

## **Planning a Blessing Service**

Our Jewish friends celebrate their children coming into adulthood and being responsible to the commandments of God with a Bar Mitzvah for Boys and a Bat Mitzvah for girls.

A Blessing Service is sort of like a Christian Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah for our children. It is our acknowledgement that they have passed from childhood into adulthood. They are now responsible to God and His Commandments. As they are making this transition into adulthood they receive a special blessing from close friends, loved ones, siblings, and parents. This special service will provide a monumental and unforgettable experience for your child, and all those who participate.

Even though we encourage you to bless your children as often as possible, this is a special day just for them where you celebrate who they are and the hope of their future. Usually, The Blessing Service will consist of a dinner, in which a few close friends and family members are invited.

### **Prepare your Child for the blessing service.**

In all of your preparation make sure that you take time to talk to your child about the blessing service and the significance that it will have in his or her life. Teach your children the principle of the blessing. Show them examples in the Bible where God has blessed children as a result of their parent's spoken blessing. Show them that Jesus desired to bless children and wants them to be blessed too. Let them know that, after the blessing is spoken over them, God will work in their lives making the blessings come about. Hopefully, it will be an event that each of your children will highly anticipate.

### **At what age should we have this blessing service?**

We recommend that you plan a special blessing service when your child turns thirteen. At this age they have a good understanding of what the spoken blessing is all about. They are also old enough to comprehend and receive the things that are being spoken to them.

At age thirteen, your child is about to face some of the most difficult years of their life, their teen years. You will want to bless them before they are confronted with all of the temptations of adolescence. Hopefully, your blessing will be a great encouragement to them and they will be able to fall back on the words of hope spoken to them during tough times. They will need to be reminded that they have a future in Christ Jesus and that God has a plan for their lives.

Hopefully, even when faced with temptation to sin, they will remember the blessing that mom, dad, and the family have spoken over them. They will know that the blessers are pulling for them, continually blessing them, and expecting the best out of them. This may be the edge that helps them to say NO to the bad and YES to the good.

### **Who should we invite?**

Who you invite is a personal choice, but we suggest that everyone that is invited should have "An Active Commitment to Fulfill the Blessing" in your child's life. You want the people who truly love your child, who are committed to praying for your child, and will speak a heart filled, Holy Spirit inspired blessing over your child.

By the time your child turns thirteen your family probably has some close friends that love your child like one of their own. Invite them to come speak a blessing over your child.

Invite your child's and your family's spiritual mentor. This may be your Pastor and his wife, or an Associate Pastor and his wife, or your child's Children's Church teacher, or Sunday school teacher. It should be someone (or more than one person) who has been spiritually inputting into your child's life and is committed to seeing God's plan for their life fulfilled.

Invite close, extended family members. Maybe a favorite aunt, uncle, or cousin. Invite both sets of grandparents, brothers and sisters, mom, and dad.

It is important to understand, and for those invited to understand, that each person invited will be expected to speak a blessing over the child. I like to have the blessing spoken in the order listed as such: Friends, extended family, grandparents, brothers and sisters, mom, and then dad should speak the Father's Blessing last.

Make sure that you invite them far enough in advance that they can adequately prepare a blessing for your child. Some may be caught off guard by this request and will need time to think about it. Some will not understand what the blessing is all about and you may have to teach them the principles of the spoken blessing. You may need to give them this guide or the other blessing book that we have referenced. But when they understand the power of the blessing, they will be excited about the opportunity to bless your child and it will be a significant and meaningful event in their life as well as the life of your child.

We have found that grandparents really appreciate this opportunity and put a lot of prayer and thought into their blessing. Brothers and sisters often speak some of the most tender and sweet blessings that we have heard. And when the Mother speaks the blessing always seems to be a special anointing of love and grace in the room. But when the Father speaks, he speaks with a sense of spiritual authority as he commands the blessing over his child, knowing by faith that as he speaks it, the Lord will cause it to come about. These blessing services are powerful and the presence of the Lord is strong as the blessings are being spoken.

Also encourage those invited to not only speak a blessing, but to also write it down or type it out. This way you can keep a record of the blessings spoken that your child can refer to for the rest of their lives. A copy of the blessings would make a special wedding gift when they marry.

For our children, we invited one close family member to speak a blessing, I doubled as the pastor and father, their grandparents spoke blessings upon them, their siblings spoke blessings over them, and Janet and I each spoke a special parental blessing over each of our children.

### **What type of meal should be prepared?**

This should be a special day for your child. So, prepare their favorite meal. Make it special for them. Make sure that your child knows that this meal is in their honor. You may even want to have a special cake, similar to a birthday cake, which expresses the significance of that day. Usually, the meal is prepared in your home, but it is ok if your child wants to go to a restaurant. If you go to a restaurant, try to have a private room, or go back home where the blessings can be spoken without interruption. As soon as the meal is over, LEAVE THE DISHES FOR LATER, and move to the room where the blessing will take place.

Take pictures; retell stories (the good ones) of your child growing up. Remind them of special events in their lives so far. At dinner talk about their salvation experience, achievements, rewards, friends, family vacations, and other things that bring joy in remembering. Make this day as special for your child as possible. THEY SHOULD BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION.

### **Should gifts be given?**

The greatest gift that will be given that day is the spoken blessing. We don't want to take away from the importance of that but gifts with meaning are encouraged. Give items that will remind your child of this special day and the blessings being spoken this day. For example, some parents have given their children a ring, necklace, or other jewelry items that will remind them that they have been blessed as they wear them. Pictures, figurines, poems, or songs all can be given to enhance the remembrance of the blessing. Some have written and sung a special song for the one being blessed. Get creative and give something meaningful.

At Bradley's blessing (knowing that Bradley liked to fish) friends gave him a statue of a man fishing which went with part of the blessing that they spoke over him; that he would be a fisher of men.

## **Your Child's Response**

You may want to work with your child to help them write a blessing to be spoken over those that have just blessed them. This blessing could express appreciation and gratitude for the influences these people have had in your child's life. Your child might want to quote their favorite Bible verses and express why they are meaningful to them. They may have a special poem that they want read or you may have someone sing or play their favorite song for everyone. Remember your child is called to be blessed and to be a blessing to others.

## **The Wedding Blessing**

We at Believers encourage blessings to be spoken over couples on their wedding day. Both sets of parents are encouraged to lay hands on the couple and bless them. If they are nervous, they may need to read a prewritten blessing. We can't think of a better way for a couple to start their new life together than to do it with the blessings of their parents.