



Wednesday Prayer

14th Sunday after Pentecost – Shoes for the Journey

**¹⁵As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.
Ephesians 6:15**

Many parents and caregivers may find themselves shoe shopping with the children and youth in their lives in these coming weeks before school starts up again. It's a time of transition – most likely filled with multiple emotions of excitement, nervousness, anxiety, joy, and some sadness at the ending of summertime. This new pair of shoes is just one small part of them becoming ready for the new school year.

This verse from Ephesians is taken from a much longer lesson in which Paul is focused on putting on the “armor of God” in order to stand against the forces of evil. Youth too, may need some “armor” to be protected from all they face in today’s world. I wouldn’t recommend using the Old Testament words of putting on the armor of God with youth, but I do recommend thinking about how we as adults can support them through our words and actions. How might we ease some of the anxiety and model the gospel of peace?

Teenagers need adults who will walk with them, opening conversations around safety, mental health struggles, and whatever is on their mind that they’d like to talk through. Physical walks are a great time to engage in conversation and get away from screens together. “Walking with” youth can also look like conversations on a car ride or on a Sunday morning with the youth at your church. Here are some questions to get started. {Excerpts from [Fuller Youth Institute’s 8 Questions to ask your high school freshman.](#)}

1. *When it comes to going back to school, what (if anything) are you anxious about? How can I best support you?*
2. *What did you learn about friendship in middle school? How does that affect the type of friendships you hope to develop this year?*
3. *Who are a few adults that you’d like to spend more time with? What do you like about them, and what might you want to learn from them?*
4. *What new struggles might pop up for you in high school? Who is someone older than you that you can talk with about these when they come up? How can I help?*
5. *Is your youth group at church a source of support, and if not, how could it be? Is there anything I can do to help out?*

Loving and protecting God, as we walk with youth through times of transition, help us to be the armor of support and peace in their worlds. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.