

School and Church Walking Together Through the School Year

Life in both schools and churches has an annual rhythm, of events and celebrations. In schools major Christian festivals are a key part of their annual cycle while churches of course, mark these festivals every year. Most churches already link with their local schools for some of the major festivals however there are other opportunities for working together to support the spiritual lives of children, staff and families. This material offers suggestions for how the school and church might walk term by term through the year together. We have put suggestions for each term with links to further information and resources. There are far too many to do all of them select the activities that would work best in your context.

Some of these ideas will only be suitable when partnering with a church school. These ideas are shaded to help your planning. Some will be suitable if the church hosts the activity rather than the school. Invitation to participate, not expectation to join in is essential for all pupils and adults.

If you have done something that has worked well in your school and church context we would love to hear about it.

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Resources These are our 'go to' websites for practical and easy to use resources

Bible Chat Mats

[Bible Chat Mat: Specials - Bath and Wells Diocese](#) These colouring mats with a Bible focus and some questions to talk about while you colour are useful for involving a variety of ages together.

Flame Creative Kids Blogspot

[Flame: Creative Children's Ministry](#) There are some useful materials and activity ideas for primary school and nursery children.

Jumping Fish Publications

[Experience Journeys – Jumping Fish Publications](#) Experience Journeys are packs of ideas for a trail to use at festivals with primary aged children. There is a small cost for these packs.

Diocese of Guildford

The Diocesan Education Team create a lot of original material for schools. A good place to start exploring is [this page on the website](#).

Muddy Church

[Community | Muddy Church](#) Lots of free downloadable resources for outdoor trails.

Prayer Spaces in Schools

[Prayer Spaces in Schools](#) Lots of ideas and resources for reflective prayer activities for all ages. The session videos explore setting up prayer spaces for different seasons and themes.

We have a separate guide on our [School and Church Partnerships page](#) on setting up a *Reflection Space* in a community school.

Autumn Term

Shaded box indicates an activity best used with a church school.

| When | Activity | Location | More details and links to useful resources | Involving Households |
|---|--|------------------|---|--|
| Staff Inset Day | Prayer and Reflection Space for school staff | School or church | Offer school staff some reflective prayer activities as part of the start of the year inset day. The Diocese have a pack of materials on their website here. | |
| End of holiday / first week of term | Blessing of the backpacks (or book bags) | Church | Invite children and staff to bring their school bags to church for a blessing during the service as they start the new school year. There are some downloadable tags and resources here There is an example service from Esher Parish here Blessing of the Backpacks: 6 Tips for Success | Invite the whole family to be part of this |
| September / early in the term | Church gives each new pupil a Bible, or could be at the start of a new Key Stage | School or church | Rather than give Bibles as pupils leave the school give them as they join. Pupils use them in RE lessons and collective worship. The Bibles for Children scheme helps churches provide Bibles at a low cost. Home - Bibles for Children Our list of recommended Bibles is on this webpage School and Church Partnerships - Diocese of Guildford | Invite the family to be part of this |
| 2 nd Sunday in September | Education Sunday | Church | A national day of prayer and celebration for all involved in education. There are materials from Churches Together online Education Sunday – Churches Together in England | Invite the whole family to be part of this Include prayers for families |
| 21 st September | International Day of Peace | School or church | International Day of Peace | |
| Harvest Festival | Act of worship Collection and distribution of gifts | Church | It can be helpful if both school and church share the same theme and project for giving | Include the whole family with the collection and distribution of gifts |
| October | Black History Month | School | School and church could look at the contribution of black Christians to mission, worship and teaching. Perhaps using racially diverse Christian art, prayers and songs in worship in both school and church. Racial diversity - Diocese of Guildford | Families could be invited to a special collective worship or service. Families may wish to contribute stories and images. |

