

What's on in a Church of England School



Christian Festivals

Candlemas (the presentation of Christ in the temple) 2nd February
Christingle

Shrove Tuesday 13th February

Ash Wednesday 14th February

St Valentine's Day: 14 February

Other Festivals and Awareness Days

National Nest Box Week 14th - 21st February

National Wear Red Day 25th February

Fairtrade Fortnight 26th February - 11th March

Chinese New Year February 16th

2nd February - Candlemas Day

The presentation of Christ in the Temple. This is often called Candlemas from the custom of congregations holding lighted candles during the celebration in church. It celebrates the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Luke 2:22-38

Maybe a good time for Christingle services if you didn't hold one before Christmas.



Candlemas commemorates the ritual purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of her son Jesus. This day also marks the ritual presentation of the baby Jesus to God in the Temple at Jerusalem.

The Gospel of Luke says that Jesus was met by Anna and Simeon. Simeon held the baby Jesus and called him a Light to the World.



The festival is called *Candlemas* because this was the day that all the Church's candles for the year were blessed.

On *Candlemas* night, many people place lighted candles in their windows at home.

In pre-Christian times, it was the festival of light. This ancient festival marked the mid point of winter, half way between the winter solstice (shortest day) and the spring equinox.

People believed that *Candlemas* predicted the weather for the rest of the winter.

If *Candlemas* Day be fair and bright
Winter will have another fight.
If *Candlemas* Day brings cloud and rain,
Winter won't come again.

Traditional

Any Christmas decorations not taken down by Twelfth Night (January 5th) should be left up until *Candlemas* Day and then taken down.

"The Snowdrop, in purest white array, First rears her head on Candlemas day."

Snowdrops are also called **Candlemas Bells**

There are usually lots of snowdrops around on *candlemas* day. Why not bring some into the classroom. Get the children to draw and paint them - they will make a lovely display - make you all feel like spring.



The name 'snowdrop' doesn't mean drop of snow - it means drop as in 'eardrop' - the old name for earring

Maybe use a waterproof fine black pen to draw and then watercolour paint wash over the top, like the last of these pictures. Plenty more inspiration - Google 'paint snowdrops'





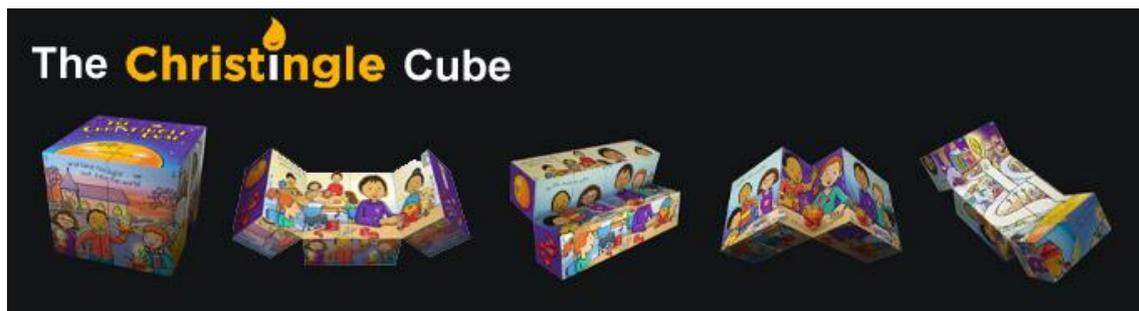
Did you manage a Christingle service at Christmas time? If not Candlemas is the perfect alternative.

More about Christingle at www.christingle.org

Christingle is an ideal opportunity to explore Christianity within your school. On their website you will find a wealth of free resources for use in a variety of classroom settings. There is 'Messy Christingle' and 'Express Christingle' and a whole host of ideas and fun activities .



or how about the Christingle cube - a fun way of teaching the children about the meaning of Christingle?



To order your Christingle Cube for just £3.95 (plus P&P) ring 0300303055. All proceeds go towards the work of The Children's Society (folded size 2 3/4 inches, 73mm. Opens to 5 1/2 inches 140mm.).

And this year a free Christingle collection candle for children to take home (or to gran's house!) to be filled with change.



On the site you can get FREE red tape, FREE candles, cardboard drip shields, posters, lesson ideas, sermon notes, colour-in-Christingles and Christingle games.... and much more.

