

Overwhelmed.

Maybe that's the perfect word to describe how many families feel right now as they anticipate their children returning to school in the midst of a global health crisis.

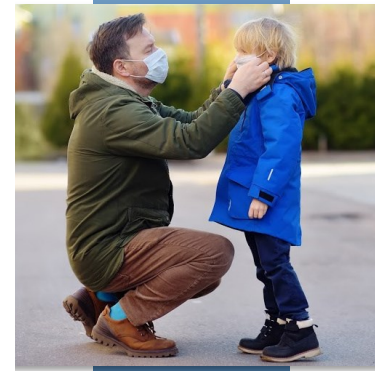
Today's world seems quite different from what we previously knew — and it's often filled with anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. Families are struggling to process increased demands placed upon them. Teachers, catechists, and staff are considering the best approaches for moving forward with learning, keeping health and safety as the top priority. Faith Formation must be reimagined in creative formats. And while technology connects us in incredible ways, sometimes we feel the pressure of information overload.

What about our faith during times like these?

We've compiled these faith-themed back-to-school resources to help provide your family with a source of comfort, hope, and encouragement.

There's a *daily prayer* that parents and children can share before school each morning. There's a *printable tag* that children can color and attach to their backpacks to help remind them that God — and their parish family — is always with them. There's an *activity page for preschoolers* and a special section for *college students* who might not have the college experience right now that they'd envisioned. We've also reviewed a variety of faith-related resources for *parents, teachers, and catechists*, highlighting the most helpful ones in a concise way to accommodate families' busy schedules.

We're keeping you in our prayers.



*"In the world,
you will
have trouble.
But take
courage:
I have
overcome
the world."
~John 16:33*

A Parent's Prayer for the School Day

(can be shared with your child each morning before school starts)

Loving God, thank you for this day that you have made
and for my children (*names here*).

During their school day, help them feel near to you
and to always hear your voice.

Please watch over them and keep them safe as they explore
and learn, and fill all of their encounters with kindness.

Bless and strengthen their teachers and school staff.

Let their hearts remember your peace when they feel afraid
or anxious, and guide them to do their best in every situation.

Help them to love others like you do.

We ask all this through Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*



Especially for College Students

- For college students who are learning remotely — perhaps at home rather than on-campus — the **Child Mind Institute** offers tips for both parents and students [to help support college learning at home](#). The site also provides suggestions for [preparing for college emotionally](#) in addition to academically.

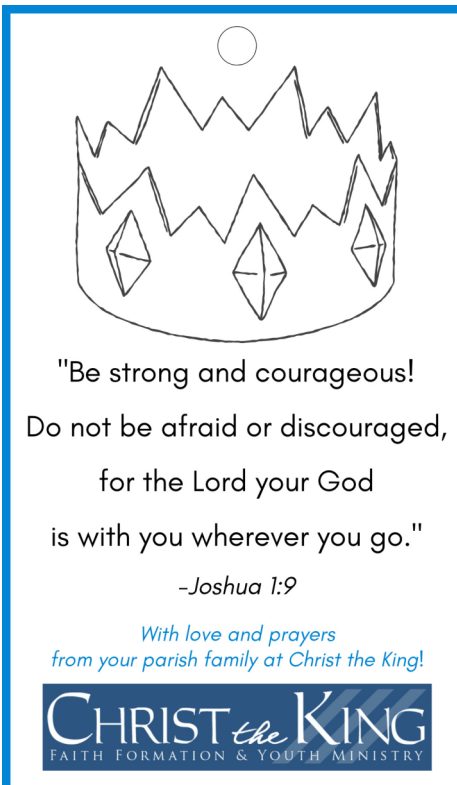
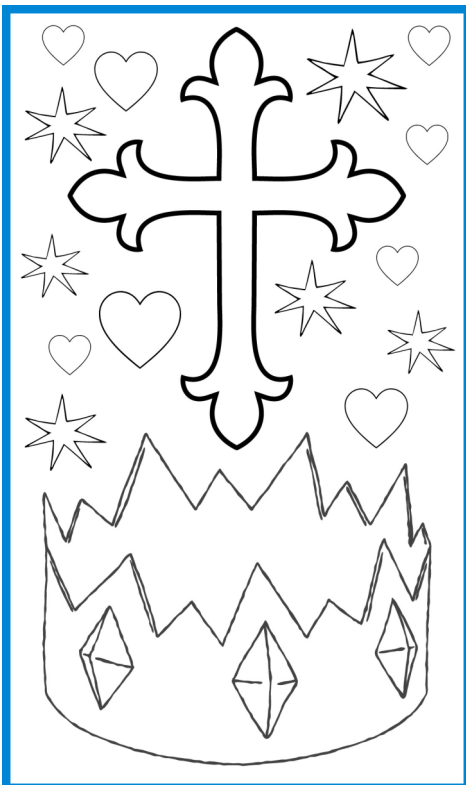
- How can college students continue practicing their faith during their college years? *Catholic Digest* magazine offers an inspiring article with scripture: [“Resources for Faith Formation in College.”](#)

