

BEGINNING THE BEDTIME BLESSING

Best Use: As a way to establish the nightly routine of praying for and giving a blessing to your child

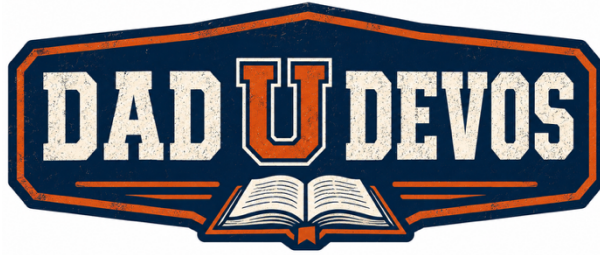
Nutritional Value: A bedtime blessing with younger children affirms their value and security

- The word “bless” or “blessing” is used almost seven hundred times in Scripture, and we see examples throughout of parents blessing their children. Scripture reminds us that our God is a God of blessing: *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”* (Eph 1:3).
- We receive a blessing from our Heavenly Father and have the wonderful opportunity to pass it on to our children, communicating the unconditional love, affirmation, and acceptance every child needs.
- Think of the acronym **BLESS** to summarize the 5 basic elements of an impactful blessing...
 - ✓ **Be** committed: This isn’t a fleeting moment or mere symbolism. It’s an active commitment to your child’s well-being by accepting responsibility to help them become all God intends.
 - ✓ **Lovingly** touch: The power of a hug or placing your hand on your child while affirming them creates an important physical connection and communicates warmth, acceptance, and relational health.
 - ✓ **Express** value: Just like we add value to someone’s pocket by handing them a coin, we add to a child’s life when we use words that attach high value to them as a person.
 - ✓ **See** potential: Parents are best positioned to see a child’s natural strengths and foresee possibilities for their future. Giving a blessing includes picturing a special future and cheering them toward it.
 - ✓ **Say** it: An effective blessing must be put into words, whether spoken, written, or both. More than simply being present, words of affirmation let a child to know he or she is appreciated and accepted.

Advance Preparation: Keep this devo near your child’s bed to use when tucking them in at night.

Serve It Up: As you tuck your child into bed, lay your hand gently on their head, arm, or shoulder while praying to reassure him/her with a loving touch.

- The most common blessing from Scripture is **Numbers 6:24-26**, which says, *“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.”*
- Consider framing this verse to keep beside your child’s bed.
- Other examples of blessing from Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13, 5:23, 2 Thessalonians 3:5, and Hebrews 13:20-21.



PARENT PICTURE

Best Use: As a bedtime prayer activity with young children

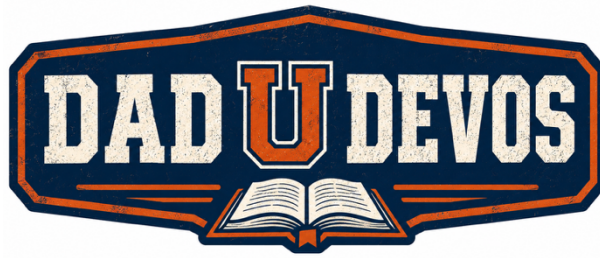
Nutritional Value: A fun way to share your story with the child

Advance Preparation: You'll need a photo of yourself as a child (about the age of your kids)

Serve It Up: Follow these steps while tucking your child in bed to serve up a great experience...

1. Pull out the photo of yourself as a child and show it to him or her.
2. Ask the child to guess the name of the person in the picture. Give him/her clues if needed, such as:
 - We are both very close to this person
 - He or she was born many years before you
 - He or she remembers when you were born
3. If your child doesn't guess correctly, reveal that you are the person in the picture. Briefly describe the house you lived in, your bedroom, your family, what you enjoyed doing, the church you attended (if any), and any other details that might interest your child.
4. Invite your son/daughter to ask questions about what your life was like for you at the age pictured.
5. Ask your child whether he/she thinks the two of you might have been friends if you were both little kids together instead of parent/child.
6. Share that "Even though I'm a grown-up, there's still a part of me that's a little child who likes to play and hear stories. And I still like to be with certain little children – especially you!"
7. Lay one hand on the child and pray this blessing:
"Dear God, thank You for [CHILD'S NAME] whom You've given me. Help us, as we grow older, always to be great friends. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen."

*The book *Bedtime Blessings* by John Trent has more great ideas.



