

Staff Work

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Dear Parents of College Freshmen

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Dear Parents of College Freshmen

Abstract

"The transition to college is a dramatic change for most, and God is in all the details."

Posting about sending a child off to college from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/dear-parents-of-college-freshmen/>

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Disciplines

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Dear Parents of College Freshmen

 [all in allthings.org/dear-parents-of-college-freshmen/](http://allthings.org/dear-parents-of-college-freshmen/)

Kim Brinkerhoff

Dear Parents of College Freshmen,

It's *that* time of year again... but instead of pencil boxes, 3 ring binders, pencils with the right lead, and tissues for the classroom, you are sorting through the laundry basket of extra-long sheets, a pillow, the cell phone charger, an alarm clock, and a few matching bath towels... all there reminding you that it's going to be *different* this time.

So then a few new questions zip through your mind: what if they don't get up on time, who will care for them if they get sick, what if they won't call me, what if they're homesick, don't like their roommate, don't go to bed EVER, fail a test, forget about a paper (and about proofreading it, for that matter), don't eat well, don't make friends, or don't have clean clothes? And who is going to match their socks?

Breathe.

Yes, for some it's "gotten easier," and for others it's like dropping off a piece of your heart to survive out there all alone. The truth is, it doesn't matter whether it's the first, the second, or the last child you are going to drop off at college. Your heart is going to feel the loss of someone special in the daily "ins and outs" of life. You love them. It's normal to feel this way. Not always easy, but normal.

No, I have never dropped a child off at college, but I have been the student and I can tell you what we need.

The facts are:

Some of us didn't know what we had until we didn't have it anymore. So give us a chance to miss you.

Some of us couldn't wait to get out of the house. These may be the years for a lot of growth.

We are afraid. It's not a weekend retreat, week of camp, or a month-long mission trip.

We will fail. Sometimes failure is our best teacher. You were there once.

We will miss you even if it's not right away or we don't admit it.

We are excited!

God is carrying out this plan in perfect sovereignty. Every detail has God's promise of completion for our good and the Almighty One's glory. Men and women of faith entrusted their children to the Lord all throughout history: Abraham with Isaac, Hagar with Ishmael, Isaac and Rachel with Jacob and Esau, Jacob with Joseph, Jochebed with Moses, Hannah with Samuel, Jesse with David, Mordecai with Esther, Mary and Joseph with Jesus, and then Lois and Eunice with Timothy. If you weigh in on just one of those situations you'll realize that the center of God's will was the safest place for them to be. Notice that even when these imperfect parents didn't trust the Lord, God still had the perfect way. God is always up to good things. God is incapable of anything less.

As a steward of time, college is just one season of many, yet it is one of the most opportune times to capture what this kingdom responsibility looks like in every aspect of life as students move away from home. We can learn from the past and dream towards the future, but we are only afforded living in the present to accomplish both. Consider it an immense privilege to encourage your student as they walk through these unfamiliar changes. College should be a community set up to support and equip them for

academic and lifestyle success: not just to survive, but to thrive.

When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. I Corinthians 13:12

These are big changes and you can encourage your child in very practical ways, guiding the decision making to develop confidence and responsibility toward the worship of the King.

Here are a few ideas that might help throughout the year:

Packages. They are the best! It's a little bit of home in a box.

Send a letter. Simple handwritten notes go a *long way*. They take time and they're in *your* handwriting.

Send a short text. Encourage us. This "growing up responsibly" thing is hard.

Call us, but not every day. There is nothing like hearing the voice of someone who loves you on the other end of the phone. Plan to call once a week and let the details pile up in anticipation for that time to share.

Transition is hard. Be patient while time works out the details of so much change. It's not worse, just different. Be gracious with each other.

Listen. We are learning a lot and are being challenged. We are changing, and whether we admit it or not, we want you to be a part of it.

Pray for us and tell us so. This is a gift like nothing else. Show us your confidence in the fact that God is up to great things in and through this season of life. You can't be on campus all the time, but He is.

We still need you. It just looks a little different. You are our biggest cheerleaders.

The transition to college is a dramatic change for most, and God is in all the details. "He will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you" (Isaiah 26:3). There is not one detail He left out or one promise He will not keep. Take it one day at a time and let them know that you are there to walk beside them. "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). That would be my prayer for your student in the coming months. Wisdom. Stature. Favor with God first, and then man.