

WELCOME

Dear Families,

We are so excited that you downloaded
(or picked up) the Empowered Homes
Back to School Guide!

Inside this guide you will find resources to
help your family set goals, pray, and extend
healthy conversation as you prepare for the
school year.

It is our hope and prayer that this guide will
give you practical equipping and
encouragement for the
coming school year.

Please visit empoweredhomes.org to find
more resources in the areas of marriage,
parenting and personal growth.

-The Empowered Homes Team

10 THINGS STUDENT PASTORS WANT PARENTS TO KNOW ABOUT STUDENT MINISTRY

1 **We love your kids!** *When most of the world is running away from teenagers, our student ministry staff and volunteer leaders are running towards them. We serve in student ministry because we love students and we want them to fall in love with Jesus. Please know our team thanks God for the opportunity to serve in student ministry and love your kids!*

2 **We are entrusted to care for every student in our ministry.** Even though our student ministry staff loves your kids, we believe strongly that, “Nobody loves their kids more than their parents.” We know you love your kids more than we ever will – and rightfully so! That being said, please understand our team cannot have this same mindset. We’re called to love and support every student in our ministry. This presents numerous challenges as we have many competing priorities, family dynamics, financial situations, schedules, friend groups and decisions to pray and wade through. It’s not an understatement to say when we make a decision for one student or family, it has the potential to impact other families or the student ministry as a whole. Our staff accepts these challenges and through prayer and wise counsel attempts to make the best decisions for your kid(s) and our student ministry. Please trust that we are doing our best for you, your family and all families in our ministry.

3 **We will point your kids back to you.** Many times we may be the first person your students come to with a problem. This means we may have some hard conversations with your kids and encourage them to come talk to you. We work under the philosophy of, “If I were a parent, would I want to know this about my teen?” Parents, please know this isn’t always easy and it puts us in some very difficult positions. We understand the importance of building trust with students allows them to open up about their lives and they may not want to talk to you as their parents. However, we are constantly working under the principle mentioned above which, we believe, most parents appreciate. Our biggest ask is that when your kids do bring these hard conversations to you, you remember the “10 Second Principle” and meet them with grace, forgiveness and wisdom. You truly are the biggest influence in your child’s life. We have seen God work so powerfully when these hard conversations are done well. Please remember we always want to partner with you in any way we can in these conversations.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE
10 SECOND PRINCIPLE
AT EMPOWEREDHOMES.ORG



10 THINGS WE WANT PARENTS TO KNOW ABOUT STUDENT MINISTRY

4 **We all need to grow as parents and student ministry leaders.** *The student ministry is not perfect. We understand this and we are constantly seeking to grow and improve as leaders. We believe the more we grow and the better we're equipped at serving families, the healthier our students become and the stronger their faith grows. In the same way, the more parents grow as the primary disciple-makers of their families, the healthier our church and student ministry becomes. Let's grow together and impact our kids for eternity!*

5 **There are no "quick fixes."** It would definitely be nice if our kids came with a manual when they were born to help us know what to do when they mess up. We've had parents ask us to meet with their sons or daughters throughout the years to "talk some sense into them." We will definitely set up a time to meet with your son or daughter and do everything we can to stir them towards Jesus. We may even suggest meeting with the entire family depending on the situation or recommend further counseling, if needed. But please remember, there are no "quick fixes" in the spiritual life of anyone, much less a teenager. As a student ministry team and even as parents, we can't change the heart of a student. That's the Holy Spirit's job. However, what we can all do is continually pray for our kids and cultivate an environment for them to fall in love with Jesus and own their faith.

6 **Communication is key.** Parents, can I confess something to you? Our staff and volunteer leaders aren't always sure how best to support you. Furthermore, we're not always sure if you understand and support what we're trying to accomplish in the discipleship of students here. As you can imagine, communication is so important in these areas and it ultimately impacts our families. Our staff would love nothing more than to meet one on one with you if you have a question, concern or need more clarity. We don't always know what those may be unless parents and/or students share them with us. This opens up lines of communication, which are so helpful, and ultimately blesses and helps our students.

7 **A parent's attitude towards church influences their kid's attitudes towards church.** Parents, our attitude towards church (as most things) communicates something to our kids. If church community is not a priority for you and other activities constantly take precedence over opportunities for spiritual growth that communicates something to our kids. Does that mean our families need to be at the church every time the doors are open? Of course not! We need our families at sports games/practices or at band competitions and dance recitals to be light and engage the world with the Gospel. Naturally, we can't always control our kids' attitude for church (or anything!), but we can model and teach them the importance of being a part of a body of believers. If anything is hindering their desire to be involved in the student ministry, please let us know and we will partner with you to do everything we can to help get them connected!

