



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Newsletter No.5
April 2026

A message from the Director of Education

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Easter to you all! I hope that you have all had a peaceful and relaxing Easter holiday. In his Easter message, Pope Leo stated,

'Christ's resurrection is the beginning of a new humanity; it is the entrance into the true promised land, where justice, freedom, and peace reign, where all recognise one another as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father who is Love, Life, and Light.'



This is an inspiring and optimistic thought for us to begin the summer term of 2026. We pray that this will be a happy and successful term for your school communities where justice, freedom and peace reign. The newsletter contains details about key events and updates that are happening this term; however, I would like to draw your attention to the following announcements.

Welcome to Clare

I am delighted to start this newsletter by welcoming Mrs Clare Rice to our team. Clare is our new Education Business Manager and starts with us this term. I know that she is looking forward to meeting everyone and working with you. Part of Clare's responsibilities will be supporting Alison as administrator for Catholic School Inspection. She will be taking time to learn about this process so please continue to communicate with Aleah Oyagbohun during this time. Clare can be contacted at: clare.rice@diocesehn.org.uk



Bishop's Day

Bishop Stephen invites all school and trust leaders to join him at this annual event on **Thursday 4 June**. He would appreciate all school leaders to join him on the day. Please can you ensure that the department has the names of all members of staff who are Bishop's appointments who are retiring or leaving Catholic education by **Monday 27 April**. We would like to recognise their service at the lunch time Mass, a special invitation will be sent to them.

Pastoral Strategy

It has been great to hear that many schools have worked with their parishes in relation to this important Diocesan development. We will be keeping you all updated in relation to the findings. The deadline for consultation return is **Thursday 23 April**.

Religious Education Directory

It was wonderful to join many of you at the sessions that John delivered to all primary school in our Diocese. It was an invaluable opportunity for everyone to understand the thinking and theology behind this exciting new resource. Thank you to John for delivering so enthusiastically at every session. Huge thanks to our secondary schools for hosting these events too. It was much appreciated and a great opportunity to showcase our fantastic secondary schools. We hope the FAQs sent with this newsletter will help your staff in the implementation of this resource

Day of prayer for vocations

You will read later in this newsletter that Bishop Stephen asks us to join the World Day of Prayers for Vocations on Sunday 26 April. It would be great if our school communities could participate in this event, praying for vocations during this week leading up to Sunday.

I very much look forward to meeting with you over the next few months. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the team if you have any questions or need support with anything.

Wishing you all every good wish,

Catherine



Bishop's Day Conference

Bishop's Day Conference

**Educating for a Hopeful Future:
Understanding Pope Leo XIV's Vision for Our Schools**

**Bishop Stephen Wright
invites...**

**The Durham Centre,
DH1 1TN
Thursday
4 June 2026
9.30am - 2.00pm**

With Guest Speaker:

Father Eamonn Conway

**all Headteachers and
Catholic Education Trust leaders
to join him at this event.**

To book your place, use
the link below
<https://diocesehncourses.org>
or by contacting
education@diocesehn.org.uk

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Bishop Stephen warmly invites all school and trust leaders to attend this day. It is an opportunity to come together in prayer and celebration.

We are also delighted to welcome Father Eamonn Conway. He presents Pope Leo XIV's Apostolic Letter as a roadmap as to how schools can nurture hope in concrete ways.

The session will help leaders discern how to form communities that cultivate resilience, spiritual depth, and a hopeful worldview in young people. Leaders will be given the opportunity to reflect on curriculum, culture, pastoral care, and formation practices that align with the Letter's vision of integral human development and missionary discipleship.

This will also be an opportunity for Bishop Stephen to thank headteachers, deputy headteachers, primary and secondary RE subject leaders and lay chaplains who are retiring or leaving Catholic education within our Diocese.

Please can you ensure that you send names of these people to: education@diocesehn.org.uk by **no later than Monday 27 April**. We will then ensure that these people are invited to the Mass to receive recognition and an episcopal blessing.

We hope that you will make every effort to attend this special day. **Booking closes on Friday 15 May 2026.**



Thanksgiving Mass 2026

We would like to invite Catholic Education Trust Directors and Foundation Governors to attend a Mass of Thanksgiving for their dedication and service to Catholic education on **Thursday 9 July 2026**.

