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Back to School

Gwen R. Marra

Dordt College, gwen.marra@dordt.edu

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Back to School

Abstract

Posting about preparing for a new school year from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/back-to-school/>

Keywords

In All Things, children, school, schedules, routines

Disciplines

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

Back to School

 [all in allthings.org/back-to-school/](https://allthings.org/back-to-school/)

Gwen Marra

Does excitement or sadness enter your mind when you turn the calendar from July to August and realize the start of another school year is just around the corner? There have been days when I have felt both emotions. I am excited to begin a new school year, but I realize how our household schedule has changed from the school routine. How will I ever get my family ready for the early mornings and the structure of school?

Here are a few tips that have helped me through the years:

Read. Maybe you have read with your children every night during the summer (Kudos to you!), but if you have let the habit slip, pick it up again! Some classic reads that are a lot of fun include *Chocolate Fever* by Robert Kimmel Smith, *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt, and *Trumpet of the Swan* by E.B. White. Older kids might enjoy *Savvy* by Ingrid Law or *Al Capone Does My Shirts* by G. Choldenko. Read aloud times provide a great closure to the end of the day and an opportunity to share with each other about hopes and dreams for the future.

Morning routine and bedtime routine. When my children were young, it was helpful to shift our morning routine to 15 minutes earlier each day the week before school started. Then we would naturally shift the bedtime routine to 15 minutes earlier as well. This helped us to get into a better sleep routine before the start of school and it made that first morning a bit less shocking!

Get ready for school. Purchase school supplies and label each item. Teachers so appreciate when parents/children have made a genuine effort to be prepared. In the primary grades it is so helpful to have markers and scissors marked before the children come to school. Sharpen pencils! Pack the backpack! Older children are able to label their own materials, but they may need help to organize binders and notebooks. Help your children become familiar with the school and any important routines, such as using lockers or keeping PE clothing in a cinch sack so it is easy to grab as you walk out the door.

Have healthy breakfast/snacks ready for your children. Plan breakfast ahead of time. What does your child like to eat and how much time does it take? Do they eat first thing in the morning or do they do better if they first are dressed and then eat? If your kids are not good breakfast eaters, you may want to pack a light, healthy snack for recess. If your children have a long bus ride, it may be important to send a granola bar or a piece of fruit for them so they're not starving when they get home.

Talk to your children about the upcoming year. Listen to how they are feeling. Are they excited about the new school year? Are they nervous about a new teacher or friends in their class? If so, visit school during an Open House night, or if there is not a scheduled visiting time, ask the school or teacher when it would be convenient to stop by. Arrange for your child to have a play date with some children that will be in his or her class. Talk about routines with your children for the beginning of the day or the end of the day.

- If your child is in the early primary grades, it is very helpful to have a written schedule of where he or she is supposed to go after school. Put it in the child's backpack and make sure they know where it is. (Label it with the child's name.)
- If your children will ride the bus, try to find a neighbor or a church friend who could be a "bus buddy" and help your child manage this new environment.

- If you know of a new family that has moved to town, invite them over so their kids can get to know your kids, and they will see a familiar face when school begins.
- Address issues like how to ask for help, what to do if they encounter bullying or see someone else being bullied, and how to be a friend to someone who needs one.

Celebrate the summer you have had. Have one last picnic at the park, enjoy ice cream sundaes for supper, bake cookies for an after-school snack that first day. It is important to celebrate the fun of summer and all it offers as you look forward to a new school year!