

Everyday Ubuntu Celebration booklet

The Diocesan Education Team Project 2023



Introduction

The 2023 Diocesan schools' project, 'Everyday Ubuntu', inspired young people in schools and parishes across Winchester and Portsmouth Dioceses to reflect on how we are all connected. No matter where we are from, what we like to do, or who we are, a person is a person through their connection with other people. Almost everything that we do affects other people. By learning and thinking about Ubuntu, children and communities celebrated friendship, reconciliation and the many ways in which are all one community. Our annual projects have been taken-up in America, numerous dioceses in England, and also by local authority community schools. This year's project ended like no other before – with hundreds of children beating out drum rhythms in cathedrals across the dioceses in a celebration of togetherness.

Children discovered how Ubuntu, an African philosophy often translated as 'I am because we are' or 'humanity toward others' is demonstrated throughout the Bible. In the Gospels, Jesus comes to restore our relationship with God and in doing so each other ([Ephesians 2:11-22](#)). Christ identifies with his disciples as he lives with them in community. Jesus' word in [John 15:13](#), "greater love has no man than this: that he lay down his life for his friends," refers not only to crucifixion, but also to the daily sacrifice of self for others.



Ubuntu echoes this spirit and attitude. In Acts, church communities are established in different cities. The early church was a community ([Acts 2:42-47](#)). The New Testament reminds us to love one another ([John 13:35](#)); live at peace and in harmony ([Romans 13:14-21](#)); serve each other ([Galatians 5:13; 6:10](#)); encourage one another ([1 Thessalonians 5:11](#)); and bear with each other ([Ephesians 4:2](#)).

Archbishop Desmond Tutu summarised it : 'A person of Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for she or he has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that she or he belongs in a greater whole, and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed'.

This booklet celebrates the work of our schools and wider communities as they learnt more about Ubuntu.

Bringing people together

Children at Lockerley Church of England Endowed Primary School held a Community Week, with a focus on the whole school learning about the concept of Ubuntu in RE lessons. Pupils discussed the meaning of Ubuntu as a school and started to think about how they could celebrate friendship and kindness, alongside the school values of Love and Respect, and the many ways in which they are all one.



Assistant Headteacher Alex Clark said: 'We decided to participate in a range of activities in our school houses, focusing on the concept of Ubuntu in our school, village and national communities. We all took part in four different activities throughout the week: gardening and developing our school grounds, litter picking to support Lockerley village, craft activities to share with our families at home, and decorations for our final celebration of our country's community, which was our afternoon tea to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III.

'We invited extended members of our school family, in addition to members of our village, to attend our afternoon tea, which was a lovely celebration of our learning and allowed us to share our learning about Ubuntu. A key feature was Ubuntu drumming, performed by Year 3 and 4, with rhythms repeated by Year 6 at their leavers service at Winchester Cathedral. It was a very positive week celebrating the concept of Ubuntu and community in so many different ways.'





Linking communities across the world

Church schools in Winchester Diocese are linked to the country of Rwanda in Central Africa. Pupils and teachers are involved in mutually beneficial teaching and learning activities. Children at St Lawrence Church of England Primary School in Alton used this link to further the children's understanding of Ubuntu.

Collective Worship Crusaders in Year 2 led a class worship on Ubuntu before children wrote prayers for their friends in Rwanda.





In a recent visit to Rwanda, headteacher of St Katharine's Church of England Primary School in Bournemouth Nikki St John and Mat Bowen, Executive headteacher of The Oaks Federation in the New Forest joined members of the Diocesan Education team to work with Rwandan schools on 'Everyday Ubuntu' projects.

Here you can see a paperchain being made, containing links made in our schools and then add to Rwandan pupils. Some of the chains remained in Rwanda, others were brought back home.





Children and teachers also learnt songs and dances and read prayers created in both countries for each other, being the global community together in the spirit of Ubuntu.





The children from St Katharine's were very excited about the visit and enjoyed the preparations that included writing prayers, making paper chain links, recording messages and creating a dance entitled 'Love Grows'.

A group of children from school, led Sunday worship at St Nicholas' church, telling the congregation about the children's mission to be 'Global Neighbours'. Members of the congregation joined in writing prayers for Mrs St John's visit and the schools in Rwanda. 'We have been inspired by the Diocesan project, 'Everyday Ubuntu', and the children have really embraced the idea that 'we are one' and 'we are all connected,' said Mrs St John.





This wreath was created containing the names of parishioners and pupils in Rwanda and the Winchester Diocese. It was displayed in Winchester Cathedral and later at the Bishop of Winchester's annual tea party to thank school leaders.



In worship, children at Alverstoke Church of England Junior School enjoyed an update from their friends in Kitoo Primary School in Africa. Children learnt about the difference that they have made through their fundraising efforts. *'The water tank is full and pupils are now having clean water for drinking and washing their hands after the toilet. You have changed their lives.'*

Children explored a replica Kenyan slum dwelling constructed on the school site. Through enquiry, they



pondered and discussed questions such as 'What makes a home?' 'What does it mean to be rich?' 'Do your living arrangements shape your future?' Staff were amazed by pupils' deep thinking, maturity and insight when discussing such big questions.

The school's pupil Mission for the Week was to show 'Everyday Ubuntu' with the following question prompts:

- Who is open and available to others?
- Who celebrates the wins of others, without feeling jealous?
- Who tries hard to be part of our school community and give something positive back?
- Who lives the 'Be Kind' part of the school motto every day?

