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The first day of school

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.B.

Public school started in Nashville, Tennessee, two weeks ago. The thermometer tipped 90 degrees, as yellow buses lined school driveways. Kids exploded into the sunshine. Who can do homework when the pools are still open? In our condo complex, the pool was filled with hot pink and cool blue "noodles" by the time I got home.

I was curious how some of my young friends fared on their first day. So I phoned two high-school girls. I've been friends with them and their families forever.

"So how was the first day of school?" I asked Patricia. She started the ninth grade today in a new (to her) school.

"It was good," she said. "I actually knew someone that went to all my classes."

Kids in Nashville pray a lot, so my next question wouldn't sound unusual "Did you pray about anything before school?" I asked.

"I did pray," Patricia answered, "because I had a really bad dream. I had a dream that it was the worst day possible. I tripped a lot. I got lost more times than I could think of." In Patricia's dream, her school "was a big cement prison. But," she added, "nothing bad happened to me during the day."

When I asked how she prayed, Patricia answered, "That I wouldn't be the only one." I think Patricia meant that she would know some of the other kids and not feel alone all day. And she added, "I did know that I was going to have a good day. I thought of the ...synonyms [for God]. I thought about divine Love and God." There are many names for God. Some of them in the Bible are *Father* and *Shepherd*. Seven other names for God found or

implied in the Bible are included in the Glossary of "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy. They are *Life, Truth, Love, Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit*.

After my conversation with Patricia, I called Lindsey, who is a senior and is on the soccer team. When I asked about her first day, she said, "I might get changed out of one of my classes. Everything else was good. I was really tired, because I had to get up really early. Besides that, it was good. We had a soccer game. We lost, but we played well over all. "

She didn't pray specifically about the first day of school, but she had been praying. Lindsey said she prayed "about stress from all my summer reading." She continued, "We worked on it some at Sunday School." Some of the ideas she prayed with were: "I have infinite resources from God and I'm His reflection. Time is just a human measurement. "

When I asked if there was a specific verse, she said, "Wait, it's in my purse." Moments later, Lindsey read me this sentence from Science and Health: "Spirit, God, gathers unformed thoughts into their proper channels, and unfolds these thoughts, even as He opens the petals of a holy purpose that the purpose may appear" (pg. 506).

"Did the prayer help?" I asked.

"Well, yeah, I got all my stuff done and didn't have to stay up until 3 in the morning," she laughed.

Lindsey's advice for the first day of school is: "Be prepared. I have homework tonight, a quiz tomorrow, and a test Friday!" That's good advice for kids in any grade. And part of the preparation is prayer.

Both Lindsey and Patricia prayed with spiritual facts they had learned about God. They didn't just ask God to help them, and go on. They stopped for a minute. They thought about what they knew to be true about God and about themselves as God's children. They used spiritual ideas in their prayer that they'd learned in Sunday School and from reading the Bible and Science and Health. Then they put their prayer into practice.

You can prepare for school by praying with what you know about God. There are lots of verses in the Bible and Science and Health that will help you. One of my favorites is, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7).

We know that all things work

together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28