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| | | | The series 'Do Great things for God' has some interesting biographies. Children & Youth The Good Book Company | |
| Remembrance Day | Act of Remembrance | School Church War memorial | Suggestions for possible content for a service on Growing4Growth here Curated resources on our website here Remembrance - Diocese of Guildford | Invite all ages to act of remembrance |
| 31 st October | Light party or light trail These are often offered as an alternative to Halloween parties. | Church or school | Resources are available from Scripture Union here Some churches hand out Trick of Truth Boxes as part of a trail available here Hope Together : Autumn | Offer as a family fun afternoon Or a trail around the community |
| Advent | Share an Advent calendar Advent trail Posada | School | The Diocese of Guildford create an online advent calendar which school and church could enjoy together. There is a primary and a secondary version each year. An Advent trails might involve the whole community putting items on display in their window. There is a school based Explore Advent from Jumping Fish here Posada the crib figures of Mary and Josph travel to Bethlehem. Find out about it here Welcome Mary & Joseph to stay at your place The Church of England | Give links to online calendar to families Encourage families to take part in Advent Trail and Pasad |
| Christmas | Carol service Christingle service Carol singing in the community Christmas trail Christmas Fair | Church School | Information about Christingle Services here Some suggestions for Christmas trails on Muddy Church website here Have a stall at one another's Christmas Fair | Invite families where there is capacity. Provide refreshments for families Invite families to church Christmas services at the end of each school specific service. |

Spring Term

Shaded box indicates an activity best used with a church school.

| When | Activity | Location | More details | Involving Households |
|--|--|-------------------------|---|--|
| 6 th January | Chalking the door | School Home | This is a way of writing a symbol, linked to the visit of the wise men, over the front door as we ask God's blessing upon those who live, work, or visit throughout the coming year. There is downloadable material on Flame Creative Kids Blog spot here | Create a pack of chalk, instructions and prayer to use at home |
| 2 nd February | Candlemas Collective worship Christingle | Church | You could do your Christingle here. | Invite families to attend |
| Lent | Mark Lent together | School Home | #40 acts of kindness have suggestions for children and adults which are popular with schools 40acts: Do Lent generously | Share the suggestions with families |
| Mothering Sunday 3 Sundays before Easter Day | A Mother's Day service in the church | Church | Sensitivity is necessary because some children may not have a mother or grandmother. | Families invited to attend. Flowers given to carers. |
| Towards end of term | Easter Pause Day | School | The old Diocese of Guildford Easter Pause day materials are here | Families invited to view the artwork created during these days. |
| Towards end of term | ExploRE Easter day or half day | School and church | The new (2026) ExploRE Easter materials from the diocese include links with the church community in the suggested activities. Religious Education in Church Schools - Diocese of Guildford | Families could be invited to view the Easter gardens, and the artwork the pupils create. This could be displayed in the church. |
| Holy Week | An Easter Journey | Church or churchyard | There are some useful materials for sale from Jumping Fish here Trails to download on the Muddy Church website here | Invite families to do the trails after school or at the weekend. |
| Easter | Service | Church | | Invite families where there is capacity. Provide refreshments for families Invite families to church Easter services at the end of each school specific service |

Summer Term

Shaded box indicates an activity best used with a church school.

| When | Activity | Location | More details | Involving Households |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| April 22nd Earth Day | Joint eco church / eco school projects | Church Churchyard School Community | A global event to focus on protecting the environment. Earth Day: The Official Site EARTHDAY.ORG An opportunity for the school and church to work together on environmental projects, in the local community | Invite families to be involved in sharing their environmental tips and hints and to be involved in projects. |
| Exam period | A quiet reflective space | school | Some churches provide a reflective prayer space for pupils around GCSE and A levels. There are materials on the prayer Spaces in Schools website | |
| Ascension to Pentecost | Thy Kingdom Come an opportunity to focus on the Lord's Prayer | Church | Thy Kingdom Come is a Global prayer movement for 9 days between Ascension Day and Pentecost. While this is aimed at churches schools may take the opportunity to focus on the Lord's Prayer. | Send home materials |
| Pentecost (Around May half term) | Service Pause Day | Church School | The Diocese of Guildford have materials for a Pentecost Pause day for years R-7 on their website here. This material could be adapted for a service | |
| Summer | Summer Fair | School Church | Have a stall at one another's summer fair or fete | Invite families to each other's events |
| July | Leavers' Service or prayer Spaces | Church School | The Diocese of Guildford have materials for year 2 and 6 Leavers Services on their website here. Churches could offer year 6 pupils a copy of the book It's Your Move . | Invite families to engage with the reflective prayer activities |
| July | Toddler Group Leavers | Church | Invite people from the school to attend the Toddler Group graduation You could give children this brand new book. Get Ready to Go Scripture Union | Families included |
| July | Welcome Service / event | Church | Invite new pupils and their families to a welcome Sunday at the church. "Come and meet your church family and meet other families who have children starting the school." You could give children this brand new book. Get Ready to Go Scripture Union | Event is for whole families |
| Last day of term | End of year service | Church | | Invite families if there is capacity |

