

THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK'S LENT CALL 2026



“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

Proverbs 22:6

Week 5: Southwark Diocesan Board of Education – Love Thy Neighbour

compassion proactive
loneliness love community sanctuary
heal care restore
hope kindness justice repair
friendship renew forgiving
proactive safety

The Board of Education looks after 99 schools across the Diocese of Southwark and works with the 12 local authorities across the diocese. The schools are a mix of infant, primary, all-through schools, and secondary schools. There are also sixth-form colleges. Between them, the Board of Education schools serve 34,000 students. The Board also works with the Chaplains in Higher and Further Education Colleges and the Universities within the diocesan boundaries. That is a huge number of young minds to influence and to help to set on the right paths.

Just as in other parts of the world, education is so important right here at home. That is why the Board of Education works hard to ensure, not only that their students achieve the most they can academically, but also that they learn about living as part of our communities and the wider world. It is important that

we remember always that if we ‘start children (and young people) off on the way they should go, even when they are old, they will not turn from it.’ (Proverbs 22:6)

Many will remember the deep concerns about the far-right protests and unrest that occurred nationwide in the summer of 2025. As a result of these concerns, Bishop Christopher called a meeting of the clergy in the diocese. He wanted to offer help and support to those who were concerned following the growing sense of insecurity and lack of safety as a result of the protests that had taken place and the flying of the St George’s flag. Those who met together were encouraged by a project that Christian Aid was doing on ‘Love Thy Neighbour’. As the clergy at the meeting had spoken of the importance of engagement with the community, Bishop Christopher asked if the Board of Education could develop a resource that could be used in our schools.

Raising money to support projects that focus on the work of schools that will help benefit children and young people to flourish here in our diocese and in our link dioceses in Zimbabwe and Jerusalem.

The Bishop of Southwark’s Lent Fund
Registered Charity No 1075122
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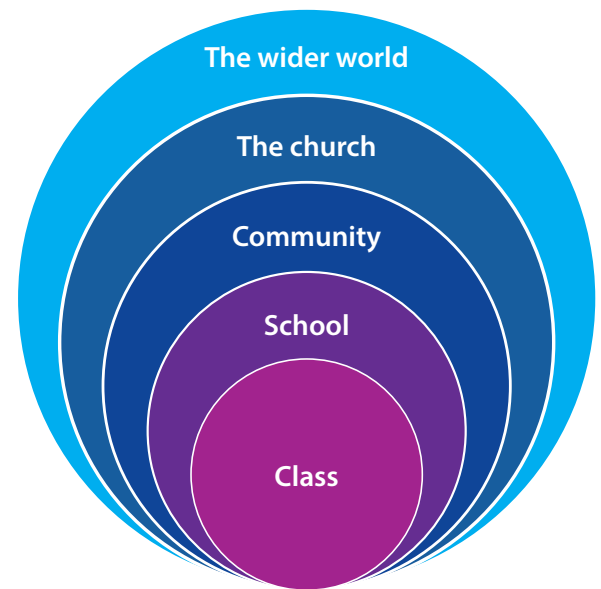
The Board of Education has developed their own programme called *Love Thy Neighbour*, which draws on materials from Christian Aid and elsewhere. It's a five-week programme exploring what it means to be a good neighbour, rooted in Christian values of kindness, compassion, humility, forgiveness, and love. It is designed for schools working in partnership with churches and communities, gradually widening the children's understanding of 'neighbour' from the classroom to the wider world.

Across the five weeks, the programme offers teachers and chaplains ideas to help students to reflect on how kindness looks, feels, and sounds. Students are asked to consider what the Bible teaches about loving others and then to think about how these values can be lived out in practical, creative ways in their everyday lives. Activities include prayers, storytelling, art, shared meals, acts of kindness, and collaborative projects that involve families, parishes, and the wider community.

The programme encourages children to see kindness as active and transformative supporting those who struggle, repairing what is broken, and working together for healing and justice. Through biblical stories such as the Good Samaritan and Joseph, and through symbols like shared bread, repaired pots, stepping stones, and garments of love, children are invited to understand that love of neighbour strengthens individuals, communities, and the world when practiced with patience, gentleness, and hope.

Each week has a short and a long version so schools can choose how they wish to approach the project and how much time they want to give to it.

The *Love Thy Neighbour* resources will be launched in schools in February in time to be used during Lent if schools would wish to do so. But it can also be used at any time of the year.



Helping children and young people in our classrooms and schools to learn how to treat each other well, to respect and celebrate difference, and to serve one another as we are taught in the Bible will help to form them well for the future.

In supporting the Bishop's Lent Call, you can help to ensure that our schools have the necessary resources to make this an enjoyable and creative learning experience, which will encourage the children and young people to be thoughtful. It will help them to learn the skills necessary to become resourceful and proud members of their local communities and to care for those around them not just locally but globally too.

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