

CHILD DEDICATION

A Family
Commitment
to Follow
Christ

Follow



CHILD DEDICATION

Child dedication is a joyful opportunity for parents and the church to recognize that children are gifts from God and to publicly commit to raising them according to God's Word.

At Calvary Community Church, we believe God has entrusted parents with the responsibility of nurturing, teaching, protecting, and discipling their children. Child dedication is a public expression of that responsibility. It is a commitment by parents to raise their child in a God-honoring home and to point that child toward a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

What is Child Dedication?

Child dedication does not save a child, guarantee salvation, or make a child a member of God's family. Salvation is God's gracious work, received personally through faith in Jesus Christ. Rather, dedication provides an opportunity for parents to thank God for their child, consecrate themselves to the responsibility of Godly parenting, and invite the church to partner with them. For this reason, child dedication might more appropriately be understood as family dedication.



Biblical Basis for Child Dedication

Scripture does not prescribe a formal child-dedication ceremony for the church. However, Scripture gives us examples of parents presenting their children before the Lord and provides clear instruction concerning the responsibility of parents to teach their children to know and honor God.

- **Samuel** - Hannah brought her young son Samuel to the Tabernacle and presented him to the Lord, recognizing that he had been given to her by God and dedicating him to the Lord's service (1 Samuel 1:24-28).
- **Jesus** - Joseph and Mary brought the infant Jesus to the Temple and presented him before the Lord according to the Law (Luke 2:22-24, 39).

These passages provide examples of God's people recognizing His purposes concerning their children. They also point toward the responsibility parents have to raise their children to know and honor God.

A photograph of a man in a light blue shirt holding a baby in a patterned onesie. They are in a church, with other people's heads visible in the foreground and background. The lighting is warm and focused on the man and baby.

*Unless the Lord builds
the house, those who
build it labor in vain.*

Psalm 127:1

Biblical Significance of Child Dedication

Child dedication is primarily a commitment of the parents, accompanied by a commitment of the church to support and encourage the family, to raise their child to know and honor God. It is not a spiritual act performed on behalf of the child. Parents acknowledge God has created their child and entrusted this child to their care. They recognize parenting as a God-given responsibility and commit themselves to fulfill that responsibility according to his Word.

Deuteronomy 6:1–9 gives parents a clear picture of this responsibility. God's people were instructed to love him, keep his commands, and intentionally teach his truth to their children in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life.

This ceremony is not a declaration of the child's salvation or faith. It is a public commitment by parents before God and the church family.

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Child Dedication and Salvation

Child dedication does not save a child. Scripture teaches that salvation is God's gracious work through Jesus Christ and is received personally through faith in him. A parent cannot believe the gospel on behalf of a child, and a parent cannot make a saving decision for another person.

Every person needs God's saving grace because every person has sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Sin separates us from God, and we cannot save ourselves through good works, religious activity, morality, or personal effort.

God, because of his great love for us, sent his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus lived the perfect life we could never live, died on the cross as the sacrifice for our sin, and rose from the dead in victory. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we receive forgiveness, reconciliation with God, new life, and the hope of eternal life. Salvation is God's gift of grace received through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9).

For a fuller explanation, see [Salvation: Knowing Christ and New Life in Him](#).

For this reason, child dedication does not bring a child into God's family. Only God's saving work through personal faith in Jesus Christ does that.

Child Dedication and Infant Baptism

The New Testament does not give an explicit example of an infant being baptized, nor does it explicitly command the baptism of infants. The clearest examples of baptism involve people hearing the gospel, responding in faith, then being baptized.

At Calvary Community Church, we therefore practice believer's baptism rather than infant baptism. We believe believer's baptism is an outward expression of an inward work of God's grace. A believer publicly identifies with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and declares their desire to follow him in obedience.

For a fuller explanation, see [Believer's Baptism: Following Christ in Obedience](#).

Child Dedication at Calvary

At Calvary Community Church, child dedication is a public expression of a parent's commitment to raise their child in a God-honoring environment.

Parents are saying: God has entrusted this child to us, and we commit ourselves to raising this child for his glory. Parents commit themselves to:

- Love and care for their child.
- Teach God's Word.
- Pray for their child.
- Model a life of faith in Jesus Christ.
- Shepherd their child's heart rather than merely manage their behavior.
- Lead their child toward an understanding of the gospel.
- Encourage their child to personally trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- Seek God's wisdom and strength in the responsibilities of parenting.
- Entrust their child's future to God's sovereign purposes.

The dedication does not guarantee what decision a child will ultimately make concerning Christ. Parents are responsible to faithfully point their children to Christ; they are not responsible for producing their child's conversion.



Family and the Church

God's design is for family and community. Jesus made clear that God's family is larger than our biological families. Those who have been born again are adopted into the family of God and become brothers and sisters in Christ. Child dedication therefore gives us an opportunity to celebrate both the family God has established and the family God has created through the gospel. Children are a gift from the Lord. Parents have been entrusted with tremendous responsibility. And the church can surround families with prayer, encouragement, biblical instruction, and examples of lives transformed by the gospel.

The Commitment of the Church

Child dedication is not only about what parents promise; it is also an opportunity for the church to recognize its responsibility to support families.

The church commits to:

- Pray for these parents and children.
- Encourage parents in their calling.
- Provide biblical teaching and spiritual support.
- Model what it looks like to follow Jesus.
- Help create an environment where children can hear and see the gospel.
- Walk alongside families through the joys and challenges of parenting.

