

Week One: Notice the Blessings Level D (ages 15-18)

Matthew 5:1-12; Genesis 37:3

Lesson Focus

Blessings are all the good things that the Lord and people who love us do for us. We can bless others through our actions.

Vocabulary

1. Beatitudes – Ten blessings that will bring happiness given in the Sermon on the Mount
2. Blessed – favored or made happy by the Lord
3. Poor in spirit – someone who recognizes that they don't have the truth and that they need to receive it from the Lord
4. Mourn – someone who has suffered loss
5. Meek – humble
6. Righteousness – people who long for the goodness and life of heaven
7. Merciful – showing mercy to others
8. Pure in heart – people who are unwilling to give in to unclean (evil) thoughts
9. Persecuted – people who are under attack
10. Jacob – the youngest of the three patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
11. Joseph – Jacob's son, born from Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife
12. Tunic – a gown like outer garment, with or without sleeves

Key Concepts

1. The Lord takes care of us and gives us blessings everyday.
2. We can help the Lord bring blessings to the people around us through our words and actions.

Activity Options

1. **Discussion Ideas**
2. **Featured Activity:** Circle Reading and Blessings Jar
3. **Featured Activity:** Dramatizing the Ten Blessings
4. **Song:** "The Ten Blessings" (see attached sheet music; an MP3 file is available on the website)
5. **Take Home, Alternative, or Extra Activities:** "Go forth and be a blessing" card; prayers of praise for blessings (attached pages)

Discussion on Matthew 5:1-12 and Genesis 37:3



Today we will be talking about two stories: The Beatitudes or blessings from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12) and the story of Joseph, Jacob's beloved son (Genesis 37:3).

1. For the next seven weeks, we will be focusing on the subject of relationships. What does the word "relationship" mean to you? (A dictionary defines this as: the friendship, contact, communications etc., which exist between people.) Try to bring the discussion about to the fact that we have relationships with everyone we meet, but that does not necessarily mean we are friends or blood relatives.
2. What do friendships and relationships have to do with spiritual things? "The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend..." (Exodus 33:11) Jesus had friends (John 11:11). He brought his friend Lazarus back from the dead. He invites us to be His friends: "You are My friends if you do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).
3. The statement "You are what you eat!" applies to us both as natural and as spiritual beings. What we love and go for spiritually while we are in the world creates our personality to eternity. The Writings tell us that after we die, we actually become what we love, and we will live to eternity with other people who love similar things (see *Divine Providence* 338:4).
4. When the Lord was on earth, He talked about blessings that are given to people who show their love for Him by obeying the Commandments. These ten blessings are called the Beatitudes. They are part of the Sermon on the Mount. (If students have not heard the Beatitudes, read Matthew 5:1-12.) More than anything else, the Lord wants to give people the gift of a happy life in heaven for ever.
5. The Lord also gives us rules to guide our lives—the Ten Commandments. Both the ten blessings and the Ten Commandments were given on mountains—in a state of mind when thoughts are lifted to the Lord. What relationship might there be between the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes?
6. In Genesis 37:3 we read about a father's special gift to his beloved son: Joseph's coat of many colors. If we look at this story in a different light, putting the Lord in place of Jacob, the father, and ourselves in place of Joseph, what might this coat mean in our lives? (clothing = truth)
7. Focus for the week: look for ways to bless friends and family, and to recognize ways in which they bless you.

Featured Activity: Circle Reading and Blessings Jar

Supplies Needed:

1. Copy of the “Blessing Quotations” cut apart (see attached pages)
2. Empty jar or other vessel (preferably of clear glass)
3. Scraps of brightly colored paper
4. Pencils or pens
5. Background music



Activity

1. Have the group sit comfortably in a circle and distribute one or more of the “Blessing Quotations” to each person. Set the jar in the middle of the circle along with the pens and scraps of paper.
2. Invite group members to take turns reading aloud the various quotations and commenting on them if they choose.
3. Introduce the idea that blessings may be on many levels—some are spiritual, whereas others are natural. Both kinds of blessings are good. Encourage students to share just a few of the blessings they’ve experienced today, or perhaps this week.
4. Invite students to take the scraps of colored paper and write a different blessing they’ve received on each scrap. The various colors of paper are like the colors of Joseph’s coat. You may use quiet background music to help students think and promote a warm atmosphere. When students have finished, have them fold their blessings and put them into the jar.
5. Take a minute to look at the jar full of colorful paper and take joy in the number of blessings people were able to think of in just a short time!
6. Pass the jar around the circle and have each student take out a couple of blessings (not necessarily their own) and read them aloud to the group. Invite students to think about the rich ways in which their lives have been blessed and to think of ways they can bless others during the coming week.