10 THINGS WE WANT PARENTS TO KNOW ABOUT STUDENT MINISTRY

8 Stay vigilant. Most parents want to believe the best of their kids and that their kids would never get involved with (fill in the blank). There's nothing wrong with wanting to believe this. But parents, unfortunately, sin is so enticing and the plethora of vices and temptations that kids face these days is truly daunting. We share this not to scare you, but to encourage you to stay actively and intimately involved in the affairs of your kids. We've spoken with many parents who've shared how they "buried their heads in the sand" only to find out later their kids were struggling significantly, getting deeper and deeper into destructive activities. Parents, you are the first line of defense. There are many ways you can stay vigilant and connected to your kids. And there are many resources out there!

9 We need your prayers! Prayer matters and prayer works. We believe nothing eternally significant happens apart from prayer. Parents, as mentioned, we understand we are not the perfect student ministry and unfortunately, we most likely never will be. Our staff makes mistakes and certainly doesn't have everything figured out. Please be patient and communicate with us often as we seek to learn, grow and get better equipped at serving the families of our church. We really hope by now you've realized we desperately need your prayers. Please remember to pray for the ministry and us. We even ask you to pray for us with your kids. We have seen and felt God answer prayers numerous times as we've served in student ministry. We are constantly praying for you as parents, your families and certainly your teenagers. We pray often for each other and we pray often for our volunteer leaders. Our staff would love to hear how we can pray for you and your family through email, text or in person.

10 Enjoy this season! We pray and envision a generation of disciple-makers who, changed by the Gospel, will influence their homes, churches and communities for Christ. As parents, we should look forward to the day we send our sons and daughters out from our homes to go and influence the world for Christ (Psalm 127). We want to be a part of a legacy in our homes that changes generations through the Gospel. Parents, let's enjoy this journey, with its ups and downs and not miss the wonderful privilege and challenge of raising faithful sons and daughters. Together, I have no doubt our prayers will be realized!

**In this together,
Your Student Ministry Staff**

5 THINGS TO TELL YOUR KIDS EVERY MORNING

The beginning of each school day can be chaotic, whether you are trying to get out the door or settle into a home school routine. Plan ahead to use your morning routine as an opportunity to encourage, invest, and inspire your family to become the best they can be. To help start the day off right, here are 5 things to tell your child every day.

BE A LEADER

Tell them that leaders go first, set examples for others, and help when needed. Good leaders do the right thing when no one is watching.

BE KIND

Tell them that being kind is doing and saying the right thing, even if it means you get nothing.

GET BACK UP

Tell them that no matter what happens, we always get back up and try again.

BE RESPECTFUL

Give respect to adults at school because they have authority. Respect your peers in the way that you want to be respected. Respect the facility because we always leave places better than we found them.

ENCOURAGE OTHERS

Ask them, "Do your words encourage others or tear them down?"

PRACTICE IT! - - - - -

Use the questions below to rate how well your kids are doing in these areas and then pray about how you can use your morning routine to help encourage their growth.

Needs Work OK Neutral Good Excellent

How would you rate your morning routine with your kids?

How would you rate your kids as leaders among their peers?

How would you rate the resilience of your kids?

How respectful are your kids towards everyone in the family?

How often do your kids put others first?

What else would you add to your morning encouragement for your kids?

IDENTITY IN CHRIST REMINDERS

Children and Teens are faced with situations and experiences that cause them to question their identity often bringing about confusion and disorientation. Find time to regularly remind your family members of who God has created them to be.

I am a Child of God (Romans 8:16).

I am Loved (John 3:16).

I am Chosen (John 15:16).

I am Precious (Isaiah 43:4).

I am a New Creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I am God's Masterpiece (Ephesians 2:10).

I am Holy (Ephesians 1:4).

I am Victorious (Luke 10:19).

I am Blessed (Ephesians 1:3).

I am Accepted (Romans 15:7).

I am God's friend (John 15:15).

I am Made by God (Psalm 139:13).

4 TIPS TO EQUIP YOUR CHILD FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR

*I have wanted to be a teacher and have enjoyed working with students for most of my life, and building relationships with the students is by far my favorite part of the job. That being said, it can also be the hardest part when you have forty different students all with varying needs, desires, and goals not to mention all of the other everyday responsibilities of the job. Being a teacher has taught me many things, both about myself and about the kids I teach. I want to share some of the things I noticed that helped students have a great school year, while also sharing some words of encouragement from a teacher's perspective. **Here are four tips to help equip your children for a successful school year:***

1 SET GOALS WITH YOUR CHILDREN

If you want your teacher to be in on the goal-setting conversation, encourage your child to share his or her goals with their teacher(s) at the beginning of the year. This way, the teacher can help equip your child as well and help them achieve their goal. Plus, we like celebrating achievements with them.

