

The role of the church

Equip and empower

In a society which values personal happiness and acquisition, Christian virtues are often unwelcome. Individualism and consumerism not only define our society, they also found the bedrock of much of what is taught in schools. Christians cannot help but be influenced by contemporary culture, but we can also hold a different conversation – one which talks about human flourishing and about working for the common good. We prioritise relational living because God is relational.

‘hold a different conversation – one which talks about human flourishing’

But we also need to understand that schools and colleges are right in the frontline of the battle for hearts and minds. It’s part of the role of the church to prepare children and young people to meet that challenge and to equip and empower them to evaluate conflicting ideologies against biblical truth. We can do so in full confidence that God’s word will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He sends it out (Isaiah 55.11).

Use resources

A wide range of local and national organisations support assemblies and RE teaching in schools (see below). If your church isn’t already involved in support, introduce your leaders to the work of Open the Book and Prayer Spaces in Schools. These are rapidly growing organisations that offer resources, support and sometimes training to mobilise teams in local churches. Explore the work of Scripture Union, which has a network of schools workers across the country, or Festive if your children are in post-16 education. Ask your church whether it would be possible to host Counties’ Life Exhibition or GSUS Live trailers that support RE programmes by offering multimedia experiences about the life of Jesus. Order copies of the Bible Society resource Pass It On, which contains Bible stories written by well known authors.

Become an education champion

Encourage your church to have an education champion who encourages, supports and inspires people to get involved, whether actively in school or in a prayer group. Offer to be that person yourself, and never miss an opportunity to champion your local school communities in your church.

Pray for Schools is a vital ministry with a simple, bold aim – to mobilise Christians to support their school communities through prayer, so that every school in the UK is a prayed-for school. You can pray alone, with a partner, or in a group. Pray for Schools offer resources for key prayer events during the school year – they are available on the website, which includes a video of a prayer walk.

Contribute to the culture

You can only contribute to the culture if you are where the people are, so take every opportunity that you can to get involved in your child's school, as a helper, as a governor or as part of the home-school group. If you want to help other children, consider becoming an education champion with TLG. Challenge your church – how is it involved? Some churches provide governors for their local schools – does your church? How does your church plan to support education further in the future? How is your church preparing its children and young people to live for God in school or college?

For more information:

- Supporting Christians in Education: Trevor Cooling + Mark Greene, LICC www.licc.org.uk/shop/product/supporting-christians-in-education

Organisations:

- Counties GSUS Live www.gsuslive.co.uk
- Counties Life Exhibition www.lifeexpo.co.uk
- Festive www.festive.org.uk
- Godly Play www.godlyplay.uk
- iSingPOP www.isingpop.com/index.html
- Open the Book www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/open-the-book
- Pass It On www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/pass-it-on/pass-it-on-home
- Pray for Schools www.prayforschools.org
- Prayer Spaces in Schools www.prayerspacesinschools.com
- Schoolwork.co.uk www.schoolwork.co.uk
- Scripture Union www.scriptureunion.org.uk/YourCommunity/Schools/2885.id
- TLG www.tlg.org.uk/web/earlyIntervention