



Schools Prayer Network

# SPN Update



## Schools Prayer Network

SU Scotland, 70 Milton Street, GLASGOW, G4 0HR  
 Phone: 0141 352 7632 Fax: 0141 352 7600  
 E-mail: [schoolsprayernetwork@suscotland.org.uk](mailto:schoolsprayernetwork@suscotland.org.uk)  
 Web: [www.suscotland.org.uk/pray](http://www.suscotland.org.uk/pray)

Dear praying friends,

Sermons at my church these past Sunday mornings have all shared the same theme, "The Church—what is it?" It has been good to be reminded that we are a body, loved by Jesus, his Bride, a community of worshippers, a witnessing people—and also in a spiritual battle.

We are at war within as well as without. It is easy to criticise the church. We are a nation of church-hoppers, with less allegiance than ever before to denomination or theology as our basis for choosing where we worship. Recently the BBC screened a programme entitled "A church in crisis?" (BBC1, Tuesday 24th August). Perhaps the BBC had edited out any good, positive comments, but it communicated only a sense of hopelessness and helplessness, a church that wouldn't be missed if it were no longer there. We are tempted to discouragement.

How we need to see the church through God's eyes:

"..the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth." 1 Timothy 3:15

A household, the *living* God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. Wow! These are hugely positive and affirming aspects of the church which we need to communicate to children and young people: family, belonging, a God who is alive and not dead, a place where truth is proclaimed. As a local church, how do we communicate this in our community, and within the school context? Read inside to discover more...

Elizabeth

Elizabeth McDowall, Prayer Coordinator  
 Schools Prayer Network

## Welcome

A warm welcome to all of you who are new to the Schools Prayer Network.

Some of you have been able to link up with others praying for the same school. Others of you have added new schools to the SPN. A full list can be viewed on our website. Since the last edition of the Update (May 2010), **35 schools** have been **added** across Scotland. They are:

**Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire:** Alehousewells Primary  
**Argyll:** Rockfield Primary **Ayrshire:** Ardeer Primary, Auchendarvie Academy, Cairn Primary, Carrick Academy, Crosshill Primary, Glencairn Primary, Hayocks Primary, Queen Margaret Secondary, Sacred Heart Primary, St Cuthbert's Primary, St John's RC Primary  
**Borders:** Morebattle Primary, Yetholm Primary  
**Edinburgh:** Fettes College, St Mary's Music School  
**Fife:** Wormit Primary  
**Glasgow:** Hollybrook School, Holy Cross Primary  
**Highland:** Broadford Primary, Elgol Primary, Kyleakin Primary, Sleat Primary  
**Lanarkshire:** Abronhill High, Carnbroe Primary, Cumbernauld High, Kirkshaws Primary, Lorne Street Primary, Pentland School, St Maurice's High, Stepps Primary, Townhead Primary, Victoria Primary  
**Renfrewshire:** Newmains Primary

**Our vision: Prayer for every school in Scotland**

## Dates for your diary...

### Children & Families Prayer Event

An exciting prayer opportunity for families

**Sunday 23rd January 2011**

Houstoun House Hotel, Uphall - more details to follow.

**New!**

### Strictly Come Praying

**Grangemouth:** Sunday 20th March 2011

**Dundee:** Sunday 27th March 2011

Booking starts 11th January 2011

# Prayer, church, local school...

You already pray for your school. Churches in your village or town share a similar concern for local children and the community. How can the two come together?

Whether you are a teacher, chaplain, pupil, church minister or member, there are many

opportunities to put prayer into action and support your local school in delivering the religious and moral education element of Curriculum for Excellence.

Not sure how? Read below for some ideas that link prayer, church and the local school.

## 1. Through increased prayer

- By holding **Back to School with God** services. Churches from as far apart as Benbecula and Dublin held BSG services this year.

"Adults thoroughly enjoyed it and the local school staff were very appreciative of our prayers." Fay Lamont, St Ninian's Episcopal Church, Dundee

- **Pray Day for Schools.** European Pray Day for Schools is on Tuesday 16th November. An ideas sheet is enclosed (or attached by email).



- Distribute the **"5" prayer leaflet.** (A supply is available from Elizabeth McDowall.) A separate version is available for primary children and teens/adults. Get praying for 5 people for 5 minutes for 5 days for 5 weeks, then share your stories. Pray for school friends, pupils, teachers and allow God to transform individuals at school.
- Give out **prayer bookmarks.** Ask your church children to write their name and the name of their school on a bookmark; link each child with a "prayer buddy" who will commit to pray for them. Bookmarks are available to download at [www.suscotland.org.uk/pray](http://www.suscotland.org.uk/pray), or by phoning or emailing Elizabeth McDowall.
- If you are a **chaplain**—enlist your church's support in prayer. Tell your congregation

which schools you visit, when you are leading assemblies, your prayer needs.

