

REDEDICATION



REFLECT

Worship

תפילה/Prayer

Birkat Ha-banim V'ha-banot/Blessing the Children

It is a custom for parents to place their hands on the children's heads when they say the blessings, but if your children do not like that, or if that makes it awkward to read the words, say the blessings with an arm around your child or without touching at all. Many parents today give *all* their children both the preliminary blessings: the one that has traditionally been given to daughters *and* the one traditionally given to sons. The daughters' blessing asks that children be blessed with the best attributes of the biblical matriarchs: loyal to their families, adventurous, capable, and open to loving relationships. The sons' blessing does not invoke the patriarchs, rather the sons of Joseph. The Midrash teaches that although these brothers were raised at the Egyptian court – the first Jewish children to grow up in non-Jewish surroundings – they resisted assimilation, retaining their Hebrew names and mode of dress. They are also sources of blessing because they are the first siblings in the Bible who do not display sibling rivalry!

You can also find these blessings in *Siddur Lev Shalem for Shabbat and Festivals* (p. 75), in the PAS *Siddur for Youth* (pp. 22–23), in the PAS *Mahzor for Young Families* (pp. 4–7), and in the PAS *Mahzor for Youth* (pp. 12–13).

יְשִׁימָךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה.

TRADITIONALLY, TO SONS

Y'simkha Elohim k'Efrayim v'khiMenashe.

יְשִׁימֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּסָרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה.

TRADITIONALLY, TO DAUGHTERS

Y'simeikh Elohim k'Sarah, Rivkah, Rahel, v'Leah.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.

TO ALL CHILDREN

Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yishmerekha.

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיַחַנְךָ.

Ya'eir Adonai panav elekha vihunekha.

יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיַשֵּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

Yisa Adonai panav elekha v'yaseim l'kha shalom.

May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe.

May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

May God bless you and guard you.

May God show you favor and be gracious to you.

May God show you kindness and grant you peace.