**The Importance of Blessings**

*Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.**I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.*”

(Genesis 12:1-2, NRSV)

At the time of the story of Abram (later called Abraham), people worshipped many Gods and there was no sense of monotheism. God appeared to Abram and tells him that if he follows God, and God alone, that God will bless him and that his descendents will become a great nation. Abram was faithful and did as God asked. And God was, in return, faithful to Abram and gave him more descendants than there are stars in the sky. We are the descendants of Abram. We are the blessed ones called to be a blessing for others. Being blessed by God and understanding that God has called him to be a blessing to others was the first step for Abram. God began Gods’ relationship with him by telling he was blessed to be blessing to others. Abram, before he knew much of anything else about God, knew that God had blessed him to become a blessing.

Is it any wonder then that Jesus simply blessed the children who were brought to him? These children were much too young to understand the concept of a messiah, or who it was that their parents had brought them to see. So Jesus, rather than trying to explain to them who he was and tell them about his love, simply blessed them and through his touch, warmth and presence, they left his presence, fully aware of his love for them. He, as God had done with Abram, began his relationship with children by blessing them.

Both of these stories highlight the power of blessings. And it is because of these stories and the power of spiritual transformation that being blessed brings, that we bless children as often as is possible.

**What is a Blessing?**

It is a simple time where we look a child in their eyes and tell them, “You are a blessing.” It is not in the words we say, but in creating and intimate space with the child that God’s presence is felt. There is a mystery to it, really. You have to try it to understand the power and presence of God that is there when you bless a child.

**What do I do?**

You simply explain to the children that you are going to bless them. And it is a good idea to demonstrate it the first few times. They can choose where they would like their blessing. It can be on their hand, their forehead, or they can decide not to be touched at all.

Once you explain the blessing to the children, one at a time, you bless them. You can make a symbol on them ( a cross, a heart, a smile or one they ask for), or simply hold their hands in yours. If you want or on special occasions you can use oil, lotion or lip balm (we call it blessing balm) to bless them with.

Say: (Name), You are a blessing!

**Who Can Give a Blessing?**

Anyone. A minister, a teacher, a parent, a grandparent, a friend and children can bless each other. In fact, if you give blessings to children, before long, they will not leave until they have blessed you in return!

**When Are Good Times for Blessings?**

* Each time a child leaves an event at church including Sunday School, Children’s Worship, Children’s Choir, VBS.
* At the end of Children’s Time during worship
* For the presentation of 3rd grade Bibles
* On Promotion Sunday as they graduate from one grade to the other
* As they leave on mission trips
* At times of grief and pain such as at a funeral or hospital call
* Acolytes can be blessed
* At home before they leave for school
* At bedtime
* After a visit to a grandparents house
* For special events like Birthdays and first day of school.
* Anytime is good for a blessing!

**Do I have to be Perfect to Give a Blessing?**

No, none of us is perfect … but we are still a blessing. You are a blessing!