[Note to Teachers: You may wish to omit the sharing portion (#6) of this activity if you feel doing so would give the students greater freedom to express their thoughts.]

Featured Activity: Ten Blessings Dramatization

Supplies Needed:

1. A copy of “The Ten Blessings and Their Meanings” for each student (see attached page)

Activity

1. Divide students into small groups and assign one or more of the blessings to each group.
2. Ask each group to come up with a way to act out the blessing(s) keeping in mind its spiritual meaning. This could be a skit or a tableau. For example, for “hunger and thirst after righteousness” a person could be reaching for a glass with the word “truth” on it. For “blessed are the poor in spirit” a person could be reading the Word.
3. When all groups are ready, take the blessings one at a time. Read the quotation from the Word and its spiritual meaning and watch each group’s dramatization.

Blessing Quotations

Cut the quotations apart and take turns reading them aloud.

Blessed are those who hear the word of
God and keep it!

Luke 11:28

Blessed are those who keep justice,
And he who does righteousness at all times!
Psalm 106:3

Real blessing is reception of love and
faith from the Lord, and conjunction
thereby, for this is the source of eternal
happiness.

Heaven and Hell 364

The Lord never curses anyone, nor is
even angry. It is a person who curses
himself by turning himself away from the
Lord.

see Arcana Coelestia 1093

Blessed are those who do His
commandments, that they may have
the right to the tree of life, and may
enter through the gates into the city.

Revelation 22:14

Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord!
We have blessed you from
the house of the Lord.

Psalm 118:26

Bless the Lord, O my soul;
And all that is within me,
bless His holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
And forget not all His benefits.

Psalm 103:1-2

I will bless the Lord at all times;
His praise shall continually be
in my mouth....
Oh magnify the Lord with me,
And let us exalt His name together.

Psalm 34:1,3

Blessed be the Lord God...
Who alone does wondrous things!
And blessed be His glorious name
forever!

Psalm 72:18-19

Blessed are [those]...who walk in the law of
the Lord!
Blessed are those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!

Psalm 119:1-2

Nothing is a blessing except what is given by the Lord. For that alone is blessed because it is Divine and eternal, and contains in itself heaven and eternal happiness; all other things...are not blessings, even though they may be so called.

Apocalypse Explained 340

In early times it was customary to say "Blessed be Jehovah", by which people meant that every blessing, that is, all good, flows from Him. It was also a way of expressing thanks for the Lord's having blessed them.

Apocalypse Revealed 289

By "blessing" is meant every good which a person receives from the Lord.
Apocalypse Revealed 289

Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!
Revelation 5:13

Blessed be the Lord,
Who daily loads us with benefits!
Psalm 68:19

The Divine blessing consists in being happy to eternity.
Arcana Coelestia 8717:3

Honors and wealth are blessings and they are curses.... With the good they are blessings, and with the wicked curses.... They are blessings with those who do not set their heart on them, and curses with those who do set their heart on them.
Divine Providence 217

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance
upon you,
And give you peace.
Numbers 6:24-26

God be merciful to us and bless us,
And cause His face to shine upon us.
Psalm 67:1

You, O Lord, will bless the righteous;
With favor You will surround him as
with a shield.
Psalm 5:12

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly...
But his delight is in the law of the Lord.
Psalm 1:1-2

Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!
Revelation 19:9

The Ten Blessings and Their Meanings

- 1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

People who realize that they need what the Lord teaches in His Word are happy.

- 2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**

People who are sorry when they do something wrong, and who then try to do what is right or good are happy.

- 3. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.**

People who are gentle and kind with others, but stand firm against evil are happy.

- 4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.**

People who want what is good for everyone are happy.

- 5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.**

People who are compassionate to others are happy.

- 6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**

People who love the Lord with their whole hearts are happy.

- 7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.**

People who do what the Lord teaches in His Word are happy.

