

Blessings Given

Dear Facilitator: Blessing. It is a word that we use in our Christian circles, but what does it mean? The Old Testament is filled with people blessing people: Elijah to Elisha, Isaac to Jacob and Esau, Moses to Joshua, and more. Are blessings still relevant today? Should we pass on blessings to others? If yes, how does one go about blessing another?

Ultimately, blessings come from God. In Ephesians 1:3, it says, “Praise be to the God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”

This week we are going to begin to understand the term “blessing.”

It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson.

Participants will:


1. Explain how blessings were used in the Bible.
2. Develop a blessing for each member of the family.

This week’s commitment statement is: As God has blessed us, we should bless others.


We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

Blessings


Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time talking about the power of prayer and how we can pray for our children and family members.


 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

Introduction *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Did you know studies have shown that if you think positively about another, the other will more likely than not behave positively? In school, if a teacher thinks that a student has higher potential, the student will do better in school. The opposite is also true: If you think someone is no good, often the person will live up to your expectations. This is called a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Often, in the Bible, fathers would give blessings to their children. Because we can look at those blessings, written in the Bible, we also know what happened in the person's life. The blessings often were prophetic. "A spoken blessing is a positive, biblical statement that invokes the blessing of God in the life of another" (<http://iblp.org/>).

We read stories of Isaac blessing Jacob, Moses blessing Joshua, Noah blessing his sons, Joseph blessing the people of Israel, and more!


 **Share:** Share a blessing you, the facilitator, wrote for a family member or friend.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Explain how blessings were used in the Bible.
2. Develop a blessing for each member of the family.

This week's commitment statement is: As God has blessed us, we should bless others.

Family & Table Talk 20 minutes

 **Say:** Share something you appreciate about one another.

After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.

As you begin this portion of the evening, explain that each time you will start with the overview and then the lesson time.



Scripture SUPPORT

Matthew 19:13

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

Mark 10:16

And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Ephesians 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Genesis 27

Blessing from Isaac to Jacob and Esau

Genesis 49

Jacob's blessing to his sons

Deuteronomy 33

Moses's blessing to the people of Israel

40 minutes

Parent Training

Faith Formation

BLESSINGS GIVEN

Have each member share what he or she learned about each other over the family dinner conversation. (If available, write on a board comments from participants.)

Sometimes we do not realize how much we appreciate each other until we talk about it. Maybe you discovered something that someone appreciates about you and would have never known unless you talked about it today.

Blessing. It is a word that we use in our Christian circles, but what does it mean? The Old Testament is filled with people blessing people: Elijah to Elisha, Isaac to Jacob and Esau, Moses to Joshua, and more.

Are blessings still relevant today? Should we pass on blessings to others? If yes, how does one go about blessing another?

Ultimately, blessings come from God. In Ephesians 1:3, it says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

This week we are going to begin to understand the term, "blessing."

In Genesis 27, we see that Jacob tricked Isaac into giving him his brother Esau's blessing. In verse 38, Esau cries out to his father, requesting that he too be blessed. (If the passage is unfamiliar, read it together.)

How about you? Did you yearn for some kind word or blessing from your mom or dad? What about your children?

According to Trent (TheBlessing.com), a blessing can fight back against a toxic culture, open a child's heart to a lasting faith, and help heal hurts from the past.

Many times, you can take Bible verses and create a blessing for your child(ren).

STEPS TO WRITING YOUR BLESSING (Theblessings.com)

1. Paragraph 1: Why your child is special
 - Write one to two things you appreciate about your child.
 - Explain why you love this about your child, especially how it blesses you and other's lives.
2. Paragraph 2: Face their fears
 - Pick a challenge your child faces.
 - Acknowledge the fear.
 - Provide encouragement and hope.
3. Paragraph 3: Share your genuine commitment
 - Share how you and the LORD are committed to the child no matter what.
4. Share the experience in a unique way.
5. Memorialize the moment by taking a picture or something similar.

Example from Theblessings.com

“Jared, we are so grateful that the LORD has given you to us. Two things we love about you so much is how the LORD has built into your life such a joyful spirit, and He’s combined that with an amazing energy for jumping right into the middle of life!”

“Jared, we know as you start fifth grade at a new school that there will be lots of challenges. But your joy for life, your incredible smile, and your willingness to jump in and try new things are strengths God will use in your life to help this be a great year for you—and to help others. We believe the LORD will get you through the tough days and help you find that right group of friends. We know it may be tough at first, but we pray that by the end of the year, this will have been the best year ever for you in your new school.”

“So, Jared, may you know every day that Mom and I are going to be praying for you and will be looking for ways to cheer you on. And even on those days when it may be tough to smile or when you’re lonely and miss your old friends or times are just tough,

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may you remember that you're NEVER alone. God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). We want you to know that God will be with you every day in your new school. He'll be your Shepherd and guide you every day, and as long as we have life and breath, we'll be there for you as well. We can't wait to watch you use the strengths God has given you to create a special future!"