Local Dates

Shaded box indicates an activity best used with a church school.

| When | Activity | Location | More details | Involving Families |
|---|--|----------------------|---|---|
| <i>Patronal Festival</i> | <i>Celebration of the patron saint of your church and school</i> | <i>Church School</i> | <i>Most Anglican Churches are named after a saint or possibly the person of the Trinity. Many church schools share the same name as the church. A patronal festival is an opportunity to celebrate that saint</i> | <i>Invite families to attend the celebration</i> |
| Prayer Spaces | A prayer space is set up for the pupils to run for a few days | School Church | Prayer Spaces in Schools are an opportunity for pupils of all faiths and none to explore life's questions, spirituality and faith in a safe and interactive way. More information and resources here Prayer Spaces In Schools | Invite families to use the prayer space after school |
| Reflection Space | A reflection space is set up for the pupils over w few days | Schools Church | See our separate guide on how to run a reflection space in a community school. School and Church Partnerships - Diocese of Guildford This will focus on mental health and well-being. | Invite families to use the reflection space after school. |
| Various dates for different year groups | Church supporting the school residential visits | Off site | Many schools take pupils away on residential visits. These can be an opportunity to further the school and church partnership with church team going along to help, or where the destination is not too far away, setting up and running activities as part of the experience. CPAS offer grants of £2,000 towards these school and church residentials. They also have a pack of materials ' Dangerous Kindness ' that provide spiritual content to use on a residential. | Families could be invited to share the conversation starters after the residential. |
| Ongoing | Link school collective worship to church worship | Church School | Use the themes, songs and prayers in school collective worship in church services. Children could be involved in planning and leading part of the service. | Families could be invited to attend the services and could be invited to prepare part of the service. |

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| Ongoing | Lunchtime or after school club | School | The church could run an extra curricula Christian or faith club for pupils. See our separate material for guidance and resources. | Families could be invited to join in with worship at the end of the club. |
| Ongoing | Prayer for the school | Church School | This may be a small group of people praying. There are resources on the Pray for Schools website here. Include praying for the school in the regular intercessions in church and on the prayer calendar if the church has one. | Invite families to support their local school with prayer |
| Ongoing | Pop up Coffee for Families after drop off | Church school | Offer coffee to families after they have dropped their children at school. Could be in a gazebo, or church porch anywhere that is on the way to the school. Remember the toys for the toddlers! | For families |
| Ongoing | School and church environmental projects | Churchyard or school grounds | The school eco club may be interested in helping with activities in the churchyard, such as planting, and building bug hotels, bird surveys etc. Church volunteers may be willing to be involved in school eco projects. Eco Church - An A Rocha UK Project Home - Eco Schools | Invite families to join in, especially with projects in the churchyard. |
| Ongoing | School and church social justice projects | School and church | The school may be looking for opportunities for their pupils to engage with social justice projects, both local and global. Where the church already has an established link with a project the school may value getting involved. Christian Aid provide useful principles, the criteria in the Global Neighbours Award provide suggestions. Schools Christian Aid | Families, including the extended family living in other communities may provide input and resources into these projects. |