

EducationSunday

5 February 2012

LEARNING AND SERVING

If you are reading this, you are probably one of the 88% of the world's population lucky enough to have attended primary school. Possibly, you have also been to secondary school (60%), and you may even be one of the 27% who have studied beyond secondary school level. *

In our culture, access to education is often taken for granted and education is increasingly seen as a commodity to be bought and sold for individual gain. This was not Jesus' view of education. Jesus used parables and stories as an accessible way to help people see the world through God's eyes and challenge them to act for justice.

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9:16-17) he speaks of being entrusted with a commission – a commission to proclaim the gospel by making ourselves 'a slave to all', living alongside the poor and the weak, and serving others.

As Christians we are called to work for a fairer world – to ensure that everyone has access to education, that our schools include those on the margins of society, and to tackle the root causes of poverty and inequality that lead to millions of people around the world being denied their basic human rights.

Last year's student protests and the debate around Higher Education funding highlight a fundamental question – what is education for? Our time in education is not simply about preparing us for the workplace; it is also about the development of the whole person and finding ways to use our newly acquired skills and knowledge in the service of others.

In Mark's Gospel we read the story of Jesus healing the woman with a fever. He 'took her by the hand and lifted her up'. How can we lift others up? Serving others can be as simple as making a cup of tea and really listening to someone's story, or volunteering in our local community, getting to know our neighbours and listening to those on the margins.

We can also use our skills and talents in the service of education. For some people this might be as teachers, youth workers, classroom assistants, chaplains, careers advisors, counsellors and support workers, but all of us can do something to support young people and students in our communities and churches.

Through the service of others we can proclaim the gospel of justice, peace and love for all. Education is a means of becoming more effective partners with God, enabling us to share in God's work of redemption.



About Education Sunday

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 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.

Next year Education Sunday will be on 27 January, 2013.

* <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXT/EDUCATION/0,,contentMDK:20573961~menuPK:282404~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:282386,00.html>

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LECTIONARY READINGS*

for 5 February 2012

- Isaiah 40.21-31
- Psalm 147.1-11, 20c
- 1 Corinthians 9.16-23
- Mark 1.29-39

*Variations in the Roman Catholic Lectionary:
Job 7.1-3, 6-7, Psalm 147.1-6, 1 Corinthians 9.16-19, 22-23,
Mark 1. 29-39

A song for Education Sunday

This song has been specially written for Education Sunday by Linda Currin. It can be sung to the tune Slane (Lord of all hopefulness).

Jesus the Teacher

1. Jesus the Teacher, the sower of seed,
You taught by example, by story and deed.
Your lesson - a kingdom of people made new,
More wholly themselves and more truly like you.

2. Jesus the Master, we walk in your path,
We watch as apprentices learning your craft.
Our goal to become all that's gracious and true,
More wholly ourselves and more truly like you.

3. Jesus the Healer, the sheltering wing,
You cherish and challenge, you bless what we bring.
You draw us to move from the known to the new,
Transforming our minds as we grow more like you.

4. Jesus, when vision can scarcely prevail,
In tiredness or tension or fear that we fail,
Still teach, heal and draw us, our vision renew
Until we're made whole in the fullness of you.

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The Education Sunday 2012 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 school assemblies** are available from www.educationsunday.org

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

Catholic Education Service for England and Wales

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

The Church of England and 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

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

The Salvation Army Schools and Colleges Unit

UK and 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

