



All Age Worship - Education Sunday 2026

Project a copyright-free screen slide of the felled [Sycamore Gap tree](#).

Call to Worship

When the Israelites saw the great power with which the LORD had defeated the Egyptians, they stood in awe of the LORD; and they had faith in the LORD.

Exodus 14.31, GNB

Song

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty – Robin Mark

Prayer of adoration and approach

Lord God Almighty, we come to worship you,

Remembering that you are the ground of all being.

We come to you as the creator of our finely balanced, battered, beautiful world.

Give us open ears and open hearts this morning

As we come to listen to you and to learn together.

Amen.

Talk, part 1

Education in a broken world?

Ask every primary school child in the congregation to put up their hand if they know the answer to this question:

Pointing to the image of the [felled Sycamore Gap tree](#), ask children to identify it.

If no one knows, repeat with secondary school students.

Now ask three primary school children to come to the front. Hand them an item each, which you've brought with you, such as a trowel, a pack of slug pellets and some Gorilla Tape.

How are they going to use these tools to bring the tree back to life? Ask them to come up with ideas.

Thank them for their valiant efforts.

As they return to their seats, remind the congregation:

When something is broken, our normal tools and resources may not be enough to fix things.

Growing up in the 2020s meant being taught from home or wearing masks to school. It meant that, suddenly, you couldn't play with your friends.

The family holiday had to be cancelled because prices had shot up by 10 per cent.

Images of destruction in Ukraine and the Middle East have kept flickering across our TV screens, alongside images of people on Britain's streets staging demonstrations and counter-demonstrations.

And while we're experiencing one flood or heatwave after another, it's dawning upon our university graduates that one day, AI may make a mockery of their hard-earned skills and qualifications.

The world has changed, in some cases beyond recognition. And we may be forgiven for feeling that it looks increasingly like the felled Sycamore Gap tree.

So, where will our hope come from? How do we get from here ([point to the image of the felled tree](#)) to here: [Show this slide](#)

Stay tuned ...

Prayer of confession

God, you delivered the people of Israel from a hopeless situation. You broke the chains of slavery and made them free citizens in a land of their own.

Today can sometimes look as hopeless as being slaves in Egypt must have looked to the ancient Israelites.

We're failing to make peace in the world. In this country, we're increasingly at odds, arguing over nationhood, resources and ethnic differences.

And while the planet is hotting up, we're still slow to make sacrifices for the common good.

Forgive us for all the bad things that are happening under our watch. Forgive us and come to our rescue.

Amen.

Hymn

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind – John Greenleaf Whittier

Reading: Romans 14.1–12

Talk (part 2)

How do we educate, and how do we learn, in a world as challenging, threatening and divided as ours?

On the surface, today's reading from St Paul's letter to the church in ancient Rome is all about a bygone culture and tradition. Which foods are acceptable to God? Which days of the week or month or year should be kept holy? Well, so what?

But let's look closer.

The apostle Paul is urging a highly diverse Roman congregation to get on despite their differences.

Now, that sounds a lot more relevant, doesn't it? Relevant to a world, and a nation, that seems more divided than ever.

And make no mistake. The Christians in Rome lived under the Emperor Nero. And we all know how that turned out.

Likewise, we are facing major threats today.

And if St Paul were here today, might he ask: 'What are you going to do about it? How are you going to go up against division and destruction?'

When will we progress from complaining to taking responsibility?

The apostle Paul puts it this way: 'Every one of us will have to give an account of ourselves to God.' (Romans 14.12, GNB)

This verse shouldn't scare us. It should motivate us.

God has given us this life. Are we going to waste it?

So, if you're in school, college or university, give it your best shot. Don't lose hope. God is still there. He's promised to look after you and give you strength, even in the age of AI.

If you're an educator, paid or unpaid, remember the image of the tree. The tried and tested may no longer work. New saplings will need planting: new ideas, new approaches, new ways of preparing our young people for an uncertain future.

On Education Sunday, let's remember to stay close to God and his word, whether we're students, teachers, or parents.

Hold up or point to a Bible.

God is still speaking to us, right into our everyday and its challenges.

But this book is no good on a shelf. The Bible needs to be read, studied, savoured, wrestled with. And it wants to be put into practice.

Five hundred years ago, one man literally risked his life to enable people to experience God, up close and personal – through the Bible.

Project a copyright-free screen [slide of William Tyndale](#).

2026 marks the 500th anniversary of William Tyndale's New Testament. The man was a linguistic genius. We all speak Tyndale. Phrases we use on a regular basis were coined by him. They're in his Bible translation.

The old Bible you've all heard of – the King James Bible – borrowed heavily from Tyndale. No King James without Tyndale.

He was driven by the desire for ordinary Christians to immerse themselves in the Scriptures. Because he knew that it contained words of life. Words from God. Words that could shape and sustain people back then.

The Bible can do the same in our day. It can give us hope, vision and energy for new growth amidst the ruin and decay around us.

The Bible speaks of a God who wants to uphold you and strengthen you, right in the middle of the challenges you face, whether you're in primary or secondary school trying to keep up with teachers' and parents' expectations. Whether you're a student or an apprentice wondering if all the hard work will pay off, or whether AI might end up throwing a spanner in the works.

God promises to be with you if you're a parent or teacher in challenging times.

Let's keep in touch with him. Through prayer. By reading his word. And by planting hope within our sphere of influence. Hope that is grounded in God.

We began this morning with Exodus 14.31: 'When the Israelites saw the great power of the LORD, they stood in awe; and they had faith.'

Amen.

Song

In Christ alone, my hope is found – Stuart Townend

Prayers of intercession

Loving God,

We bring to you children and young people who find education challenging and even overwhelming.

We pray for those who are excluded from education or live in areas of disaster or conflict.

We pray for those who will soon be looking for work; that they might show perseverance and never lose hope.

Help us all to put our faith into action, to allow your word to shape us, and to do our bit for a better world.

Amen.

Hymn

Love divine, all loves excelling – Charles Wesley

Blessing

May we go out from this church eager to learn and full of hope in our Lord,

Holding onto him in the face of adversity,

Knowing that new trees will grow.

Amen.

For more Education Sunday 2026 resources visit: cte.org.uk/educationsunday2026

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