- Many college students and families are struggling to cope with **stress and uncertainty** right now. Here’s an article titled, [“Tips to Help College Students During the Covid-19 Pandemic.”](#)

- How can college students **stay healthy** on campus during this global health crisis? Read [“Managing Pandemic Health Risks on College Campuses.”](#)

- Here’s an **article** that explores [“10 Tips for College Freshmen: Staying Connected to Your Faith”](#) (from the *National Catholic Reporter*).

Christ the King Printable Backpack Tag



"Be strong and courageous!

Do not be afraid or discouraged,

for the Lord your God

is with you wherever you go."

—Joshua 1:9

*With love and prayers
from your parish family at Christ the King!*

CHRIST *the* **KING**
FAITH FORMATION & YOUTH MINISTRY

Supplies Needed:

- heavy white 8.5"x11" cardstock
- printer
- markers, crayons, colored pencils, or other items for coloring the tag
- scissors (*or a paper trimmer*)
- glue stick
- hole punch
- string or keychain (*to attach the tag to a backpack*)
- optional*: laminator and a laminating sheet for added durability

Directions:

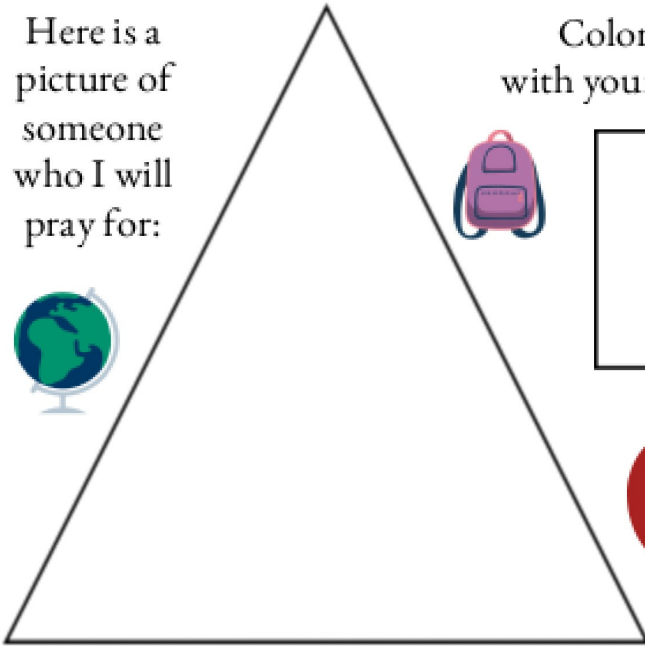
Print this page in color on heavy cardstock, then have your child color both sides of the tag. Use a glue stick to glue both sides of the tag together. Punch a hole in the top (over the circle), then attach the tag to a backpack with string or a keychain. For more durability, you can laminate the tag. Another idea is taping both sides of the tag inside one of your child's school folders, binders, or pencil case — or placing it in a lunchbox!

Printable Activity Page for Preschoolers

This is how I write my name:

Blank rounded rectangular box for writing a name.

Here is a picture of someone who I will pray for:



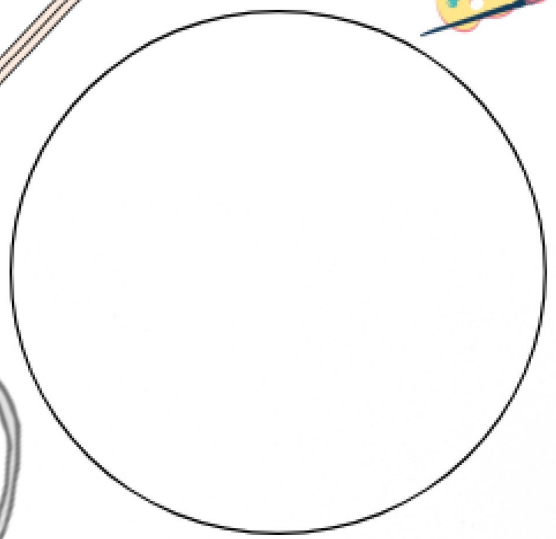
Color this square with your favorite color!



