



101 (or more) Ideas

for developing and nurturing relationships
between church and school communities.



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Introduction

Faith is rarely lived out as it is described in religious text books or portrayed in the media and so being good news for young people needs creativity, humility and heart. The idea that churches and schools can and should work together for the benefit of children and young people is nothing new, and as society, technology and lifestyle continue to change, mutual sharing and understanding of the best ways to communicate with and support children, young people and families will need ongoing nurture and wisdom.

In 2001 Lord Dearing wrote the report *The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium*. In that report he emphasized the possibilities for developing and nurturing relationships between churches and schools and encouraged churches to be creative in this enterprise. This is further picked up in the Church of England 2010 report, *Going for Growth*; 'The potential for developing relationship, whether with church or community schools, is enormous through chaplaincy, activity clubs, religious education, serving on governing bodies and visits to the church itself. The continuing requirement for an act of daily worship of a broadly Christian nature in every school offers further possibilities for parish and school engagement'. *Going for*

Growth Page 3

This booklet seeks to offer both parishes and schools a 'starter for ten' in developing and nurturing relationships that will benefit the whole community. There are ideas, signposts to resources and a smattering of wisdom gleaned at the coal face!

Here are some important points;

- Church and school links are stronger and live longer when they are **not only** reliant on the Head teacher and the clergy person.
- Nurturing church and school links is a two-way process.
- The majority of the ideas within this book can be translated or adapted for Primary **and** Secondary schools.
- Developing relationships is ultimately for the benefit and nurture of children and young people.

Finally, the Diocesan Departments of Mission and Education are committed to supporting and enabling churches and schools to bless and serve each other. A list of contact details of Diocesan Staff can be found on page 16.

Church supporting school

In worship, faith & spirituality

1. Find out prayer needs of the school and support in prayer.
2. Offer to create quiet corners or a focal area (and regularly change and refresh these).
3. Gather a team who can create 'Prayer spaces in schools'.
www.prayerspacesinschools.com
4. Offer *Godly Play* sessions in school.
5. Support the school in the use of liturgy in worship, church calendar, saints & special days and seasons.
6. Find team to offer 'Open the Book'.
www.openthebook.net
7. Share worship songs & music.
8. Make the most of 'Education Sunday'. Resources can be found at the 'Churches Together in England' website.
9. Invite schools to take part in /lead special services, monthly services on a Sunday.
10. Prayer walks around the school grounds & local community by church members.
11. Set up a prayer walk around school & grounds to enable children to pray for their school and community.
12. Offer to be on or organise a 'grill a Christian' panel.
13. Help set up and run projects like 'Labyrinth' or 'Breathe'.
14. Help meet the needs of the RE curriculum creatively and appropriately (see p 10 for more on this).



Christian Unions

15. Offer a lunch time meeting for Christian children or young people.
16. Starting a Christian Union— www.schoolswork.co.uk/blog/entry/starting-a-christian-union
17. Youthwork 'ready-to-use' meeting guides—
www.youthworkresource.com/ready-to-use-session-plans
18. Urban Saints offer 'Energize'. Great material across age groups from 3-18— web.energize.uk.net

Collective Worship

19. Lead engaging and creative collective worship regularly in school and church, for and with children and staff.
20. Gather a team who will regularly create and lead collective worship in school.
21. Ask school for feedback about collective worship in order to learn and improve.
22. Offer conversation and/or training with staff on 'worship'.
23. Lead Eucharistic services for the school or staff
24. Work with children so they can plan and lead worship—
www.worshipworkshop.co.uk
25. Use appropriate delivery techniques; be aware of language, themes, choosing stories, agenda/values of person delivering and how appropriate these are in whole School, Key Stage/year groups or Classroom settings.

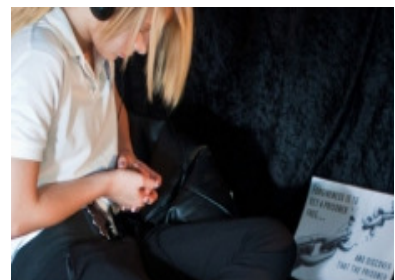
Focus on...

