



 **EXPLORE
TOGETHER**

Scripture Union Scotland serving Scotland's schools

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Introduction

Welcome to Explore Together – a guide to the opportunities and resources available to Scotland's schools from Scripture Union Scotland.

Scripture Union Scotland is part of the worldwide family of Scripture Union movements that began in the nineteenth century and now operate in over 130 countries across the world. In Scotland our focus is on a commitment to helping children and young people explore the Bible in a creative and open environment where they are able to draw their own conclusions about Jesus Christ.

With a team of 30 Regional and Associate Staff across the country, alongside a network of accredited volunteers, SU Scotland is well placed to support you in the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence.

Our staff are trained to work in primary and secondary contexts, and some also have experience of working alongside pupils with additional needs.

Our range of activities, outlined in this brochure, responds to Curriculum for Excellence. In these we deliver relevant, interactive, dynamic and inspiring sessions that build on the four capacities and seek to bring learning to life, all within the context of our Christian ethos.

For more detailed information please contact us (see back cover) or visit www.suscotland.org.uk/regional.



SU Groups

Throughout Scotland there are around 500 SU Groups running in primary and secondary schools. The groups take all shapes and forms: it can be a handful of pupils having a chat or a busy classroom of pupils engaged in a fun activity; it can be held at lunchtime or after school; it could meet in a classroom or in a gym hall.

“
*Please allow me to say how much I enjoy the SU Group at Perth High - I cannot believe I went to netball practice for two years instead of going to SU! I find the meetings every Wednesday lunchtime **FUN, ENCOURAGING, INSPIRING** and **HELPFUL**. I felt so accepted and at home in the group from the very first meeting I came to. There really is something special going on in our group.*

Hannah, Perth High School



However, they do have elements in common. They are all set up and run with the agreement of the School Management Team. In addition, all those who volunteer to lead groups (over 800 teachers, chaplains, parents, youth workers and senior pupils) are accredited by SU Scotland. For more on this accreditation please see page 12.

Through these groups SU Scotland seek to contribute positively to worship in the school informal curriculum as outlined in the RO circular (see page 8) – many groups have received favourable reports during HMIE inspections.

SU Scotland encourages each group to make Bible exploration central to their programme, and this can be done through games, drama, video and music clips, discussion, crafts and reflection. Programmes are designed to be inclusive (groups are open to pupils of any faith or none), creative, fun and appropriate for the age-group of those attending.

SU Scotland Regional and Associate Staff support volunteers who are working in schools, giving advice and helping them to run the groups as well as possible and within SU Scotland's policies and guidelines.

For senior pupils who lead groups (or help to lead with another adult), we find that it can be a very positive experience, promoting responsible citizenship and developing their leadership skills with a Christian foundation. We offer these young people training at our autumn Go Conference. This four day residential event is for S4–S6 pupils who want to explore their faith and role in their community at a deeper level. The time spent with like-minded peers, in interactive teaching and learning based on Christian values, is a key stage for young people to recognise their potential for leadership – and take their passion to make a difference back into local school situations.



SU Holidays and Weekends

SU Scotland is one of the largest providers of holidays for young people in Scotland, enabling around 3,000 children and young people to attend a residential event each year.

SU Holidays contribute significantly to the holistic development of the young person. Each young person is part of a small group, supervised by adult leaders, responsible for their care, nurture and safety. Trained instructors lead a range of indoor and outdoor activities. We often see young people grow in confidence as they overcome their self-imposed limits and encourage one another.

Each event has a programme of spiritual exploration, providing space for young people to question and consider their own response to the Christian faith.

During the Easter, summer and October school holidays we offer a wide range of multi-activity holidays. We also have specialist holidays (like water sports, music, drama) and a programme of popular Easter study holidays for pupils preparing for upcoming examinations where they will undertake around four hours of supervised study each day.

School SU Groups are also given opportunity to take part in regionally

organised weekend holidays. These are excellent events to build up the sense of community within a school SU Group. They also allow young people to meet up with others from their local area.

SU Scotland staff and volunteers welcome the opportunity to share with school pupils (e.g. during an assembly) about these competitively priced holidays. Many events have locally organised, accompanied travel to holiday venues. All bookings, communication and administration are done directly through SU Scotland offices.

More information on SU Holidays can be found at our holidays' website www.suholidays.org.uk or by speaking to your local SU Scotland contact.

