



BACK TO SCHOOL RITUAL

You are welcome to use this lesson to inspire spiritual conversation in your family or youth classroom. It is written for elementary age but could be adjusted as needed.

THINKING JOB: Ask a “thinking job question” to get everyone thinking about something pertinent to the lesson. This could be asked moments or hours before your conversation.

What is my “power word” for the school year?

Lesson

| Materials | Things to Prepare | Today’s Goal |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large stickers or paper • Markers • List of power words | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have each child create a sticker or sheet with their name and power word. | <p>To have your youth feel the support of your community for back to school, and for the community to participate in supporting the youth.</p> |

PREPARATION

Each child should create a sticker or sheet with their name and power word. You can create intentionality about what is best for your group for this process. They are welcome to decorate their stickers or sheets.

Optional, practice saying their name and word into a microphone if that will be part of your ritual.

PASSAGEWAYS BACK TO SCHOOL RITUAL

Why + Introduction to ritual: (Can share with families or your congregation.)

Going back to school after a summer off is one of the biggest transitions in a child’s year. School brings joy and learning but also a level of complexity into their lives.

Today we are sending our youth back to school with some great love and energy, and to let them know they have a whole community here that loves, supports, and believes in them.

Process: (With your congregation)

In front of your community, each child will say their name and a power word they have chosen for the school year. Once all have shared, lead the community in this blessing.

Blessing:

I invite you to rub your hands together, imagine that love and support, and lift them up towards our youth as you join me in saying:

Blessing – You are healthy and brave. You are kind and curious. You are always loved and supported.

And we will do this one more time adding our teachers and all school personnel to our blessing:

Blessing – You are healthy and brave. You are kind and curious. You are always loved and supported.

Thank you for joining me in sending our group off with some good cheer.

CONCLUSION:

After returning to your youth space, choose a moment to stand in a circle. Use different color markers to draw a smiley face on the top of each child and teacher's left hand. Bring the circle in close. The teacher holds out their left hand with the thumb pointed right. The person to their right uses their left hand to grab the teacher's thumb and points their thumb to the right. One by one, add each person until the hand circle is complete.

See attached process.

SAY: Talk about how we are all connected and supported. You can ask the class to say their power word into the circle as a group (1-2-3- Say your word!). Have them imagine the happiness and fun they will have at school

this year. Blessing in the affirmative: say each line and have them repeat.

- I am healthy and brave.
- I am kind and curious.
- I am always loved and supported.
- I use my powers for good at school.

AFFIRMATION –I use my powers for good at school. repeat 4X

Note: Printable affirmations and coloring sheets for this lesson are available at <https://www.milehichurch.org/youth-family/> .

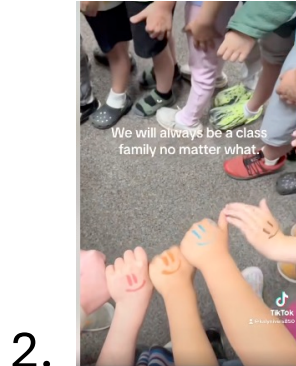
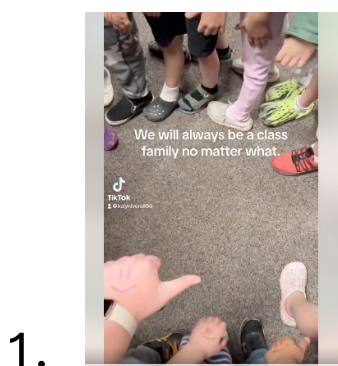
List of Back to School Power Word ideas:

Brave
Calm
Courage
Creative
Curious
Fun
Friendly

Grateful
Grounded
Happy
Helpful
Honest
Joy
Kind

Leader
Peaceful
Positive
Respect
Strong
Unique
Wonder

Smile Circle Guidelines



(Words on image not important.)