

Living Faith @



The month of July is going by fast - isn't it odd how once July 4th has gone by, the rest of the summer goes very quickly. Many vacations will be coming to an end - ball games are winding up the season - the people on RAGBRAI are pedaling across the state during some of summer's hottest days - county fairs are occurring - people are looking to August when schedules will change from summer busy to school busy with the all the fall activities.

In the meantime, the month of August gives us the opportunity to plan and implement the remainder of the summer-time endeavors. Bible school, ice cream socials, and other fundraisers are happening within congregations. Personally, there might be books to read, crafts to finish, go to the movies, plan a picnic with fresh produce from the farmer's market, and/or go camping either in the backyard or in a campground near water so you can take a dip to cool off during the hot days. August gives us the time to spend time with family before the hustle of fall begins.



Family time is important, not only for personal growth of communication skills between parents and children and learning problem-solving skills, but also for studying more about Jesus, reading the Bible, and praying together.

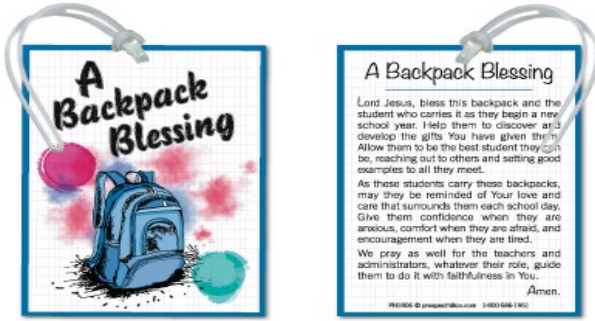
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Planning for Fall and Faith Formation

August is just around the corner which means school is starting soon – many schools in Iowa start classes the third week in August. That means it's time to start preparing for all the fall programs. There are some things to think about **now** so that you are ready, especially if you are a pastor, a faith formation leader, or volunteer.



Blessing of the Backpacks – One fun way to send the kids off to school knowing that God is watching over them. Start letting everyone know now so they will bring their backpacks on the Sunday you designate. Here is an example of one backpack tag that can be used.

- **Plan a Rally Day for the beginning of Fall activities** – A rally celebration doesn't have to be complex – create a simple theme and focus your activities on that. Here are a few ideas: Tie-Dye, Superhero, Neon Colors, Camouflage, Sweets.
- **Plan a Mission Project for the school year** – Start out the year with a planned mission or outreach project for the whole congregation to focus on. It can be supporting a local cause such as a food bank or some other charitable organization, or a world-wide cause such as Lutheran World Relief. You can visit our Synod website for mission ideas: <https://www.neiasynod.org/ministries/>
- **Decorate Church Bulletin Boards for Fall** – Invite some children or families to come and decorate church bulletin boards - make them welcoming and inviting! Make it a party and have snacks or a light lunch available.
- **Plan for ways that children, youth and families can assist during worship service** Children love to feel that they are an important part of the congregation and they love to participate in worship! Find some simple ways for them to help with ushering, reading scripture, praying, acolyting, and helping with communion and worship offerings. Put out a signup sheet now and start encouraging families and children to sign up.
- **Organize Worship Activity Bags** - for children to use during the worship service. Make sure they are clean and that broken crayons, marked up activity/coloring books, & etc. are replaced and updated.
- **Pray special prayers for the beginning of the school year** – for our children and families, for teachers, for all those who are involved in the care and education of our youth.

*** Note: some of these ideas are repeats from a previous year and can be molded to fit smaller or larger congregations