Bible verses

Now it is time to write blessings for members of your family. What are some good Bible verses to use as you prepare blessings for your family members (<http://iblp.org/>)?

- Is the fruit of the Spirit evident in his life? (See Galatians 5:22-25.)
- Is he serving others in love? (See Galatians 5:13 and Luke 6:27-38.)
- Is he seeking God's guidance so that he can carry out the good works God has prepared for him to do? (See James 3:12-13, I Timothy 6:11-19, Titus 3:8, and Hebrews 10:24.)
- Is he submitting to his God-ordained authorities? (See Hebrews 13:17, James 4:7, Colossians 3:18, and I Peter 2:13-14.)
- Does it appear that something may be competing with his devotion to God? (See Matthew 6:33.)
- Are there particular temptations that seem to present big challenges in his life? (See Matthew 6:13, I Corinthians 10:13, Matthew 26:41, I Timothy 6:9-12, and Luke 8:4-18.)
- Are you aware of any fears, hurts, or pressures that he is facing? (See Galatians 6:1-3, James 5:16, Romans 12:1-15, and Ephesians 4:32.)

If comfortable, have each family share the blessing.

Write down each family member's name. Next to the name, write how you appreciate the child, a fear the child faces, and some potential Bible verses to use for your blessing.

Notes

SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Explain how blessings were used in the Bible.
2. Develop a blessing for each member of the family.

This week's statement is: As God has blessed us, we should bless others.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as a parent this week?

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

Student Training

Faith Formation

BLESSINGS GIVEN

Objectives

- Help children be aware of what is meant by the term “blessing.”
- Help children be aware of what is meant by unconditional love.
- Help children be aware of the power of unconditional love.
- Help children be aware of how we can learn to love unconditionally.
- Help children be aware of how to bless their parents.

What is a blessing? A blessing is God’s favor and protection. A blessing can also be a prayer or word of favor and protection spoken over someone. It is a powerful gift that secures God’s plan for a person’s life. Ultimately, blessings come from God, and God gives us many blessings! For example, the gift of unconditional love that a parent bestows on their child is a blessing. Some would argue that it should be easy for a parent to show unconditional love to their child, but most parents will tell you that they learned that they need God’s help to love each other as well as their children unconditionally. God and your parents love you unconditionally. When we love

someone without condition, it means we love them just the way they are no matter what they say, do, act. That may seem as if it should not be that difficult, but in many cases, it can be quite challenging.

When parents love each other and their children unconditionally, their actions are saying, “I love you. You are good enough just the way you are. I love you while you are growing and developing into the person God created you to be. You have my love—no matter what!”

Everyone needs to know there is someone loving them, cheering for them, praying for them, and committing to being there as long as they live. God loved us unconditionally

when He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to save us from our sins. Romans 5:8 proves this: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

When children feel loved and affirmed just the way they are, even with their imperfections, they feel good about themselves. They are more willing to look at their shortcomings and work on changing their not-so-positive behaviors. Just think how much better the world would be if every child experienced this kind of love and affirmation.

Even when your parents must correct you, they are doing that because they love you. Correction is also a part of loving you. Proverbs 3:12 says, “... the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father [disciplines] the son he delights in.” As our loving Father, God corrects us when we exhibit incorrect behavior because He loves us. So, when your parents correct and discipline you, they are proving their love for you.

One way we can learn to love others just as they are is to realize that just as each of us has strengths in our character, we also have weak areas in our character where we can improve and do better. And God loves us even when we are not so loveable. Yes, God just loves us! He can't help Himself because God is Love (1 John 4:8). We don't have to earn it or act a certain way. In the Bible, God lets us know He is actively committed to us. In Hebrews 13:5, He tells us that no matter what, He will never leave us or forsake us. Also, Jeremiah 31:3 says, “The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.’”

God wants us to love each other the way that He loves us. Every time we read verses where God tells us He loves us, it's as if He is right here saying it to us repeatedly. If we are to follow God's example, we need to say to each other often, “I love you!” We need to always be there for each other in good times and even more so in bad times. When

we must confront someone, we do it in calmness and confirm our love with peaceable words and gestures. A warm hug and a forgiving smile can go a long way to erase bitterness.

Through the blessing of unconditional love, we learn what it is to experience feeling valued and loved by the important people in our lives. In the Bible, along with daily speaking affirmation over their children and demonstrating their active commitment through their everyday support and provision, parents also administered blessing in other ways. A very powerful way was through their words. A spoken blessing is a positive statement that asks for the favor of God to be in the life of another person.