- If you are a **teacher or schoolworker**—look for a prayer partner from your local church; look for opportunities to share the needs and pressures of your job with the church family. Ladies meetings are always looking for speakers: could you share something of your work with your Guild or Women's Association?
- If you are a **pupil**—find an older person to be a prayer carer; someone you can pass prayer request to, in confidence. Is there another pupil you could buddy up with to pray?
- **24-7 prayer**—Run a 24-7 prayer focus for your school for a day or a week. Hazel Jamieson and Margo Cunningham organised 24-7 prayer for their holiday clubs. Hazel says:

"People were asked to pray where they were. The effect was a real sense of peace and God at work."

See [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com) for more information.

- Make up a **schools prayer board.** In church, paste up pictures of each school in your area together with the names and/or photos of the children and adults who are linked with that school, as a reminder to pray. A map showing the spread of the schools represented by folks in your fellowship would also be helpful.

## 2. Through opening church doors

End-of-term services are the traditional opportunity to welcome a school into the local church. What about at other times? Here are a few ideas, tried and tested by other congregations.

- Each year Westwoodhill Evangelical Church in East Kilbride hosts a **dinner** for all local school headteachers. Irene Moore, Schools Resource Worker for Westwoodhill, explains:

"Every eighteen months we invite the Senior Management Teams from the thirteen schools we have contact with for dinner at the church. We do this to show our appreciation for their involvement with the church. We also take the opportunity to have a display of Religious and Moral Education resources which are available to browse and borrow in addition to some entertainment and an After Dinner Speaker. Outside caterers come in to provide the food and menus are delivered to the school and sent back to the church a few weeks before the meal to ensure that everything runs as smoothly as possible on the night."

- West Linton Parish Church celebrates its 850th anniversary this month. The local primary school has been invited to visit the church, where there will be a stand about SU's work and **workshops** looking at what Christians believe about Jesus.
- Over the past few years several churches in Lanarkshire, Glasgow and Edinburgh have welcomed in Primary 6 children to explore the Christmas message in an interactive and fun-filled way. Called **Bubble-gum 'n' Fluff** in Glasgow, or **Christmas presentations** in Edinburgh, these events are a great way to assist schools in exploring Christian festivals, which is an element of Curriculum for Excellence. The Easter Code, or Easter presentations, likewise investigate the Easter festival and are aimed at P7s. Children and teachers come to church, and church volunteers host and present the activities. Resources to run Bubblegum 'n' Fluff or the Easter Code can be obtained either from [www.suscotland.org.uk/esteem](http://www.suscotland.org.uk/esteem), or the Calderside Academy chaplaincy team website, [www.calderside.org.uk](http://www.calderside.org.uk).
- At Christmas, Gorgie Parish Church in Edinburgh invite their local primary school choir to sing and take part in their Christmas Nativity Service. Parents come along to church to hear their children sing.

"The kids really enjoy the experience and there is a great atmosphere. It is great to see the children bringing their parents and family along and to see the church full of people who wouldn't normally come to such a service." Jonathan Barber

- Or how about an **inset day club**? James Gill, SU Missions Coordinator, writes

"It's a school in-service day again. Parents are looking for something to keep their children occupied, or a reason to get their teenage offspring out of bed and off that social networking site. The local Church Hall is often empty. Okay, teachers are in their schools, but it is surprising how many Christian adults are available to help organise and run a 9am-3pm Holiday Club that needs Christian teenage input and is open to any local P1-P7 children. It is amazing how much fun, relationship-building and Bible teaching can be achieved in 6 hours. What an opportunity!"



Inset Day Club, Aboyne-Dinnet Church of Scotland

### 3. Through giving of time, talents, money

- **SU Groups** in schools are voluntary groups led by parents, school staff, SU Staff or other volunteers. They usually meet at lunchtimes or after school and provide an opportunity for worship in the informal curriculum (as laid out in Religious Observance legislation) as well as opportunities for young people to explore the Christian faith for themselves through activities, discussions and Bible investigation. There are lots of volunteers doing a fantastic job leading SU groups every day of the week! There is room for many more. Interested? Contact your SU regional worker in the first instance—see [www.suscotland.org.uk/schools](http://www.suscotland.org.uk/schools) for further details. SU groups have lasting impact. Lynne Robertson, Director of TEAR Fund Scotland, came to faith through her school SU group at Paisley Grammar in the 1980s. She writes:

"I must have heard countless Bible talks at the SU group. I couldn't tell you much about them. But at some point I discovered that being a Christian meant more than just believing in God and going to church. And I was struck by the friends I made there, ordinary young people who chose to live for God when living for God was not the done thing. So in the best way I knew how, I made the decision to put my thirteen-year-old life, my future and my eternal destiny into the hands of Jesus Christ. God's work in my life didn't stop. He had heard my prayer of commitment to him, and he intended to take me at my word. Reflecting on those days, I am so grateful for the impact Mr McLean's SU group has had on my life."

