



Blessing of the Backpacks

Invite the students to join you down front with their backpacks. Read (or have a student read) Micah 6:8. "What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Tell the students that you and the church would like to pray over them today using this verse. And that we will 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 justice, kindness, and humbleness will become your way of life as you follow God each day.

Invite everyone to join you in blessing the students by using the provided **Prayer of Blessing**.

Have some volunteers assist you in distributing the 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 button, card, or sticker.)

If the parents have used the Discussion Sheet before the service:

1. Ask the students to remember what ideas they came up with for doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly. Ask them to place a button on their backpacks to remind them of how they can live out justice, kindness, and humbleness, the way of life God calls us to live.
2. Tell them that their church family will be praying for them as they head back to school.

If the parents have NOT used the Discussion Sheets yet:

1. Let the students know a Discussion Sheet is available to use with their parent or guardian. After that discussion, they will be able to identify some specific ideas for doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly each day. Encourage the parents to spend a few minutes doing the Discussion Sheet activity later today so they can decide one idea to implement this week.
2. Invite them to remember when they see the button on their backpacks that they carry much more than their books and school supplies. They carry with them justice, kindness, humbleness, and the prayers of their families and congregation.

Invite them to return to their seats with their backpacks.



August 5-11, 2024
Seven days of devotions
for Back2School
d365.org

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Prayer of Blessings

Leader: God, we thank you for each student who is here today with their backpacks. You love them no matter what and ask them to follow you. 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 they follow your ways as they learn, have fun, meet new friends, and experience this new year. As they begin this year, what do you ask of them?

Church Staff: To *do justice*: may they stand up for others. May they look for needs around them and offer compassion and care. As they see friends and meet new people, may they show your great love and help everyone feel welcome and included.

Family Members: To *love kindness*: may they be eager to help their friends, families, and everyone they meet, not because they have to help, but because they want to show kindness. May they share encouragement and compassion.

Congregation: To *walk humbly* with God: may they journey with you each day. May they be thankful, respectful of others, and willing to listen. May they be gracious when things are good and when things are tough. May they not take themselves too seriously but take your ways seriously.

Leader: We bless you today as you seek to *do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly* with God.

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 STUDENTS GOING *Back2School*

Conversations about faith are important! As your children get ready to head back to school, here are some questions leading to a conversation about kindness, humbleness, and acting on behalf of others. Don't worry about getting it all correct - just have fun talking and thinking together!

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?

How are you feeling about going back to school?

What are some things that will be familiar? In what ways will school be different for you this year? What are you looking forward to?

What will you pack in your backpack?

This year, as you pack your notebooks and water bottles, consider Micah 6:8 which says: "What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Justice, kindness, and humbleness: together, these three things make up the way of life God calls us to live. What do these words have to do with going back to school?

We do justice by speaking up for others, noticing and meeting needs, and helping everyone feel included.

- What are some practical ways you can do justice this school year?
 - Here are some ideas: Speak up for someone being bullied, learn about needs in your community and find a way to help, creation care like picking up trash or working in a community garden.

We show that we love kindness by being friendly, unselfish, and considerate of others.

- What are three ways you can show kindness to others this year?
 - Here are some suggestions: Invite the new kid to your lunch table, share a positive word with someone at school every day, be a good listener with your friends.

We walk humbly by being thankful, respectful, and willing to listen.

- How can you show humility at school?
 - Here are a few ideas: Thank someone once a week, be gracious when you win and when you lose, don't be braggy, and congratulate others when they succeed.

Invite your child to place the button they received from church on their backpack as a reminder to Do, Love, Walk. Say a prayer for the new school year, and how to recognize moments to share kindness and serve others.



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