

# DISCIPLESHIP | MATTERS

**With store aisles filled with back-to-school items**, families are beginning the process of transition from summer fun to fall structure. These tips can ensure a smooth transition B.A.C.K. to school!

**Be prepared:** Find out the academic and behavior expectations of the school and teacher(s) regarding workload, supplies, calendar and grading procedures. When available, review course syllabi together.

**Assess time investment:** Once you are familiar with the year's academic expectations, assess together the amount of time available for other activities. Note planned extracurriculars, and discuss your child's and your family's priorities to ensure they align.

**Create a support team:** All students need academic, emotional and social support throughout their academic careers. For example, a student taking advanced level courses could benefit from support from peers, teachers and school counselors as well as parents to ensure balance and avoid burn-out.

**Know and honor limits:** Stress-induced medical issues commonly affect children and teens, so it is crucial to prioritize activities, create a support network, and ensure that you and your child set appropriate boundaries. Children will need to say "no" to some activities to make sure they get sufficient sleep. A child with an introverted personality will need scheduled "down time" after the intense interaction of the school day.

— Korri Garrett Williams, teacher, Gifted Education and Honors Program coordinator, Warhill High School, Williamsburg, Va.



Anyone who does anything to help a child in...life is a hero to me.

— Fred Rogers

**Recent years have seen a profound loss of commitment** in our nation to quality universal education—a commitment that was a direct result of the Sunday School Movement. Sunday school programs are failing while inequality in education is increasing. As you plan for Sunday school, consider responding to the needs of the times by reclaiming the vision of Sunday school to provide and advocate for equal education for all children.



*Bear with one another and...forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you.* — Colossians 3:13

**Family rituals provide a sense of security**, identity and belonging, and help define family life while building relationships and bonds. Rituals strengthen and help instill values. They comfort children in unfamiliar circumstances and act as anchors during uncertain times, such as traveling, relocating, natural disasters or family crises. Consider the following rituals for enhancing family life:

- meals begun in prayer and peppered with *unpressured* conversations;
- family service projects co-planned by children and adults;
- a good night song, silly farewell or special greeting—even if they are late, and you are angry; and
- forgiveness moments (parents asking for forgiveness when they've wronged their children and practicing forgiveness toward children), sealed with prayer, hugs or a shared snack.



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Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.