

Prayers and Liturgy

Education Sunday 2010

CALLED TO SERVE

OPENING RESPONSES

Father God, source of all knowledge and wisdom

We welcome you here

Jesus, the teacher who calls disciples to follow him

We welcome you here

Spirit, bringer of understanding and insight

We welcome you here

Holy God,

who created a world intricate in detail and rich in potential,

help us to establish your reign in every area of our lives

that we may glorify you in our work, in our neighbourhoods and in our families

through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen.

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.

PRAYERS FOR PEOPLE INVOLVED IN EDUCATION

These prayers have a response that the congregation can join in with:

Leader: Fill them afresh with your Spirit

All: **And inspire them to walk in your ways**

Invite teachers in nurseries, schools, colleges and academies to stand

Lord God, we thank you for teachers, for their enthusiasm and hard work and for all they invest in the children and young people that they teach. Help them as they transform their places of work and their relationships through the way they teach.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit

and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite those who work in schools, colleges and academies in other capacities to stand – teaching assistants, administrators, school meal supervisors and so on

Lord God, we thank you for the many people who enable schools to run smoothly and who provide a nurturing environment for our children. Help them to know their value and to enjoy the work that they do.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit

and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite school governors to stand

Lord God, we thank you for school governors who play the role of a critical friend in the life of the school.

Help them to make wise decisions, to know when to affirm and when to ask questions.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit

and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite those involved in further and higher education to stand, both students and lecturers, and those in other roles

Lord God, we thank you for all those in further and higher education, those who teach and those who learn. Help them to be salt and light in the places where they study and work, able to point people towards you through what they do and say.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit

and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite those involved in education within the church to stand - youth leaders, children's leaders, house group leaders, preachers...

Lord God, we thank you for all those in our church who nurture our faith and enable us to learn more about you. Help them to draw close to you as they study and prepare, and to be nourished themselves as they lead us.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit

and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite parents, carers and grandparents to stand – all those who care for pupils

Lord God, we thank you for those among us who nurture the next generation.

Help them to love without condition, to set boundaries with wisdom and to find support and encouragement along the way.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit

and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite pupils to stand – children and young people at nursery, school, college or academy

Lord God, we thank you for these children and young people at nursery, school, academy and college.

Help them to make the most of the opportunities that they have – to be diligent students, to play creatively and to know that you delight in them as they seek to follow you.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit

and inspire them to walk in your ways.

PRAYERS FOR PEOPLE INVOLVED IN EDUCATION (continued)

Invite everyone else to stand

Lord God, we thank you for the education we have received from teachers and schools, from colleges, academies and universities, from parents and friends. Help us to support those who work in education, to appreciate the important job that they do in shaping the future of our world and to remember them in our prayers.

Fill us afresh with your Spirit

and inspire us to walk in your ways.

FOOTPRINTS ACTIVITY: GIVING THANKS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TAUGHT US

You'll need: a long roll of plain wallpaper or thick lining paper; felt tips or marker pens in containers.

Unroll the wallpaper down the central aisle of the church, or in another suitable location such as a side aisle or across the front or back of the church. Use masking tape to attach it to the floor for safety. Put the pens in containers at intervals along the length of the paper. It may be best to get a few volunteers to do this during the opening song or one directly before this prayer activity, so that the paper doesn't get ripped or dirty while everyone is coming into church.

Introduce the theme of the time of prayer – thanking God for those who have taught us. Invite people to think of a significant teacher in their lives – it could be a teacher from their school days past or present, or a church leader, or Sunday school teacher, a parent or friend – and what that person taught them. Then invite people to place their foot on the paper, facing the front of the church, and to draw round it. It might be easier if people work together in twos, so that they draw round each other's feet. Those who are less mobile will need help. People can keep their shoes on, or take them off if they prefer. Then people should write inside the outline of their foot a prayer of thanks for the person they thought of. It's a good idea to play some worship music during this activity, to help people to focus on their prayer. You could put a few examples of footprints on the paper in advance, to show people what to do and in which direction their feet should be pointing!

Once people have drawn their own footprint and prayer, they can help others, or walk along and read the prayers, adding their own to what has been written. This may be more active and noisy a time of prayer than your church is used to, but prayer doesn't have to be quiet and solemn all the time.

Once you can see that most people have written their prayers, invite them to stand quietly and look at the paper, to reflect on all the people that are represented there, and the steps forward in life that they have inspired. Lead a prayer from the front to close the activity. You could use words like these:

Lord God, we give you thanks and praise for the people in our lives who have taught us and helped us to take steps forward in our journey with you. We thank you for our nursery school teachers, for those who taught us at primary and secondary schools and academies, for university and college lecturers, for youth and children's leaders in our church, for everyone who has taught us along the way. We ask your blessing on all those who work in education in our congregation. Help us to support and encourage them, in Jesus' name, Amen.

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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.

