



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

OCTOBER 2026

RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

RESOURCES

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CREDITS

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

INTRODUCTION

This year marks the 39th anniversary of Black History Month (BHM) in Britain. Unlike in the United States, where it is observed in February, BHM in this country takes place every October. It was first organised in 1987, led by Ghanaian analyst and community activist Akyaaba Addai-Sebo, with the aim of recognizing the contributions of Black communities and promoting a more inclusive understanding of British history. As such, BHM provides an opportunity to recognise, celebrate, and better understand the contributions, experiences, and history of Black people in Britain. There is little doubt that their stories have often been overlooked in mainstream education.

From a Christian perspective, BHM is an excellent way of celebrating the way God has enabled Black women, men and children to use their God-given giftings to revitalise the Church in this country. Much like Britain and Ireland per se, the Church is a better place because of the contributions of Black people.

Also, what may have been the preserve of Black communities, is now the property of all communities. While BHM naturally resonates with Black communities, it undoubtedly belongs to everyone because it is British history, rather than a separate topic, and as such, all should participate in this month-long activity. What's more, those topics and themes explored in BHM can be also be studied throughout the year; there's no reason to limit your interest in this subject to just one month!

Some of its main purposes include:

- Celebrating contributions: BHM highlights the achievements of Black Britons in areas such as science, politics, medicine, literature, business, sport, music, and the arts. Figures like Mary Seacole, Diane Abbott MP, Benjamin Zephaniah, and Afua Hirsch etc, are among those whose work has had a lasting impact.
- Teaching a fuller history: BHM encourages us to learn more about Britain's long and complex relationship with Africa and the Caribbean, including the Black folks who lived on these shores in Roman times, as well as the Elizabethan period and Edward and Victorian eras., and the contributions of Black communities throughout British history. It also explores occurrences such as the Transatlantic African chattel enslavement, abolition, migration, the British Empire, and more recent events such as the arrival of the Empire Windrush and the experiences of the Windrush generation.
- Promoting inclusion: BHM is used by schools, workplaces, museums, libraries, and community organisations to encourage conversations about diversity, identity, belonging, and equal opportunity. It can help people from different backgrounds learn from one another.
- Addressing inequality: BHM also provides space to discuss ongoing issues such as racial discrimination, health inequalities, educational attainment gaps, and representation in public life. While BHM is celebratory, it also acknowledges challenges that continue to affect many Black communities.
- Inspiring future generations: Finally, by showcasing role models and achievements, BHM can encourage young people to pursue their ambitions and see themselves represented in British history and contemporary society.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

SERMON

Richard Reddie
Director of Justice and Inclusion, CTBI

Title: “Standing on the Shoulders of those of Faith”

Bible passage: Hebrews 12:1–2 (NIV)

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders... and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus.”

Today, we gather not only to worship our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but also to celebrate Black History Month—a time to remember, honour, and give thanks for the lives, sacrifices, and victories of those who came before us, and those who continue to blaze a trail on these shores.

Black history is not merely a collection of dates and events; it’s a testimony of God’s sustaining grace. It is a witness that even in some of the bleakest of times, God has remained faithful.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us that we are surrounded by a “great cloud of witnesses”, who are the heroes and sheroes of Scripture such as Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Ruth, David, and Esther. But today, we also remember those whose lives reflected that same faith through struggle and perseverance.

The history of Black folks on these shores is one of struggle, success and spirituality. The last term is vital

because these women and men held tightly onto a God who was just and merciful. As such, they sang songs of hope while carrying heavy burdens, and they prayed when there seemed to be no answers. Yet, they always believed God’s promises even when circumstances suggested otherwise.

Their faith reminds us of Joseph, who was betrayed but not abandoned. Their courage reminds us of Moses, who stood before Pharaoh declaring, “Let my people go.” Their determination reminds us of Joshua, who trusted God enough to march around impossible walls. Most importantly, their hope points us to Jesus Christ, who overcame sin and death and offers freedom that no earthly power can take away.

It is true that every generation has its own race to run. The generations before us fought for freedom, rights, dignity, and equal opportunity. Their sacrifices created doors that many of us now walk through, often without a second thought.

The question for us is:
What race has God called us to run?

God calls us to continue building communities rooted in love rather than division. God calls us to

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pursue justice with humility. God calls us to mentor young people, so they know both their history and their identity in Christ. God calls us to care for those who are hurting, to speak truth with compassion, and to be peacemakers in a world filled with conflict.