This special Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Stephen Wright followed by light refreshments in the courtyard.

To reserve a place, we would be grateful if you could email:
education@diocesehn.org.uk by
Wednesday 1 July 2026.

Directors and Governors
are invited to attend a
Mass of Thanksgiving
for their dedication and service to Catholic education,
celebrated by
The Right Reverend Bishop Stephen Wright
to be held at the
Cathedral Church of St Mary
Clayton Street West, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5HH
Thursday 9 July 2026
at 6.00pm
RSVP - **education@diocesehn.org.uk**
by 1 July 2026

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**

Governance Conference 2026

We are inviting Diocesan Trustees, Members, Trust Directors, Trust Executive Teams and all School Governors to join us at this informative conference on **Wednesday 1 July 2026** which is entitled, **"Drawing New Maps of Hope, Wisdom, Accountability and the Governance of Catholic Schools."**

We are thrilled to have David Wells and John Hardy, lead writer for the Diocesan Religious Education resource as keynote speakers. Bishop Stephen will be celebrating Mass for your intentions.

This will also be an opportunity for Bishop Stephen to thank Governors and Directors who are retiring after years of service.

We look forward to seeing you there. To confirm your attendance please email: **education@diocesehn.org.uk** by
Wednesday 17 June 2026.

Members, Directors, Governors
& **Catholic Education Trust Leaders**
are warmly invited to attend the
Diocesan Governance Conference

Wednesday 1 July 2026 at 9.30am
(Refreshments served from 9.00am)
Lunch will be provided
The day closes at 2.30pm

The Durham Centre,
Belmont Industrial Estate, Durham DH1 1TN
RSVP **education@diocesehn.org.uk**
by 17 June 2026

Bishop Stephen Wright

David Wells

John Hardy
Lead Writer, RED Resource

For any enquiries please contact us;
education@diocesehn.org.uk
0191 243 3313

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION



World Day of Prayer for Vocations

World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Sunday, April 26

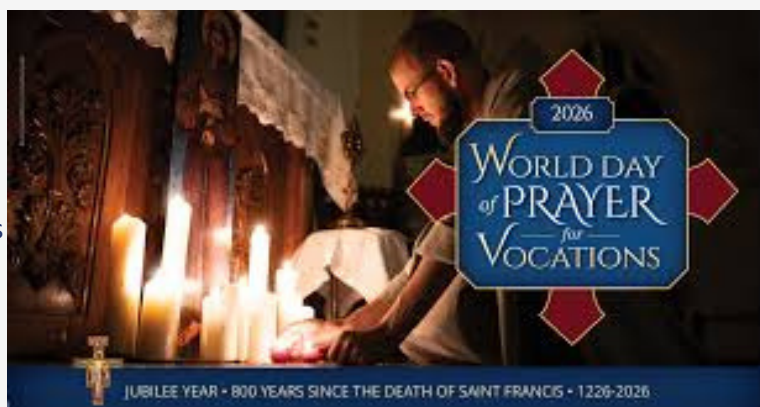
I invite us all to pray for vocations this Sunday. Bishop Stephen writes: As the Body of Christ, we are all linked to one another and just as blood reaches all parts of the body, prayer inspires and supports others in the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray that we all will be Good Shepherds of the People. As Pope Leo writes, "every vocation is an immeasurable gift for the Church and for those who receive it with joy." Vocations are revealed and nourished by prayer. As Pope Leo explains, "Only when our surroundings are illumined by living faith, sustained by constant prayer and enriched by fraternal accompaniment, can God's call blossom and mature." We all have our part to play.

Please pray particularly for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life. Please pray every day that people will respond to the Lord's call to serve Him in ordained and consecrated life. They are intimate adventures in God's love.

In our parishes and churches and schools and chaplaincies, please offer regular time in prayer for vocations.

Pope Leo encourages us to offer time for Eucharistic adoration and to meditate faithfully on the Word of God. Prayer leads to vocations. This is not a last resort; it is the essential first resort.