- ## Ubuntu learning features in Siams report

Whitewater Church of England Primary School received its Siams inspection this term. The inspector referred to the children's learning about Ubuntu in her final report: ***'Pupils articulate with confidence how living out the values of love, respect and courage relates to the vision. Older pupils relate this to the African concept of 'Ubuntu' which has been introduced to them by the local vicar. Pupils understand that this was a philosophy practised by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. Pupils relate this to treating one another fairly, with dignity and respect. Consequently, monitoring shows improvement in behaviour and engagement with learning.'***

New Forest Arts Centre Ubuntu trip

A group of twelve lucky pupils from Milford-on-Sea Church of England Primary School enjoyed a trip to the New Forest Arts Centre to take part in drama, dance and art workshops, alongside three other schools from the New Forest Learning Alliance (Brockenhurst, William Gilpin and South Baddesley schools). The children showed great enthusiasm and participation in the activities, even though some pushed them a little out of their comfort zone! The activities concentrated on the theme of Ubuntu and encouraged a sense of community and communication with others. It was clearly a fun afternoon, judging by the comments of the children:

'It was so fun! The best bit was when we had to speak gibberish!' Lewis, Year 6

'My favourite part was the drama because we met and got to know different people.' Isla, Year 6

'My favourite part was the art because we got to be totally creative and do whatever we wanted.' Amelie, Year 6



'I loved the dance because we got to make our own routine and perform at the end.' Posy, Year 5

'Our trip was part funded by local charity 'Olivia Inspires' and transport was provided by our partner schools mini buses. This community collaboration embodied our Ubuntu theme and we hope to do more work together in the future,' said headteacher Kate Crawford.

Cathedral Leavers Services

Keeping with tradition, children leaving our church schools were invited to cathedrals across the dioceses. Thousands of children enjoyed fun activities and services based on the Everyday Ubuntu project and held at Winchester Cathedral, Portsmouth Cathedral, Christchurch Priory and Romsey Abbey. Such is the popularity of these occasions, extra days were added at Winchester and Portsmouth this year. Almost 2500 pupils alone walked through the great West doors of Winchester Cathedral to celebrate their time at a Church of England School and to reflect upon the theme of Ubuntu.



The highlight of the days was the Ubuntu drumming which saw children beating out their school rhythms on drums and other percussion instruments, bringing their individual pieces together in one unique piece of music.

Children learnt how the shared experience of drumming in a group facilitates feelings of belonging, acceptance, safety, and care – qualities at the heart of the Ubuntu message.

The unique experience provided an opportunity for adults and children to feel connected with others and gain a sense of interpersonal support as the academic year ends and they move on. The Reverend Mike Griffiths, rector of East Winchester, led the drumming during the service, inviting pupils from each school to contribute a beat they had developed, showcasing how different drumbeats could work together. At Portsmouth Cathedral, Bishop Jonathan spoke about the importance of teamwork, helping the children to recognise that the highlights of their time in primary school had usually involved many other people being involved. Meanwhile, shoppers and tourists in Winchester reported that they could hear the drumming in the high street shops!

Before the services, in a variety of workshops, children were given the chance to make Lego creations, create prayer pyramids, act as archaeologists, re-enact the Coronation of HM the King, and take part in singing workshops led by musicians responsible for training the cathedral choristers. Pupils enjoyed guided tours of the cathedrals and all the historic buildings have to offer.







Every child at the leavers days received a special Everyday Ubuntu wristband blessed by the bishop.

Pupils at the Christchurch Priory service were treated to ice cream.

At the Portsmouth Cathedral service, students from The Bay Church of England school on the Isle of Wight supported workshops and did the reading in the service. It was the first time that students from the school had helped with the services and they received a special vote of thanks from Bishop Jonathan who chatted to pupils after the service.





Please share this booklet to encourage people in parishes where there is no Church of England school to consider partnership and ministry with schools.

A booklet containing a wealth of ideas, worship plans and resources to encourage schools and parishes to understand, discuss and develop the concept of Ubuntu are available on the diocesan websites:

<https://www.winchester.anglican.org/?s=%22Community+Reflection%22>
<https://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/education/resources/guidedreflections/>

Further reading

Children's Books about Ubuntu and Community

I am You: A Book About Ubuntu, Refiloe Moahloli.

All Are Welcome, Alexandra Penfold.

We Are All Neighbours, Alexandra Penfold.

Mixed, Aree Chung.

This is Our House Michael Rosen.

Along Came A Different, Tom McLaughlin.

Our Diversity Makes Us Stronger, Elizabeth Cole.

Kamala and Maya's Big Idea, Meena Harris.

We All Belong, Nathalie Goss.

Marley and the Family Band, Cedella Marley.

You Matter, Christian Robinson.

Books for Adults

Everyday Ubuntu, Mungi Ngomane.

Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me, Michael Battle.

Reconciliation, The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu, Michael Battle.

No Future Without Forgiveness, Desmond Tutu.

Ubuntu! An Inspiring Story About an African Tradition of Teamwork and Collaboration,
Stephen Lundin

Ubuntu, A Tribute to Humanity, Boakye Alpha

Ubuntu and the Everyday, James Ogude and Unifer Dyer (eds).

