

**AFFILIATION OF
CHRISTIAN GROUPS IN SCHOOLS**
Belonging to the Scripture Union Family



Scripture Union is a worldwide inter-denominational movement. In Northern Ireland at present there are Scripture Union groups in around 180 primary schools and in more than 100 post-primary schools. In our experience, these groups often play a vital role in helping children and young people come to faith and grow in Christian maturity. Amongst other things, they provide a place of BELONGING, a framework for BELIEVING and a forum for BECOMING the person God calls us to be.

Why Should We Affiliate?

We ask all those who run Christian groups in schools to consider affiliating to Scripture Union for the following reasons.

- We want to give those running Christian groups in schools an opportunity to identify with the aims, beliefs and values of Scripture Union internationally. It is hoped that this will provide **an agreed basis for unity** and make it possible for people from different churches to serve God together. It is also hoped that it will allay any concerns that principals may have in permitting a group to operate within the school or that parents may have in permitting their children to attend.
- We want those who share our aims, beliefs and values to have **a sense of belonging together** in the Scripture Union family and to benefit from the support and advice of SU staff, from the prayers of SU supporters and from opportunities to network in various ways with other SU leaders.
- As a movement, we also want to ensure that everything that happens in the name of Scripture Union **honours the Lord** and furthers His work.

How Do We Affiliate?

In order to be affiliated to Scripture Union the coordinator of the group must be approved both by the school principal and by Scripture Union.

In order to be approved by Scripture Union, anyone wishing to act as coordinator is required to apply online at www.sunivolunteers.co.uk. Applicants are informed in writing when their applications have been approved and a group may not be started until this approval has been given. If there are two or more separate groups within the school - e.g. junior and senior - the coordinator of each group is required to apply.

Once approved, the coordinator is required to ensure that:

- details of the group are entered correctly and updated each year as necessary at www.sunivolunteers.co.uk.
- all the adults regularly involved in the group are approved by the school principal in accordance with the DENI policy on child protection.

- all the adults involved in the group as leaders receive a copy of and are in agreement with our statement of Doctrinal and Policy Guidelines. (A leader is defined as anyone regularly involved in the planning and delivery of the spiritual programme.)
- all the adults regularly involved in the group receive a copy of and comply with our leaflet of Guidelines on Child Protection for SU Leaders.

These are the only conditions of affiliation. In particular, please note that there is no charge for affiliation, although any gift you or your group would like to give towards the work of Scripture Union would be greatly appreciated. Furthermore, you are under no obligation to follow any particular teaching programme.

If, for any reason, your group chooses not to affiliate please understand that you may not use the name or the logo of Scripture Union for your group.

What Next?

Whether affiliated or not, all groups **registered** with us receive information about:

- resources for Christian groups in schools;
- events for leaders and / or pupils;
- SU holiday activities.

Scripture Union staff members are available throughout the year to participate in meetings and events organised by Christian groups in schools. However, priority is given to affiliated groups.

For **affiliated** groups, we are also available to:

- help train and equip pupil leaders;
- recommend resources, share ideas and discuss issues of concern;
- help leaders establish links between their schools and the local churches.

Affiliated groups in primary schools receive a free handbook of information and advice about running a Scripture Union group.

In addition, the leaders of affiliated groups:

- are able to keep in touch with each other through our SU leaders network;
- benefit from the prayers of Scripture Union supporters throughout Northern Ireland;
- are entitled to 10% discount on anything they purchase from the Resource Centre.

We do hope that your group will choose to join with us as we invest in the lives of children and young people. This investment accrues for life!