For more information, prayer resources, and for enquiries please contact: vocationspromoter@diocesehn.org.uk
vocationspriest@diocesehn.org.uk
vocationsdeacons@diocesehn.org.uk



Carlo Acutis

Last year we saw the canonisation of the first millennial saint – St Carlo Acutis. Carlo had a special love for God and after making his first Communion, he went to Mass as often as possible. Having a deep love for the Eucharist, Carlo was committed to encouraging others to receive communion daily. An inspiring role model for our children and young people.

At Holy Rosary and Immaculate Heart Church in Sunderland there is a first-class relic of St Carlo Acutis. Fr Marc Lyden-Smith has kindly invited our schools to visit this Diocesan shrine. The visit would incorporate a talk about St Carlo Acutis followed by the celebration of Mass.

If you are interested in visiting the shrine, please contact: alison.dunne@diocesehn.org.uk who will be able to provide you with further details about this wonderful opportunity.



St Carlo Acutis pray for us



Catholic School Inspection

To date, we have carried out 30 CSI inspections this academic year.

CSI trends that are coming through are that schools are inclusive, prayerful communities with Christ at the centre, where pupils feel valued and are taught by committed and dedicated staff.

Areas that need further improvement generally are for pupils to understand the principles behind Catholic social teaching, to further develop self-evaluation processes and to implement the Prayer and Liturgy policy.

Towards 2027

CSI are inviting contributions to the review of the National Framework for the inspection of Catholic schools.

This consultation seeks the views of those involved in the life and mission of Catholic education, including school leaders, staff, governors, clergy, and parents. It focuses on the process, substance, and outcomes of inspection.

This is a great opportunity for the voice of Hexham and Newcastle to have a real impact on the review of the National Framework for the inspection of Catholic Schools and we encourage you to complete the survey in the link below:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SSQzRY2fT0OpJmB_Xy63KLfjEZ6a7UxMnONEDY6s8p5UNetRRUNCVTdKQTVUMzFXR0tITk1ENFINNy4u)

[id=SSQzRY2fT0OpJmB_Xy63KLfjEZ6a7UxMnONEDY6s8p5UNetRRUNCVTdKQTVUMzFXR0tITk1ENFINNy4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SSQzRY2fT0OpJmB_Xy63KLfjEZ6a7UxMnONEDY6s8p5UNetRRUNCVTdKQTVUMzFXR0tITk1ENFINNy4u)

Closing date is Friday 1 May 2026.

Boys' Choir



Diocesan Children's Choir

Diocesan Singing Programme Update

The Diocesan Singing Programme has gone from strength to strength this term. The Girls' and Boys' Choirs now rehearse weekly at the Cathedral Church of St Mary. Pictured are some of the 25 choir members, lower Key Stage 2 pupils from Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust schools who are involved in the Schools' Singing Programme. These children and more than 700 others have been enjoying weekly singing sessions delivered in school by Choral Director, Eimear Hurley. Children selected to join the after-school choirs have the opportunity to develop their vocal and musicianship skills through weekly rehearsals with Eimear and Cathedral Organist David Allison. The choirs are currently preparing to sing at the Cathedral at **9.30am Mass** on **Sunday 14th June** and at the Diocesan Thanksgiving Mass on **Thursday 9th July**.

The children's choirs are in need of volunteer chaperones so that we can grow the choirs' numbers in line with diocesan safeguarding policies. Chaperoning entails being present at hour-long rehearsals and ensuring all children are safe; no musical experience is necessary. If you would be interested in volunteering, please contact Eimear Hurley via email: eimear.hurley@diocesehn.org.uk or calling/texting **07814 461448**

Girls' Choir





Professional Development

Anna Silver's monthly Q and A 'Any questions' zoom session to support teachers in their **teaching of Judaism** will take place on: **Tuesday 21st April, 2026 3:45-4:45pm.**

Please go prepared with any questions you may have.

It's free and informative and no question is a silly one!

Please pass the zoom link below to any teacher who may find it useful.



Catholic Education Service
Since 1847

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82876672045?pwd=kTnWIRJ7a15v8aRec8cbHPwGx36qgp.1>

View meeting insights with Zoom AI Companion

<https://us02web.zoom.us/launch/edl?muid=add314ff-57c3-4f1d-9533-6faa0e9efff5>

Meeting ID: 828 7667 2045

Passcode: 970723

Religious Education Directory Launch

We are holding two resource launch days on:

Friday 1 May and Thursday 21 May

at:

The Durham Centre, Belmont 9.30am– 3.30pm.

