

## Milestone Ministry-Blessing of the Backpacks

**Leader: Will all who are students this year, from preschool to college, and anyone who is involved with the public education of children, youth, and adult learners – teachers, bus drivers, aides, food service, custodians, or staff.-Please come to the front.**

**Whether you brought a backpack or not, we want to bless you as you begin this school year.**

**Leader: Today you will be receiving a gift....they are carabineer that you can attach to your backpacks, All of them have the sign of the cross on them, a symbol of Being a Christian..... and some of them have a fish on them. The symbol of the fish was one of the earliest Christian symbols. During those times when it was not safe to be a follower of Jesus, Christians would use a fish to identify themselves to each other. Sometimes one would draw half of the fish, and another follower would fill in the other half, and then both would know that they were Christians.**

**That's not all though, the Greek work for fish was also an acronym-each letter of the Greek word for fish, *ichthus*, also stood for something.....The letters stand for Jesus, Christ God, Son Savior. So as these early followers identified each other with a fish symbol, they were also proclaiming Jesus Christ: God, Son, and Savior**

**This year we encourage you to keep the sign of the cross on your backpack to identify yourself as one who knows Jesus and especially as one who is known my Jesus...the one who is always with you.**

*(Pass out the carabineers)*

**Remembering the words of Psalm 121 “The Lord keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forever more.”(Bless each child with the words and making a sign of the cross on their foreheads): “ Jesus is with you wherever you go”**

**Let us Pray:**

**God of all knowledge and wisdom, these students, teachers, staff, and backpacks remind us that a new school year will be beginning this week. We pray your blessing on them and upon all students, young and old as they begin a new year. Help them to discover and develop the gifts you have given them. As they grow in knowledge, help them to also grow in kindness and compassion, learning respect for themselves and others. We ask your blessing on parents and all those who care for these students. Strengthen them to surround these students with encouragement, support, and love. In Jesus name we pray.**

**Amen**

**You may return to your seats....**

**Congregation, please rise....if there is a student or school staff person near you, please place your hand on their shoulder as we pray together the prayer that is in your bulletin, and overhead.....**

**Gracious God, you have promised to be present with your never-failing love and care. Remind us that wherever we go, you are always with us. Fill us with all the joy of learning new things so that we may be better equipped to be your servants in and to the world. Bless, O Lord, all those who stand with these students. Whatever their task or role, guide them to do it in love and faithfulness to you, knowing that even the most ordinary task becomes extraordinary when it is done in your name. We ask all things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.**

**Leader: All may be seated. You will notice that on the reverse side of the Bulletin insert is a Four Key Resource for the home. We encourage you to use these during the week to nurture your own life of faith and to be a source of prayerful encouragement to our students.....(Our worship service continues....**

Iota is the first letter of *Iesous* (Ἰησους), Greek for Jesus.

Chi is the first letter of *Christos* (Χριστός), Greek for "anointed".

Theta is the first letter of *Theou* (Θεοῦ), genitive case of Θεός "God".

Upsilon is the first letter of *Huios* (Υἱός), Greek for Son.

Sigma is the first letter of *Soter* (Σωτήρ), Greek for Savior.



# Blessing of the Backpacks

All those who are students this year, from preschool to college, and anyone who is involved with the public education of children, youth, and adult learners – teachers, bus drivers, aides, food service, custodians, or staff are invited to come forward as instructed to receive a gift and receive a Blessing.

Let us Pray:

**God of all knowledge and wisdom, these students, teachers, staff, and backpacks remind us that a new school year will be beginning this week. We pray your blessing on them and upon all students, young and old as they begin a new year. Help them to discover and develop the gifts you have given them. As they grow in knowledge, help them to also grow in kindness and compassion, learning respect for themselves and others. We ask your blessing on parents and all those who care for these students. Strengthen them to surround these students with encouragement, support, and love. In Jesus name we pray. Amen**

When instructed parents, other caregivers, and the congregation will be invited to stand and place a hand on those being blessed as we pray the following prayer:

**Gracious God, you have promised to be present with your never-failing love and care. Remind us that wherever we go, you are always with us. Fill us with all the joy of learning new things so that we may be better equipped to be your servants in and to the world. Bless, O Lord, all those who stand with these students.**

**Whatever their task or role, guide them to do it in love and faithfulness to you, knowing that even the most ordinary task becomes extraordinary when it is done in your name. We ask all things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.**



# Jesus+Christ+God+Son+Savi or

MILESTONES- What are Milestone Ministries?.....Over the next year you will be hearing more about “Milestones Ministry”. Milestones is an intentional ministry that recognizes the life stages in our lives and in our congregation such as starting Sunday School, getting a Bible, First Communion, starting confirmation, and graduation. Each of these stages presents an opportunity for learning with children, parents, and those who love and care for them.

Most milestones will offer an event that includes parents and families, recognition during a worship service, and a special gift. All Milestones relate directly to the promises made at Baptism and holds the parents and the congregation in partnership to pass on vibrant faith.

## Baptismal Promises

- to live with them among God’s faithful people,
- bring them to the word of God and the holy supper,
- Teach them the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,

- Place in their hands the Holy Scriptures,
- nurture them in faith and prayer, so that your

- Proclaim Christ through word and deed,
- Care for others and the world God made,

## HOME GROWN FAITH



children may learn to trust  
God,

## Four Keys Resource

- and work for justice and peace.

### Caring Conversations

The fall is not only the time for the beginning of another school year. It ushers in a whole series of activities following the summer months. Whether your focus is the beginning of the school year or simply another year of post-summer activities, use the following sentence starters to encourage reflection and conversation:

“I am excited about....”

“I am concerned about.....”

“I can’t wait for....”

### Devotions:

Luke 2:52 reads, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.” Growth is a part of life, even for Jesus, the Son of God. Consider how your physical, mental, relational, and spiritual growth affects your daily life and service to God, others, and all creation. Make a list of the ways your life is a gift of God, to others, and to God’s total creation. Then offer a prayer, including things from your list. Dear God, you have blessed me to be a blessing to others, to grow in wisdom, in years, and in human and divine favor. May our lives reflect your grace and your will as I serve you, others, and creation through [name those ways that your lives are a gift from God]; through Jesus Christ who increased in wisdom and stature, and in human and divine favor. Amen

### Service

Our lives are filled with learning. We learn through many social contacts. We learn at school, in the home, in the congregation, on the job, through various media, and in the community. Make a commitment in the next month to be of service by helping someone else learn. Maybe you can be a “book buddy” at school; maybe you can help somebody learn how to run a computer

program at work or develop a skill with a tool. In some manner, assist someone in her or his lifelong pursuit of learning.

## Rituals and Traditions

(For parents with school-aged children) Make the sign of the cross on the forehead of your child before he or she leaves for school, saying: “[Child’s name], Child of God, Jesus goes with you wherever you go.” Remind your child that you think about and pray for him or her during the day.

(For people without children in school) Place a cross where you work, study, or relax to remind you of God’s constant presence in Christ.

(for people without students to bless) For the next seven days, begin and end the day with the words, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Pray the Lord’s Prayer then begin your day or retire for the night.

Upcoming Milestones-

September 5<sup>th</sup>-Vocation Sunday  
September 12<sup>th</sup>-Blessings of 3 and 4 year olds  
beginning Sunday School  
September 19<sup>th</sup>-Blessing of 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders  
receiving Bibles

September 26<sup>th</sup>-Blessing of the Hands-  
Recognition of Emergency Workers, and  
Health Care