

Take some time to remember God's promises to travel with you to college, to class, as you study abroad, as you travel back home again. Look for signs of God's presence in your conversations and in the exploration you get to do during college. God. Is. With. You. Always!

## Packing for College

There's a lot of STUFF to pack when heading off to college. Whether you're a young adult or know some young adults, you get it: clothes, bedding, electronics, snacks. But there's more. Mixed in with the suitcases and boxes are piles of expectations, fears, hopes, and questions of faith.

It can be overwhelming to get ready for a new academic year, especially in a new place. How can you make room for faith during busy college years? What can you bring along to college that will help?

### 1. Pack Your Curiosity

You will likely meet students from diverse backgrounds, from all over the world, and from religions other than your own. They have important things to teach you. Ask respectful questions about how they celebrate holidays. Ask if you might tag along to a Shabbat dinner or a prayer service. As you develop friendships with peers from diverse backgrounds, you'll learn more about the world and also about your own beliefs.

### 2. Save Room For Questions

Whether you were taught to question your faith or not, college will bring a chance to ask questions about God and the world. These questions are a natural and important part of growing up. Read the Psalms to see how often the psalmist asks God questions. Find someone with whom you can talk through your questions, like a friend, chaplain or a pastor/priest. Bring your questions and doubts to God in prayer (see Psalm 10:1).

### 3. Bring Along Your Bible

You can pack your favorite paper Bible, of course. Or you can try out a [Bible app](#) so the Bible is always with you on your phone. Check out other devotions like [Pray As You Go](#) or verse-a-day websites like the one from [Bible Study Tools](#). Spending even a few minutes connecting with God can help you through your busy day.

### 4. Prayer May Look Different In College

Find what works for you. Many students I know listen to their favorite music to unwind at the end of the day, and bring their concerns and joys to God as they listen to music. Some like pen and paper journaling as a way to write out their prayers. Others find themselves praying as they walk down the sidewalk on the way to class, “God, help me through this exam!” Find a couple of people you can pray with on occasion.

### 5. Seek A Church Community And You Will Find (But You May Need To Seek Awhile)

You will not find an exact replica of your home church if you go to college in a new town. But it’s great to find a faith community in your home-away-from-home city. Check out a campus ministry through your denomination’s website or explore your college’s campus ministry offerings. Stop into a local church.

Keep in mind it may take several visits until you feel comfortable in a new place, and you may need to check out a few communities before you find a good fit. Many churches will welcome you to just come in to pray during the week if you need some peace and quiet.

### 6. Asking For Help

Many college students find themselves overwhelmed by anxiety or struggling to adjust to their new environment. You, too, may find yourself in need of some help as you adjust to college life. If you notice an increase in anxiety or wonder if you may have depression, seek out a counselor at your college, a chaplain or another trusted adult.

Asking for help is a sign of strength and something we all need to do from time to time. This is a great time of life to seek out someone to talk to in confidence.

## 7. Remember God Is With You!

As Jesus promised in the Gospel of Matthew, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (28:20). Take some time to remember God’s promises to travel with you to college, to class, as you study abroad, as you travel back home again. Look for signs of God’s presence in your conversations and in the exploration you get to do during college. God. Is. With. You. Always!

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