

“God Bless You” When You Sneeze

May the LORD bless you and take good care of you. May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. May the LORD look on you with favor and give you his peace.

–Numbers 6:24-26 NIV

Sandra Brese Rice, New York

- **Have you ever had a cold?**
- **When you sneezed, what did people say to you?**
- **Did they say, “God bless you!”?**

If we look in the history books, we can find many different thoughts on how and why the phrase “God bless you!” started. Some think “God bless you” started when Pope Gregory said it to those who sneezed. It was a time when many people were dying from a plague and they thought the sickness started with a sneeze. Some think “God bless you” was said because a person’s heart stopped or skipped a beat when they sneezed. They would say it so your heart would restart. Some thought evil spirits or bad things came out of the body when one sneezed and they filled the body up with good things by saying, “God bless you!” Some people just think that saying, “God bless you!” is good luck.

- **What do you think it means?**
- **Do you say, “God bless you!” or do you just say, “Bless you!”?**
- **Why?**

There was a time in the Bible when God told Moses the words we should use to bless each other. The words are our Bible verse for today. (Reread Bible verse above.) They really are beautiful words and they show us God’s love for us.

We can bless others we love any time and anywhere. We don’t have to wait to go to church or wait until someone sneezes. Some parents say this blessing with their children at bedtime. Some husbands and wives say it to each other as well. Some people say it to their friends after a meal, before they return home or at the end of a meeting or visit. Some say it when someone is sick or sad or worried. We can use this blessing whenever we feel a person needs it. We can also say this to someone so they know we care about them.

This might be a good habit to begin today. We can remember the people in our lives and we can witness to them through God’s Blessing ... and may God bless you! (If time permits, take time to bless those around you.)

PRAYER

Dear God our Father, thank you for the Bible and for giving us a wonderful way to bless those we care about. Help us remember to share your words with others. Help us know your love and blessings in our lives. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.