



What Is a Benediction?

SUPPLIES Needed



TO PRINT:

- Memory Verse (1 copy/child)*
- Picture of Star (1 copy)
- Cards for “Creation Memory Card Game” (2 copies/child or 2/copies for class to share)
- Letter to Parents (1 copy/family)

TO GATHER:

- Hymnal/lyrics for songs* (*Optional: guitar or music to sing along with*)
- Basket for offering*
- Crayons for “Creation Memory Card Game”

OPTIONAL:

- Kid’s Activity Sheet (1 copy/child)
- Elements of Worship Icons* (*Found in the introduction section.*)

*These items will be needed every week.

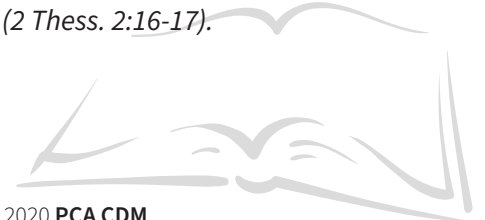
LEADER’S Review

This month we complete the elements of worship as we teach the benediction—God’s response to us as we live to worship Him. Another word for “benediction” is “blessing.” There are Hebrew and Greek words which are translated as “bless” or “blessing” in the Scripture. If you were to research the use of all these words, you would find God is jealous for the “blessings” of His people, and God delights to bless His people. “Blessing” is interchangeable with praise and worship, and “blessed” with happy and content.

However, when I think of blessing, I think of children. They are called blessings in Psalm 127: “Children are a reward from the Lord. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.” As parents, grandparents, or teachers of children, we could say children are our benediction from the Lord. They remind us of our beginnings as we watch them begin this life. They are our hope for a future kingdom generation. They are our charge to tell God’s story and live a life worth following. They are our “heirs” as they are left on earth to testify after we are gone, and they are the only “possessions” on this earth we will carry into eternity.

As you teach benedictions this month, review all of the worship elements to ensure the children understand the full image of corporate worship. Instead of using our outline each week this month, you may want to give the children an opportunity to design their own by choosing the songs, prayers, and order of the service. Also, make sure you proclaim God’s blessing to the children as you tell them who God is and what He has done.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word (2 Thess. 2:16-17).





Reading of the Word

Read scripture. (2-3 minutes)

Genesis 1: 21-22, 27-28

²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Numbers 6: 22-27

²² The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

²⁴ The Lord bless you and keep you;

²⁵ the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

²⁷ ‘So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.’”



Prayer

Recite the Lord's Prayer together. (1 minute)

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.



Hearing the Word

Teach the lesson to the children using the text below as a guide. (3-5 minutes)

Let's begin this morning by reviewing all of the parts of worship that we have studied this year. ***(Hold up the icons and let students call out each element. Ask a student to give an explanation of each one. Why are we called to worship? What is prayer? Why do we confess our faith? Why is reading the Word important in worship? What are tithes and offerings?)*** What is a benediction? A benediction is a statement of blessings from God upon His loved ones. Benedictions are found throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament and are an important part of the letters to the churches. Benedictions, though

(Hearing the Word—Continued)

brief, offer words of assurance or lessons designed to bring joy, peace, comfort, and security to those who place their trust in God.

A statement of blessings—what does that mean? Let's look at what we have said to God in our worship today. In the Lord's Prayer we said, "hallowed be Thy name." That is a statement of blessing to our God, telling Him who He is and what we desire for Him. "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever." Again we are telling God what is true about who He is and what He has done. How do we know to do that? We bless God because He began at creation to bless us. He created all the creatures of the earth and then He blessed them. He created man and woman and then He blessed them. So, we can say a benediction is the same as a blessing. What is "blessing"? What is meant in God's Word when we read, "And God blessed them"?

In the Bible, there are several words that are usually translated as "blessing" or "bless." The Hebrew word most often translated "bless" is *barak*, which can mean "to praise, congratulate, or salute." We find this first used in Genesis 1:22, when God blessed the sea creatures and birds, telling them to be fruitful and multiply in the earth. Likewise, in verse 28, God gave the similar blessing to Adam and Eve, adding that they were to rule over creation. When God called Abraham to go to the Promised Land (Genesis 12:1-3), He promised to bless him, make his name great, and through him, to bless all the families of the earth. The blessings here are plainly associated with happiness and welfare, both for Abraham and others. In Genesis 22:16-18, God again blessed Abraham, and added that blessing will come to him because of his obedience to God's commands.

Do you like to be praised or congratulated or saluted? Does anyone remember a time when you were told, "Good job!"? Well, the benediction in worship which comes after we have turned our hearts and minds toward God, heard His Word, and given Him our gifts, is God responding to us with a "Good job!" but it is much more than that. God sends us out from worship reminding us of our hope in Him, our charge to follow after Him, reminding us of who He is and what He has done for us. In the benediction we receive the blessing of God. When we return to the creation story, we see that His blessing has always been upon us. The story of the calling of Abraham is all about the blessing of God upon him. What did God tell Abraham? ***(Hold up the picture of the star to remind them.)*** He would have as many children as stars in the sky. All of the nations of the earth would be blessed through him.

Our verse for this month was given when God continued His blessing on His people who were about to enter the promised land. They had been rescued from slavery in Egypt. ***(Remind students of their study of the Passover.)*** Then, Aaron, God's servant leader, was told to pronounce God's blessing upon the people. The blessing of God, or the benediction, is not just words our pastor says at the end of our worship; it is a picture of our God from beginning to end, from creation to the cross.

(Hearing the Word—Continued)

ACTIVITY: Creation Memory Card Game (See included handouts.) (15-20 minutes)

Let's color these pictures and talk about how God blessed us in creation. *(Let children choose pictures of animals, food, plants, people, homes, or draw their own "blessing picture." Make a memory card game of creation pictures. Children can name the blessing as they turn over the card and find the match.)*

All of God's creation shows His blessing upon us. What is His greatest blessing to us? *(Give out this month's memory verse which includes a cross. Remind them that God blessed us by sending us Jesus. Only through Him do we have life, love, grace, peace, hope—all of the words that we find in the benedictions of the Bible. Jesus is our complete benediction.)*



Benediction

Recite the following verse. (1 minute)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace (Num. 6:24-26).

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