*“Camp was **AMAZING** as it brought different kinds of people together & made them into a **FAMILY**. I've made friends I'll have for life.*



Religious Observance

Religious Observance is defined as: "Community acts which aim to support the spiritual development of all members of the school community and express and celebrate the shared values of the school community."

Religious Observance (RO) is a statutory Requirement in Scottish Education with guidance found in the letter sent to all head teachers in February 2011, Curriculum for Excellence – Provision of Religious Observance in Schools. This updates the guidance previously contained in Circular 1/2005.

Traditionally, the most common way to deliver RO has been through the school assembly. We are experienced in this format of delivery and also in more innovative methods, e.g. reflective spaces, which increase the sense of choice and participation for pupils. Whatever format is required, staff will work in line with the current requirements and expectations of the educational community in Scotland.

RO should be an event that all pupils can participate in with integrity. We work carefully to plan events that are sensitive to individual needs, whether they come from a faith or non-faith background, while using the resources of Scotland's strong Christian tradition.

At the heart of RO are the six senses, set out in the report from the Religious Observance Review Group:

Sensing mystery

Meaningfulness Values

A changed quality of awareness

Otherness Challenge

We work with Education Scotland's RO template which includes three elements: stimulus, guided reflection and response.

All RO events are planned in consultation with school management and we are pleased to submit a completed RO template to you prior to delivery of the event.



Within The Curriculum

SU Scotland has many years of experience of working with schools in Scotland. We have a creative team of workers throughout the country, all with different skills and expertise. Your local SU Scotland staff member and volunteers will be able to offer some of the following inputs within the curriculum, encouraging pupils to fulfil the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.

RME Classes

SU Scotland staff members are happy to take part in RME lessons, encouraging successful learners to think creatively and make reasoned evaluations of what they hear. They may be able to teach a class on specific aspects of Christianity, answer questions on what Christians believe on moral or social issues, or facilitate class or group discussions.

Bible Alive

Bible Alive is a programme aimed at P5–P7 children which takes them through the whole story of the Bible in a series of interactive lessons using storytelling, music, drama, props, costumes, video clips, quizzes and activities. Bible Alive is held together by “Rhyme & Sign”, a set of rhyming couplets which recap the storyline of the Bible accompanied by British Sign Language signs.

Exploring the Christian Festivals

Christmas and Easter – what are they all about? SU Scotland, in partnership with local churches, uses a number of interactive resources to work with your pupils to explore these Festivals.

Transition Work

Moving from primary to secondary school is a big step in a child’s development. Using the recently updated *It’s Your Move* resource, P7 pupils have an opportunity to discuss their excitement and worries about their move. Experienced practitioners can guide discussions, pointing to biblical examples of similar ‘big’ experiences that were overcome, so encouraging pupils to be more confident about the move to secondary school.

Personal Search Day / Week

A team from SU Scotland will feed into many aspects of the curriculum and help young people to examine their role as responsible and global citizens, understand Christian beliefs and communicate their own as effective contributors. Have a break from the normal timetable and allow our team, which may include a band and drama group, to work with your school or a year group for a day or a week. Examples of topics that have been explored include “Freedom” and “It’s my life!”

“
Teaching staff who were present were amazed at the way in which the children listened and remembered as well as the interactive nature of the lessons. I personally have not seen anything better in this area of the curriculum.
”

Senior Teacher

Working with Others

SU Scotland is primarily a volunteer movement and relies on senior pupils, youth workers, parents or volunteers from local churches to run SU Groups and other events in schools.

Every volunteer is required to undergo an initial vetting process – filling in a detailed application form and obtaining two references – which is then updated each year. Overall group leaders are accredited in the same way and also have an informal interview. Once a volunteer has been accredited by SU Scotland, they are required to become members of the PVG scheme before being authorised to take part in events under the auspices of SU Scotland.

Volunteer leaders are supported by SU Scotland's Regional and Associate Workers, who provide appropriate resources, visit occasionally to see the volunteer in action, identify training needs and discuss with the volunteer how things are going. Pupil leaders are encouraged to attend SU Scotland's leadership training weekend in October, where they will have opportunity to meet other senior pupils fulfilling a similar role, and participate in workshops focussing on the issues around leading an SU event in school.