Micah 6:8 reminds us:

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Justice without love becomes harsh. Love without justice becomes passive. But when we walk humbly with God, he teaches us to live both faithfully and courageously. As Christians, Black History Month is ultimately about remembering God’s faithfulness across generations.

When families prayed together, God sustained them. When churches became centres of hope, God strengthened them. When communities refused to surrender their dignity, God walked beside them. The same God who carried our ancestors is carrying us today.

Some of us are facing personal battles. Some are carrying grief. Some are struggling financially. Some are praying for healing.

Some are waiting for doors to open. Remember this: if God was faithful then, He is faithful now. Hebrews tells us to fix our eyes on Jesus—not on fear, not on discouragement, not on what the world says, but on Christ. History teaches us that difficult seasons do not have the final word. The cross looked like defeat.

The tomb looked like the end. But on the third day, Jesus rose with all power in His hands.

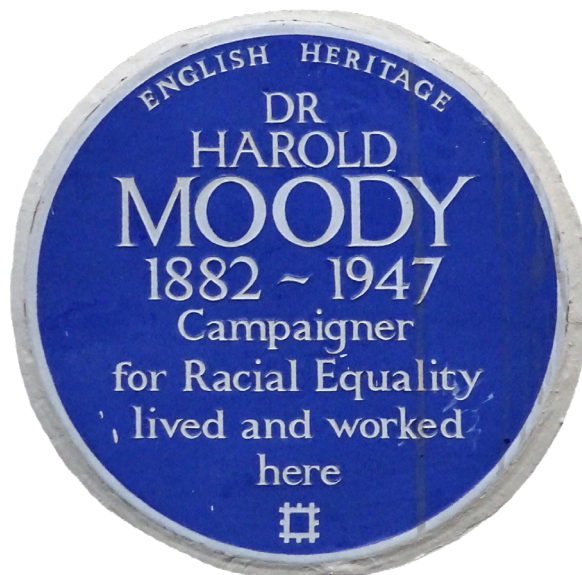
That resurrection hope is the foundation of our faith.

So today we celebrate more than achievements. We celebrate God’s faithfulness. We celebrate resilient faith. We celebrate hope that refused to die. We celebrate a Saviour who continues to lead his people forward. Today, may we honour those who came before us not only with our words, but with our lives. May we live with integrity; may we serve with compassion; may we pursue justice; may we love our neighbours and may we raise the next generation in faith.

And may future generations look back and say that we, too, trusted God, stood for what was right, and left a legacy of faith. For our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Amen.

“The generations before us fought for freedom, rights, dignity, and equal opportunity. Their sacrifices created doors that many of us now walk through, often without a second thought.”



Dr Harold Moody has been described as Britain’s version of Dr Martin Luther King. See CTBI’s Black History Month resources for 2025 for full details of his life and achievements.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH



PRAYERS, BIBLE READINGS, SONGS, POEM, AND ACTIVITIES

PRAYERS

Opening Prayer

God of all nations,

We thank you for the rich heritage, faith, resilience, and achievements of Black British people throughout history.

We remember those who endured injustice, challenged inequality, and worked tirelessly to build a more just and compassionate society.

May their courage inspire us to value every person as made in your image.

Help us to celebrate diversity, stand against racism in all its forms, and work together for justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Unite us in love, strengthen us in hope, and guide us to build communities where everyone can flourish.

This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God,

We give thanks for the generations of Black women and men whose gifts have enriched Britain through faith, culture, education, science, the arts, public service, and community leadership.

Thank you for their perseverance in the face of hardship and discrimination.

May we honour their stories, learn from their experiences, and continue the work of building a society marked by dignity, equality, and mutual respect.

Fill us with gratitude and a commitment to justice.

Amen.

Prayer for Justice and Unity

God of justice,

Open our eyes to recognise prejudice wherever it exists.

Give us the courage to challenge injustice with wisdom and grace.

Heal the wounds caused by racism and discrimination.

Bring reconciliation where there is division, understanding where there is fear, and hope where there is discouragement.

Teach us to listen well, speak truth with love, and walk humbly with one another.

May your peace reign in our hearts, our communities, and our nation.

Amen.

Prayer for Young People

Gracious God,

Bless the young people of today.

Inspire them through the stories of Black British pioneers and leaders who have shaped our nation with courage, excellence, and faith.

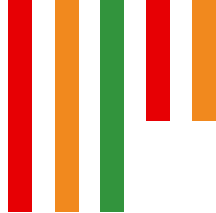
Give them confidence in their identity, strength to overcome obstacles, and compassion to serve others.