Idea 3: Prayer Spaces in Schools



"Prayer Spaces In Schools enable children and young people to explore faith and spirituality from a broadly Christian perspective in a safe, creative and interactive way. A range of flexible resources can be adapted to work for participants aged 5 to 18 bringing an experiential dimension to a variety of subject areas and to pastoral aspects of school life."

"The Prayer Room is a great opportunity for students to have an experience of prayer rather than solely learning about prayer in RE lessons." (Head-teacher)



Prayer Spaces in Schools is an initiative of 24-7 Prayer.
Further information can be found at prayerspacesinschools.com

"I've been quite surprised at the depth of some of the comments that have been put into the prayer box" (teacher)
"I love it because I can talk to god quietly" (pupil)



Transitions

Supporting children and parents through times of transition can be an important and valuable role that church members can offer help with.

Scripture Union offer two resources;

26. 'Get Ready, Go!' is a resource for children starting primary school. A version for parents is also available.

27. 'It's Your Move' is for those moving from primary to secondary school.

Both can be found at www.scriptureunion.org.uk

28. Help children transition from children to youth ministry.



Focus on...

Idea 28: Transition from Children to Youth Ministry

St Sebastian's Church in Wokingham work with three local primary schools offering 'Row'd' to year six pupils. The children & youth ministers work together on the programme with one of the aims being to enable the transition from children's to youth ministry as the children move from year 6 to secondary school.

For more information about Row'd have a look at www.stsebastians.org.uk/schools or contact;
Sally Alexander—children@stsebastians.org.uk
Debbie Harris—youth@stsebastians.org.uk



Christmas Specials

29. *Experience Christmas* (Jumping Fish)
www.gloucester.anglican.org/resources/jfish
30. *Holy Family* or *Advent* Godly Play stories
31. *Barnabas RE Day*
www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/advent-and-christmas
32. *Christingle*—There are many resources for offering Christingle themed services, assemblies and workshops in Church, after-school and youth clubs, primary and secondary school assemblies & classroom workshops and worship. Christingle is a key fund raiser for the Children's Society and an opportunity to talk with children & young people about a range of issues concerning their peers. Further Information at www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/fundraising-and-appeals
33. Wayne Dixon, Scripture Union Development Worker (Schools) in Slough invites you to visit '*Christmas Unwrapped*' (usually takes place in November). Further details & how to contact Wayne can be found at—www.sloughbaptistchurch.org.uk/schoolsweek



Easter Specials

34. *Experience Easter* (Jumping Fish) www.gloucester.anglican.org/resources/jfish
35. *Mystery of Easter* or *Faces of Easter* Godly Play Stories
36. *Easter Journey* (BRF) - www.easterjourney.org.uk.
37. *Barnabas RE Day* www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/lent-and-easter
38. Wayne Dixon, Scripture Union Development Worker (Schools) in Slough invites you to visit '*Easter Cracked*' (usually takes place in March). Further details & how to contact Wayne can be found at—www.sloughbaptistchurch.org.uk/schoolsweek



School visits to churches

39. Unlock, open the door and turn on the lights and heating.

Show 'church' as a living community not a dead relic.

- 40. Be hospitable & generous.
- 41. Use symbols in your building to open up the mystery of God. Encourage wondering about God in the colours, light, icons, crosses and other features.
- 42. Use understandable and appropriate language. Beware of assuming knowledge, being 'churchy' or patronising.
- 43. Be creative, appropriate and specific in your contribution.
- 44. Give the children time and space for reflection and being.
- 45. Make sure everyone can hear you—use a microphone if it helps.
- 46. Give warm goodbyes.