<http://shop.childrenssociety.org.uk/christingle/>

On Amazon you can get a set of 12 flameless candles for £11 - ideal for younger children.



13th February - Shrove Tuesday

The day is set aside for repentance and absolution in preparation for Lent. The name Shrove comes from the old word "shrive" which means to confess. On Shrove Tuesday, in the Middle Ages, people used to confess their sins so that they were forgiven before the season of Lent began.

More popularly, it is a day of eating and enjoyment. In Britain it is known as 'Pancake Day'. Shrove Tuesday is a day of celebration as well as penitence, because it's the last day before Lent.

Lent is a time of abstinence, of giving things up. So Shrove Tuesday is the last chance to indulge yourself, and to use up the foods that aren't allowed in Lent. Pancakes are eaten on this day because they contain fat, butter and eggs which were forbidden during Lent.



Get Delia's pancake recipe from

http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/basicpancakeswithsuga_66226 or
<http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/2907669/easy-pancakes>
<http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/videos/techniques/how-make-pancakes>

Make pancakes in school, try a pancake race or tossing pancakes, a parents' pancake race - or a teacher's pancake race.



Elsewhere it is a time of carnivals and the **MARDI GRAS** (Fat Tuesday in French).

Falling just before Lent, it traditionally marks the last opportunity for fun and feasting before 40 days of "self-denial".

Festivities begin at the beginning of February, leading up to Mardi Gras day, and consist of parades, dancing in the street, costumes and masked balls. The modern Carnival tradition developed in Europe in the Middle ages, and is celebrated mainly in Roman Catholic communities in Europe and the Americas today. Some of the most famous celebrations are held in Nice (France), Cologne (Germany), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and New Orleans (USA)

Why not hold a mini Mardi Gras? Have a carnival day with fancy dress. Lots of excellent ideas for activities on

http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/mardi_gras.htm

14th February - Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent

Some churches have a special part in a service called 'ashing'. As a way of showing sorrow for wrong things done, and as a reminder that all die, the Priest makes a sign of the cross in ashes on the forehead of each person. The ashes are usually made from burning palm crosses that were kept from Palm Sunday the previous year. Lent is a time when Christians think about the things they have done and the way that God wants them to live. Saying sorry to God by confessing our sins - owning up to the wrong things we have done - is a more important part of people's worship and prayer during Lent.



Why not?

Have an 'ashing' service in school or in your local church.

Show the children what ashing is and ask your minister to come and do a service.

Ask the children if they would like to take part.

Decide on a Lent project which will help a good cause - let everyone know

Ideas for getting the most out of LENT - Why not choose a charity to support or a family to help.

Be generous. Act together. Transform your world.



14th February to 29th March - Lent

For Western Christian churches, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, and is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. Lent is often marked by fasting, both from food and festivities. In schools it can also be a good opportunity to change our world for the better.

During Lent purple cloth is often draped over Christian crosses as it's associated with mourning and anticipates Jesus's crucifixion. Lent is the period of 40 days which comes before Easter in the Christian calendar.

What can you do in school that makes the most important Christian festival special?



Try - Turn over a new leaf



Provide each child with a template of a leaf. Explain that on one side they will be writing or drawing something they are sorry for. When they have finished, they can turn the leaf over, because if you are truly sorry, then God you will forgive you and it can be forgotten. On the other side of the leaf, the children should write or draw something good they can do this Lent. Perhaps it is something simple like keeping their room tidy or helping at home. Or maybe it is something they can do better in the future like trying not to argue or being a good friend. In taking part in this activity, each child is turning over a new leaf. They are putting any bad things behind them and making a promise to do something good.

It will also make a few good worships have a go and make it your own.

Love life - live lent

Try watching the video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOwnI2pQPMc>

and get your copies from

<http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/category/christian-books/lent,-holy-week-and-easter-1520>

Get Lent teaching resources from

KS1 <https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources/primary-40069/ks1-religious-education-41874/lent-evt3411/>

KS2 <https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources/primary-42198/ks2-religious-education-44030/lent-evt3411/>

To get TES recourses you will need to sign up - but it's free, and well worth it.



Lots more Lent teaching ideas on

<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/lent-and-easter-support-material/>

Why not make a LENT working wall in the classroom? Get the children to add to it with all the ways they are making a difference to their world in Lent - get families involved.