May they grow into leaders who seek justice, value diversity, and reflect your love in all they do.

Amen.

Closing Blessing

May the God who created us in diversity, the Christ who calls us to love one another,



and the Holy Spirit who empowers us for justice and peace,
bless us and keep us.
May we go forward celebrating every culture, honouring every story, and working together for a future of hope, equality, and reconciliation.
Amen.

HYMNS AND WORSHIP SONGS

For a Black History Month church service in Britain and Ireland, it's often meaningful to include a blend of traditional hymns, African and Caribbean-influenced worship songs, spirituals, and contemporary gospel that celebrate God's faithfulness, justice, hope, and the contributions of Black Christians to the Church. This combination reflects both the rich heritage of 'Black Majority Churches', and the diverse worship traditions found across Black British congregations, while keeping Christ at the centre of the celebration.

Traditional Hymns

These are widely sung in churches on these shores, and fit well with Black History Month themes:

- Great Is Thy Faithfulness
- Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer (Bread of Heaven)
- Amazing Grace
- And Can It Be
- Blessed Assurance
- To God Be the Glory
- The Church's One Foundation (unity in Christ)
- For the Healing of the Nations (justice and reconciliation)
- Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You

Spirituals

These honour the faith and resilience of enslaved Africans:

- Lift Every Voice and Sing (often called the Black National Anthem)
- Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
- Go Down, Moses
- Steal Away
- There Is a Balm in Gilead
- He's Got the Whole World in His Hands
- This Little Light of Mine
- Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho

Contemporary Gospel and Worship

Popular in many Black Majority Churches in Britain:

- Way Maker – Sinach
- Imela – Nathaniel Bassey ft. Enitan Adaba
- Excess Love – Mercy Chinwo
- You Are Great – Steve Crown
- Our God Is Greater
- How Great Is Our God
- 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)
- The Blessing
- Goodness of God

Popular Caribbean Gospel songs

These songs are popular in many British Caribbean churches:

- Lean on Me (gospel arrangement)
- Order My Steps
- Total Praise – Richard Smallwood
- Jesus Is the Sweetest Name I Know
- Victory Is Mine
- Praise Is What I Do – William Murphy

Songs on Justice, Unity and Hope

Suitable for reflecting on Black History Month and God's call to justice:

- Bind Us Together
- In Christ Alone
- The Servant King
- Make Me a Channel of Your Peace
- Let There Be Peace on Earth
- We Are One in the Bond of Love

Suggested Order of Service

1. Processional: Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer
2. Opening Praise: Way Maker
3. Hymn: Amazing Grace
4. Reflection: Lift Every Voice and Sing
5. Offertory: Great Is Thy Faithfulness
6. Communion: There Is a Balm in Gilead
7. Closing Praise: Total Praise
8. Recessional: This Little Light of Mine

BIBLE READINGS

Below is a selection of Bible passages that lend themselves to a sermon theme for Black History Month.

- Exodus 32: 1, 7-14
- Deuteronomy 6:1-9
- Psalm 89
- Matthew 25: 31-46
- Luke 15: 1-10
- 1 Timothy 1: 12-17

POEM

We walk on streets where stories bloom,
Beyond the pages, beyond the room.
With every step, with every name,
We honour courage, hope, and flame.

From Windrush dreams across the sea,
To voices raised for liberty,

Hands that healed and minds that led,
Building futures where others tread.
Artists painted truth in song,
Writers showed where we belong.
Teachers, nurses, workers, all—
Standing proud, refusing to fall.

History lives in every face,
Every culture, every place.
Not just one month, not just one day,
But every step along the way.

Together we remember, learn, and grow,
So every child will always know:
Black British history shines so bright,
A beacon of courage, hope, and light.

ACTIVITIES

Activities for Adults

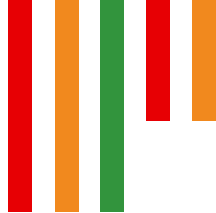
Learn through history

Attend talks or panel discussions on topics such as:

- The Black Tudors
- The Black Edwardians
- The Black Victorians
- The Windrush generation
- Black British civil rights movements
- Contributions of Black Britons to science, healthcare, arts, and politics
- Join a book club featuring works by Black British authors.
- Watch documentaries followed by a group discussion.

Cultural sites

- Explore museums and exhibitions highlighting Black British history.
- Take a guided walking tour focused on Black



history in your town or city.

- Visit local archives or libraries hosting Black History Month displays.

