



Celebrating Milestones During COVID-19

2020 will be a memorable year for sure. While all of us will think of months of stay-at-home orders, the youth and children in your church will think of missed celebrations. High school students will think of cancelled proms and graduation ceremonies. Promoting students will think of missed moving up celebrations from elementary to middle school and middle to high school, youth group initiations, and their first event being a part of the children's group. Students are experiencing big feelings around these missed milestone celebrations. As the days for these celebrations approach, it is a great opportunity for ministry leaders to think creatively about how you and your church can help students celebrate these big life events. We may be living physically distant but we can still connect socially.

For Graduating/Promoting Students

1. Create personalized yard signs to place in the students' yard. One such sign from a church read "FBC loves [student name]" and featured the school name, mascot and class of 2020. You could also personalize with the students' picture, graduation art, etc.
2. Hold a virtual recognition service for graduating students, families, and volunteers that work with them. Allow time for each volunteer to share their memories, favorite stories and prayers for each student.
3. Create a special newsletter and/or video featuring your graduating students. The video could be featured in virtual worship close to the time of graduation.
4. Plan a celebratory gathering with graduates and families to be held in the future, when it is appropriate for groups together as per government recommendations. Depending on when this happens this could become a blessing/sending off of graduates to their next step (college, job, etc.).
5. Have church members "adopt a graduating student" and organize a time to deliver gifts, letters from the church, etc. to each student. You could livestream the deliveries on the church's social media platforms and/or record and share with members.
6. Ask graduating students to record a 1-2 minute video of themselves sharing stories from their time at the church. Compile the videos and feature in a virtual worship service.

Other Milestones

1. For kids entering your children's or youth group create a welcome kit. This could include the Bible translation used in the children's/youth group, children's/youth group t-shirt, favorite group snacks, rules to favorite group games, etc.
2. Record a virtual tour of the children's/youth ministry area in your church. Share with new group members so they are familiar with the spaces when gatherings in church buildings resume.
3. Ask volunteers/teachers who work with children's/youth group to write letters to new students as an introduction. Teachers/volunteers could also include reasons why they are excited to have the new student join their group.

