

Year of the Child 2009

Think calendar. Think church calendar. Think schools' calendar. Think local and national calendars.

- ❖ What are the important dates?
- ❖ How can you make the most of them in the Year of the Child?

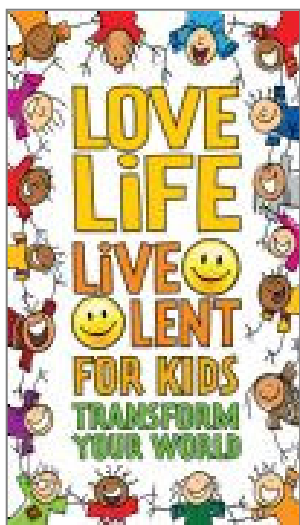


8 February - Education Sunday

For well over a hundred years there has been an annual recognition of Education Sunday in England and Wales. It is a national day of prayer and celebration for everyone in the world of education. This year's theme is: The Earth is the Lord's: How then shall we teach?

You can download a leaflet and other resources including a school assembly from: <http://www.educationsunday.org/>. The ideas in the leaflets are intended to be used as a springboard for a variety of events on or around Education Sunday.

If you feel unable to devote a whole service to celebrating the education theme on Feb. 8th, why not use some of the ideas on other occasions? Some churches, for instance, prefer to hold a special service of rededication for staff and students at local schools, colleges and universities at the start of the academic year. Other churches prefer to hold a service of celebration and thanksgiving at the end of the academic year.



Lent Challenge

This was a surprisingly popular idea in a Community Primary assembly this year and adopted by several schools.

<http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/listing.asp?id=2384860>

This year's 'Love Life Live Lent' booklets contain 40 simple actions to do throughout Lent. With both Adult & Youth and Kids' versions, everyone can take part! Each week contains 6 actions, covering: Home & Family, Community, School/College/Work, Global, Green and Sabbath.

Combining the most popular actions from the last two years, these new undated booklets can now be re-used year after

year! Also available on the Church House website are free downloadable 'Love Life, Live Lent' materials for children's groups and adult Bible studies

'Love Life Live Lent' Kids version - 50 booklets cost £37.50 - ISBN 9780715141816 / 10 booklets cost £8.50 - ISBN No: 9780715141809

National Family Week (May 25th-31st)

Information at www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk

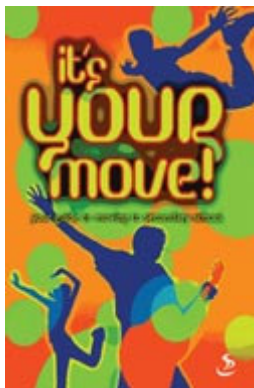
This is a new national initiative to celebrate family life in Britain with an expectation that faith groups will be involved in running events and activities.



There is encouragement to have 'Family Fun' doing things together and the chance to nominate a 'Family of the Year'. You could generate the 'Big Family Idea', one idea to make a difference in the world. There will also be a 'Big Family Picnic' (spring Bank Holiday), Sports Saturday and a family tree planting ceremony on 'Family Roots' Day'.

Sounds like a great thing to be involved with and the site hints at funding for activities! Organising things locally could be a good contact point with your community.

'It's Your Move' project (School summer term)



Remember your first day at secondary school?

What's your first memory of that day?

Towering Year 11s? Hundreds of people all round the place? New teachers? Vast buildings? Wondering how you'd find out where the toilet was? Bullies?

Whether you were a confident or a scared 11-year-old, chances are that you were at least a bit apprehensive about starting this new phase of your life!

It's Your Move! is an educationally-appropriate and culturally-sensitive booklet, compiled by young people and those who work with them and features useful advice, stories, tips and exercises in a colourful, fun-packed 64-page book containing:

- ❖ A-Z survival guide
- ❖ Real-life stories from students about to make the move
- ❖ Real experiences from students who have made the move
- ❖ Wise advice, including the thought that God is with us at all times
- ❖ Poems and stories for a good read
- ❖ Pages for collecting autographs– and to make the book personal

One Warwickshire village school purchased a copy for each pupil, and ran a retreat day on a local farm for all year 6 pupils to discuss issues the book raises.

If you haven't already seen *It's Your Move!*, SU will send you a free sample copy. Single copies are about £2.99; a bulk order plus guide is cheaper. The book can be ordered over the internet or through a local bookseller. There is also a video showcasing *It's Your Move!* which can be downloaded from the website.

www.scriptureunion.org.uk/SU_ItsYourMove/english/

SU also offer 'It's Your Move+', a two-hour training event which helps teams from churches make the most of *It's Your Move!* If you can host a training event for your church and other local churches in your area, then a team will come and deliver this for you. Contact the training manager on **01908 856219** or email trainman@scriptureunion.org.uk

Open Churches week (13th–19th July)

Preparations are well under way for this July's Open Churches Week. Last year over 400 Suffolk churches opened their doors to visitors and tourists.

New resources for 2009's week will be posted on the diocesan website very soon by our Church Tourism Officer, the Revd Margaret Blackall.

Although it will be the very end of the school year, one highly effective way of getting people, both young and old, through the door of your church is to contact a local school and



ask if they'd like to put on an exhibition of their work or an art display. Explain that this is part of your celebration of Year of the Child and of the Open Churches week. Start talking to them about it now and ask for suggestions of what they might like to put up. Invite them down to look at the space. Remember to invite the press to the exhibition; schools like their names in the papers.

Other aspects of church life can be shown off from clubs to flower-arranging. Refreshments can be served, for children too!

Back to School - September

While you may remember your first day at secondary school, your first day at primary school might be a more hazy memory!

Nevertheless, starting primary school is a big change for child and parent alike and Scripture Union has sought to ease this tricky time with *Get Ready Go!* – a book for parents to use with children, that explains all that they might expect in their new school.



Sitting inside the back cover, there is a smaller book, *Get Ready to let Go*, containing advice and real-life stories of parents who have been through the traumatic time of sending their child to school for the first time!

Who in your community might benefit from such a resource?

November 20th – Universal Children's day

This is also the anniversary of the Convention on Children's Rights.



Suggest a local school marks this occasion and offer a prize for children dressing up in national costumes. There is plenty of information about Universal Children's Day on the website and several assemblies available too.

This could be a good photo opportunity for the school in the local press but more importantly gives a chance to find out about children across the world, and to learn about and celebrate the 'Rights of the Child'.