Make Lent a time to do something special

14th February - St Valentine's Day:

Lots of useful information, interesting facts and traditions on

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/saints/valentine.shtml>

Success gained him unwelcome notoriety, which became Bishop Valentine's downfall. He was jailed and ultimately beheaded, but not before he fell in love with the jailer's daughter. It is thought that on the evening of his execution the bishop passed her a note which read "from your Valentine".

This story has blossomed into the defining tradition of Valentine's Day. An estimated one billion cards sent each year, making it the second largest card-sending holiday of the year behind Christmas.

Some amazing Valentine traditions

In Wales wooden love spoons were carved and given as gifts on February 14th. Hearts, keys and keyholes were favourite decorations on the spoons. The decoration meant, "You unlock my heart"



In the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who their valentines would be. They would wear these names on their sleeves for one week. To wear your heart on your sleeve now means that it is easy for other people to know how you are feeling.



In some countries, a young woman may receive a gift of clothing from a young man. If she keeps the gift, it means she will marry him.



Some people used to believe that if a woman saw a robin flying overhead on Valentine's Day, it meant she would marry a sailor. If she saw a sparrow, she would marry a poor man and be very happy. If she saw a goldfinch, she would marry a millionaire.

Just in case - here is a picture of a goldfinch.



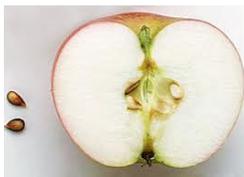
A love seat is a wide chair. It was first made to seat one woman and her wide dress. Later, the love seat or courting seat had two sections, often in an S-shape. In this way, a couple could

sit together - but not too closely.

Think of five or six names of boys or girls you might marry, As you twist the stem of an apple, recite the names until the stem comes off. You will marry the person whose name you were saying when the stem fell off.



Pick a dandelion that has gone to seed. Take a deep breath and blow the seeds into the wind. Count the seeds that remain on the stem.



That is the number of children you will have.

If you cut an apple in half and count how many seeds are inside, you will also know how many children you will have.

If you have a traditional pudding, like prunes and custard for example, you will be left at the end of the meal with some stones. You now use the following rhyme to count the stones.

Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, rich man, poor man,
beggar man, thief! Carry on counting until you
have used up all the stones - and that's the one
you will marry!!

(other puddings are also available!)



All amazing facts and traditions - Do you know any more?

A well loved saint's day which has taken off as a significant secular festival. Lots of fun for the children. A Valentine assembly with teachers dressed up in appropriate 'hearts' would be fun.

or how about making Valentines cards in school - you can get lots of ideas from

<http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/making-valentines-day-cards>

<http://www.bhg.com/holidays/valentines-day/cards/easy-to-make-valentines-day-cards/>



Other Faiths

3rd February - Shinto (Japan)



Shinto has no known founder or single sacred scripture.

Shinto is wholly devoted to life in this world and emphasises man's essential goodness.

The essence of Shinto is the Japanese devotion to invisible spiritual beings and powers called *kami*, to **shrines**, and to various rituals. Shinto is not a way of explaining **the world**. What matters are rituals that enable human beings to

communicate with kami. Kami are not God or gods. They are spirits that are concerned with human beings - they appreciate our interest in them and want us to be happy - and if they are treated properly they will intervene in our lives to bring benefits like health, business success, and good exam results.

Shinto is a very local **religion**, in which devotees are likely to be concerned with their local shrine rather than the religion as a whole. Many Japanese will have a tiny shrine-altar in their homes. However, it is also an unofficial national religion with shrines that draw visitors from across the country. Because **ritual** rather than belief is at the heart of Shinto, Japanese people don't usually think of Shinto specifically as a religion - it's simply an aspect of Japanese life. This has enabled Shinto to **coexist happily with Buddhism** for centuries.

8th February - Nirvana Day

Nirvana Day (Parinirvana) is the day when Buddhists from the Mahayana tradition remember the death and enlightenment of the Buddha. A Nepalese painting of the Buddha's death



16th February - Chinese New Year

The Year of the Dog

Chinese New Year, also known as the spring festival, is the most important celebration in the Chinese calendar. The spring festival celebrates the start of new life and the season of ploughing and sowing.