Here is what my school looks like!



If I could make my own face mask, here is how I would decorate it:



At preschool this year, I would like to learn more about:



Back-to-School Resources for Educators

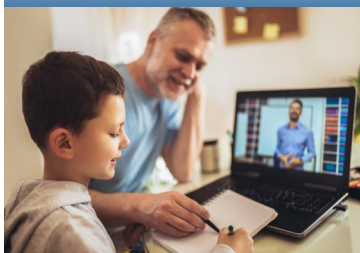
- Looking for effective supplemental curriculum materials? Check out [“350+ Amazing Online Learning Resources”](#) from **We Are Teachers**.
- How can educators discern **mental health warning signs** in their students, especially during this time of anxiety and fear? [Here are some strategies](#). Also, [here are 10 techniques that educators can use to support their own mental health](#), in addition to [tips for teachers during the pandemic](#).
- Xavier University offers [prayer resources](#) for educators to help provide **peace and hope**.



Catechists: Making God Known to Others

- If you're a catechist who will be teaching **Faith Formation lessons online** during this upcoming year, make sure to check out Joe Paprocki's video, [“Tips for Catechists Doing Faith Formation Remotely.”](#) He offers information about using the features of different online platforms, setting up your teaching space, and best practices for delivering the material.
- There's also a [“Pop-Up Catechesis” page](#) that features a variety of **short videos** that catechists can share with their students, on topics ranging from the Exaltation of the Cross and the Nativity of Mary to saint feast days and getting to know the Bible.
- Christ the King has paid for a subscription to **Formed** so that parishioners (including catechists!) have free access to a wealth of Catholic resources to share. Visit Formed's [“Faith at Home” page](#) for links to valuable Faith Formation content.
- [Catechist.com](#) has lots of **Faith Formation materials** that can be shared with students. There are some great suggestions in the article, [“Holy Hacks for Catechists: 20 Creative Ways to Share the Faith.”](#)
- [Catholic Icing](#) and [Catholic Mom](#) are two websites that offer **Faith Formation lessons** as well as arts and crafts for a variety of ages.

Parenting Links and Support



- Vibrant Faith Catalyst offers **meditations and prayers** that families can use in the mornings and at bedtime. [Check out the article](#) “Faith at Home” by Sharon Quackenbush.
- How can parents help their children through anxiety, especially during this time of pandemic? The **Fuller Youth Institute** provides [some practical strategies](#).
- [“8 Conversations to Have with Your New Middle School Student”](#) is a wonderful article for **parents** who are navigating this new chapter in their child's life.
- What are some **positive ways** in which you can [connect with your college student](#) who is coming home during break? Writer Steve Argue tackles this topic.
- Some young people might experience **doubts about their faith** during this time of fear and uncertainty.
- How can parents effectively talk with them about their feelings? [Here are four steps](#).
- Feeling overwhelmed by trying to help your child with **online learning**? Here are some helpful [“Remote Learning Tips for Parents.”](#)
- As a parent, how can you **encourage your family's faith** during this time of pandemic, when you might not be able to attend Mass in person? Catholic Icing offers ideas for practicing your Catholic faith at home: [“Weekly Mass Resources for Kids.”](#)
- Check out [“Relying on God in Schooling Chaos”](#) by writer Jane Korvemaker for **spiritual practices** that can help your family navigate the return to school.
- Christ the King's Faith Formation office has compiled a list of **local resources** to help families in need — from information about area food pantries to ways to get immediate help during a crisis. [Click here to download and print the PDF document](#).

For more information about Faith Formation and Youth Ministry at Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, please call (518) 464-4776, send an e-mail to ljensen@ctkparishny.org, or visit our website: christthekingfaithformation.weebly.com.

You can find Christ the King's parish website at parishes.rcda.org/ChristTheKing/.