, 2013

Revised Common lectionary

- Psalm 19
- Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10
- 1 Corinthians 12.12-31a
- Luke 4.14-21

Catholic Lectionary

- Psalm 19.8-10
- Nehemiah 8.2-4, 5-6, 8-10
- 1 Corinthians 12.12-30
- Luke 1.1-4, 4.14-20

About Education Sunday:

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

The resources are designed to help you prepare for your own celebration on or around Education Sunday, or on any other day during the year, such as the start or end of the academic year. You can use these resources in your church, in local schools, colleges and universities and in other places of learning.

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A prayer for Education Sunday

God of wisdom, on this day, and knowing it to be your purpose that all your children should grow in understanding and truth, we pray for all those involved in education:

for all teachers and lecturers whose work shapes the lives of others;

For all chaplains in schools, colleges and universities who offer pastoral care and seek to interpret the purpose of education in daily life;

For children and students, that learning may be a joy, and gaining knowledge a source of happiness;

For administrators, that care and efficiency may go hand in hand;

For all involved in the whole task of education, That it may be devoted to justice rather than self-seeking,

Equality rather than privilege,

And creation of community rather than division.

We ask this in the name of him who as the Way directs our path, as the Truth is our purpose and goal, and as the Life is the very spirit by which we live.

Donald Hilton. Used with permission of Christian Education.

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The Education Sunday 2013 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 and sourced by members of the Education Sunday steering group. 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.

Further resources:

Further resources including prayers, sermon outlines, all-age worship ideas, song and hymn suggestions and outlines for collective worship in schools are available from:

www.educationsunday.org

Education Sunday
2014 is on 16
February.

