



Dear Friend:

A warm hello to you from everyone here at Focus on the Family! School is back in session, and I know you're joining me in praying that this year would be much more normal than last year. Students here in the U.S. and all over the globe have certainly had to contend with some unique challenges over the last year and a half — but as Christian parents we have a wonderful opportunity to point our kids to Jesus throughout all of the fear, uncertainty, and upheaval that come their way.

To be sure, our world has been steeped in chaos and confusion in recent months. Even before the pandemic hit we were seeing the steady, unrelenting demise of common decency, civility, and the universal understanding of right and wrong. For parents, the world looks like an especially frightening place into which to launch our beloved children.

On top of the pandemic-related tumult we've all experienced, our nation's schoolchildren are constantly faced with a barrage of unbiblical messages and teaching, and our team at Focus hears often from parents who are deeply dismayed by the ideology their kids are being exposed to in the classroom on a daily basis. To make matters worse, when young believers attempt to express their convictions at school, they are often silenced by teachers and administrators who mistakenly believe that allowing children to share their faith violates the so-called "separation of church and state."

It's a sad state of affairs in our country when schools are given the green light to teach explicit and immoral sexual content to children as young as kindergarten — and yet these same kids are reprimanded and muzzled when they attempt to tell their teachers and classmates about their love for Jesus.

HOPE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

I've made no bones about my deep concern over where the culture is headed and the impact it's having on the most vulnerable among us. However, I wholeheartedly believe that the way Scripture calls us to respond to those who are hostile to Christian values goes straight to the heart of our calling as the Church. Amidst this "faithless and twisted generation" (Matthew 17:17), what does it look like to compellingly share the truth of God's Word — and to equip our kids to do the same? How can we empower our children to engage those around them with love, courage, and compassion?

This mission is the reason we established *Bring Your Bible to School Day* event.

In the present-day cultural climate that is so unfriendly to scriptural principles, it's no wonder Christian students are enthusiastically embracing *Bring Your Bible to School Day*. After all, this observance allows them not only to exercise their First Amendment rights in a respectful way, but it also gives them the opportunity to share their faith with their peers.

If you haven't heard of *Bring Your Bible to School Day*, this is actually more than just a single day — although that is its culmination. In short, *Bring Your Bible* is a nationwide, student-led movement that encourages young people to read Scripture, share the Gospel, and embrace religious liberty. The

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annual expression of these objectives takes place on the first Thursday of every October. This year's *Bring Your Bible to School Day* falls on October 7, and we're looking forward to hearing the inspiring stories and testimonials that will come out of this upcoming event!

You'll be encouraged to know, too, that the *Bring Your Bible* movement has grown significantly in recent years. In 2020, more than 514,000 students from over 50,000 U.S. schools took part — and we're aiming to see that number increase once again in 2021! Meanwhile, it's been exciting to see major news organizations raise awareness about *Bring Your Bible to School Day*, with this observance having been featured by the Associated Press, Fox News, *Sports Illustrated*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, and a number of other media outlets.

TEACHING CHILDREN BY EXAMPLE

Throughout the year, Focus on the Family spurs on students and their families to participate in *Live It Challenges*, which are monthly activities designed to help people live out their faith within their schools and communities. Since October of 2020, nearly 14,000 families have signed up for the *Live It Challenges*, with over half of those families being new to the ministry of Focus on the Family. We value their enthusiasm for the *Live It Challenges* and are excited to be able to introduce them to our resources designed to help families thrive.

In all of these endeavors, we want the next generation to understand that shining the light of Christ in these dark and challenging times goes beyond carrying a Bible to school once a year — although that's certainly a great start! What that day symbolizes, however, is the call each one of us has been given to enter into our individual spheres of influence with boldness, joy, and love for those who don't yet know the Savior. *Bring Your Bible*, then, is intended to inspire courage in kids so that they understand the life-changing impact they can have on those around them as they harness their religious freedoms in order to bring a message of salvation and hope to our hurting world.

We have wonderful examples of this kind of faithfulness time and again throughout God's Word, but the specific story that comes to my mind involves the slave girl who was captured by Naaman, commander of the Syrian army during the days of Elisha the prophet. 2 Kings 5 tells us that, following a Syrian raid in Israel, this young girl had been carried away from her home and family and enslaved by her enemies. It's difficult to imagine the terror, grief, and bitterness she must have battled.