FAT CAT

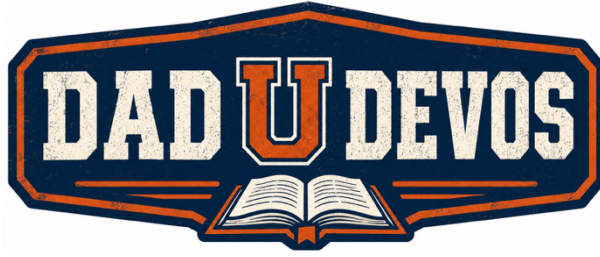
Best Use: As a bedtime blessing activity with younger children

Nutritional Value: Affirms the unique value of your child

Advance Preparation: Place this recipe card on your young child's bed stand to use when tucking them in at night.

Serve It Up: Follow these simple instructions for a great experience...

1. As you tuck your child into bed, explain that you want to play a game where you create word pairs that rhyme – like “fat cat” or “funny bunny.”
2. To play, one person thinks of a word or pair and gives clues to the other so they can guess what it is. For example, the clue for “funny bunny” might be “laughable rabbit.” For “fat cat” you might say “chubby kitty.”
3. Here are a few ideas to help you get started:
 - Rude Dude
 - Old Cold
 - Tan Man
 - Dragon Wagon
 - Snake Cake
 - Ant's Pants
4. Now share a rhyme about your child: [CHILD'S NAME] is a “fun son” or “joy of a boy” or a “pearl of a girl.”
5. Let the child attempt to guess. Then tell him or her to listen for it in the following bedtime prayer that you pray while laying one hand on the child: *“Dear Father in heaven – Thank you for all the fun You give us. And thank you for a [“fun son” or “pearl girl”] like [CHILD'S NAME] to share it with! Amen.”*



WHAT DO I LOVE?

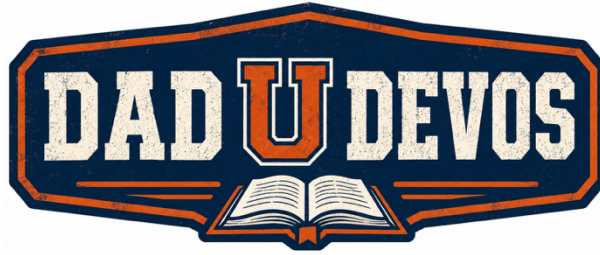
Best Use: As a bedtime blessing activity with younger children

Nutritional Value: Affirms the unique value of your child

Advance Preparation: Keep this devo near your child's bed to use when tucking them in at night.

Serve It Up: Give each other a brief blessing at bedtime by following these simple instructions...

- While tucking in for bed, say, "What do I love?" The other person must then guess what the person is thinking in one of the following categories...
 - A fun moment they shared that day
 - Something nice about the other person
 - Something they appreciate that person did today
- When finished, ask and answer the following...
 - *How did we experience God's goodness today?*
 - *Did we need to ask God's forgiveness today?*
 - *What do we want to give thanks for before falling asleep?*
- Close your time praying for each other.



SCARED OF THE DARK

Best Use: Whenever your child is anxious or afraid at night

Nutritional Value: Reminds them that they are securely in God's protective hands

Advance Preparation: Keep this devo near their bed for whenever the occasion arises

Serve It Up: Sit on your child's bed (or lay next to them) and follow these guidelines...

1. LISTEN – What are you afraid of?

- **SAY:** "Tell me what's making you feel afraid."
- Let them explain without immediately dismissing the fear.

2. REMIND – What is true?

- **SAY:** "You may feel afraid, but you're not alone. God is here, God is good, and God is watching over you."
- Read or say **Psalm 4:8** together: *"In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."*
- **SAY:** "This means that **God is awake so you can sleep.**"
- You might want to repeat this verse together or memorize it.

3. PRAY – Let's give our fear to God.

- Keep it short and specific.
- **SAY:** "God, ____ feels afraid right now. Thank You that You are with us and that we can trust You. Please help ____ rest peacefully tonight. Amen."

4. REST – Now we can trust Him.

- End with a calm, confident reassurance.
- **SAY:** "You don't have to figure everything out tonight. Remember, **God is awake, so you can sleep.** I love you. Good night."
- Another helpful verse to memorize is **Psalm 56:3-4**: *"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid."*