New Year festivities start on the first day of the lunar month and continue until the fifteenth, when the moon is brightest. The first week is celebrated with visits to friends and family following special traditions designed to bring good luck. The second week ends with the Lantern festival on the evening of the 15th day of the lunar month.

Chinese New Year is the oldest Chinese festival and has many traditions. Before the start of the festivities, Chinese people spring clean their houses to sweep away any bad luck. On New Year's Eve, all



2018 Year of Dog



brooms, dustpan and brushes are put away so that good luck cannot be swept away. Houses are decorated with paper scrolls with good luck phrases such as 'Happiness' and 'Wealth'.

On New Year's Eve, families gather together and have a large, traditional meal. There are different types of food depending on which region of China people come from. In the north, people eat djiaozi - a steamed dumpling and in the south nian gao - a sticky, sweet rice pudding.

People will stay up until midnight setting off fireworks to frighten away evil spirits. Red symbolises fire which will scare away evil spirits, so people dress head to foot in new red clothing.

On New Year's Day children will wake up to find a red envelope filled with money and sweets under their pillows left by their parents and grandparents.

Chinese New Year ends with the lantern festival on the fifteenth day of the month. The lanterns are often hand painted with scenes from history or legend. People hang glowing lanterns at the windows of their houses and carry lanterns under the light of the full moon. A dragon dance often takes place with a dragon made of paper, silk and bamboo held aloft by young men dancing and guiding it around to collect money.

In some countries, especially England, the festivities are shortened, so that the lantern festival takes place on Chinese New Year's day and you can see parades with dragon dancing and brightly painted lanterns in Liverpool and Manchester.

Why not try some Chinese art work to celebrate this colourful festival.



<http://www.topmarks.co.uk/ChineseNewYear/ChineseNewYear.aspx>

<http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/chinese-new-year>

What else is on in February?

14 -21 February National Nest Box Week: Give a bird a home

From 14-21 February 2018 it will be National Nest Box Week, a chance for you to encourage birds in your garden or your school, to come home to roost!

Organised by the [British Trust for Ornithology](http://www.bto.org), or BTO, the week is an important one for all the brilliant birds we have in the UK, from Robins to Owls!



The idea behind the week is to get us all to put up nest boxes in our local areas, not only to protect the wildlife we already have, but to encourage even more birds to brood in our backyards!

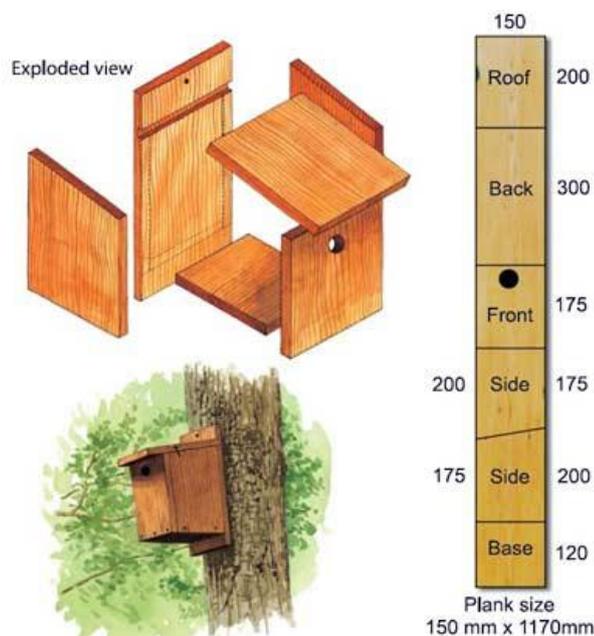


National Nest Box Week started in 1997. As more trees are cut down, birds lose their homes, so putting up boxes is a great way of helping our winged friends - and it's thought there's now between 5 to 6 million boxes across the UK.

Don't worry if you've never put up a bird box before. At the official [National Nest Box Week](http://www.bto.org/nnbw/index.htm) website, there are lots of hints and tips to get you started, as well as information on how to monitor the box and see what kind of wildlife you're likely to attract!

<http://www.bto.org/nnbw/index.htm>

Do you know that different types of boxes will attract different types of birds. For example, small holes in nest boxes will attract the Blue Tit, Great Tit, Nuthatch and House Sparrow.



