



Supporting your church's college students

Before they leave:

- Encourage students to sign up with WELS Campus Ministry at wels.net/campus-ministry so the committee can share their information with their local campus pastor and send/e-mail them free copies of Meditations devotions and *Forward in Christ* magazine.
- Provide mentors. Consider pairing each student with a mentor of the same gender from the congregation. The mentor is then responsible for reaching out at least once a month to see how things are going, ask about specific needs, and help the student continue to grow in his or her faith.
- Have a special "sending-off" worship service at the beginning of August each year. Focus on how the congregation can support students in their faith life, and how students can stay connected while they're away.
- Create a bulletin board with photos of the students and where they're going to school, with requests to the congregation to pray for them or mail them something.

While they are away:

- Send care packages
- Send encouraging emails
- Send birthday cards with a note of encouragement and a small gift card
- Make them something – baked goods, tie blankets, quilts, etc. (something in school colors is a big bonus!)
- Send an encouragement jar: Ask the Sunday school, Lutheran grade school classes, or other small groups to write short encouraging notes for each student and put them in a jar; include them in care packages or as part of a college starter kit.
- Use social media: Create a special group for members who are away from college where the pastor and college students can share testimonials, encouragement, and prayer requests with one other. If a private social media group doesn't work, ask all of your college-age members to follow your church's accounts to stay connected while they're away.

When they get back:

- Ask them to volunteer their talents at holiday worship services (music, readings, ushering, greeting, etc.) and at summer outreach activities and worship.
- Invite them to speak to your church's teen group when they're home on break about what it's like at college and how they stay connected to their faith.