

Book of Blessings: Blessing on the Occasion of a Birthday

It is always appropriate to give thanks to God, but especially so on the occasion of a birthday. The birthday celebration provides an opportunity for acknowledging and giving thanks to God as the author and giver of life. A birthday is also an appropriate occasion for children to express love and thanks to their parents who have shared the gift of life and love with them.

This prayer may be led by a family member.

A. LONGER RITE INTRODUCTORY RITES

When all have gathered a suitable song may be sung.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. R. Amen.

Praise be to God, who loves us and fills our lives with joy, now and for ever. R. Amen.

Each year as we celebrate another birthday we recall the gift of life which we have received from God. Today we give thanks for our parents and all those who have loved, nourished, and taught us of God's love.

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD *(taken from the Lectionary for Masses with Children)*

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the apostle Paul to the Philippians:

Every time I think of you, I thank my God. And whenever I mention you in my prayers, it makes me happy. This is because you have taken part with me in spreading the good news from the first day you heard about it. God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.

You have a special place in my heart. So it is only natural for me to feel the way I do. All of you have helped in the work that God has given me, as I defend the good news and tell about it here in jail. God himself knows how much I want to see you. He knows that I care for you in the same way that Christ Jesus does. I pray that your love will keep on growing and that you will fully know and understand how to make the right choices. Then you will still be pure and innocent when Christ returns. And until that day, Jesus Christ will keep you busy doing good deeds that bring glory and praise to God.

Or other Scriptures: Hosea 11:1-4--Israel was a child. 1 Thessalonians 3:9-11--May you grow in holiness. 1 Peter 1:3-5--New birth in Christ. Matthew 5:1-12--The beatitudes. Luke 2:21-32--Presentation of Jesus in the temple.

One of the following responsorial psalms may be sung, or some other psalm.

(Psalm 90) R. Teach us to number our days aright.

Before the mountains were begotten and the earth and the world were brought forth, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. **R.**

You turn man back to dust, saying, "Return, O children of men." For a thousand years in your sight are as yesterday, now that it is past, or as a watch of the night. **R.**

You make an end of them in their sleep; the next morning they are like the changing grass, Which at dawn springs up anew, but by evening wilts and fades. **R.**

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart. Return, O LORD! How long? Have pity on your servants! **R.**

Fill us at daybreak with your kindness, that we may shout for joy and gladness all our days. Make us glad, for the days when you afflicted us, for the years when we saw evil. Let your work be seen by your servants and your glory by their children. **R.**

Or other Psalms:

Psalm 128:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 R. The Lord bless you all the days of your life.

Psalm 103:1-2, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 R. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

LITANY

Let us praise the Lord God of all creation.

Blessed be God, who has shaped us from dust and breathed life into us.

Blessed be God, who in his great love has sent his only Son to save us.

Blessed be God, who guides our feet along right paths.

Blessed be God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R. Blessed be God for ever.

Let us pray to God, the author and giver of life, in the words his Son taught us:

All: Our Father . . .

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A) For adults

God of all creation, we offer you grateful praise for the gift of life. Hear the prayers of N., your servant, who recalls today the day of his/her birth and rejoices in your gifts of life and love, family and friends.

Bless him/her with your presence and surround him/her with your love that he/she may enjoy many happy years, all of them pleasing to you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

B) For children

Loving God, you created all the people of the world and you know each of us by name. We thank you for N., who today celebrates his/her birthday. Bless him/her with your love and friendship that he/she may grow in wisdom, knowledge, and grace. May he/she love his/her family always and be faithful to his/her friends. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

As circumstances suggest, the family member leading the prayer may in silence sprinkle the person with holy water.

CONCLUDING RITE

May the Lord bless us and keep us.

R. Amen.

May his face shine upon us and be gracious to us.

R. Amen.

May he look upon us with kindness and give us his peace.

R. Amen.

It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.

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B. SHORTER RITE

340 *All make the sign of the cross as the minister says:*

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All reply: Now and for ever.

341 *One of those present or the minister reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:*

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the apostle Paul to the Philippians:

1:3-11 Thanks be to God. Every time I think of you, I thank my God. And whenever I mention you in my prayers, it makes me happy. This is because you have taken part with me in spreading the good news from the first day you heard about it. God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.

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342 *Or: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-11--May you grow in holiness. Matthew 5:1-12--The beatitudes.*

343 *A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; a lay minister says the prayer with hands joined.*

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R. Amen.

Prayer Source: *Book of Blessings*, prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy *A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1989.