



## Prayers for a Backpack Blessing

### For Students

Lord, bless these backpacks and the children and youth who carry them as they begin yet another year of school. Give them peace when they feel nervous, focus when they feel distracted, energy when they feel tired. Open their minds to the lessons they will learn both in and outside the classroom. Help them to make friends that build one another up, and be friends to those who need them. Guide them in making good choices as they grow in wisdom and maturity. Be ever-present with them in the classroom, on the school bus, on the playground, and at home, and may they feel your loving care in all they do. Amen.

### For Teachers

Lord, bless those in the ministry of teaching future generations. As they embark on a new school year, grant them energy, passion, discipline, and endurance for their daily tasks. Infuse their classrooms with an atmosphere of care and mutual respect, that all interactions there will be bathed in patience and understanding. Help their lessons to grow pupils in both knowledge and character, and help us all to support the work these teachers do building up our community and our future. Amen.

### For Donated Backpacks and Supplies

Lord, bless these backpacks and school supplies and the children who will use them. Let these physical gifts be symbols of the love and support we give to the children of our community throughout the year. Help us to look upon every child in our community as one of our own, helping them to grow in character and knowledge. Amen.

Prayers by Jessica Miller Kelley

## What's a Backpack Blessing?

- A backpack blessing is a moment set aside during Mass to encourage students. Doing so celebrates with the excited, and soothes the anxious. No matter the age or how a student is feeling about the upcoming school year, a backpack blessing is a valuable ritual within a faith family.
- Students bring their backpack with them to church on an assigned morning. Then, if the worship space is conducive, they head up front with their bag and receive a blessing. Often, students receive a tag to put on their backpack that reminds them of this special blessing.

## Why Do a Backpack Blessing?

- Lots of feelings surround the start of a new school year. Some students are over the moon. Others are made nauseous by the thought of a new teacher, class, maybe even a new school. That was me. The thought of school starting would cause my stomach to turn immediately. And some kids don't care all that much one way or another.
- No matter where a kid is on that emotional continuum, ritual offers something for everyone. When we gather to reflect on such a moment of time, we find comfort, grounding and a sense of added significance.
- Also, a chapter's beginning is an important time to recognize God's faithfulness and care. God walks with us always and sends the Holy Spirit to strengthen and equip us for all the steps we take in life. Don't worry...God's Got Your Back! 😊
- Seizing opportunities to highlight this informs our children's and youth's faith journeys.
- Additionally, we highlight for students what a blessing education and access to it is. Gratitude is the basis for joy, so we offer our young ones a gift when we teach them to search for God's provision.
- Not only that, but we are blessed to be a blessing to others. Take the time to dream about how they might be a blessing in their school and community.
- Searching for something concrete? Invest in girls' education through The Revolutionary Underground Foundation, an organization and girls' school started in 2006. Their mission is to provide girls and young women in Africa access to learning resources and technology, leadership training and emotional support, focusing on empowering them to become vessels for change.

## Helpful Tips for Your Backpack Blessing

- Ask that the students arrive a few minutes early to go over what they and their parents can expect.
- Have the students leave their backpacks up front after the blessing. Once the service is over, invite families to retrieve their children's backpacks.
- Take a photo of all the students with their backpacks to share on social media. Also, it makes a significant impact to mail a print of the picture to the students with a card of encouragement.
- Communicate with parents who may need financial assistance for purchasing their children's backpacks. Coordinate acquiring them before the blessing so their children have a backpack there.