

Faith Community Church

Child Dedication

What is child dedication?

Child dedication is a ceremony that symbolically expresses your desire as parents to raise your child in the ways of Jesus Christ. You submit your will for your child to His will. The act of dedication must not be thought of as a ritual or ceremony that has saving merit. An individual's salvation never rests on their dedication. Nor does child dedication assure a child's salvation.

Scripture clearly teaches that salvation is a personal response of faith to the forgiveness and newness of life offered through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. No one can make the commitment of personal faith for someone else. We are charged by God to live out a genuine relationship with Jesus that would encourage your child to trust God with her life as well.

Why should I dedicate my child?

The Bible provides examples for us. Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to the Lord (1Samuel 1:27, 28). Mary and Joseph took baby Jesus to the Temple to have Him dedicated to God (Luke 2:22) and He was baptized as an adult (Matthew 3:13-17). In Mark 10:13-16 we read "Some people were bringing little children to Him so He might touch them, but His disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them 'Let the little children come to Me. Don't stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I assure you: Whoever does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' After taking them in His arms, He laid His hands on them and blessed them."

Dedication is not just a pledge within the church; it is also a promise to cultivate a gospel centered environment in the home. One must never underestimate the incredible influence a parent has on the faith of their children. Child dedication expresses the intention of the parents to do everything they can to guide their child to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Dedication is also a public pledge to circle the child with a positive gospel centered environment that will nurture the child's faith in God. Scripture tells us that we are to "Teach a child about the way he should go..." (Proverbs 22:6) and Ephesians 6:4 instructs us to bring up children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord".

Dedication of children to God is a promise to be godly role models living out a gospel saturated life.

How old should the child be?

There is no set age for a child to be presented to the Lord. Children are generally presented within the first year or two of their life. For new believers we encourage parents to dedicate their unbelieving children regardless of age.

Why do you not baptize infants?

For a fuller understanding of FCC's position on baptism, we recommend you read the elder position paper on baptism found on the FCC website.

According to Scripture, everyone (adult or child) who recognizes his or her need of a Savior and then repents and believes in Christ should be baptized (Acts 2:28,41; 8:36-38). In the Scripture there is no record of infants or very young children being baptized. They are not yet able to understand right or wrong or the need for a Savior.

Can a legal guardian dedicate a child?

Yes, if you are a legal guardian and the child lives with you. The person making a public vow should be the child's parents or legal guardian, as caretakers, you are responsible for the upbringing of the child.

What about godparents?

There is nothing mentioned in the Bible about godparents. Parents themselves have the primary responsibility to raise up their children in the things of the Lord. Some parents may like to have witnesses to confirm their commitment. These may be relatives or loved ones who know the parents well and who are themselves Christians and faithful to the Lord. Only parents will be asked to come forward with the child/children for the dedication. Godparents will not come up on stage at the dedication but will participate with the rest of the congregation during the dedication.

What if I am a believer but my spouse is not?

We encourage both parents to be present even if only one parent is a believer. However, if only one parent is a believer and the unbelieving parent chooses not to participate, the dedication for the child can still be done if the unbelieving parent has given permission.

"For the unbelieving husband is set apart for God by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is set apart for God by the husband. Otherwise your children would be corrupt, but now they are set apart for God." (1 Corinthians 7:14)

What if I am not married yet live with the child's father/mother?

Dedication is not just for the child; it is also for the parents. It is declaration (vow) where the parents dedicate themselves to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Both parents can still dedicate their child even if they are unmarried. We strongly encourage those who are living together as though they are married to repent of their sin against God and take such steps as necessary to live a life that would bring honor to Jesus' name. It is very difficult to make a declaration of dedication when the parents are living in unrepentant sin. If the parents are no longer together, we still encourage both parents to come together for the dedication. If one parent is no longer in the picture, then the parent that is raising the child can come forward with the child.

What happens during the actual ceremony?

During the ceremony, the pastor will invite the parents to bring their children on stage. You will vow before God and the congregation, much like wedding vows, that you will raise your child in the Christian faith, that you will be his or her example, and that you will train your child to be a follower of Jesus by learning obedience in prayer, Bible study, living in community with other disciples, faithful church attendance, etc. The congregation will also be asked to commit themselves to support the parents as they raise their child up in the faith.

The pastor will then pray for the children and their parent. Following this you will exit the stage and may return to your seats. You will receive your child's Dedication Certificate after the service.

Should the child be dressed in a special way?

No. You can dress the child in whatever clothes you wish.

Can we take pictures during the ceremony?

Picture taking is permissible if done orderly and without interference. Please do not go on the stage to take pictures. The dedication being made at this time is important and serious to the Lord. Please make sure that your guests are aware that they should use great discretion when taking pictures during the ceremony.

Do I need to meet any requirements?

Many parents who have gone through the process of child dedication for their children have not yet dedicated themselves to the Lord. Therefore, parents who want to dedicate their child to the Lord must meet the following criteria:

Saved: We believe all parents, who want to publicly testify that they will dedicate their child to the Lord, have a saving faith in Jesus. They must know they are born again. "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

Surrendered to God: Dedication is all about surrender. It is the parent saying before God, "Lord, I surrender this child to You so that You may accomplish Your purpose in their life. This child is yours, not mine." We desire and encourage you to develop a life of daily devotion to Him through the study of scripture, prayer, worship, confession and repentance of sin.

What do I need to do to dedicate my child?

After carefully reading the material in this packet, you will be asked to attend a short class and demonstrate understanding of our teaching on this subject.