



**TODAY'S TOPIC:**  
Spirit In My Backpack: Peace,  
Kindness and Back to School  
Affirmations

You are welcome to use this lesson to inspire spiritual conversation in your family or youth classroom. It is written for elementary age but could be adjusted as needed.

**THINKING JOB:** Ask a “thinking job question” to get everyone thinking about something pertinent to the lesson. This could be asked moments or hours before your conversation.

***What feelings do I have about school?***

**Lesson**

Materials	Things to Prepare	Today's Goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Backpack</li> <li>● Rocks or weights</li> <li>● Index cards</li> <li>● Markers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●</li> </ul>	Know that using affirmations at school and about school can change your thoughts.

**ASK:** Ask school related questions: Who is about to go back to school? What grade are you going into? Where do you go to school?

**ASK:** It is great when we can name our feelings. What's the most exciting part of school?

- What is your favorite part of school?
- What is the hardest thing about school?
- Is there anything you don't like about school?

**SAY:** You can have lots of feelings about school and your feelings can change during the day and from one day to the next.

**ACTION:** Ask for a volunteer and have them put on the backpack. Sometimes at school, things don't go the way you want. Ask for suggestions about things that could happen during the day at school that might bring your emotions down. (You're new and scared. You lost your lunchbox. Someone takes your stuff. You fall down and get hurt. Someone is mean. Feel dumb, can't do it, too shy to make friends.)

For each emotion (sad, mad, scared, anxious, confused) add a rock or weight to the backpack.

**ASK:** How does it feel to carry around all the extra weight of those emotions? One way you can change the weight is to choose your thoughts.

**ACTION:** It is okay to feel all of your feelings. But if you want to change your feelings and lighten your weight, what are some thoughts you can choose to change your day if it isn't going very well? For each uplifting emotion, take a weight out of the backpack. (kindness, friendliness, courage, focus, confidence, caring, honesty, respect)

**ASK:** How important is "kindness" at school? How can you be kind? How can others be kind to you? How important is "peace" at school? How can you bring peace? How can others bring peace? Peace and kindness are the opposite of rocks. They are almost like helium balloons that lift us up!

**AFFIRMATIONS:** An affirmation is a statement you make as if it is true today. An affirmation is a way to get more of what you want OR the opposite of the feeling you don't want and how to focus on the thing you do want.

What are some things we might want to affirm for ourselves about school?

- "I can do it!"
- "I have lots of friends."
- "I have the best teacher."
- "I learn new things easily."
- "I am powerful and unafraid."
- Make up your own examples.

**ACTIVITY: AFFIRMATIONS:** Use index cards and markers to create one affirmation for each child, in their own handwriting, if possible. Suggestions: can start with, "I bring...to school with me." "I am..." Or use the examples above as a guide.

**ACTIVITY:** Create a backpack zipper pull with yarn beads or other craft supplies to remind them of their affirmation.

**AFFIRMATION** – I choose to be kind. repeat 4X

Note: Printable affirmations and coloring sheets for this lesson are available at <https://www.milehichurch.org/youth-family/> .