



The Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call 2026 An act of collective worship for schools

Week 2: Schools – a child's right to education

This is one of five outlines for collective worship written to help schools and churches pray, offer love and hope and encourage giving towards the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call 2026. The Lent Call supports our brothers and sisters in Christ in our own diocese and in our link dioceses in Zimbabwe and the Diocese of Jerusalem as well as the Middle East.

Bible passage: Deuteronomy 6:6–7

Song:

Chain of Love by Soo Bishop (Come and Praise All About Our School – BBC).

[Chain of love, BBC Teach](#)

Gather:

Pose a riddle: "What has everyone in this room either had or is having now?"

"Answer: an education.

Engage:

Education is what we all do, all through life, we learn. We have all had a formal education, that is the chance to go to school through our childhood and learn. We are all having or have all had access to a school education.

Why does education matter? Some answers...

...Education helps us to

- Make friends
- Read and write
- Learn lots of other things about ourselves and the world
- Understand each other
- Look after ourselves
- Develop our skills and character
- Get jobs
- Have a safe space

...and much more! We feel the value of education in shaping our lives and futures. School provides a place for us to learn, thrive, and connect.

Here in England, we can all have access to free education, we do not have to pay to go to school. However, years ago families in England used to have to pay and so only children from rich families could go to school. The Church of England felt that all children should have the chance to be educated, however rich or poor their families were and so, beginning over 200 years ago, they set up schools to educate 'the poor of the parish'. This led to the 1870 Education Act when the government made it law for all children in the United Kingdom to go to school and have the chance to have a free education. This was reinforced and further developed by the 1944 Education Act. Here in England, there are schools in every local community – they are near us and we can get to them easily.

However, it is not like this for all children in the world. In some parts, families must pay for their children to go to school. In other parts, children also must travel far to school – sometimes making perilous journeys. This means that many children don't have the opportunity to go to school or have an education.

Education is so important that it has been made a universal right for children in the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child – Article 28: "All children have the right to free primary education."

This has been adopted by all countries in the world, apart from the United States of America.

It is also a Sustainable Development Goal – 4: "To provide an inclusive and equitable quality education for all."



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This has been adopted by most countries of the world.

However, there is still a way to go to achieve these. UNESCO, the UN organisation, recently stated that 272 million children are currently out of school globally. We can help the campaign for inclusive and equitable quality education for all by supporting campaigns and organisations promoting this, through speaking up and praying about the situation.

Respond with a prayer:

*Dear God,
We thank you for the gift of education and all that it does to transform our lives.
We pray for all those children in the world who do not have school to go to.
May world leaders and governments make it possible for all young people to have free, local, high-quality education so that each child may develop their potential, given from you.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.*

Sending out:

We must be thankful for our education and always treasure how we are being enabled to fulfil our potential; it starts with an education.

A moment of reflection for schools:

- Q:** What do you value the most about education?
- Q:** What is the best thing that you have learnt so far and why?
- Q:** How could you promote the right of all children and young people in the world so that there is 'an inclusive and equitable quality education for all'?
- Q:** What do these words from the Bible mean for education?

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise."

