

Sanctuary First

January 2013

Theme Summary

“The Blessing”

*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.
(Numbers 6:24)*

We recommend the blessing is printed out (and laminated?) for everyone to carry with them.

Background

As we enter a New Year, we want to bless others as we are blessed. Abraham was told that he would be blessed in order to be a blessing to the nations. The people of God are blessed in order to be a blessing to the world in which we live. Our worship will alternate between receiving and celebrating the blessings that God bestows on us, and how we might be a blessing to others.

The Aaronic Blessing has been used for centuries in the Jewish and Christian tradition, and, in Church of Scotland, it has been used as the words of blessing sung by the congregation over a child at baptism. Like many traditions, this repeated practice can dull the full meaning of the words and phrases. We offer a space designed around prayer stations where we are invited to savour again the full riches of all that God promises in this ancient blessing.

Music has been suggested related to the various stations. Since the stations are all in the one space, and people will move to different spaces in a random order, the music should be taken as suggestions for playing in while people move around. You may want to choose other suitable music to add to the mix as background for these times of reflection.

<p>STATION 1 - BLESS</p>	<p><i>The Lord bless you.....</i></p> <p>We can identify five marks of blessing in Scripture:</p> <p>A family blessing begins with <i>meaningful touching</i>. It continues with a <i>spoken message of high value</i>, a message that pictures a <i>special future</i> for the individual being blessed, and one that is based on an <i>active commitment to see the blessing come to pass</i>.¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer an opportunity for people to receive a simple blessing from designated persons who may also anoint with oil on the forehead or on the hands. • The station may have a selection of Bible promises for people to take and receive. <p>"Freely have you received; freely give."</p> <p>Blessing has been described as an "infusion" of God's goodness and power, and so we take time to think of individuals we want to bless as we enter this New Year with an "infusion" of God's love</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop coloured ink into a glass of warm water and watch it spread. Pray as you watch. • Drop paint on to wet paper and watch the colour infuse the paper. Watch and pray.
<p>STATION 2 - KEEP</p>	<p><i>The Lord bless you and keep you....</i></p> <p>Erect a small gazebo or tent which marks out a safe place - comfortable cushions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A place of imagining God's holding hand e.g. cartoons of bears hugging • Print out the attached "Hugging" pdf and use in this area ('The Hug Therapy Book' by Kathleen Keating which is available in Kindle)

	<p>Music Playing : I will raise you up on eagles wings</p> <p>youtube - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVEvD30e5yc)</p> <p>or buy on iTunes https://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/eagles-wings/id283964358?i=283964375</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for people we want to see "kept" by God - names on paper and envelopes and placed in a box at a Cross.
<p>STATION 3 - SHINE</p>	<p><i>The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you.....</i></p> <p>This space will have light boxes on which we can place images of Jesus OR a loop projection of a series images of Jesus from different cultures OR a number of Greek Orthodox icons. Images of Jesus are included in the attached Powerpoint presentation.</p> <p>The invitation is to look into the face of Jesus and let the light of his face shine on us.</p> <p>Music: "Whenever God shines" (Van Morrison)</p> <p>youtube - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuzVwiL1i5M</p> <p>buy on iTunes https://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/whenever-god-shines-his-light/id267293036?i=267293361</p> <p>or "Only Imagine" (Mercy Me)</p> <p>youtube - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sw9RnNRrjU</p> <p>buy on iTunes https://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/i-can-only-imagine/id193656444?i=193657297</p>

<p>STATION 4 - GRACIOUS</p>	<p><i>The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.....</i></p> <p>This space will focus on the generosity of God who is gracious and full of mercy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of the world with images/headlines from the news - stones with phrases from the Lord's Prayer on it - use these phrases to touch the places that need his grace and mercy. <p>Music: The Father's Song (Matt Redman)</p> <p>youtube - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xm6xr4Q9BZc</p> <p>buy on iTunes - https://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/the-fathers-song/id570613167?i=570613760</p> <p>or My Father (Steph MacLeod)</p> <p>buy on iTunes - https://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/my-father/id483281009?i=483281010</p>
<p>STATION 5 - PEACE</p>	<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>The Jews tied the words of the Torah to their foreheads and their forearms as a sign that they would love God with heart and soul and mind and strength. So we offer this blessing in the form of a scroll with a little band of silk to tie it to our wrists as a commitment to be a blessing to others.</p> <p>We end in a circle with a hand on the shoulder of the person on our right and say "the blessing" together for each other.</p>