Creative workshops

- African and Caribbean cooking classes.
- Spoken word or poetry workshops.
- Drumming or music sessions exploring African and Caribbean traditions.
- Art workshops inspired by Black British artists.
- Textile, fashion, or headwrap workshops.
- Film and discussion nights

Host a screening followed by facilitated conversation.

Themes could include:

- Identity and belonging.
- Migration.
- Community activism.
- Black British music and culture.
- Race and equality in modern Britain.
- Community engagement.
- Volunteer with organisations supporting Black communities.
- Support Black-owned businesses by organising a shopping or dining event.
- Invite local entrepreneurs to share their experiences.
- Interactive activities.

Black history quiz

- Timeline challenge where teams arrange key events in chronological order.
- “Guess Who?” game featuring influential Black Britons.
- Employee storytelling events.
- Guest speakers from the Black communities.
- Inclusive leadership workshops.
- Showcase Black-owned suppliers or businesses.

- Dance workshops (such as Soca, Afro dance, or Caribbean folk dance).
- Community networking events.
- Book recommendations for discussion.

Consider reading works by authors such as:

- David Olusoga
- Bernardine Evaristo
- Reni Eddo-Lodge
- Akala
- Benjamin Zephaniah

Discussion prompts

- Which overlooked figures have shaped Britain?
- How has Black British culture influenced music, fashion, literature, and sport?
- What can we learn from past British civil rights campaigns?
- How can communities continue to promote inclusion throughout the year?

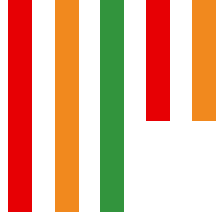
Activities for Children

Here are some Black British History Month activities for children that combine learning with creativity. Many of these activities can be adapted for different age groups.

1. Learn About Black British Heroes

Introduce children to influential Black Britons, such as:

- Mary Seacole
- Walter Tull
- Diane Abbott
- John Blanke
- Floella Benjamin
- Lenny Henry
- Stormzy
- Benjamin Zephaniah



Activity: Create fact cards or mini posters about each person

2. Story Time

Read children's books by Black British authors (See the 'Resources' section for children) or featuring Black British characters, then discuss:

- What did you learn?
- Who inspired you?
- How is the story connected to Britain?

3. Timeline Challenge

Create a large timeline showing important moments in Black British history, including:

- Roman Britain
- Tudor England
- Black Georgians
- Black Victorians
- The Abolition of Transatlantic African chattel enslavement
- The arrival of the Empire Windrush
- Modern achievements in sports, science, arts, and politics

Children can add pictures and drawings.

4. Art Inspired by Black British Culture

Invite children to:

- Design a collage celebrating diversity.
- Create portraits of inspirational Black Britons.
- Make flags representing their own heritage and discuss what makes Britain multi-ethnic.

5. Music Around Britain

Listen to music by Black British artists from genres such as:

- Reggae
- Grime

- Soul
- Afrobeats
- Jazz

Talk about how these styles have influenced British culture.

6. Food and Culture Day

Explore foods connected to Black communities in Britain, such as:

- Jamaican patties
- Jollof rice
- Plantain
- Curry goat
- Puff-puff

Children can locate the countries of origin on a world map.

7. Poetry Workshop

Read poems by Black British poets and encourage children to write a poem about:

- Kindness
- Identity
- Family
- Community
- Belonging

8. "I Have a Dream" Activity

Ask children:

- What change would you like to see in your school or community?
- What makes everyone feel included?

They can write or draw their ideas.

9. Heritage Map

Children create a map showing:

- Where their family comes from

- Languages they speak
- Favourite traditions

This celebrates everyone's background.

10. Quiz or Treasure Hunt

Create clues based on Black British history.
For example:

- Who was the first Black woman elected to Parliament?
- Which famous nurse cared for soldiers during the Crimean War?
- Who served as a trumpeter in the Tudor court?

11. Drama and Role Play

Children can act as historical figures and give a short speech beginning:

"Hello, my name is... and this is why I'm remembered."

12. Kindness Tree

Write acts of kindness, inclusion, and respect on paper leaves and attach them to a classroom tree to reinforce the values explored during the month. These activities help children understand that Black British history is an integral part of Britain's history while encouraging curiosity, creativity, and respect for different cultures and experiences.