SU Scotland works with churches in a community, encouraging them to engage with the local school and find out how they might actively support the school community. The encouragement is for churches to think beyond the traditional roles of providing input to RO and RME – perhaps discovering if the school would welcome support in a variety of other ways, such as listening to readers in a primary school or offering ideas for work experience placements to a secondary school.

Chaplaincy

Many schools in Scotland have a chaplain or a chaplaincy team, appointed at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Chaplains may comprise of local ministers, youth workers or parents and the roles played by them can be very varied.

Traditionally, chaplains have been involved in delivering RO and assisting in RME. Many schools are discovering the benefit of chaplains who are available to have meals with pupils in the school canteen, accompany pupils on school trips or be co-opted onto the Parent Council.

As the chaplain's relationship with the school is deepened so their ability to offer pastoral support is facilitated.

A number of SU Scotland's Regional and Associate Workers are involved in school chaplaincy teams. In areas where only one denomination is represented, the presence on a chaplaincy team of an interdenominational organisation like SU Scotland enables the team to be more ecumenical, as encouraged by government guidelines.

We have been involved in both formal and informal training and updating of chaplains throughout Scotland. SU Scotland attempts to keep abreast of the latest developments in education and to pass on the information and skills needed to keep chaplains and chaplaincy teams relevant – so that they are able to serve their school effectively.



Developing Leadership Skills

SU Scotland is one of a relatively small number of organisations recognised by YouthLink Scotland as deliberately and positively contributing to the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence in partnership with schools. Our *COMMISSION* programme enables senior pupils to participate in residential training before joining teams at events we are running.

The training develops transferrable abilities such as presentation skills, caring for others, leading games and team work. This instruction, along with mentoring while on placement, provides a learning environment that supports key aspects of Health and Well-being such as:

- **Developing self-awareness, self-worth and respect for others**
- **Experiencing personal achievement and building resilience and confidence**
- **Learning how to give appropriate support to those who can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others**

A follow up weekend helps participants to reflect on their strengths and make informed choices when planning their next steps – including involvement back in their school such as being prefects, Duke of Edinburgh participants or leading a club within the informal curriculum.



SU Scotland can help you realise the potential of outdoor learning with two activity centres to choose from – Lendrick Muir in the heart of Scotland, near Kinross and Alltnacriche in the Cairngorms National Park, near Aviemore.

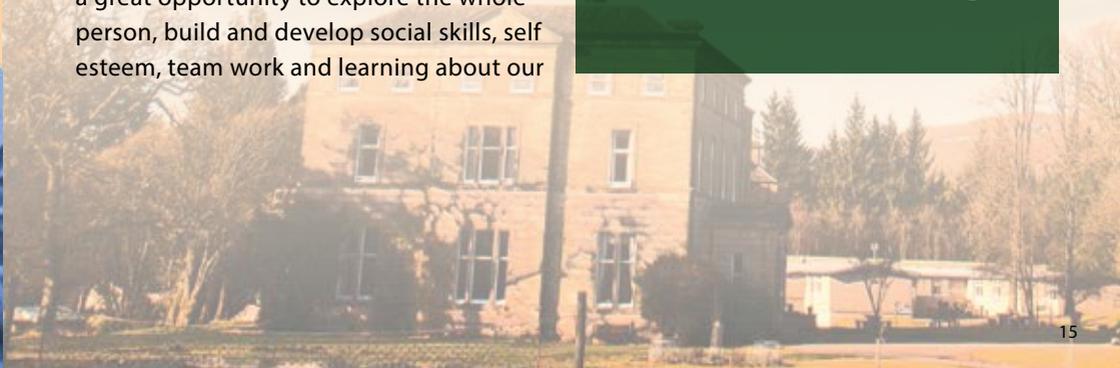
Your school will discover a relevant and dynamic approach to the curriculum that brings outdoor learning to life. Our team of qualified outdoor activity instructors and experienced staff are committed to delivering residential and away-day experiences that will delight, inform and inspire. We can offer a wide range of activities to meet the educational needs of your primary or secondary pupils and, as we build the programme around your expected outcomes, we can agree a price to match.

We believe that a residential experience is a great opportunity to explore the whole person, build and develop social skills, self esteem, team work and learning about our

environment – all within the framework of Curriculum for Excellence.

Both of our centres deliver the John Muir Award and can also tailor packages to focus on particular curriculum areas, all whilst learning outdoors.

For more information or details on how to book anything from a single day non-residential through to a five day stay, please visit www.classroomoutdoors.org.uk.



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