

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.

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.

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.

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.



*Bishop Malcolm McMahon,
Chairman, Catholic Education Service
for England and Wales*

Message from Bishop Malcolm McMahon: Called to Serve

The elusive factor that often characterises our schools is referred to as ethos. Ethos is a term that is difficult to get hold of. It is expressed in the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural threads that run through the whole of education, the subjects that are taught and the way they are delivered, the way school is managed, the behaviour of the staff and children, the quality of the school dinners, the refereeing on the football pitch. The relationship which the teacher has with the individual pupil or student is usually a unique forum in which the young person is guided in discovery of the truth beyond the bare facts of the subject to that which is Truth itself. An awesome responsibility!

The teacher in a Catholic School has a special role because for them the child or student is not just a person to be trained for life but someone who has been created by God to reach a fulfilment which is beyond our imaginings. For a person to take on responsibility for our young people and become a teacher is more than finding a job which is personally satisfying, it is to become a partner in God's plan for a better world.

© 2010 Education Sunday Steering Group

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.