School Services in Church

- 47. Work with school on this as an act of worship rather than a 'show and tell'.
- 48. Communicate with school about role of clergy/church workers in leading, speaking and hosting services in church.
- 49. Have welcomers.
- 50. Open early & offer refreshments to parents/carers/supporters attending services while they wait for children to arrive from school.
- 51. Be aware of how the practicalities of the building will impact on children's ability to participate. For example, the time it takes getting in and out of pews, gathering at the front, sight lines behind pillars and so on.



52. Hearing children's contributions is often an issue. If possible have a 'sound system' person (or two), one to 'man the desk' another to help the children with using microphones.

Recognise opportunities for church members to serve.

53. Help with 'Golden time' activities.
54. Accompany groups on school trips.
55. Cheerlead at sports day.
56. Bake and take in cakes and offer prayer and support through times of Ofsted and SIAS inspections.
57. Share a bible story in book week.
58. Serve refreshments for those organizing the school fete.
59. Be a lifeguard for school swimming.
60. Listen to readers.
61. Pay for your school to access a 'Barnabas RE' Day—
www.barnabasinschools.org.uk
62. Help school develop 'wild', 'spiritual' or 'food' gardens in their grounds or offer parts of church grounds/gardens for this.
63. Offer a lunchtime or after school club for any children.
64. Have a notice board in church about school.
65. Let school staff know about 'Alpha' or other courses on offer at the church.
66. Supporting or coaching sports clubs.
67. Getting involved in mentoring young people .
68. Adopt a chaplaincy type model of "hanging around" - being there for young people in the young people's space at breaks, lunchtime or after school.
69. Offer a Work Experience placement in church. An example of this by Trinity Learning in Abingdon can be found at
www.trinityabingdon.org.uk/learning/workexperience
70. Where appropriate, encourage church members to offer work experience at their business.



Supporting RE

71. *REinspired*—www.re-inspired.org.uk

REinspired is a Christian charity based in Reading working with 20 local churches, 11 primary schools and 2 secondary schools whose vision is to see churches fully engaged in supporting their local schools in religious education and the spiritual development of pupils.



Locally our mission is making religious education in schools exciting and life-changing through encounters with local people of faith within an educational framework helping children to answer the question: "What do Christians believe about...". Nationally our mission is help churches across the country do what we do.

Contact REinspired office@reinspired.org.uk or on **0118 9663929**

72. *Culham St Gabriel's Institute* —www.cstg.org.uk

73. *Energize* from Urban Saints offers a wealth of material on a variety of topics— web.energize.uk.net

Recognise Mission Opportunities.

- 74. Run a Holiday Club. A wide variety of material is available from amongst others BRF Barnabas and Scripture Union. A number of churches are often willing to share expertise and resources and we at the Diocese offer to pray for Holiday clubs, big & small, every year. Contact Yvonne Morris for further information on this.
- 75. Host activity mornings/ afternoon/ days for children and families.
- 76. Provide meals for those who normally receive free school dinners.
- 77. Run 'Messy Church' or similar with or in school.
- 78. Offer afterschool clubs depending on the expertise you have available. For example, gardening, Bible stories, art & craft, dance, music, drama, sport/games.
- 79. Attend and help at 'grounds' days.
- 80. Help with breakfast clubs.
- 81. 'Sponsor a school sweater' – ask congregants to contribute towards the cost of an embroidered school jumper for a family in need.

82. Offer good Christian books, bible storybooks and suitable full bibles for school libraries.
83. Encouraging and supporting children & young people attending Christian holidays and camps.
84. Enabling teenage Christians to serve on holidays and camps as young leaders.

School supporting Church

85. Invite guest speakers to visit collective worship before 'they're on' so they get a feel for what happens.
86. Communicate your needs, hopes and expectations to visiting speakers, listeners and storytellers.
87. Offer guidance to visitors on classroom & behaviour management and ensure there is a staff member to assist appropriately.
88. Evaluate and feedback to visitors on collective worship or other contributions.
89. Include item on worship and church links in Head-teacher reports to governors and in school improvement plans.
90. Dedicate a notice board in school to church.
91. Pray for church through the annual cycle of seasons, events and specific local occurrences.
92. Help church workers make a year plan of when you would like them to come in for visits, assemblies, special occasions and when they could plug their special events, services and clubs.



