Back to School Milestone

The beginning of the school year is an important time for families and friends. Students and parents experience a vast variety of emotions from excitement to worry. New schedules and activities begin and are woven into daily routines. Time with family and friends often change from casual summer fun to more structured fall schedules. All of this and more creates an awareness of a new beginning. New beginnings are the perfect time to take a breath and find God's presence in the midst of the change.

This Back to School Milestone has four steps: Caring Conversation, Bible reading, Activity and Ritual.

1. Caring Conversation: Begin supper time with your child(rens) favorite after school snack. Let the favorite snack be the appetizer if you will. (string cheese, peanut butter and jam sandwich, fruit, crackers etc.) Chat using one or all of the following questions.
   a) What was your favorite thing about going back to school?
   b) What made you sad about going back to school?
   c) Parents remember when you were in school – share what your favorite and least favorite thing about school was or tell a story about a time you got in trouble at school.
   d) What do you like best about your teacher?
   e) What do you hope you will learn at school?

2. A Bible Reading:
   a) We don't know much about when Jesus was young and going to school. But we do know Jesus loved to learn and he was a good teacher. Read – Luke 2: 41-52 the whole story or Luke 2:46-47&52 here:

[46]After three days they found him (Jesus) in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. [47]And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.
[52]And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

Jesus liked to learn and he taught us many things but especially he taught us to be kind.

3. Activity:
   a) For some students going back to school can be a scary time. Maybe you have been scared or worried and that is okay.
      - If you are worried about school, tell someone who loves you – sometimes telling someone your worries helps them get smaller.
      - If you are feeling good about school and you have a "friend bench" at your school watch the bench for someone who might need a friend. Or watch for someone standing alone – check to see if they would like to go for a walk around the playground with you and ask them about their favorite video game.

4. Ritual:
   - Finish your snack but before you start supper. Get the students to stand and a grownup says this prayer:

Dear God, thank you for school and the opportunity to learn. Thank you for teachers and staff who do their best to make school special. We pray for our students and all students especially for those who are worried about school. We pray that our students will have fun, learn good stuff and continue to grow in kindness. We pray these things in the name of Jesus our teacher and friend. Amen

(adapted by Debra Berg from 2020 Milestones Ministry, LLC. September 21, 2023)