

“The Wonder of Blessing Hands”

“The Wonder of Hands” is a monthly devotional series written to nurture and affirm the preschool and early childhood ministry partners of Iowa District West. Directors are invited to share the devotion with staff, board members, and other partners. The devotional series builds on the theme of the August 2013 District Early Childhood Conference. We celebrate the wonder of Jesus’ hands and the hands who bless His children.



The Iowa District West Early Childhood Cabinet seeks to support and resource the preschool and early childhood ministries of Iowa District West. The annual District Early Childhood Conference is a key instruction and connection event for directors, teachers, board members and pastors. Please put the August 8, 2014 “Wild About Children” Conference on your calendar.

May 2014

Celebrating the Wonder of God’s Blessing Hands

It’s May. It has been a long year. End of year field trips, graduations and the summer break is upon us. Preschool students are making their final preparations for the move to kindergarten. It is a special time for teachers, assistants and directors of the over 40 preschools and early childhood centers in Iowa District West.

At the end of the divine service on Sunday mornings, the pastor extends God’s blessing to the congregation with the “Benediction of Almighty God.”

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you (look upon you with favor) and give you peace.

This blessing was originally given to Moses by God (Numbers 6) to be passed along to Aaron and his sons (priests of Israel) to speak, putting the Name of God “upon the people of Israel.” The verse concludes, “and I will bless them” (Numbers 6:27).

God blesses His people in many ways, not the least of which is to extend His love to us by putting His name on us.

God’s “Hands of Blessing” are seen first at the baptismal font when God, through the hands of the pastor, places the “sign of the cross upon the forehead and upon the heart” of those being baptized.

They are seen again on the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross, where He shed His very body and blood for the forgiveness of sins; the same body and blood that is distributed in the Sacrament of the Altar to all who believe.

God’s “Hands of Blessing” are seen again at the empty tomb, as the Father raises Jesus from the dead to give us hope for eternal life.

And we see God's wondrous Blessing Hands in the spoken Word of the Gospel where we hear and are assured that our sins are forgiven. This Gospel assurance includes God's promise of life and salvation in Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

Like Moses passing along the Benediction of Almighty God to the priests of Israel for the purpose of God placing His name on His people, it is your calling, your privilege, your blessing, to pass on the Gospel promises of life and salvation from the Wondrous Blessing Hands of God to the children in your preschool or early childhood center.

Yes! It is May. End of the year field trips, graduations and summer break is upon us. We who serve you on the Early Childhood Cabinet of Iowa District West pray the many and varied blessings from "The Wonder of God's Hands" remain on you during this end of the school year and summer vacation.

We hope to see you at the Early Childhood Conference at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Urbandale on August 8.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

Have a blessed summer.

Hand in Hand - Reflections and Discussion

- + What blessings do you receive from the Wonder of God's Hands as you send your students home for the summer?
- + How might you extend the blessings of God to your students and their families for the summer?

Holding God's Hand in Prayer

Lord, dismiss us with Your blessing, Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
Let us each, Your love possessing, Triumph in redeeming grace.
O refresh us; O refresh us, Trav'ling through this wilderness. (LSB 924, Stanza 1)

Thank You Lord, for everything we receive from the wonder of Your blessing hands;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Authored by Rev. Ray Smith, Iowa District West Early Childhood Cabinet