

OBJECTIVE Each young woman will understand and desire the priesthood blessings she can receive through her father.

- PREPARATION**
1. Picture 8, A Father's Blessing, located at the back of the manual.
 2. Optional: Prepare the following wordstrips: Naming and blessing babies, Baptizing, Confirming, Administering to the sick, Ordaining to priesthood offices, Setting apart, and (on another color of paper) Father's blessing.
 3. Write on a card or piece of paper for each young woman the scriptural references and questions suggested under "A Father Can Bless His Children through the Priesthood."
 4. Assign young women to present any scriptures, stories, or quotations you wish.

**SUGGESTED
LESSON
DEVELOPMENT**

Introduction

Wordstrips or chalkboard

Ask the young women to identify some ordinances and blessings performed by Melchizedek Priesthood holders.

As the young women respond, post the appropriate wordstrips. Or write their answers on the chalkboard, with "FATHER'S BLESSING" in capital letters. Then display the picture of a father giving a blessing.

A Father Can Bless His Children through the Priesthood

Teacher presentation

The right to give blessings is one of the most precious gifts given to a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder. He has the right and power to bless his family members as the Lord would if He were present. The father is entitled to receive revelation from the Lord about the life of the person being blessed.

Scriptures and questions

Explain that fathers' blessings have been given since the time of Adam. Distribute the scripture cards you have prepared. Have the young women read each scripture and discuss the blessings given in each.

1. *2 Nephi 2:1-3*. What did Lehi promise his son Jacob? (He would be blessed because of his afflictions, would live safely with his brother Nephi, would serve God, and would be redeemed.)
2. *2 Nephi 3:1-3*. What did Lehi promise Joseph if he kept the commandments? (He and his descendants would inherit the land forever, and his descendants would not be destroyed completely.)
3. *Genesis 49:8, 10*. What blessings did Jacob promise his son Judah? (His brethren would praise him, he would overcome his enemies, and he would rule until the Savior [Shiloh] came.)

A Father's Blessing Can Guide and Encourage a Young Woman

Chalkboard discussion

Ask the young women to discuss when it is appropriate to ask for a father's blessing. Write their responses on the chalkboard.

Answers might include the following:

1. At the beginning of a new school year
2. When making a big decision
3. At a time of personal problems
4. When leaving home for trips, missions, military, school, or marriage
5. During a time of sorrow, such as a death
6. At a time of worry, doubt, stress, or as you feel the need

Teacher presentation A father's blessing can be a source of comfort, strength, inspiration, counsel, and wisdom. Also, fathers' blessings can increase family unity.

Unlike a patriarchal blessing, a father's blessing is not preserved in the Church archives; however, it may be recorded in family records or personal journals.

Story Elder Ezra Taft Benson related the following:

"Some time ago, a young man came to my office requesting a blessing. He was about eighteen years of age and had some problems. There were no serious moral problems, but he was mixed up in his thinking and worried.

"He requested a blessing. I said to him, 'Have you ever asked your father to give you a blessing? Your father is a member of the Church, I assume?'

"He said, 'Yes, he is an elder, a rather inactive elder.'

"When I asked, 'Do you love your father?' he replied, 'Yes, Brother Benson, he is a good man. I love him.' He then said, 'He doesn't attend to his priesthood duties as he should. He doesn't go to church regularly, I don't know that he is a tithe payer, but he is a good man, a good provider, a kind man.'

"I said, 'How would you like to talk to him at an opportune time and ask him if he would be willing to give you a father's blessing?'

" 'Oh,' he said, 'I think that would frighten him.'

"I then said, 'Are you willing to try it? I will be praying for you.'

"He said, 'All right; on that basis, I will.'

"A few days later he came back. He said, 'Brother Benson, that's the sweetest thing that has happened in our family.' He could hardly control his feelings as he told me what had happened. He said, 'When the opportunity was right, I mentioned it to Father, and he replied, "Son, do you really want me to give you a blessing?" I told him, "Yes, Dad, I would like you to." ' Then he said, 'Brother Benson, he gave me one of the most beautiful blessings you could ever ask for. Mother sat there crying all during the blessing. When he got through there was a bond of appreciation and gratitude and love between us that we have never had in our home' " (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, pp. 45-46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, pp. 31-32).

Discussion Discuss why President Benson recommended that the young man ask his father to give him the blessing even though the father was not a very active Church member. (The father was willing to exercise his priesthood by giving his son a blessing. This blessing proved to be a great spiritual experience in their family. The father and son both grew spiritually through the experience.)

In cases where a father cannot give a blessing, a young woman can ask her grandfather, brother, home teacher, bishop, or any other Melchizedek Priesthood bearer to give her a blessing.

Quotation "If no one in the immediate or extended family can give the blessing, the home teacher should be invited to perform this sacred ordinance. This order of the Church provides for every member. . . . Worthy and faithful home teachers are able through their faith and prayers to receive the same inspiration that might come through priesthood leaders" (Vaughn J. Featherstone, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, Feb. 1979, p. 41).

Conclusion

If you desire, tell about a time when you or a member of your family received guidance and encouragement from a father's blessing.

Lesson Application

1. Encourage each young woman to discuss fathers' blessings with her father and family, perhaps during a family home evening.
2. Encourage each young woman to prayerfully consider how a father's blessing could benefit her life and then ask for one at an appropriate time.
3. Suggest that each young woman talk with her father, expressing her desire to receive a father's blessing. She might do this during a personal interview or by requesting a special time to talk. (Be sensitive to young women who have nonmember fathers or no father in the home. You might suggest that they talk to the bishop.)