



Life Actually By Kari Kampakis

12 back-to-school prayers

It's that time of year again, time to pull out the backpacks, get haircuts, set up alarm clocks, and make 20 trips to Target because school is about to start, and Mom is on a mission.

Wherever your heart is this season — whether you're jumping for joy because you're ready for some space, or crying on the sofa because you aren't ready to let your kids go — you probably have mixed emotions about the school year ahead. You hope it will be a great one, but what if it's not? You want your kids to excel and be happy, but what if they fall and struggle in ways you never saw coming?

We moms like control, and not having control over the next nine months can make us a little, well, anxious. And since my favorite cure for anxiety is prayer, I'd like to share some prayers that might calm an anxious heart.

Here goes:

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the gift of a new school year. Thank you for our school community and the great education our kids enjoy. With gratitude I pray for the following:

1. Confidence. Help my children see themselves through your eyes and draw strength from their confidence in you. ("God is within her, she will not fall." Psalm 46:5)
2. Kindness. Enable my children to be a blessing and a light to those they encounter ("So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." 1 Thessalonians

5:11)

3. Wisdom. Open my children's hearts and minds to your ways, and enlighten them with insight into your will. ("If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." James 1:5)

4. Self-control. Give my children the discipline to work hard, control negative impulses, and grow in the virtues that draw them to you. ("No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:11)

5. Strong relationships. Surround my children with positive influences and godly friends who help them grow in your image and become the best version of themselves. ("Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'" 1 Corinthians 15:33)

6. Courage. Instill in my children the courage to be true to themselves and faithful to you, even if it means standing alone. ("The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Deuteronomy 31:8)

7. Faith. Fix my children's eyes on the big picture and keep their minds in awe of your ability to create, control, and sustain the universe. ("The men were amazed and asked, 'What kind of man is this? Even the winds and

the waves obey him.'" Matthew 8:27)

8. Peace. Calm my children's hearts when they feel stressed, worried, or lost. Remind them you are the God of peace, not confusion. Make your presence known as you carry them through trials and challenges. ("I am leaving you with a gift; peace of mind and of heart. And the peace I give you is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." John 14:27)

9. Clarity. Help my children hear your voice and see you at work in their lives. Make it clear what you want them to do. ("For God speaks again and again, though people do not recognize it." Job 33:14)

10. Fortitude. Give my children strength and grit when they get tested, and help them recognize any escapes that you provide. ("And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:13)

11. Protection. Armor my children physically, mentally, and spiritually. Surround them with angels to guard them and guide them. Cultivate sharp instincts in each of them that allow them to be gentle yet smart. ("Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves." Matthew 10:16)

12. Hope. Equip my children to bounce back quickly from daily disappointments. Keep them

anchored in the hope of heaven, the joy of Jesus, and the security of your promises. ("For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11)

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Moms, I'm thinking of you and your families as this new school year begins. Whether you're sending your baby off to kindergarten, your oldest child to college, or something in between, I pray that God watches over your children and blesses them with positive growth as they start new adventures and spread their wings wide.

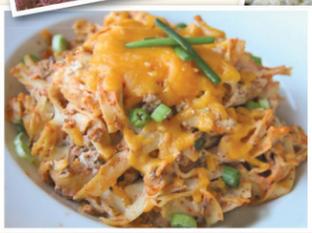
It's all good, and it's all going to be okay. Our kids have lessons to learn and so do we, and if we can settle our fears and anxieties, we can get excited about what's in store and maybe even anticipate the thrill of the unknown and the pleasant surprises that await.

Kari Kubiszyn Kampakis is a Mountain Brook mom of four girls, columnist and blogger for The Huffington Post. Her newest book, "LIKED: Whose Approval Are You Living For?", releases Nov. 15 and is available for pre-order on Amazon. Her first book, "10 Ultimate Truths Girls Should Know," is available everywhere books are sold. Join Kari's Facebook community at "Kari Kampakis, Writer," visit her blog at karikampakis.com or contact her at kari@karikampakis.com.

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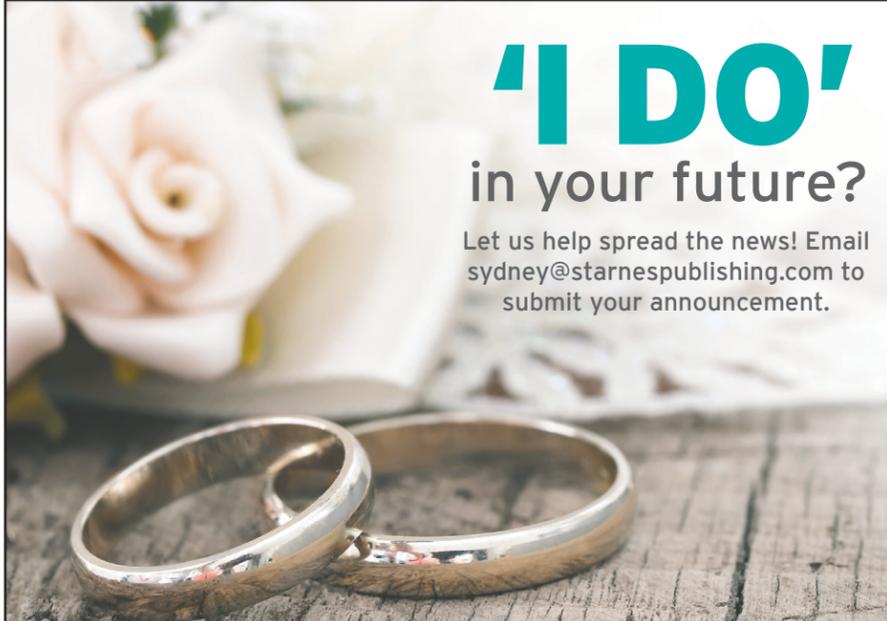
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