

Backpack Blessing Celebration – Marie Graw Religious Education Coordinator/Communications LOCCSD

This is our second year – last year we gave out bags with pencils, prayer cards, bracelets, etc. in them.

Last year we had over 150 bags and we ran out. We put a flier in report cards, had posters around the schools, promoted during first week back, and we asked parishes to put the blessings announcement in their bulletins.

This year we are giving a backpack reflector/light, with our Division logo on it.

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The following is a suggestion only:

Each pastor will determine how it will go at his Parish (and the form of the blessings and gifts presented will vary given the size of the school division and parish):

Following the homily teachers/staff will bring the school division’s gift baskets (pencils, erasers, prayer cards of schools' patron Saints) forward for a blessing.

Father will ask **all** students to come forward with their packs, or if they do not have their packs, come up without them.

Teachers/staff will help students lineup; Father will invite the congregation to stand and extend their hands, and he will offer a blessing of protection and good study.

Following the blessing students will return to pew (teachers/staff will return to pew).

Father will ask anyone employed by any school to rise - he (and the congregation can join in) will give them a blessing and they will be seated.

Father will ask if there are any **donors** (people who have given/donated school supplies to schools or individual students) and **volunteers** of schools, present.

He will ask them to stand, and will bless them (again all could join in) and they will be seated.

Each parish decides if it wants to give a small gift also, or give a free brunch ticket, provide coffee and goodies, or some other **“welcome gesture”** to the large number of students (and their families) that come out.

Students receive gifts from the baskets by pastoral team teachers and staff as they leave the Church.