

How You Can Be a Big-Time Blessing to Your Child's Teacher

Open House just ended. Your child's teacher is wiped out and sprawled on her sofa after meeting a bazillion parents and students—who think she will remember each of you and all the information on those sheets you placed in her hands. She was already tired from preparing each little detail to beautify the classroom your child will inhabit. Compilation of curriculum, handouts, materials and gathering of supplies—many of them paid for with her own money—is done. Lesson plans are thoughtfully made, probably worked on over the summer while you hung out at the pool.

She's exhausted tonight, but also has that exhilarating excitement building that will keep her from sleeping well before the first day of class.

She gets up extra early, ready to be there with a sunshiny attitude to greet your student each morning. She often stays after hours and still takes home papers to grade or lesson plans that need to be tweaked.

She's passionate about her subject area. She cares for your child individually. She sees their potential and desires to see them reach it. When that's not happening, she counsels them or devotes extra time to tutoring—often while her children wait in daycare and her husband begins dinner at home.

So how can you bless her? How can you acknowledge your appreciation for the countless hours she puts in? How can you encourage your child to do the same?

- Pray for her daily. Pray for her health. Pray for her

family. Pray for her commitment to the Lord and to the work He called her to do. Pray for her if she disappoints you in some way. She's human. Prayer can change things. Her heart. Your heart.

- "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger" (James 1:19). If something ruffles your (or your child's) feathers, be sure to listen to all sides, pray before speaking and refrain from anger. Approach conflict in a kind, open-minded way.
- Realize that she has a classroom full of students, some who require extra guidance. In upper grades, there may be multiple classrooms of students—lots of names, needs and personalities. Your child is important to her, and so are the others.
- Show grace. Even teachers are human and have bad days. Her kids might have spilled orange juice all over the kitchen floor while rushing through breakfast, dumped milk in the van on the way to school or left their show-and-tell at home. She might have a family member struggling with illness, or have financial issues or be dealing with some other difficulty.
- Teach your child to respect her. Demonstrate that respect as an example to your child (even in conversations at home). Encourage your child to communicate appreciation to the teacher for the great lesson and her preparations. Yes, even the paper grading! A word of thanks can be just the motivation she needs to keep going.
- Write a kind note. In this digital age, we communicate by email, and that's convenient and fine. But go the extra mile. Make the effort to write out by hand your thankfulness for her dedication.
- Find out her favorite things and slip her a little gift every now and then. Her favorite tea. A teacup. Her favorite coffee, or a gift card to the local coffee shop. Chocolate. Or maybe mints, hard candy, water bottles. Teaching can be hard on the throat, and

something soothing might just be the ticket. There are many inexpensive ways to give a treat. If the Lord has blessed you in abundance, give generously. A gift card to her favorite bookstore or clothing shop. Even a teacher supply store. A thoughtful gift for an evening out. Think dinner and a movie!

- Choose to believe the best. Choose to build up. Choose to cheer her on each day.

Parents and teachers are a team, joining together to build a great foundation for your student to succeed. Play fair. Do all things for the good of the team and for the glory of God. Grace wins every time.

Go be a blessing today. You—and your child—will be blessed in return! {eoa}

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