

Education Sunday: what's it all about then?



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Help and support

Most Christian leaders realise the strategic importance of being able to reach out to young people, adult learners and those who work with them. But many of those leaders, quite frankly, aren't sure where to start.

Likewise, many churches would like to offer help and support to Christian teachers and lecturers, classroom assistants and support staff, volunteers and school governors ... but have never got around to doing anything about it.

Of course, many congregations would love to show how much they value every child and adult in their community by affirming them in their life-long educational journey (whether at school, college, university or in the work-place) and offering meaningful spiritual and practical support. However, many congregations aren't sure how to do this without sounding patronising.

An annual day of prayer and celebration

Education Sunday is the answer. In fact, for well over a century there has been an annual day of prayer and celebration for everyone involved in education in England and Wales. Now 'Education Sunday', as it has become known, is an event recognised by all the major Christian Churches. Education Sunday is celebrated on the ninth Sunday before Easter.

And Education Sunday (whenever it is celebrated!) provides the perfect opportunity for Christian leaders, churches and congregations to demonstrate their commitment to learning and teaching, and, more specifically, to those who learn and teach.

With this in mind, an ecumenical steering group representing different Christian denominations (together with the Association of Christian Teachers and the Student Christian Movement) meets each year to devise the Education Sunday theme. The theme for 2004 is 'Putting out into the Deep' (based on the story in Luke 5: 1-11).

Online resources

The content of *Education Sunday 2004 worship materials* is intended to be shared, photocopied and, most importantly, used! Also, to make things even easier this year, all the worship resources included are now available at: (www.christian-teachers.org.uk).

It should be noted that, although all of the ideas presented in *Education Sunday 2004 worship materials* are intended to be used in Christian worship on or around Education Sunday on 8 February 2004, they can be used at any time of the year!

Putting out into the Deep

God invites learners and teachers 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; whose 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?