During these sessions we will be launching our online platform where schools will be able to access the website hosting resources needed to deliver the new curriculum. You will receive your school's username and password and will have the opportunity to familiarise yourself with the site.

Places can be booked via <https://diocesehncourses.org/>

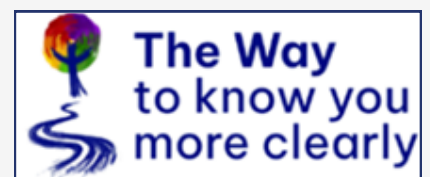
Please note that there are no available places for Friday 1 May and we are not permitted to exceed numbers, due to health and safety reasons.

Please contact education@diocesehn.org.uk if you are unsure if your place has been reserved.

Religious Education Directory

Thank you to all our secondary schools, who have supported us in hosting the Religious Education Directory (RED) training since January. Also, thank you to all our primary schools who have attended the sessions; we hope that they have given you an insight into the expectation of the RED. Following the sessions, as few questions have been asked and we would like to reassure all staff by providing answers to questions that we know you all may have.

You will note that you have been sent a FAQs in relation to the delivery of the new Religious Education Directory starting in September 2026.



We hope that this supports you with the implementation. However, we are also available at any time if you have any further questions.



Religious Education

Primary RE subject leaders

We are looking forward to welcoming all our primary RE subject leaders to their termly meetings. The meetings are:

- **Thursday 18 June at The Holiday Inn, Seton Burn, 9:30am – 3:30pm**
- **Friday 19 June at The Durham Centre, Belmont, 9:30am- 3:30pm (FULLY BOOKED)**
- **Thursday 25 June at The Holiday Inn, Darlington, 9:30am – 3:30pm**
- **Friday 26 June at The Durham Centre, Belmont, 9:30am- 3:30pm**

During these sessions, RE subject leaders will be introduced to the bite-sized training, which they will be delivering in their school during the coming academic year. The training will be explained to them, and they will have the opportunity to work with colleagues to practise how they will deliver this to their staff. In addition to this training, subject leaders will be taking part in the annual moderation of books; can all RE subject leaders please bring a book from each year group so that it can be quality assured?

If, for any reason, the RE subject leader is unable to attend the above sessions, we ask that another representative from the school attends, so that they are able to receive the bite-size training sessions and bring this back to school in preparation for the implementation of the Religious Education Directory in September 2026.

Secondary Heads of RE

We are looking forward to welcoming all our Heads of RE to the summer term meeting on **Friday 3 July, at The Durham Centre, Belmont, 1:30pm – 3:30pm.**

This will be an opportunity to receive updates and share good practice. In addition to this, we would like to encourage you to take part in a moderation session; full details of this will be shared nearer the time. If the Head of RE is unable to attend, we ask that a representative from the school attends to receive the updates and take part in the moderation.

Thank you for your continued support.

Cafod



Thank you to everyone who completed the Big Lent Walk. Cafod would like you to keep them in your thoughts when planning fundraising events in school. For further information on events you may wish to support please use:
<https://cafod.org.uk/>

Cafod also, have some places for anyone wishing to take part in the Great North Run in September 2026. There are limited places, however if you would like to run on behalf of Cafod, please use the QR code to register your interest.

Great North Run for CAFOD!

Are you up to the challenge? Join #TeamCAFOD and raise vital funds to help our neighbours overcome poverty around the world.

When: Sun 13 September 2026
Where: Newcastle to South Shields
Reg fee: £20
Fundraising target: £350

Scan the QR code to register your interest

SCAN ME



New Governors' Welcome

This session will welcome new foundation governors to their role and discuss the statutory and canonical responsibilities of the foundation governors in a Catholic school.

We would encourage all new governors to attend this training session.

If you would like to attend our Foundation Governors welcome session on **Tuesday 21 April 2026**, please contact Rebecca Daglish at: education@diocesehn.org.uk who will be happy to book your place.