- **Keeping Faith in Schools Conference**, Edinburgh, 29th September. Email Bill Baird at [bill.baird@care.org](mailto:bill.baird@care.org) to find out how your church could sponsor a teacher to attend.

### 3. Through giving of time, talents, money (cont'd)

- **Bible Alive** is a dynamic programme to teach children in P5-P7 the whole storyline of the Bible in a series of interactive multi-media presentations. It supports Curriculum for Excellence and covers many aspects of the RME curriculum. Trained volunteers use storytelling, drama, music, activities, video clips, props, costumes, sign language and puppets to bring the Bible alive! For more information contact Jane King (01796 474202, jane@kingserve.org).

*"Bible Alive was a great addition to our RME curriculum at P7 this year. The programme was well planned, well resourced and delivered in a highly professional manner."  
School Depute Head*

- The Scottish Bible Society's **Bibleworld Mobile** is a bus which can be parked in a church or school car park. Sponsored by local churches, this is an ideal opportunity to show care for local schools. Aimed at the P5-S1 age range, children come on board and explore six interactive zones. ([www.bibleworld.co.uk](http://www.bibleworld.co.uk))
- Some schools now have **contemplation rooms**. Many lie empty and unused because the school aren't sure what to do with them! If you are a

teacher and know of such a room at your school, why not volunteer to kit it out with some prayer resources? Ideas and inspiration to be found at [www.prayerspacesinschools.com](http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com).

- Orison provide an exciting range of **prayer resources** suitable for both primary and secondary aged children. For around £200 per day, Orison can supply a team to provide a prayer experience in a local school, classroom, church hall, or even tent! Hire resources at [www.orisonschools.org.uk](http://www.orisonschools.org.uk) or download: [www.schoolswork.co.uk/resourcetoolkit/entry/orison-prayer-resources/](http://www.schoolswork.co.uk/resourcetoolkit/entry/orison-prayer-resources/).
- Carlsbridge Evangelical Church, Clarkston, sponsored **Pop Connection**. For a cost to the church of around £1500, a professional team of musicians went in to three local primary schools, teaching 7 'pop hymns' which were then recorded onto CD and sung in church to parents.

*"The evening concert was brilliant—the church was full, the children enthusiastic and it was a great opportunity for the church to build links into the community. We are planning another one!"  
Iain McCallum*

### 4. Through chaplaincy and schools work

Chaplains and schools workers play an important role in the life of a school and may be the only Christian a young person comes across. What a responsibility, and yet what a privilege to be engaged in this work, offering teaching and pastoral support to pupils and staff alike! You need **training and resources**:

- If you live in the Lanarkshire area, Jen Robertson will be running **chaplaincy training** in March 2011. Email [jen.robertson@suscotland.org.uk](mailto:jen.robertson@suscotland.org.uk) early next year to receive further details of where, what and when.
  - **Religious Observance—Design and Practice**: This highly successful course on the design and delivery of Religious Observance in schools is aimed at school staff and chaplains. It is a Masters level module (worth 20 Masters credits) and is delivered by a partnership of Glasgow University, Scripture Union and the Church of Scotland. ([www.gla.ac.uk/departments/religiouseducation](http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/religiouseducation), or email [eaitken@cofs.org.uk](mailto:eaitken@cofs.org.uk))
  - Needing inspiration for music at assemblies? Scottish songwriter Stephen Fischbacher has written **songs** which are catchy, easy to learn, and enjoyed by all ages. Issues such as emotional literacy, bullying, resilience, loss and friendship are addressed sensitively and compassionately. All the songs affirm everybody's value, uniqueness and creativity. CD Rom teaching packs are available with ideas on using the songs in a variety of teaching contexts, including assemblies. ([www.fischy.com](http://www.fischy.com))
  - Register online with [www.schoolswork.co.uk](http://www.schoolswork.co.uk) to get excellent ideas and download **free resources** for assemblies, lessons and school lunchtime groups.
  - Check out [www.damaris.org](http://www.damaris.org). Click on the links to receive **assemblies** or **RE materials** online, linking themes with popular movie clips. Buy resources on the online store, or pay an annual subscription (several churches could do this together). SU is a charity partner with Damaris and SU volunteers are entitled to a 25% discount on subscriptions and materials! Enter code Ch95237 at the online checkout.
- You also need prayer!** Are there people registered with SPN who are praying for your school? Could they be praying for you and your work there? To link up and find out if others have registered prayer, email [elizabeth.mcdowall@suscotland.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth.mcdowall@suscotland.org.uk). Has your school chaplaincy team registered yet? Tell them about SPN!