

# CHILD DEDICATION

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## What we believe and why we celebrate

At Crossroads Bible Church, we wholeheartedly believe that children are a gift from God and as parents, the stewardship of that gift carries great joy and responsibility. God's central role in the lives of parents and children is essential to growing and establishing a healthy and holistic home. *"Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain" (Psalm 127:1).*

We believe that parents' actions in raising their children are of great importance to God. There is a responsibility as followers of Christ to raise children in a way that will please the Lord. *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).*

Scripture offers an example of dedicating children to the Lord in 1 Samuel 1:11, 26-28, where Hannah vowed to dedicate her child to the Lord if He would grant her one. The Lord honored her request and she kept her vow, dedicating Samuel to the Lord. *"...Then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life" (1 Samuel 1:11).*

As a Christian parent, by dedicating a child to the Lord, you are acknowledging your need for God in your family, inviting God to be active in your family life, submitting your desires for your child to God's desires for him or her, and making a commitment to raise your child in God's way.

We believe that your child is not only yours but truly a gift from God. We are earthly stewards of the life God has placed in our home. *"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:3-5).*

Some of the responsibilities the Lord has entrusted to parents include continuously praying for their children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9), instructing them in the way of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6), setting a godly example (Deuteronomy 11:19), and disciplining them as the Lord would discipline us (Proverbs 29:15, 17; 13:24).

As parents, you are only able to do these things through Christ's strength (Philippians 4:13).

For these reasons, we celebrate child dedication as an outward expression of those biblical beliefs. Child dedication is not the day of salvation for your child. Salvation is the free gift of God, received when someone grasps their need for Christ and makes the conscious decision to enter into a relationship with God. Not only is it not salvation, it isn't baptism either. Baptism is the public profession of faith as described above. Once a child is old enough to decide to accept Christ as their personal Savior, then they can make the choice to be baptized.

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## How we celebrate

Rather than a collective and potentially impersonal experience in a large Gathering, we value small expressions of community, especially for intimate, personal life events. In these spaces, parents and families can draw on close friends and family for joy, encouragement, support, and accountability as they journey with their children over the years. For this reason, we encourage parents to consider how to create a child dedication celebration that is intentional and uniquely theirs—looking for ways to be known, loved, cared for, and celebrated on this special day.

### Who will lead it?

Many parents find value in asking someone who has invested in their lives, journeyed with them, and has an intimate connection with them. This may be a mentor, a parent, a grandparent, etc. For some, they desire to have a pastor lead the dedication. There is nothing extra special or significant about a pastor leading over anyone else. As a church that believes in the priesthood of believers (1 Peter 2:19), we encourage any follower of Christ to lead a child dedication, especially one who is intimately connected to the family. If someone is willing to lead but would like to meet with a pastor to go over the details, our pastors would love the opportunity.

### Who should attend?

Anyone close to you who celebrates the gift of your child, and has a desire and willingness to be involved in your life and the life of your child. This can be immediate and extended family, friends, house church members, mentors, etc. You may also want to consider how to invite them to participate in the celebration, such as reading Scripture, prayer, singing, or helping with a meal.

### Where should we celebrate?

Your home or the home of a family member can often be a warm and inviting place to celebrate. If you would prefer to have it at the church, please reach out to [facility@crossroads-bible.org](mailto:facility@crossroads-bible.org) to check on availability of space. On Sunday mornings, we may have space in the Upper Room depending on the week.

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## Elements to consider

As you plan for the celebration, below are some elements you may want to include. You have flexibility to make the celebration what you want it to be. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you would like a church leader to help you plan for your child's dedication.

### **An explanation of child dedication**

Set the stage for what child dedication is and what it isn't. You can use the handout on "What we believe."

### **Declaration of intent**

This is acknowledging the holy and weighty moment as we recognize the role of a parent in accepting their children as gifts from the Lord, entrusting them to His care, and committing to raising them in the faith.

### **Parent's Commitment**

Asking parents to verbally acknowledge the intent above through some questions. Here are some examples.

- Are you willing to commit this child to the Lord?
- Are you willing to accept responsibility to raise them to know and love the Lord?
- God has entrusted you with the holy and weighty responsibility of guiding your children as they grow. Do you lovingly accept this responsibility?
- Will you protect and nurture this gift and the gifts of your child?
- Will you commit to living out God's word consistently and faithfully before your children?
- Will you dedicate yourselves to teaching the ways of Christ, sharing the gospel, and modeling them to your children?

### **Community Commitment**

Asking those present to commit to the family.

- Will you commit to being a source of support, encouragement, and accountability?

### **Parent's blessing for their child**

Parents may choose a verse, write a letter, speak words of blessing, etc. You may want to consider a tangible gift to offer your child as a reminder of this special day.

### **Community prayer time**

Open up space for people to pray for the parents and child as a community.

### **Worship**

Have a time of reflection and worship using music.

### **Final blessing**

Laying hands on the child and praying a closing blessing

### **Meal**

We encourage a time around tables for those who attended the dedication. Breaking bread together is a wonderful way to celebrate and connect as a community.