

“BACK TO SCHOOL” SEPTEMBER 2006

Have you noticed the change in the volume of traffic? Every year around this time, the streets get busier as yellow buses transport students to school and parents drive their children to various activities. The signs are obvious for all to see: school is back in session. Our church is located in the middle of one of Florida's largest school districts. In fact, the Pinellas School District is the seventh largest in the state. Our district has over 148,000 students. Those are big numbers and they help to explain the increase in traffic every year around this time.

It isn't necessary to wait for the opening of the school year to realize the importance of learning. As Christians, we know that over and over again the Bible talks about the life-long challenge of growing in our faith. When the crowds sought out Jesus, they were eager to listen to his teachings. They sensed that Jesus was revealing truth to them about his Heavenly Father and his Father's Kingdom.

Perhaps the most famous of Jesus' teachings is the Sermon on the Mount. This special instruction of our Lord is found in the Gospel of Matthew. It begins with this description of Jesus:

*“Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain,
and when he sat down his disciples came to him.
And he opened his mouth and taught them.”
(Matthew 5:1)*

Matthew then records three chapters of Jesus' teachings. Our Lord increased their understanding of God and God's Kingdom. Listen to Matthew's comments at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount:

*“And when Jesus finished these sayings,
the crowds were astonished at his teaching,
for he taught them as one who had authority.”
(Matthew 7:28-29)*

Those who listened to Jesus were teachable. They carefully weighed his words and were open to his instructions in the faith.

We will celebrate Christian Education Sunday - “Rally Sunday” - on September 17. That Sunday will start a week of new beginnings in Adult Sunday School, Children's Sunday School, and the Wednesday Night Bible Study. Opportunities can also be found in the Women's Bible Studies and the “Read the Bible in 2006” group. Please circle September 17 on your calendar. I hope that many of you can join us as we seek to grow in our faith. Are you ready to go “back to school”?

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