RESOURCES FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Encourage those in your congregation to find out more about the noted figures within Black communities in Britain and Ireland. During the week they could research and write something about an individual – two paragraphs – which they could read out in front of the church, or in Sunday School, every Sunday during Black History Month. The people could include:

- Black British scientists such as Prof. Geoff Palmer, Dr Margaret Aderin-Pocock, Dr Kevin Fenton, Dame Elizabeth Anionwu, Dr Donald Palmer, Dr Nira Chamberlain, Dr Charlotte Armah et al.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES

ONLINE

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

www.ctbi.org.uk

CTBI's racial justice resources provide a fulsome understanding of this annual celebration.

Baptist Union. Visions of Colour

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/379637/Visions_of_Colour.aspx

The Baptist Union's Visions of Colour resource contains material that can be used throughout the year, including Black History Month.

Keep the Faith

<https://www.keepthefaitth.co.uk/>

Keep the Faith magazine produces an annual Black History Month special which is available in October.

BOOKS

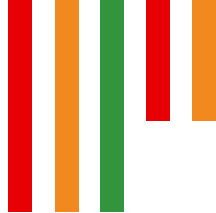
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Reddie, Richard. *Race for Justice: The struggle for equality and inclusion in British and Irish churches*. Monarch Books. 2022.

Sturge, Mark. *Look What the Lord Has Done!: An Exploration of Black Christian Faith in Britain*. Scripture Union Publishing. 2005.

Smith, S.A. *British Black Gospel: The foundations of this vibrant UK sound*. Monarch Books. 2009.



SECULAR RESOURCES

BOOKS FOR ADULTS

Adi. Hakim. *Black Voices on Britain: Selected Writings*. Macmillan Collector's Library. 2022.

Bourne, Stephen. *Black Poppies: Britain's Black Community and the Great War*. The History Press. 2nd Ed. 2019.

Bourne, Stephen. *Under Fire: Black Britain in Wartime 1939–45*. The History Press. 2020.

Dabydeen, David, Gilmore, John and Jones, Cecilia. *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*. Oxford University Press. 2007.

Fryer, Peter. *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*. Pluto Press. 2018.

Gilroy, Paul and Hall, Stuart. *Black Britain: A Photographic History*. Paperback. Saqi Books. 2011.

Hudson, Simon. *History Through the Black Experience*. New Generation Publishing. 2023.

Kaufmann, Miranda. *Black Tudors: The Untold Story*. One World Press. 2018.

McMillan, Michael. *The Front Room: Diaspora Migrant Aesthetics in the Home*. Lund Humphries Publishers Ltd: Revised edition. 2023.

Mussai, Renée. *Black Chronicles: Photography, Race and Difference in Victorian Britain*. Thames and Hudson. 2025.

Nanton, Avril and Burton, Jody. *Black London: History, Art & Culture in Over 120 Places*. Inkspire. 2021.

Ohajuru, Michael L. *Who is John Blanke? Historians and Artists Reimagine the Black Tudor Trumpeter*. Canbury. 2025.

Olusoga, David. *Black and British: A Forgotten History*. Picador. 2021.

Olusoga, David. *The Black History Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained*. DK Publishers. 2021.

Renfrew, Barry. *Britain's Black Regiments: Fighting for Empire and Equality*. The History Press. 2020.

Robinson, Jane. *Mary Seacole: The Charismatic Black Nurse who became a heroine of the Crimea*. Constable. 2004.

Vernon, Patrick and Osborne, Angelina. *100 Great Black Britons*. Robinson. 2021.

The Voice. *40 Years of Black British Lives*. Ebury Press. 2022.

Walker, Robin, Marshall, Vanika, Berry, Paula and Vaughn, Anthony. *Black British History: Black Influences on British Culture (1948 to 2016): 32 Hours of Teaching and Learning Material for Parents, Guardians, and Teachers of Secondary School Students*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. 2017.

Warner, Tony. *Black History Walks*. Jacaranda Books. 2022.

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Atinuke and Nebechi, Kingsley. *Brilliant Black British History*. Bloomsbury Children's Books. 2024.

Monique M. Ingalls. *Black British Gospel Music: From the Windrush Generation to Black Lives Matter*. 1st ed. Routledge. 2024.

Harper, Mireille. *Timelines from Black History: Leaders, Legends, Legacies*. DK Children. 2020.

Harrison, Vashti. *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History*. Puffin. 2019.

Mensah, Millie. *The Black Curriculum Migration: Journeys Through Black British History*. DK Children. 2022.

Narjee, Lania. *The Black Curriculum Legacies: Black British Pioneers*. DK Children. 2022.

Nubia, Onyeka. *Blackamoors: Africans in Tudor England, Their Presence, Status and Origins*. Narrative Eye. 2013.

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