Nonetheless, what God shows us in His Word is a girl who takes pity on the very man responsible for her unthinkable predicament. Naaman was stricken with leprosy and was undoubtedly desperate for a cure. Did this little girl who had been so victimized by her captor revel in his affliction? No, she shared the good news that there was a prophet who could heal Naaman and pointed him in the right direction.

Nowhere within the pages of Scripture are we told this girl's name — and yet her story is one of the most powerful and moving examples of Christ-like love and forgiveness I can think of.

Don't we all sometimes feel like strangers in our own land, too? In fact, the Bible tells us that's exactly what we are, "sojourners and exiles" (1 Peter 2:10) whose "citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). We are, in effect, living in a foreign land, just like Naaman's slave girl — and that's certainly true of our kids as well. They are immersed in a society that opposes nearly every value we are attempting to

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instill in them, and American schools have become breeding grounds for ideologies that run directly counter to Judeo-Christian thought.

Our children face a challenge similar to the one entrusted to that nameless little slave girl, who was surrounded by those who rejected her God and her faith. Yet, she still had an impact that echoes through history and continues to inspire God's people today.

As believers, we should all long to see our own children embrace that same spirit of humility and compassion toward those who might not be inclined to treat our kids with kindness or even tolerance.

This is the very calling the *Bring Your Bible* movement equips our kids to live out. Ultimately, our hope is that students across the nation who take part in this campaign will prompt many others to investigate for themselves the claims of Christ.

TESTIMONIES OF FAITH

Every year, young people reach out to us with uplifting accounts of their experiences with *Bring Your Bible to School Day*. We love hearing from kids who tell us about the conversations they've had with others and the questions they've been able to answer. Following is just a small sampling of a few of the reports that have come our way:

"I read my Bible during silent reading time. A classmate told me it was against the law to read my Bible at school. I told her it wasn't against the law and kept reading. My mom and dad told me they were proud of me for not quitting when things got tough!" —Kaylee (student)

"We encouraged our young people to not only bring their Bibles to school but engage in at least one conversation about their faith. In our youth group alone, we had participation in eight different schools. We even heard back from a few teachers just how much they appreciated that their students were willing to stand up for what they believed in." —Bret (youth pastor)

"I love doing [Bring Your Bible to School Day]! It makes me feel better at teaching others about how God has impacted my life. I was doing virtual learning, but whenever I sent an email to my teachers, I [included] a Bible verse very specific to each teacher." —Emiliana (student)

"I LOVE that Bring Your Bible to School Day gives my kids an opportunity to stand up for their faith and to share it openly in a setting that is perceived as 'off limits.'" —Jaimee (parent)

"The Bible calls us to be bold for Christ and Bring Your Bible to School Day helps young people do just that! This special day...is really allowing us to impact our next generation for Jesus Christ." —Bret (pastor)

Isn't it wonderful to see how the Lord is emboldening kids and teens all over the country to stand firmly for their constitutional rights as they testify to their faith? God is working mightily through students to make a difference.

I hope you'll help us spread the word about this dynamic movement! Tell your friends, relatives, church family, and co-workers – and perhaps you might even share information about *Bring Your*

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Bible to School Day on social media. In addition to following the *Bring Your Bible* effort on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, you can visit our website at FocusOnTheFamily.com/bring-your-bible/ for more specifics.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE NOW

Will you also help equip parents and the next generation to impact culture for Christ by sharing a generous ministry gift today? It is only through the generosity of our ministry partners that we can save and strengthen marriages, equip parents to raise godly children, advocate for vulnerable children and preborn babies, and participate in the public square.

Your renewed support would be so appreciated! As a nonprofit organization, we rely on the donations and generosity of friends just like you. So please consider responding again right away. Every \$40 you give today will help parents equip 10 students to live boldly and let their faith shine through efforts like the *Bring Your Bible to School Day* program. Your gift now will empower families to be living, breathing examples of God's love and grace through events like *Bring Your Bible to School Day*, our broadcasts and other ministry programs and resources.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to reconnect with you and give you a glimpse into Focus' latest efforts. Our outreach is made possible by the sacrificial involvement of friends like you. May the Lord guide and bless you and your loved ones as we embark on a new school year!



Jim Daly
President

P.S. As always, we deeply appreciate friends like you who help us empower parents to raise children who live out their faith boldly.