



FRESH START WITH FAITHFUL STEPS

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As August unfolds and the rhythm of a new school year begins, we find ourselves standing once again on the holy ground of beginnings. New classrooms, sharpened pencils, reorganized church calendars, fresh initiatives, and shifting routines signal more than just a change of season; they represent hope, growth, and the quiet, courageous work of starting again.

Whether you serve in the church office, the sanctuary, the classroom, or the community, this time of transition is both sacred and tender. It carries with it an invitation: to begin again with God, to lean into purpose, and to trust that Christ is already present in what is forming.

REFLECTION #1

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." Arthur Ashe

Scripture: "His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." 2 Peter 1:3

We don't need everything to be perfect to take the next right step. As church workers, we often feel pressure to have it all figured out before moving forward, but what if we focused instead on what is already working?

Reflection Prompt:

- What is one small thing that went well in your ministry last week?
- What personal strength did God help you draw upon in that moment?
- What's the next small step you can take this month?

We build momentum not by leaping into perfection, but by stringing together small faithful steps, each one pointing toward the larger story God is writing.

REFLECTION #2

"Transitions are opportunities to write new stories."

Scripture: "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

The stories we tell about ourselves shape how we live and love. In moments of change, we have a chance to re-author the script.

Maybe your internal narrative sounds like:

- "I'm too tired for a new season."
- "Everything falls on me."
- "It's always been like this."

Let's pause. Breathe. Invite the Spirit in.

Therapeutic Practice:

- Ask: "What is the story I'm telling myself right now?"
- Reflect: "What do I want the story to be by the end of this season?"
- Pray: "Lord, give me courage to tell a story that includes hope, grace, and renewal."

REFLECTION #3

"You are not required to set yourself on fire to keep others warm." Joan Crawford

Scripture: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:39b
(Self-care and neighbor-care go hand in hand.)



Mindfulness Exercise: The Sacred Yes and the Compassionate No

Step 1: Pause for a moment and name one thing you're saying yes to this week that feels heavy or misaligned.

Step 2: Ask yourself:

- Is this a "yes" rooted in love, or fear of letting someone down?
- What might a faithful "no" look like here?

Step 3:

- Repeat quietly or prayerfully:
- "God calls me to care, with limits, not depletion."
- "Boundaries are love in action."

Let this moment realign your energy with God's grace, not guilt.

REFLECTION #4

"You are allowed to grow, rest, and change."

Scripture: "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

Attune Before You Act

Emotion is not the enemy, it's the compass. Before rushing into solving problems, take a moment to emotionally check in with yourself and those around you.

- "What am I feeling right now?"
- "Where do I feel it in my body?"
- "What is this emotion trying to tell me about my needs or longings?"

Invite God into your emotional landscape. It is there, in the tender places, that connection grows, between you and your calling, between you and others, between you and the One who formed you.

A Prayer for New Beginnings

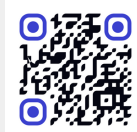
Gracious God,
In this season of fresh starts
and sacred transitions,
Breathe courage into our weary places.
Kindle joy in our hearts as we greet
the unknown.
Bless the teachers, leaders, students,
staff, and families
Who walk into new spaces this month.
May our work reflect Your mercy,
Our hearts remain open,
And our steps follow the path
you prepare before us.
In Christ's name we pray, Amen.



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