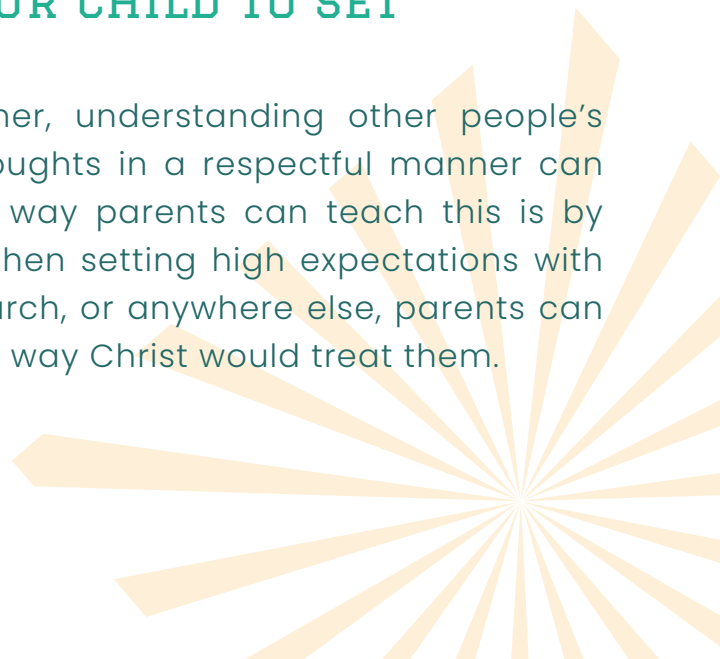


2 REMIND YOUR CHILD WHO THEY ARE IN CHRIST.

Every child is more than a number or test score, and my hope and prayer as a teacher is that kids can walk confidently knowing that truth. I put a lot of pressure on myself to perform well in school, and I often felt like I had to achieve perfection when it came to grades. However, this way of thinking is far from the truth. Once I started following Jesus, I realized that perfection is a very overrated word.

3 ENCOURAGE AND EQUIP YOUR CHILD TO SET THE EXAMPLE.

Little things like being a good listener, understanding other people's perspectives, and communicating thoughts in a respectful manner can go a long way. Probably the biggest way parents can teach this is by setting the example themselves and then setting high expectations with their kids. Whether it's at home, at church, or anywhere else, parents can set the tone for how to treat others the way Christ would treat them.



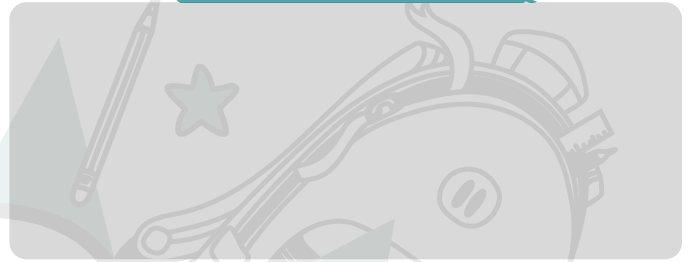
BACK TO SCHOOL GAME PLAN

Going back to school is an exciting time! It can also feel overwhelming and busy. Use the Back to School Game Plan to set some goals and brainstorm some action steps towards maximizing your routines this fall. Download extra copies of this planning sheet at empoweredhomes.org.

Spiritual Goal



School Goal



Action Steps



Family Goal



Personal Goal



Action Steps



Goal Check-in Dates: _____

AFTER SCHOOL CONVERSATION STARTERS

INSTEAD OF
THESE

- How was school?
- Did you have fun at school?
- Who did you sit with?
- Was your teacher nice?
- Were your classmates kind?
- Did you hang out with anyone?
- How was lunch?

TRY
THESE

- Tell me one thing you learned today!
- What was the best thing you did at school?
- What was the most interesting thing your teacher said today?
- What class rules did your teacher say are important?
- Did anyone have anything fun or interesting to talk about?
- What were most kids doing at recess / breaks?
- What was the best game you played today?
- Who sat near you at lunch? What were they eating?
- What is the most shocking thing you saw today?
- Where did you see kindness today?

A STUDENT'S PRAYER

by: St. Thomas Aquinas

**Grant me,
O Lord my God,
a mind to know you,
a heart to seek you,
wisdom to find you,
conduct pleasing to you,
faithful perseverance
in waiting for you,
and a hope of finally
embracing you.**

Amen.



WWW.EMPOWEREDHOMES.ORG