- 8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

People who are attacked by evil spirits are happy because the Lord can help them turn away from evil and toward what is good.

- 9. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.**

People who are walking the path to heaven are happy.

- 10. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

The Lord gives us the everlasting happiness of life in heaven if we look to Him.

The Ten Blessings

Matthew 5: 3-12

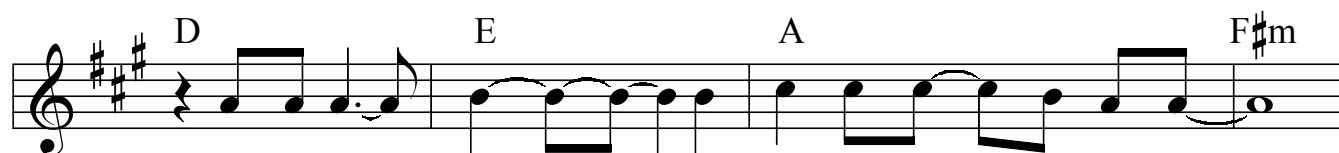
Lori Odhner



1. Bless-ed are the poor in spi - rit, For theirs is the kingdom of heav'n.—
 2. Bless-ed are the mer - ci - ful, For they shall ob - tain— mer - cy.—
 3. Bless-ed are— you when they shall re - vile you and per - se - cute you,—



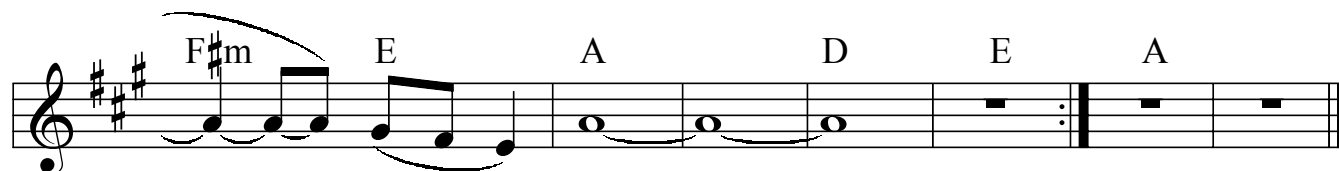
Bless - ed are— those who mourn,— For they shall be com - for - ted.—
 Bless - ed are the pure in heart,— For they shall— see— God.—
 And— say all kinds of e - vil a - gainst you false - ly— for— My sake.—



Bless-ed are the meek,— For they shall in - her - it the earth.—
 Bless-ed are the peace-mak-ers, For they are the chil-dren of God.—
 Re - joice— and be ex - ceed - ing - ly glad,—



Bless-ed are— those who hun - ger and thirst for righ - teous -
 Bless-ed those who are per - se - cu - ted for righ-teous - ness' sake,— For
 For— great is your— re - ward—



ness, For they shall be filled.—
 theirs is the king-dom of heav'n.—
 In— heav'n.—

Go Forth and Be a Blessing

- ❖ We receive some blessings directly from the Lord. Others come to us through other people—kind words, deeds, or simply a smile when we're down.
- ❖ Choose one of these signs to put on your mirror or next to the door of your room or home as a reminder that the Lord can work through you to bring joy and happiness to someone today. (To make colorful, print on colored paper or add a decorative border.)
- ❖ Think about the abilities the Lord has given you and be alert to the daily opportunities that come your way to use these gifts to be a blessing.

GO FORTH AND BE A BLESSING

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O merciful God, help us to be truly thankful to You, everyday, for all Your many blessings. Make us worthy of Your goodness toward us. Teach us to receive Your heavenly blessings with gladness and to use the things that You have given us well. Amen.

O Lord God, who formed the earth and placed humankind upon it; who sees the sparrow's fall and numbers all the hairs of our heads: We thank You for all Your care which is over us every moment. We thank You for the precious things of heaven, and for the precious things of the earth. We thank You for home and loving family and friends, for knowledge of Your created world, for the church where You are known and worshiped, and for Your holy Word now opened in Your mercy, from which we shall learn the way to all the joys of heaven. O Lord, teach us to use all these gifts of life rightly, so that we may find a place in Your Kingdom, and enter into Your gates with thanksgiving and into Your courts with praise, and be thankful to You and bless Your name, forever. Amen.