

Parent/Child Dedication at WCC

What is the biblical foundation for child dedication?

In *1 Samuel 1:27–28*, a godly woman named Hannah prayed year after year for God to give her a child. He answered her prayer, and she gave birth to a son, whom she named 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, following the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph took the infant Jesus to the temple and dedicated Him. In both Scripture passages, the parents entrusted their child completely to God.

Dedicating a child is a commitment parents make to partner with God in raising their children. The Parent/Child Dedication service provides parents an opportunity to publicly proclaim before God, church and family their commitment to lead and spiritually nurture their children in cooperation with God’s intentions.

The writings of Moses found in *Deuteronomy 6:5–9* describe God’s plan for how a parent should raise 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.”

Who dedicates children at WCC?

Dedications are made by parents living within God’s covenant of biblical marriage (*Genesis 2:20–24*) or single parents or guardians who acknowledge the biblical model for marriage and the principle of Scripture to teach their faith to the next generation (*Deuteronomy 6:6–9*).

During dedication, parents or guardians promise to raise their children in a Christ-centered home, and the church promises to assist them. To partner with any church, parents would be wise to decide if they agree with its beliefs and vision so they can be 100% supportive in their partnership with the church.

For parents to have a child dedicated at WCC, they should:

- Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Ensure their beliefs line up with WCC’s statements of belief.
- Attend WCC’s weekend services regularly.
- Take steps toward acknowledging and surrendering to God’s plan for their relationship before participating in a Parent/Child Dedication service if they are living together but not married.

The staff is open to discussing any of the above statements with parents.

Why doesn’t WCC practice infant baptism?

In the New Testament, there are stories of parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them and prayed for them and told His disciples to welcome them. But He did not baptize them, and He did not tell anyone else to baptize them. Baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation.

If you were baptized as an infant, it was done with good intentions by your parents. However, as stated above, placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ is a personal decision. According to scripture, it is not a decision made for a person by another individual.

At WCC, older children who attend a baptism class and demonstrate a clear understanding of the purpose and meaning of baptism, which is to publicly declare they have placed their faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ, can be baptized.

At what age can children participate in a Parent/Child Dedication service?

WCC does not have a set age requirement for dedicating a child to God. Most parents dedicate their children as infants or toddlers. However, many parents dedicate children much older than that, often for the following reasons:

- Parents are new believers in Christ and their children were not dedicated when they were infants.
- Parents are having a younger child dedicated and want to have their older children dedicated at the same time.

Can a single parent participate in a Parent/Child Dedication service?

Yes! Dedicating a child to God signifies the commitment of parents (including single parents) to do their best to raise their children to be followers of Christ. The decision to dedicate a child is not dependent upon the beliefs of the ex-spouse; however, single parents are encouraged to discuss child dedication with their ex-spouse, if possible. Ideally, both parents, even if not married, would still commit to dedicating the child to God. WCC acknowledges that it takes extra effort for a single parent to raise a child and that the church is committed to supporting single parents in providing a Christian foundation for their child's upbringing.

Can parents assign godparents?

Although the term godparent is not used at WCC, parents are welcome to invite family members and friends who support them to attend the Parent/Child Dedication service, which is typically held on a Sunday morning. The presence of these significant adults symbolizes their commitment to play a supportive role in the child's spiritual development.

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