

God of the Past, Future, and Ever-Present

The Fall ministry season is the perfect time to look backward and dream forward. It's a critical moment to re-evaluate, to phase some things out, and to launch some new ideas. Sometimes, however, tinkering with ministry programs simply masks the deeper issues we may feel this time of year. It's so easy to get caught up in "I can't wait until..." that we miss the present, while at other times we dwell on past successes (or failures) and we lose sight of our future.

Our confidence lies, not in our past, present, or future, but in God who leads us through our past, gives us hope for our future, and is very close in our present. In this light, we ask you to join us in this past, future, and ever-present prayer:

Our God and Father, Lord Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit...

We stop to look back... to look forward...and, in this moment, to remain mindful of you.

As for the past...

Thank you for leading me through these past months of summer ministry;

Thank you for your protection on our trips and activities;

Thank you for sustaining my family and for the ways my family walked through this journey with me;

Thank you for some of the new friendships that were formed this summer;

Thank you for the students who moved one step closer to following you;

Thank you for the ways you stretched our understanding and devotion to you;

Thank you for _____ (add you favorite youth worker's name here) and for the encouragement it is to work with people like him/her;

Thank you for the hardships too;

And thank you that our youth ministry is different today from who we were last year at this time...and from who we were last June;

I cling to the promise that you, who began a good work in us, will see it to completion.

As for the future...

I celebrate the new beginnings that come with a new school year ;

Increase my faith to trust you for what is yet unknown;

Mature my wisdom as my theology informs my ministry, and my ministry informs my theology;

Increase my interdependence on the body of Christ;

Help me to see myself as you see me—blessed, chosen, loved, forgiven, saved, accepted;

And help me to help my students see themselves as you see them;

Give me the grace to endure the challenges ahead;

Grow our love for you this year. And our love for one another. And our love for the world.

As for the ever-present...

Remind me the beauty of child-like wonder;

Remind I'm your servant and that my ministry position simply offers me greater opportunity to serve and sacrifice;

Remind me that I'm loved by you regardless of what unfolds this year;

Remind me that my life is the most powerful lesson I'll teach this year;

Remind me that any power I have comes from You—the same power that raised Jesus from the dead;

Remind me that my role as a youth leader means I get to extend your mission...it allows me a tangible way to as we embrace the world with love, healing, reconciliation, and hope.

Daily may I find myself dependent on you, and in this dependence, I pray the prayer you taught us to pray Jesus.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

Fall is here. God is more here. Bless you as you embark on this season of ministry.