God's Word tells us that there is incredible power in our words (Proverbs 18:21). The first spoken blessings in the Bible are in Genesis 1:28 when God blessed Adam and Eve. Then, in Genesis 12:1-3 and again in Genesis 22:17, God blesses Abraham. Afterward, many other persons in the Bible bestowed blessings. Later in the book of Genesis, Abraham spoke the blessing over his son, Isaac; Isaac over his son, Jacob; and Jacob also blessed his children. In Luke 24:50, Jesus lifted His hands and blessed His disciples. The meaning of the word "bless" is to speak well of, to praise, or to speak God's favor and prosperity. Ultimately, the blessing is God giving power to someone to do that which they were created to do. Like our examples from the Bible, when we use our words to speak a blessing over someone, it encourages, strengthens and lifts the one who it is spoken to.

Blessings are still powerful today! A parent may place their hands on their child's head and pray over them speaking words of love and affirmation. Another way to bless someone is by describing to them an extraordinary future that God has planned for them and declaring it to come to fruition. The blessing lets the child know what their parent thinks of them. It also helps them to see their future through God's eyes. A spoken blessing is a way to

show God's love, and when a parent blesses their child, it invokes the presence of God in their life and sets the child on a life path that is pleasing to God. In Mark 10:16, some people brought their children to Jesus so He could touch them, and it says that Jesus took the children in His arms and put His hands on them and blessed them. Jesus set an example for us to follow. He wants us to know that blessing children is just as important and meaningful in our world today as when He walked on the earth.

Yes, it is powerful for parents to bless their children, but did you know that you can bless your parents? In Ephesians 6:1-2, the Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." So, as you can see, God even makes a special promise to you when you honor your parents!

When you honor your parents, you are placing high value on them, and this blesses them. You do this by the attitude you display to them, how you speak to them, and how you obey them... no whining or complaining! You can bless your parents by giving them affectionate hugs and kisses and by making sure you tell them often how much you appreciate them for everything they do for you. You can bless them by spending time talking to them, giving them a public verbal tribute, writing them a heartfelt note, drawing them a beautiful picture, or making a special card to express your love for them. When you do this, you will not only bless your parents, but you will bring a smile to God's face and abundant blessings on your own life for years to come.

DISCUSS

- What is unconditional love?
- How does God love us unconditionally?
- What does God say about disciplining us, His children?
- What does God tell parents about disciplining their children?



Scripture SUPPORT

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Proverbs 3:12

...the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father [disciplines] the son he delights in.

1 John 4:8

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Hebrews 13:5

...God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Jeremiah 31:3

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."

Proverbs 18:21

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

- Why is it good for a parent to bless their child?
- What are some ways a child can bless their parents?
- What is the most important way a child can bless their parent?



Activities

Activities are age appropriate. One is focused on young children, and the second is for children ages 4-16.

YOUNG CHILDREN

Materials

Pencils, crayons, or markers

- Color a picture of children playing with Jesus.

AGES 4-16

Materials

Small package of sticky notes for each child

Envelopes

Pencils and markers

Before showing the video, tell children that the video expresses God's unconditional love for us and what the Bible says He thinks and says about us. Tell the children you would like for them to listen carefully to what God thinks and says about them.

Have children view YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/Lm5XNDtO2aQ> (Briefly discuss)
(If not possible, do activity without video.)

- After the lesson and viewing the video, explain to children that the video was expressing God's unconditional love for each one of us. Ask them how it makes them feel to hear Him say wonderful loving things about them?

- Give each child a packet of at least 20 sticky notes. Tell them they are going to write blessings on sticky notes. Have them write loving comments to their parents, brothers, sisters, and other loved ones telling them how special they are to them or telling them what they love about them.
- When children are finished, have them put their sticky notes together back in their “Blessing Envelope.”
- Tell them to stick them in places where they know their mom, dad, or other loved ones will find them. (Places like the bathroom mirror, car steering wheel, brother or sister’s bedroom mirror, or backpack!)
- Have children share some of the blessings they wrote.



Scripture
SUPPORT

Genesis 12:2

I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

Genesis 22:17

I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies.

Luke 24:50

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he [Jesus] lifted up his hands and blessed them.

Mark 10:16

And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Ephesians 6:1-2

Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.



CHALLENGE QUESTION

I SPEAK WORDS OF APPRECIATION TO MY PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS OFTEN.

CHALLENGE COMMITMENT

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE QUESTION THIS WEEK?



AFFIRMATION *Have children repeat:*

*The blessing of God
is on my life!*

Resources & Materials

Trent, J., & Smalley, G. (2011). *The Blessing: Giving the Gift of Unconditional Love and Acceptance* (Revised), Nashville: Thomas Nelson. ISBN-13: 978-0849946370

TheBlessing.com <http://www.theblessing.com/html/parents-step-1.html>