

## Schoolbag blessings

If September brings some kind of new beginning for your family, such as a child starting nursery, school or moving up a class, it can be helpful to know that God is always with us wherever we go.

The start of a new term is an opportunity to ask for God's blessing on the places we will go and the people we will meet.

Here's a simple way to do this:

- Look in your child's school bag. Often there is a name tag built in. You can usually take the paper slip out of the tag.
- Write on the back of the paper slip a simple prayer for your child, for example, 'Dear God, please bless (child's name) at (nursery/school) this year', or similar words.
- Replace the card in its holder, and nobody will know the prayer is there except you, your child and God.
- If the bag doesn't already have a tag, you can use a keyring (one of those with a plastic frame and a paper insert) and attach it to the zip.

**Parents:** if you take a bag or briefcase to work (or even if you just have a handbag or sports bag) why not make yourself a blessing label too?

### Plan for each day

Starting a new morning regime can be stressful but planning ahead for the next day is a great way to reduce morning panics and get the day off to a smooth start.

So the night before, try doing a few things ahead of time. Helping your child pack their bag and laying out their outfit or school uniform can help. Make their packed lunch the night before too, if they'll have one.

Saying a simple prayer each night at bedtime can help children relax and know God will be with them through everything they'll do the next day. Ask your child if there are any special things happening, whether there is anything they're excited about. If they have any worries or think there might be problems to tackle the next day, let them know they can hand their worries to God, because Jesus promised that everyone who has problems can come to him, and he'll find a way to lighten the burden.

You might then like to pray with your child about those things, to say thank you for everything that's going well, and ask for God's help with the challenges. The following prayer is an example, but simply talking to God like a friend is often the easiest way to pray!

*Loving God, thank you for all my friends, and my teachers/carers.  
Thank you that I have the chance to learn new things every day.  
Please bless everyone at school/nursery, and please bless me too.  
Help me to know that all day long, whether I'm having fun  
or whether I'm feeling upset, you're there for me.  
Amen*

**Make a memory**

If your child recently had a first day at school or nursery or playgroup, keep the photo of them that day as a reminder, and of how special the moment is. You could take one at the same time each year, and create an album – pick a background that won't change, so you can see how they've grown!