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
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**New
Foundation Governors'
Welcome**

Welcome Session for New Foundation Governors
Tuesday 21 April 2025
5.00pm - 6.00pm
Online

Register Now <https://diocesehncourses.org>

Good Shepherd Mass



Invitation to the Good Shepherd Mass 2026

This year marks the 80th anniversary of St Cuthbert's Care, and we warmly invite your school to join us as we celebrate this special milestone together at our Good Shepherd Mass.

For eight decades, schools across the Diocese have supported our charity through the Good Shepherd Appeal. Your generosity has helped us continue our mission of caring for children, families and older people across the North East, and we look forward to celebrating this wonderful tradition of kindness with you.

Two Masses will be held this year, and schools are welcome to attend whichever Mass is most convenient.

St Michael's RC Church Westmorland Road Newcastle, NE4 7RE
Wednesday 29 April 2026 at 10:00am

(Please note: due to planned maintenance work at St Mary's Cathedral, we are unable to hold our Good Shepherd Mass at the Cathedral this year.)

St Joseph's Church St Paul's Road Hartlepool, TS26 9EY Wednesday
6 May 2026 at 1:00pm

Pupils are warmly invited to bring along any Good Shepherd donations raised during Lent, as well as artwork reflecting an act of kindness, inspired by our 80 Acts of Kindness.

We hope you can join us for this special celebration.

RSVP: nicolaj.milne@stcuthbertscare.org.uk
Please respond by 20 April 2026



Aid to the Church in Need

Rosary Leadership Course

We are pleased to share information from Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), who are one of the Pope's charities and they work internationally with persecuted Christians and support the pastoral needs of the Church. At the request of the Popes since Pope John Paul II, they have managed his campaign 'One Million Children Praying the Rosary' each October. In addition, in the UK during May they run a national Rosary Campaign called Maisy Milk Rosary for Peace - this is mainly aimed at primary school aged children.

They have developed a Rosary Leadership Course which teaches and upskills secondary/6th form students to become young leaders of the rosary. The aim is for those who have completed the training, to then go into the lower schools and primaries throughout May and October and lead the rosary, with a special focus on the children who are suffering in the world due to religious persecution and/or war and famine.

If you think that your students would be interested in this opportunity, please find below a link to the course, so you can look at it and see if this is something that you would like to run in your school.

<https://acnuk.org/secondary-parish-rosary-leadership-course-one-million-children-praying-rosary>

If you do decide to participate in the training, can you please contact Education@diocesehn.org.uk, and let us know so we are able to work with the organisation to arrange certificates for those taking part.



Diocesan Leadership Development

We congratulate colleagues from across our diocese for successfully completing our leadership development programmes this term.

Primary Middle Leaders



Aspiring Deputy Headteachers



Aspiring Deputy Headteachers Programme 2026-2027

For current primary & secondary middle leaders who are ready for deputy headship

- ✓ Build the mindset and presence of a Catholic senior leader
- ✓ Practical strategies for leading school improvement from day one
- ✓ Full recruitment preparation

For further information please contact
Diocesan Education Department
Education@diocesehn.org.uk



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle
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One Diocesan Family - Welcoming - Worshipping - Sharing - Growing



We continue to keep in our prayers all those who are taking the next steps as leaders in our Catholic schools.

National Catholic Leadership Programme (NCLP) 2026 - 2028

NCLP is a course for aspiring and serving headteachers.
(more info)

To register your interest for the 2026-2028 wave and receive the information booklet, contact the Education department via education@diocesehn.org.uk.

The information booklet will also be available at the Bishop's Day Conference.

National Catholic Leadership Programme 2026-2028

A course for aspiring and serving headteachers

- ✓ National programme developed by Formatio
- ✓ Supports the formation and recruitment of headteachers
- ✓ Focuses on Catholic leadership

For further information please contact
Diocesan Education Department
Education@diocesehn.org.uk



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle
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One Diocesan Family - Welcoming - Worshipping - Sharing - Growing



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

MIDDLE LEADERSHIP IN A CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

A one day course exploring the "why" of Catholic Schools and what it means to lead with a Catholic identity

10 June 2026

9.30am to 3.30pm

The Copthorne Hotel, Newcastle

0191 243 3313 education@diocesehn.org.uk



Middle Leadership in a Catholic Secondary School

A one day course for secondary teachers who are interested in middle leadership in a Catholic school.

