



## TRAIL MARKER FIVE

# Beginning School



### Introduction

This Faith Trail marker is designed to encourage conversation with parents and children about starting school. This session will provide an opportunity to share with others the excitement and fears around beginning school, as well as empowering families to develop a regular sharing of highs and lows and prayer into their daily routine. This trail marker is intended for children who are starting school or who are in their first year of primary school.

### Things to do

- Organise name tags.
- Prepare morning tea.
- Photocopy colouring books.
- Gather pencils and textas for colouring activity.
- Make copies of Starting School handout for parents (Appendix 2).
- Gather textas, colouring pencils and paper for children's art activity.
- Print and laminate *Highs and Lows Card*—one for each family. See Appendix 3 and separate document.
- Make a keyring for each child. See Appendix 4 for one idea.

### Things you need

- *The Bears* cards—available through St Luke's Innovative Resources, Bendigo. [www.innovativeresources.org](http://www.innovativeresources.org)
- Read a book about starting school or new beginnings.
- Acrylic keyrings—available at most art supply stores.

### Session Outline

1. Welcome & Warm-up.
2. Naming the Faith Trail marker.
3. Equipping the Parents: Handout
4. Equipping the Children: Story and art activity
5. Equipping All: Highs and lows
6. End of Session Blessing  
*Ideally the families and children will take part in a **Rite of Gifting** and blessing during the worship service following the Faith Trail event.*
7. Rite of Gifting (see separate file).

## Welcome and Warm Up

- Provide tea, coffee, juice and snacks.
- Welcome participants and give them a name tag.
- When everyone is present play a game of 'duck, duck, goose'; include parents (Appendix 1). This is a good icebreaker and most children will be familiar with the game.



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## Naming: TRAIL MARKER FIVE: Beginning School

Talk about starting school and what a big and exciting step it is. Acknowledge that children and parents may be feeling anxious about this, and that this is okay. Invite both parents and children to share their thoughts and feelings by using 'The Bears' cards. Invite everyone to select one or two bear cards that describe how they are feeling about starting school. Ask families to join with another family and share about the card they have chosen. This will provide an opportunity for both parents and children to share their feelings— they may find that they are not the only one feeling like they do!



Alternatively, make a series of emoji or feeling face cards. Search the internet for ideas.

## Equipping

### HOW CAN WE HELP OUR CHILDREN AS THEY START SCHOOL?

#### FOR PARENTS

- Provide Starting School handout (Appendix 2) and work through with parents.
- Invite parents to share stories about their children or previous children who have started school.
- This session should be reassuring for parents.

#### FOR CHILDREN

- Read children a story about starting school, a book about new beginnings or just one of your favourite pre-school story books!
- Provide textas/colouring pencils and paper and invite the children to draw for a display at church. You might like to display the drawings at the church the following week along with a photo of the child. This would be an opportunity for members of the congregation to see which children are starting school.
- While the children are drawing take the opportunity to talk with each one about how they are feeling about starting school. This might be a time when you can re-assure them that their church family will be praying for them during this special time. You may also wish to invite the children to share any personal prayer requests.



## Equipping

### HIGHS AND LOWS: ALL

As children begin school this is a really good time to introduce a time of sharing highs and lows as a family. This gives children an opportunity to share how they are feeling and let you know how their day at school has been.

Ask each person to share a high and low from their day. Then pray for one another, praising and thanking God for our highs and asking God to be with one another in the lows. You will find this is a great way to learn from your children about what is happening at school.

Hand out *Highs and Lows Card* (Appendix 3) and invite small groups to give this a go!

## Blessing for Beginning School

L: Leader

**P: Parents**

L: For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. Welcome to this time of change, excitement and new opportunities.

### PRAYER

**P: Gracious God, you have promised to keep us safe and holy. Be present with these children during this time of beginning school. Give them an open and eager mind. Protect all children from temptation, and guide them with your love. Amen.**

### BIBLE TEXT

L: The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.  
Psalm 121:8

### RITUAL ACTION

Parents make the sign of the cross on the forehead of the child going to school while saying these words,

**P: (Name), Jesus is with you wherever you go.**

### BLESSING

Parents place hand on head or shoulder of child and say together:

**P: (Name), may the love of Jesus be with you as you begin your school journey and throughout the year. I/we love you. Amen.**



## Gifting

### AT THE CONCLUSION OF SESSION

- **Highs and Lows card** (used during session).
- Suitable tracts available from the Lutheran Tract Mission. Visit their website [www.ltm.org.au](http://www.ltm.org.au) for available tracts.

### AT TIME OF BLESSING DURING WORSHIP SERVICE

- **Keyring**

Make a key ring for each child beginning school. One idea is to use an acrylic key ring holder (these are available from any art supply store.) Make a double sided design small enough to fit inside the key ring. The design might include a Bible text on one side and a picture on the other (see Appendix 4). Encourage the children to hang this key ring on their school bag as a constant reminder that God is with them everywhere they go.



- **Beginning School marker pebble.**

These are available for purchase from:

Dawn Deines-Christensen  
810 Linden Street  
Decorah, Iowa, 52101 USA  
Email: [dcprairie@q.com](mailto:dcprairie@q.com)