We recognize that parents need the church, and the church needs parents. We are part of one spiritual family, united in Christ.

*Behold, children
are a heritage from
the Lord, the fruit of
the womb a reward.*

Psalms 127:3



The Commitment of Husbands and Wives

Child dedication also provides an opportunity for husbands and wives to reaffirm their commitment to one another and to keep Christ at the center of their home. Your marriage is one of the most significant examples your children will see of what it means to live in relationship with another person and with God. Your children watch you every day. They are 24/7 witnesses cleverly disguised as your children. Parenting will bring stress, challenges, disappointments, and joy. You will need God's wisdom and strength. Commit yourselves to living in dependence upon him so your children can see the reality of the gospel expressed not only in what you teach but also in how you live.

A Word to Fathers

Fathers, Scripture gives you a particular responsibility to provide spiritual leadership in your home. This does not mean you lead alone or that spiritual formation belongs only to you. It means you are called to take responsibility for the spiritual direction of your family and to lead with humility, love, sacrifice, and dependence upon God. Doing this well requires you to continually seek the Lord. And God has uniquely equipped you with someone to walk alongside you—your wife. Invite her wisdom. Listen to her. Encourage her. Serve her. Work together to build a home where Christ is honored.

A Word to Mothers

Moms, your role in the spiritual and relational life of your home is incredibly important. Proverbs 14:1 says: "The wisest of women builds her house."

Encourage your husband. Support him. Build your home alongside him. Together, with Christ at the

center, you can faithfully care for and disciple the children God has entrusted to you. You do not have to do this alone. God has given you a church family, extended family, and other believers who can encourage and support you.

*The wisest of women
builds her house.*

Proverbs 14:1

Extended Family

Extended family can be an important source of encouragement and support. Grandparents, relatives, and others who have a significant relationship with these children can play an important role in helping parents create a God-honoring environment.

The Child Dedication Ceremony

At Calvary Community Church, child dedication normally takes place during one of our weekend worship services. A private dedication may also be arranged if desired.

During the worship service:

1. The parents are invited to the platform with their child.
2. The pastor or mentor briefly explains the biblical basis and meaning of child dedication.
3. Each parent is asked to affirm their personal faith in Jesus Christ.
4. The parents are asked to affirm their commitment to raise their child in a God-honoring environment.
5. The parents affirm their desire to teach their child God's truth and lead them toward a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
6. The congregation is asked to affirm its commitment to pray for and support the family.
7. A prayer of dedication and consecration is offered over the parents and children.
8. A Certificate of Dedication is presented to the parents as a memorial of this commitment.

Our Commitment

When a family participates in child dedication at Calvary Community Church, we celebrate the gift of their child and the responsibility God has entrusted to them. We also commit ourselves as a church family to encourage, pray for, and support them. We recognize parenting as a lifelong calling which cannot be accomplished in our own strength. We need God's wisdom, God's grace, God's Word, and the support of God's people.



COMMON QUESTIONS

Does child dedication save my child?

It does not. Salvation is God's gift of grace received through personal faith in Jesus Christ. Child dedication is a commitment by parents; it does not accomplish salvation.

Does child dedication guarantee my child will go to heaven?

It does not. Scripture presents salvation as a personal response to the gospel. Parents can teach, pray, model, and encourage, but they cannot make a saving decision for their child.

Why don't we baptize infants?

At Calvary Community Church, we understand baptism to be an expression of personal faith and obedience following salvation. The clearest New Testament examples show people hearing the gospel, responding in faith, then being baptized. Therefore, we practice believer's baptism rather than infant baptism.

Is child dedication necessary for a child to be saved?

It is not. There is no biblical requirement for a child to participate in a dedication ceremony. The ceremony is an opportunity for parents and the church to publicly recognize their responsibilities before God.

Can a child be dedicated if the parents are not married?

At Calvary Community Church, we understand God's design for marriage to be the covenant relationship between a man and a woman. At the same time, we recognize that family situations can be complex in the world in which we live. Because child dedication involves publicly committing to raise a child in a God-honoring family environment, questions regarding individual family circumstances should be discussed with a pastor so the church can respond with both biblical conviction and pastoral care.

Can a family have a private dedication?

Yes. Child dedication normally takes place during a weekend worship service, but a private dedication can be arranged when appropriate.

SUMMARY

Child dedication is an expression of gratitude, commitment, and dependence upon God.

- Children are gifts from God and are entrusted to parents for care and instruction.
- Scripture gives examples of parents dedicating their children to the Lord.
- Child dedication is a commitment by the parents, not an act of salvation.
- Parents commit themselves to raise their child in a God-honoring environment.
- Parents are called to teach God's Word and point their children to the gospel.
- Child dedication does not save a child, guarantee salvation, or make a child a member of God's family.
- Salvation is God's gracious work through Jesus Christ and is received personally through faith in him.
- The church commits to pray for, encourage, and support families.
- Ultimately, parents entrust their children to God's sovereign purposes while faithfully pointing them toward Jesus.

Our Hope

Our hope is not in a ceremony. Our hope is in God. We thank him for the children he has entrusted to these families. We pray for parents as they accept the responsibility of raising them. We commit ourselves as a church to walk alongside them. We pray these children will grow to know the truth of God's Word, understand the gospel, recognize their need for God's saving grace, and personally place their faith in Jesus Christ. Until that day, we will teach them, pray for them, love them, and point them toward Christ.

