

## The Day Before



### The Week Before (continued)



## School Shopping

To teach our kids wise spending habits, my wife and I prepare the night before our back-to-school shopping trip. We look over the kids' supply lists and store flyers to estimate the cost of basic supplies, and we add a \$5 buffer for each child.

The morning of our trip, we visit a local doughnut shop. Each child chooses his favorite pastry, and we review the lists and determine if there are items we already own that could be reused or repurposed. Then we give our children their allotted money, and we go shopping.

Once the kids have selected their own supplies, they review them with Mom and Dad as we tally the cost. If the kids have money remaining, they can spend or save as they wish. If they exceed their budget, my wife and I determine if we underestimated the cost or if they selected a luxury item. Then either they exchange an item or we pick up the extra cost.

In this way, we hope our children will learn to ask themselves whether they really need the embellished scissors when the plain ones are half the price.

—Rob Hurtgen

## Retiming the Tummy

During the first week of school, students often ask their teacher, "When is lunch?" To help your child focus on his schoolwork instead of his tummy, consider establishing a lunch-time routine. First, find out what time your child will eat lunch. (For home-schoolers, decide their lunch routine.) Then every day for about a week before class starts, eat lunch at that time. (Resist the urge to snack at 10 a.m.) This simple step could help keep your child's tummy from interrupting his learning.

—Lori Scott

## The Unexpected

Last year before school began, my kids woke to a bathroom sink filled with cereal and silver spoons resting in the toothbrush holder. After their unusual breakfast, they found balloons in the bathtub, candy hanging from tree limbs and smiley faces painted on the grass. At the day's end, we huddled under the kitchen table and acknowledged that the unexpected can be both fun and frightening. We discussed how the upcoming year would likely hold both good and bad surprises, but that God would be with us in every situation.

—Alicia Bruxvoort

**Tip: Consider arranging cereal bowls in the sink, or using cling wrap or another barrier for a cereal-in-the-sink breakfast.**

## Dedicated to Serve

In the Old Testament, anointing oil was used to dedicate a person or object to God for His service. In our home, from kindergarten through college, our family meets together the night before a new school year begins. We talk about what it means to be a Christian on their school campus. My husband then anoints each child by putting a drop of olive oil onto his finger and placing it on each forehead. This symbol reminds our kids of God's presence and the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

—Janet Mitchell

## Lunch Helpers

When my children were younger, I'd pack their lunches, and they knew to take their lunches out of the refrigerator before they left for school. As they grew, I added responsibilities. Grade 1: Pack your snack. Grade 2: Pack your snack and drink. Grade 3: Pack snack, drink and fruit. Grade 4: Pack sandwich (or main dish), drink, snack and fruit. Some children may be able to handle these responsibilities at younger ages. If they can, let them! (Home-schoolers can use these guidelines for preparing lunch each day.)

—Cindi Ferrini

## Get Organized

To contain the paper clutter, I bought a four-slot, plastic wall-hanging file and hung it between the front door and the garage. Every night, the kids put their homework, permission slips, candy-sales envelopes and all other school-related papers in their slots. Every morning, they grabbed their papers as they walked out the door.

—Sue Nowicki