

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. 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.

Autumn Term

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
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 The series 'Do Great things for God' has some interesting biographies. Children & Youth The Good Book Company	Families could be invited to a special collective worship or service. Families may wish to contribute stories and images.
Remembrance Day	Act of Remembrance	School Church War memorial	Suggestions for possible content for a service on Growing4Growth here	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	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 The crib figures of Mary and Josphe travel to Bethlehem. Find out about a Posada here	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

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 The materials for the Lent 40 Acts of kindness are here	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 Diocese of Guildford have materials for an Easter Pause day for years R-7 on their website here.	
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

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.	
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	Families included
Last day of term	End of year service	Church		Invite families if there is capacity

Local Dates

When	Activity	Location	More details	Involving Families
Patronal Festival	Celebration of the patron saint of your church and school	Church School	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	Invite families to attend the celebration
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 on the Prayer Spaces in Schools Website here.	Invite families to use the prayer space after school
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.
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!	