Large boxes with holes will attract Starlings, the Greater Spotted Woodpecker and even the Little Owl. Open fronted boxes will attract the Robin and Pied Wagtail and very big boxes attract, amongst other the Kestrel, Jackdaw and Tawny Owl.

All the info you need is on

<http://www.bto.org/nbw/index.htm>

So, you can either make your own nest box or follow the link at the official site and buy a ready made box and set it up in your garden. Then all you have to do is wait patiently and see what happens next...

Here's an idea for your PTA Why not buy some planks of wood - 150mm X 1170mm from the local sawmill and then ask who would like to make a birdbox with their parents at home lots of children will want to. Get them to take a little form home ... and give out the planks! - first come first served. You could have 20 or 30 new bird boxes around the school grounds - almost over a weekend. **Tell parents to put their child's name on the front -or make it a bit quirky - they'll love it.**

25th February - National Wear Red Day

<http://www.rampupthered.org.uk/>

On National Wear it - Beat it the British Heart Foundation wants you to join them to raise heart disease awareness throughout the country this February.

Its conditions include heart attacks and strokes and it kills more people than any other disease in the UK. So how can you help beat such a difficult problem?

Well if you and lots of others are willing to help out, together we can make a huge difference to the work the organisation is doing.

The aim is to have more improved services for people living with heart disease and highlight ways to prevent developing it in the first place.

'Red for heart' is the theme - all you have to do is ask for a fundraising pack and get planning your own event.



There are loads of ideas to choose from, whether you'll be at work, at home or in school or college! Why not host your own red themed assembly, for

example, Little Red Rooster - Rolling Stones, Little Red Corvette - Prince, Red, Red Wine - UB40 or play songs by The Red Hot Chilli Peppers and Simply Red.

You can also visit the official online shop and stock up with lots of red goodies for the day. You can take things further by serving a selection of red food on red plates, with red napkins and red glasses to drink out of!

Just remember to pick out something red for wear, whether it's a t-shirt, badge, bracelet whatever! Wear it proudly and show your support.

National Wear Red Day will tie in with National Heart Month in the UK and American Heart Month which also takes place in February.

If everyone in the UK and in the US plans to wear red on the day, for women, children and men alike we'll have an even greater chance of making lives better!



26th February - 11th March - Fairtrade Fortnight

Chester Diocese is a Fairtrade Diocese and so we encourage all schools and parishes to take part in the Fairtrade fun.

Loads of free resources and ideas on the website www.fairtrade.org.uk



Why not?

Run a Fairtrade shop in school

Get someone in to talk about Fairtrade

Ring Jackie 01925 261499



Jackie runs 'Fair 4 All' in Warrington

Get the children to collect fairtrade wrappers

Have Fairtrade coffee and tea in the staffroom and at parents' meetings.

Download the Logo from the website and

Put Fairtrade logos in the school newsletter - explain the benefits of Fairtrade to parents.

Have sampling sessions for parents while they are waiting for their children

Make your school a fairtrade school



Do you live anywhere near Warrington - or do you have someone in school who does? Warrington indoor market has a brilliant stall called 'Fair 4 All' - and they are so good and helpful that the leader has received an MBE.

Here's some information about them

Fair 4 All

Warrington Indoor Market

01925 415121

Jackie 01925 261499

'Fair 4 All' is open each day from 9 - 5 . It is run by a team of volunteers - who are very helpful to schools. **They can provide assemblies, lessons and tuck shops for schools**

Please give them plenty of notice. Ring the stall, or

suz.collins1@googlemail.com

For information about becoming a Fairtrade school - ring

Brian Hancock 01925 261499

or bryanhancock15@yahoo.com



And finally...

Don't forget to send for your Christian Aid materials

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

Don't forget to order your palm crosses to give out to the children when they finish for Easter. The local church might well be ordering now, so you could ask them to increase their order for you.....

Crosses available from <http://www.eden.co.uk/palm-crosses>

And how about this

A great individual leaving present for your Y6 children.

Their very own autograph book.....with school logo. £2.99 per book, blocking fee for first time only- £25 plus postage and packing.

Contact Stephen Oliver, Big Box Solutions, 3, Millfield, Templetown, Consett, Durham, DH87NZ Tel. 01207 581136

The books take about 4 weeks to be delivered - so get in early

