



A Sunday of Blessing!

Celebrating Those Who Teach Our Children

Sunday, August 12, 2018

- **Blessing of School Faculty & Staff:** Join with churches throughout the Texas Annual Conference for *A Sunday of Blessing!* honoring those persons “in the trenches” with our children each school day. Worship services could include a special time of recognition of and prayer for those in attendance along with themed music, liturgy, media, and visuals. Among those to invite are faculty and staff from local public, religious, and private primary and/or elementary schools. Some congregations may choose to invite faculty and staff from all schools within a church’s mission field. The celebration could include the distribution of tokens of appreciation or remembrance to all in attendance. In addition, a fellowship meal honoring faculty and staff members and including the congregation could afford adults, youth, and children the opportunity to articulate words of personal blessing to those in attendance.
- **Blessing of the Students/of the Backpacks:** Some churches have longstanding traditions of blessing students and/or backpacks prior to the start of a new school year. Combining a time of blessing for students/backpacks with school faculty and staff affords local congregations the opportunity to host a large number of guests. However, local church Welcome Teams should prepare well in advance for a number of guests that challenges Easter or Mother’s Day.
- **Blessing of Church Weekday Ministry Faculty & Staff:** Churches with Weekday Ministries such as Day School, Mother’s Day Out, and/or child care centers could include those ministry employees along with those from public and private schools for *A Sunday of Blessing!* Other congregations may choose to simply honor those who serve during the school year with local church Weekday Ministries.
- **Blessing of Child Care Providers, Caregivers, & Teachers:** In many communities, child care providers, caregivers, and teachers are among the earliest and most significant of those who assist families in providing an educational foundation for their children. Names and contact information for each licensed facility in Texas may be found at the Texas Department of Protective and Family Services website at www.tdpfs.org.
- **Blessing of Local Church’s Faculty, Staff, & Students:** Congregations such as those taking first steps toward the *We Love All God’s Children* initiative may choose to participate in *A Day of Blessing* by limiting the students as well as adult educational employees to those who participate regularly in the life of the congregation. Local church nursery and/or child care staff could be included in this special day.



Resources for *A Sunday of Blessing!*

What follows is a list of scriptures, prayers, songs, and other liturgical suggestions to aid in the planning of *A Sunday of Blessing!* These resources were chosen based upon contextual relevance to ministries with children and families, the back-to-school season of year, and the vocational call of Christians to share the love and hope of Christ to all God's children!

• **Suggested Scriptures**

- **Matthew 19:13-15** *One day children were brought to Jesus in the hope that he would lay hands on them and pray over them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus intervened: "Let the children alone, don't prevent them from coming to me. God's kingdom is made up of people like these." After laying hands on them, he left.*
- **Deuteronomy 6:6-7** *Think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. ⁷ You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning.*
- **Colossians 3:17** *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

• **Worship Resources**

- ***The United Methodist Book of Worship, 1992***
 - 462 Opening Prayer: "Our heavenly Father, we your humble children invoke your blessing..."
 - 466 Opening Prayer: "God our Mother and Father, we come to you as children."
 - 535 Prayer: "At The Beginning of a New School Year"
 - 591 An Order For Commitment To Christian Service
 - 601 Prayer: "An Order for the Installation or Recognition of Church School Workers."
- ***Worship & Song: Worship Resources, 2011***
 - 87 Prayer of Confession: "Almighty God, in raising Jesus from..."
 - 90 Prayer of Confession: "You asked for my hands..."
 - 144 Offertory Prayer: "Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes one such..."
 - 187 Various Occasions: "God of new beginnings..."
 - 222 Daily Praise: "God of the peaceable kingdom..."



- **Music Resources**

- ***Marching to Zion, 1981***

- 26 “Jesus Loves the Little Children”
- 52 “Praise Him, All Ye Little Children”
- 85 “He’s Got The Whole World in His Hands”
- 132 “This Little Light of Mine:
- 210 “Lift Every Voice and Sing”

- ***The United Methodist Hymnal, 1989***

- 427 “Where Cross the Crowded Way of Life”
- 430 “O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee”
- 431 “Let There Be Peace on Earth”
- 436 “The Voice of God is Calling”
- 437 “This Is My Song”
- 581 “Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service”
- 601 “Thy Word Is A Lamp Unto My Feet”

- ***The Faith We Sing, 2000***

- 2172 “We Are Called”
- 2174 “What Does the Lord Require of You?”
- 2193 “Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”
- 2241 “The Spirit Sends Us Forth To Serve”

- ***Worship & Song, 2011***

- 3004 “Step By Step”
- 3114 “Come To The Water”
- 3115 “Covenant Prayer”

- ***Vocal Solos/Anthems***

- “Let the Children Come” – Hillsong Kids
- “Love in Any Language” – Sandi Patty
- “Teach Your Children” – Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young
- “Let the Children Come” – Tommy Nash
- “Let the Little Children Come” – Steve Green



Prayers of the People

God is the source of all wisdom and knowledge. Let us ask him to bless those who seek to learn and their teachers.

Fill us with your wisdom, Lord.

For students as they begin this new school year, that the Spirit of God may grant them the gifts of wisdom and understanding, let us pray to the Lord.

Fill us with your wisdom, Lord.

For teachers, that they may share their knowledge with gentleness, patience, and concern for their students, let us pray to the Lord.

Fill us with your wisdom, Lord.

For those who seek knowledge of the things of this world, that they may always pursue God's wisdom, let us pray to the Lord.

Fill us with your wisdom, Lord.

For parents, the first teachers of their children, that their faith and love may be an example to us always, let us pray to the Lord.

Fill us with your wisdom, Lord. Amen.

Just in Time! Communion Services, 2006

Back-To-School Prayer

Eternal God, Creator of Heaven and Earth: You formed us in your image and gave us the ability to reason and learn. In your wisdom and love you surround us with the mysteries of the universe.

- **As we begin this new school year, bless all those who seek to learn: children, youth, adults, and teachers.**
- **Bless those who prepare the learning environment: teachers, teachers' assistants, principals, counselors, coaches, secretaries, tutors, cooks, custodians, nurses, bus drivers, and crossing guards.**
- **Bless those who support students: parents, grandparents, and this church community.**

Bless each with travel mercies and make each school a place of compassion, peace, and safety. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Book of Blessings, 1989



Blessing of the Backpacks

Teacher and Redeemer, we consecrate these book bags and school supplies in your Holy Name and to your glory. We pray your blessing upon those who give them and those who will receive them. May generation upon generation be blessed by these gifts. Let each person who stands before us now feel the love and support of this congregation, and grant us all the wisdom and means to meet their needs throughout the coming year. Through Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Book of Blessings, 1989

Prayer for a New School Year

Sustainer of us all, help us to grow in your wisdom and in your ways. Remind us that your truth sets us free to learn and to love. Grant that during this academic year each student and each teacher may devote themselves to their studies and share what they have learned from others. By your Spirit of Wisdom, keep us open to your Word and ways. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Book of Blessings, 1989