Working Together

93. Share newsletters or magazines.
94. Share expertise across a range of topics, needs and age groups for example, ICT, gardening.
95. Share training in appropriate topics. For example, safeguarding, first aid, health and safety, fire, risk assessment, Godly Play.
96. Share buildings, car parking.
97. Share time and cost of youth or children's worker.
98. Joint school and church choir.
99. Shared charitable and community projects.
100. Vicar and Head-teacher book in some pastoral interaction time for each other.

Serving in structures & Governance

101. Have locally agreed way to link school and PCC.
102. Include 'Church' as part of the welcome/induction of a new Head-teacher and their commissioning/ affirmation service
103. School involved to some extent in clergy appointments.
104. School to be part of welcome for new incumbent.
105. Invite the Head-teacher to PCC to report on school and community issues.
106. PCC meetings include item on school links.
107. Fill Governor & Foundation Governor places.
108. Recognise and applaud governance as part of Christian service.

Use 'Takeover Day' as an opportunity for children and young people to;

109. Plan and lead worship in church or school.
110. Be involved in a PCC or Governors Meeting.
111. 'Takeover' specific roles for the day.

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/takeover_day



Specific guidance for churches can be found at www.oxford.anglican.org/children/ministry-with-children/takeover-day

Useful Resources

Barnabas in Churches www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk

Barnabas in Schools www.barnabasinschools.org.uk

Diocese of Bath & Wells Guideline in Church/School Partnerships
www.bathandwells.org.uk/children/schools-parishes-in-partnership

Faith in Homes www.faithinhomes.org.uk

Godly Play www.godlyplay.org.uk

Going for Growth www.going4growth.org.uk

Local Church Local School www.localchurchlocalschool.org.uk

National Society www.natsoc200.org.uk

Schoolswork.co.uk www.schoolswork.co.uk

Scripture Union www.scriptureunion.org.uk/YourCommunity/Schools

Side by Side with God in Everyday Life by Yvonne Morris
www.brfonline.org.uk/9781841018553

Worship Workshop www.worshipworkshop.co.uk

Youthblog www.youthblog.org



Being Good News for Young People

How do your church & school work together to be Good News for Young People?	
What challenges do you face?	
What opportunities are there for you to work more closely to be good news for young people?	
Who do you need to talk to?	
How will you get started?	
How will you know how well you've done in the future?	

Youth & Child Friendly Church Awards

Would you like your parish to be the recipient of one of these plaques and proudly display it on your church?



Youth Adviser Ian Macdonald and Children's Adviser Yvonne Morris, often visit churches who want to better connect with children and young people but aren't quite sure how to go about it. We are therefore delighted to launch the 'Youth and Child Friendly Church 'Welcome' and 'Good News' awards which we hope will very much help the 'how'.

The 'Welcome' award should be accessible to all churches in the Diocese and examines how children and young people experience building, community and faith. The Welcome award acknowledges that not all churches are able to provide 'big' ministries but that small scale Sunday groups or family services are important and valuable in the life of the church community.

The Good News Award builds on the Welcome Award and looks more fully at engagement and provision for children and young people. What this looks like will differ from place to place but the underlying principle of the Going for Growth report that asks churches to 'be good news for young people' is what matters.

The awards are intentionally labeled 'family-friendly' because this language is most accessible to those outside the church.

There is a self-assessment process which asks churches to examine the values, attitudes and behaviour of the whole church towards children and young people and to recognise the opportunities they have to improve and develop to be more welcoming and even better news.

Help, support and advice are available from the Youth & Children's Adviser's.

If your church is interested in the awards you can get the information pack and self-assessment forms from Carolyn Main;

✉ carolyn.main@oxford.anglican.org
☎ 01865 208257





DIOCESE OF OXFORD

Serving Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

Supporting Work with Children & Young People

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