

Baby and Child Dedication FAQ

Why do we dedicate our children?

There's no Biblical mandate to dedicate your baby or child. However, we do see examples of child dedication in the Bible. In 1 Samuel 1:27–28, a godly woman named Hannah prayed year after year for God to give her a child. God answered her prayer and she gave birth to a son, Samuel. When Samuel was born, Hannah prayed these words:

"For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord."

In Luke 2, we see Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple to have him dedicated as well.

In both Scripture passages, the parents entrusted their child completely to God.

The writings of Moses found in Deuteronomy 6:5–9 describe God's plan for how a parent should raise up a child:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon 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. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

One key step in marking your desire to nurture your child in the ways of God is to dedicate him or her to God publically, through a child dedication ceremony.

Why don't we baptize babies?

People arrive at Grace from many faith traditions and varied spiritual journeys. Most Christian traditions have some ritual that responds to the spiritual magnitude of a new baby coming into the world. Some traditions baptize infants while others dedicate newborns. We believe baptism is only for those who have made a conscious decision to follow Jesus.

Does Grace have any requirements on who can have their child dedicated?

For a child to be dedicated at least one of the parents needs to be a follower of Jesus. You don't need to be perfect to have your child dedicated, but you do need to be attempting to follow Jesus so you can lead your child down that same path.

We ask parents who are living together and who are not married to take steps to acknowledge and surrender to God's plan for their relationship before participating in a child dedication service.

What are some of the responsibilities of a Christian Parent?

When a parent dedicates their child they commit to doing everything they can to raise a child to love God. This includes:

- *Praying for the child (Job 1:5)*
- *Setting a godly example (Proverbs 20:7)*
- *Attempting to discipline them in a way that helps them understand how God lovingly*

disciplines us (Proverbs 29:15,17)

- *Involving the child in GraceKids. (No... there's no scriptural support for this. But its a good idea.)*
- *Taking the lead in the child's spiritual development (Deuteronomy 6:5-6)*
- *Inviting God into the process. We can't do this on our own. (Philippians 4:13).*

How will Grace help? By providing:

Biblical training that helps family members of all ages know, serve, and love Jesus.

- *Men's and women's support groups that parents connect with other parents and grow spiritually.*
- *Periodic classes to equip parents with helpful skills.*
- *Pastoral support as needed to address specific issues.*

Let's Talk Logistics:

- Video cameras and cameras are welcome!
- The dedicating parents, siblings and babies will be invited to the front of the Worship Center.
- You may leave your child in the nursery until the dedication or keep the child with you in the sanctuary.
- Once the dedication begins, someone will say a few introductory words and then hold your child to show him/her to the church. If your child is fussy or doesn't tolerate being held, that's okay! Don't be embarrassed if your baby has a hard time on stage. There are lots of lights and sounds to which your child is not accustomed. We'll roll with it.

If you have any questions regarding baby dedication, or want to sign up, please contact Jalonna Krueger by e-mail (jalonna@whoisgrace.com) or by calling 814-790-4973.