



BACK-TO-BUSY

No matter where you live, in Canada, or anywhere, you are likely getting into the back-to-school mode right about now. It is time to get everyone back on a schedule. Likely you have already started signing up for extra-curricular activities. Make sure in all this rush that you also schedule some 'me' time for you and your children, as well as family time for the whole family.

If you allow your children to have some input into the family schedule, your children are more likely to abide by it. Discuss things such as when homework will be done, how much screen time is allowed and when bedtime will be. Give and take as much as you can - the more your children feel they have had a say, the more likely they are to follow the schedule.

For many families back-to-school also means back-to-church. Though Advent is the beginning of the Church's year, many parish programs start in early Fall. When you are planning extra-curricular activities and making your family schedule be sure to include your Church activities. This is the time of year your parish is looking for new volunteers. Maybe one of your family activities could be to volunteer in a parish organization or event in some way together.

Now is the time to ask your Pastor if he will consider blessing the school bags at the beginning of the school year. Don't forget the teachers and catechists in your pews - their bags will need a blessing as well!

Did you know that Pope Francis was a teacher? In a recent address to students and teachers from schools across Italy (Saint Peter's Square Saturday, 10 May 2014) he talked about how he

loved school. He gave credit to his first grade teacher with helping him find his love of school. He stayed in touch with that teacher all her life. Pope Francis ended the visit with this *"And please... please, never let us allow our love for school to be stolen from us!"*

IDEAS FOR YOUR FAMILY TIME

- Mark the end of summer and the start of the school year. It can be as simple as a family photo each year, an ice cream outing, or community service. Spend a day at a local food bank or soup kitchen. Many churches organize the filling of backpacks with school supplies for needy children in the community. Help your children learn the importance of giving to others.
- Introduce your children to some Patron Saints. St. Thomas Aquinas (see *Be My Disciples* Level 2 Chapter 24 and Level 6 Chapter 3) and St. Catherine of Alexandria are two of the many Patron Saints of Students. St. Joseph of Cupertino is the Patron Saint of exam takers. Help your children look up more information about these or other Patron Saints. Encourage them to pray to them for help with their studies.