



Child Dedication

What is child dedication?

Child dedication is a ceremony that expresses your desire as parents to raise your child(ren) 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 his/her life as well.

Why do you not baptize infants?

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 sin or their need for a Savior.

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

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.

Do I need to meet any requirements?

Those wishing to actively participate in dedicating their child must be seeking to live a life of sincere obedience to God; which includes a life of devotion through the study of scripture, prayer, worship and repentance of sin. It is incongruous to dedicate your child to God while living a life in open rebellion to His word. If one of the parents is not a believer but wishes to attend the dedication, they are more than welcome to stand with or hold their child(ren), but we would ask them not to participate in taking vows they are unwilling to keep.

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.

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 both a Christian and the child's parent or legal guardian. As caregiver(s), 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 happens during the actual dedication?

During the ceremony, the pastor will invite the parents to bring their children onto the stage/platform. 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 have a role. Recognizing the great responsibility you are committing yourselves to, they will be asked to commit themselves to support and encourage you as you raise your child up in the faith.

The pastor will then present you with some resources from the church to assist you in this new commitment and pray for the children and their parents. Following this, you will exit the stage/platform and return to your seats.

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.

What do I need to do to dedicate my child?

You must demonstrate understanding of our teaching on this subject.