

Graduation is a time to reflect on who your child is, look ahead to the future God has for them, and bless them as they begin the next chapter of their life. When you bless your teenager during this time, you're focusing less on their performance and more on their identity, who God has created them to be. You're helping your teenager step confidently into the next stage of their life. The next few paragraphs should help you as you plan to bless your child at their graduation.



If you're unfamiliar with giving your child a blessing or think it's outdated, you're not alone. Perhaps you've heard of it within the Old Testament or other parts of the Bible. Blessings contain their roots in the ancient world, but they

are still very powerful today.

A parent's blessing echoes the original blessing from God the Father to humanity. God intends for this to mirror one of His first blessings to the Father of Israel: Abraham.

"And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" - Genesis 12:2-3

But this isn't the only place within Scripture. Throughout the Old Testament, fathers and sons give and receive blessings that mirror God's blessing to humanity. In Genesis chapter 27, Jacob and Esau compete for their father Isaac's blessing. Later in Genesis, Jacob blesses his twelve sons in unique and powerful ways. And even in the New Testament, Jesus "took [the children] in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Blessings have the power of speaking love, acceptance, value, security, truth, identity, and a future to our kids. These things are especially important for our kids as they graduate high school and face an uncertain future. The blessing of a parent provides them with the ability to step forward confidently knowing you support them and more importantly, God is always with them.

To begin planning for a graduation blessing event, talk with your teenager about what they want this experience to look like. They will probably have an opinion on whether it is a small, intimate gathering or a huge party.



MILESTONE 9:

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

GRADUATION BLESSING

Ask them to list for you those who have been influential in their life. The answer to that question should serve as the guest list for the ceremony.

When you invite attendees to be a part of the occasion, we recommend that you ask them to prepare a special word of encouragement and blessing for your child. As a parent, write down ahead of time the word you want to share with your child. Make sure you state to them who they are in Christ and what that means as they step forward in the world. Choose a gift for this ceremony that will be a symbol of the blessing you declared over them.



Don't worry if this event is big or small. Don't worry if your words don't come out perfectly. There is no set way to set this up. Each family and child will choose to plan their blessing event in a way that will be meaningful to them. The most important thing is that your child knows you have blessed them.

One of the great privileges given by God to a parent is the ability to unleash their teenager into the world. If you are wondering whether or not it's a big deal, just talk to an adult who never received their parents' blessing. It's a huge deal. It's a chance for you to launch your teenager into the world with the confidence of understanding who God made them to be. This will be a foundation of truth that will carry them for a lifetime.

Following are a few tips to help you plan this ceremony and give you suggestions for scriptures to use as well.

TIPS TO MAXIMIZE THE MOMENT:

1. Discuss the ceremony with your 12th grader. Should it be private, public, formal, or casual? They can help choose the format, but they can't choose whether or not they will receive the Blessing of the ceremony.
2. Decide who to invite. Send them not only the details of the evening but give them an idea of what you expect them to share with your 12th grader at the ceremony. That will give them time to prepare.
3. Prepare to give your child a symbol. Decide what you will give them and what meaning you are going to attach to it. If you can, try to



make this a surprise for your 12th grader. Surprises are typically pretty fun.



4. Write down what you plan to say. Not only will it calm your nerves to read it, but you can also give a written copy of it to your 12th grader for them to keep.

5. Bless identity, not performance.

6. Be creative. Every ceremony is completely different because it comes from the heart and mind of the parent's leading.

7. Pray. Give all of the guests an opportunity to pray over your child.

8. Scriptures of Blessing. Here are some Scripture references that you might want to read during the ceremony.

Jeremiah 29:11	Colossians 2:6-7	Philippians 1:9-10
Numbers 6:24-26	Isaiah 40:31-32	2 Corinthians 9:8
Proverbs 3:5-6	Isaiah 43:2	Matthew 28:20
1 Timothy 4:12	Isaiah 58:11	Romans 8:28
Matthew 5:16	Deuteronomy 31:6	John 15:5
Joshua 1:9	Philippians 1:6	Luke 12:34
Psalms 20:4	Proverbs 16:3	Ephesians 2:10
Psalms 119:105	2 Timothy 2:15	Deuteronomy 31:8
Philippians 4:13	Psalms 37:4	James 1:12
Romans 8:38-39	Isaiah 43:19	Romans 12:2

