

Six things churches can do now to connect with schools

The Church, as an all-age community of grace, has a long history of making a difference within local communities. However, these have been challenging times. Many churches feel they have lost connection with their schools and young people – although there are also positive stories of schools valuing their contact with the church. These six ideas are offered as ways of connecting and reconnecting.

Staffroom treats

Chocolates, biscuits and cake are always welcome treats in any staffroom and play a significant role in boosting morale.

Pastoral support

If you know your headteachers, be in touch. Personal contact and support make a huge difference. A phone call or card is worth much more than an email.

Prayer

Prayer is a powerful weapon that can move mountains. What are the needs of your school community at this time and how can your church uphold them in prayer?

Collective worship

Sharing short acts of worship via video or Zooming into assembly times is a wonderful way of bringing hope and keeping the relationship with your schools alive.

Newsletter with resources

This is a good way to give practical support to your school. You can include links and resources for the wellbeing of teachers, children and families.

Build a team

Start conversations in your church community. Can you build a team of two or three volunteers who are passionate about serving and sharing God's love in schools?

See next page for more detail on each idea.

For further ideas or help please contact:

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Staffroom treats

Chocolates and biscuits are always a welcome treat in staffrooms and play a significant role in boosting morale. It shows staff that they are thought of and appreciated.

You could devise a rota to provide schools in your parish with individually wrapped treats once a week, such as a tub of chocolates or individual biscuit bars that are good for dunking!

'It was such a lovely surprise to see the biscuits at break time and to know that people are thinking of us.'

Teacher, Dorchester

Pastoral support

Like our church leaders, our school leaders are busy being strong for everyone else. A monthly pastoral phone call to the headteacher can make a huge difference to their wellbeing, showing you care and that you are there for them if they should need you.

Don't underestimate how much a headteacher will value you taking the time to listen to their concerns.

'What I have personally valued most this year from the church is having a coffee with the vicar off site once a month.'

Headteacher, Buckinghamshire

Prayer

Knowing that your church community is upholding the school in prayer is of great value and really appreciated by schools.

What are the current needs of your school community? How can these be shared with the church community? Consider prayer chains, prayer sections in newsletters, online/small socially distanced prayer groups.

How can your church support schools and their families in prayer and contemplation? With young people often at the sharp end of anxiety or depression, we can offer them the deep blessing that comes from Christian prayer practices.

Have a look at some ideas for [prayerful activities and reflections](#).

Collective worship

If you regularly serve your schools by leading assemblies, could you record something at home to be shown during the school worship time? Some schools are trying Zoom worship sessions where visitors log on and speak live to the children.

This keeps your relationship with the school alive and supports them by bringing messages of hope and light in this difficult, dark time. Get in touch with your school to ask how you could best help, bless and encourage in this way.

Examples of simple, beautiful worship sessions led by children are on the diocesan website, as are lots of resources that can be used for collective worship:

[School worship](#)

[School worship assemblies](#)

Newsletter with resources

Some churches have been putting together a monthly newsletter, which is sent out to their school community. It contains community news and events, ideas for wellbeing and resources for teachers and parents to use with the children.

These include prayers, reflection activities, song links and 'thinking and talking' family support. Links to family talks from your online Sunday services could also be shared. When day to day life is a struggle, having resources ready-made is a real gift for schools and families.

[Find resources](#)

Build a team

Successful church/school relationships that make a real difference to the community are built upon a team of people, rather than reliant on the incumbent.

Take some time to discern the needs of your school and the skillset of your congregation. How do they match? Can you find two team members during this time that would be interested in supporting a small area of school ministry, to share God's love and make a real difference to the community? Do contact us to discuss:

- initial ideas
- training support for volunteers
- help with next steps.