

Back2School

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS



If your church does an early fall Blessing of the Backpacks as part of worship, we have a potential add in, based on a parent resource that Passport has provided to the parents of our campers this summer. If you haven't done a Backpack blessing, you might consider adding it to a moment of worship sometime in August. We suggest that you could promote this time of blessing so students know to bring their backpacks to church. Here are a few suggestions for how this time of blessing could happen, but feel free to adapt to your worship style.

- 1 At the appropriate time in the service, invite all children and youth to come forward with their backpacks.
- 2 Tell them that this time of blessing is to remind them that their church family loves them and supports them as they begin a new school year.
- 3 Read (or have a student read) **Galatians 5:22–23**.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

- 4 Tell the students that this verse is the verse that you and the church would like to pray over them today and continue to pray throughout the school year. Then say something like, *We hope and pray that this year, during the good days and the challenging days, you will grow in your faith as you learn. We hope that you will see ways to share some of these fruits of the Spirit so that they become more a part of your faith and how you live your life each day.*
- 5 Invite everyone to join you in blessing the students by using the provided **Prayer of Blessing**.
- 6 Have some volunteers assist you in distributing the fruit buttons that you got at camp. (If you did not take buttons while at camp, you may request buttons or artwork from Passport to create your own card or sticker)
- 7 **If the parents have used the Discussion Sheet before the service:**
 - a. Ask the students to remember which fruit of the Spirit they chose. Ask them to place the button on their backpacks to remind them of the fruit of the Spirit that they have chosen to ask God to grow in them this year.
 - b. Tell them that their church family will be praying for them as they head back to school.
- 8 **If the parents have NOT used the Discussion Sheets yet:**
 - a. Let the students know a Discussion Sheet is available to use with their parent or guardian. After that discussion, they will be asked to identify one of those fruits of the Spirit that they can “take to school with them each day.” Encourage the parents to spend a few minutes doing the Discussion Sheet activity later today so they can decide which fruit of the Spirit they might pack in their backpack this year.
 - b. Instruct them to be reminded each day as they see the button that the fruit of the Spirit and the prayers of their families and congregation are packed in their backpacks along with their books and school supplies—they carry them with them each day.
- 9 Dismiss them to return to their seats with their backpacks.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

For the Blessing of the Backpacks



Leader: God, we thank you for each student that is standing before us today with their backpacks. We have watched them grow and mature and learn more about you in the past. We pray for and bless them as they begin a new school year. May their faith and lives reflect the fruit of the Spirit as they learn, have fun, meet new friends, and experience all this new school year.

Church Staff: May you *love* in a way that reflects Jesus in all you do, finding *joy* in learning and growing in school, in your faith, and in your relationships with others. Even during difficult days, may you demonstrate the *peace* that comes from Jesus.

Family Members: As the school year begins, may you discover *patience* for yourself and others. When facing harsh words or actions, may you respond with *kindness*. May you act out of the true *goodness* of the heart and reflect the Fruits of the Spirit as you interact with others.

Congregation: In all you do, may you show *faithfulness* to what you have learned at home and church. May your words and actions show *gentleness* toward yourself and others. Each day, may you discover *self-control* as you make choices that will help you grow at school, at home, and in your faith.

Leader: We bless you today...

Congregation: We promise to pray for you as you start a new school year.

Leader: Thanks be to God.

All: Amen.

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A CONVERSATION STARTER

FOR FAMILIES WITH TEENS HEADED

Back2School



Conversations about faith are important! Here are four questions for a conversation about faith with your student- don't worry about getting it all correct! Just have fun talking and thinking together.

- 1 What's in Your Backpack?** Grab your backpack from last school year and go through it together. What's the funniest or weirdest thing you found in it?
- 2 How are you feeling about going back to school?** (Excited? Nervous? Disappointed summer is over? Ready for class and extracurricular activities?) What are some things that will be familiar? What are some things that you are looking forward to?
- 3 In what ways will school be different for you this year?** (New school building, new teachers, new locker, being upperclassmen)
- 4 Which fruit of the spirit will you pack in your backpack?**
Read Galatians 5:22-23. It says: **"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."**

These are nine things that the family of God are known for! Just like you need school supplies each year, there are other things that you might pack as well. Which Fruits of the Spirit would you choose to take to school this year? For example, do you need to take some kindness with you this year.



If your teenager received a button from your church, then discuss how the button being placed on their backpack can remind them of the "fruit" they can take with them each day. Pray together about what they have chosen to take with them back to school.

There are 7 days of devotion on this same theme at www.d365.org, the first week of August. You can find them later by searching past devotions. Each devotion will provide you with a question your family could discuss together.

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A CONVERSATION STARTER

FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN HEADED

Back2School

Conversations about faith are important! Here are four questions to start a conversation about faith with your child- don't worry about getting it all correct! Just have fun talking and thinking together.

1

What's in Your Backpack? Grab your backpack from last school year and go through it together. What's the funniest or weirdest thing you found in it?

2

How much have you grown since last year? Compare your child's current height to a mark from last year or have them try on last year's shoes to see if they fit. You have also grown inside—you are smarter, stronger, better at solving problems, and more determined. What are some other ways you have grown?

3

How are you feeling about going back to school? (Excited? Nervous? Something else?) What are some things that will be new? What are some things that will be familiar?

4

Which fruit of the spirit will you pack in your backpack?

Read Galatians 5:22–23. It says: **"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."**

These are nine things that the family of God are known for! Just like you need school supplies each year, there are other things that you might pack as well. Which fruit of the spirit would you choose to take with you to school? Or which of these is a response to your feelings about going back to school? If you are excited, maybe choose joy! If you are nervous maybe pick love or peace.



If your child received a button from your church, discuss how the button being placed on their backpack can remind them of the "fruit" they can take with them each day. Pray together about what they have chosen to take with them back to school.

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