This will be on **Wednesday 10 June 2026** at the Copthorne Hotel.



Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies

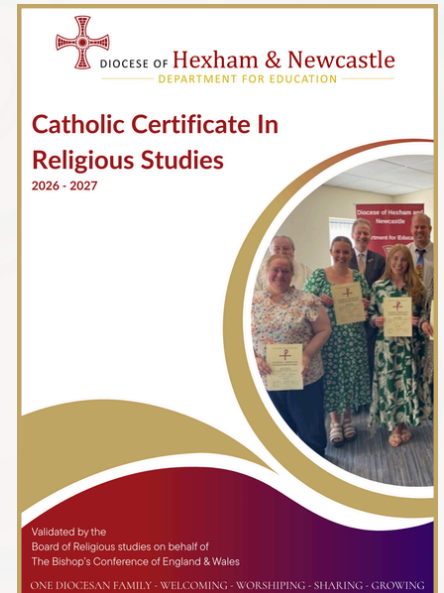
As the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) programme for 2025-2026 draws closer to the end for this year, we will be inviting those who have completed their CCRS certificate to the CCRS Mass. This will take place on **Thursday 2 July 2026 from 4:00pm – 6pm** at St Cuthbert's House, West Road NE15 5PY.

Preparations for next year's CCRS provision continue and the programme booklet will be available at the Bishop's Day Conference.

Registration forms for World Faiths will be accepted until **27 April 2026**, so it is not too late to begin your CCRS journey. We are forever grateful to our wonderful tutors and guest speakers.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Tel: 0191 243 3313 or email: education@diocesehn.org.uk



School Lay Chaplains' Retreat

We are now taking bookings for the summer retreat from **Thursday 11 June - Friday 12 June** which will be held at The Grand Hotel, Gosforth Park. We will be joined by the Daughters of Divine Charity, who will be leading us in prayer and reflection.

To book a place on either of these days please contact: **education@diocesehn.org.uk by 1 May 2026.**



Mission Together

Thank you to all schools who have sent donations from their Lenten Alms fundraising activities.

This is a great charity which can provide you with a wealth of additional resources which are available on the Mission Together website: **<https://missiontogether.org.uk/>**





Catholic Leaders and Clergy Conference

Save the Date!

Bishop Stephen would like to invite all clergy, headteachers, CEOs, Deputy CEOs and School Improvement Teams to attend this important yearly event, hosted at the Ramside Hall Hotel on **Thursday 3 December 2026**.

The day will also include a commissioning Mass for all school leaders celebrated by Bishop Stephen.

Booking details will be available in the summer term.



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Catholic Leaders and Clergy Conference **'I chose you'**

John 15:16

With Guest Speaker



Danny Curtin

03
December
2026

**Ramside
Hall Hotel,
Durham**

ONE DIOCESAN FAMILY - WELCOMING - WORSHIPING - SHARING - GROWING

RE Conference 2027



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Religious Education Conference

Guest speaker - Fleur Dorrell

We are please to welcome Fleur Dorrell who is the Biblical Apostolate Manager for the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales and National Co-ordinator of the God who Speaks initiative.

She will be suggesting six good pieces of artwork, per Branch, which can be used to support the teaching of the Religious Education Directory. There will also be notes on the artwork and the relevant Bible content, so teachers can use this within their classes.

This will cover the Branches from EYFS to Year 9. Bookings are welcome from both primary and secondary schools.



Friday 19 March 2027 at the Durham Centre, Belmont
from 9:30am - 3:30pm

You can book your place from 5 June at: <https://diocesehncourses.org> or
contact: education@diocesehn.org.uk



Dear God,

We ask that you renew our faith this Easter season. Strengthen our trust in your plans and help us to embrace the new life that you offer through Christ's resurrection.

Guide our hearts to stay faithful, overcoming doubt, and remain steadfast in your word.

May Your Spirit inspire us to grow spiritually, reflecting your love in all our actions, and enable us to spread hope to others.

Let this Easter season transform our souls and deepen our devotion to You.

Amen.