Introduction to Blessing the Children/Birkat HaBanim

The Blessing for the Children has two parts:

1. Introduction
   For Boys: "*Yesimcha Elohim k'Efraim v'chi'Menashe*"
   (May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe)

   For Girls: "*Yesimeich Elohim k'Sara, Rivka, Rachel, v'Leah*"
   (May God make you like Sara, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah)

   NOTE The formula asks God to make the boys like Ephraim and Menashe but to make the girls like Sarah, Rivka/Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. We might think that Sara, Rivka/Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah should be paired with their husbands, *Abraham*, Isaac, and Jacob instead of with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Yet, while Isaac and Jacob had the advantage of growing up in religious homes and in *Eretz Yisrael*, all of the fore-mothers as well as Ephraim and Menashe lived righteous lives even though all grew up in bad environments outside of *Eretz Yisrael*.

2. Priestly Blessing/*Birkat Cohanim* (Numbers/*Bamidbar* 6:24-26)
   This is the blessing that the priests (*cohanim*) use when blessing the Jewish people. For words to the blessing, please click here and scroll down to "*Birkat Cohanim*":
   http://practicalhalacha.com/blessings#B.

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