

PARENT/CHILD DEDICATION

*"People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might touch them...
And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them."
Mark 10:13,16*

What is "Parent/Child Dedication?"

Dedication means: To set apart your child for the special purpose for which God has made your child. Dedicating your child to God is a statement made by the child's parent[s] that it is their intent to raise the child in such a way that the child is sensitive to respond to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ when he or she is mature enough to make a decision, is teachable and obedient to the Word of God, and is committed to making a difference in the world for Jesus by being all he or she was created to be.

What will happen that morning if I have my child dedicated?

The parent[s] will be asked to come forward with the child. Pastor Kevin (or other pastor you request) will hold your child [if he or she is an infant or toddler] or touch your child [if he or she is older or is not willing to be held]. Then we will bless your child. [Sample Blessing: *"Your name is 'Andrew' which means 'manly.' May you grow to be a man who reflects Jesus – a man who is a lover and a leader, a man who is teachable yet unwilling to compromise his integrity ..."*]. After this Pastor Kevin (or the pastor you request) will briefly pray for your child. We will do this for each child participating. At the conclusion, Pastor Kevin may ask you (and the Calvary family) to respond to several questions similar to the following:

With God's help, will you do your best to

- *Create a thirst in your child for a personal relationship with Jesus through your own commitment to grow in your relationship with Jesus?*
- *Provide regular consistent biblical training to cultivate the mind and spirit of your child?*
- *Strive to maintain a home where your child is nourished with God-honoring input and loving discipline?*

What do you mean by the "Partners?"

Lots of roads are paved with good intentions. But dedicating your child is essentially making a **vow**. Vows are commitments which are to be taken seriously. You won't be able to fulfill this vow properly unless you are accountable to someone. Your partners are one or two people who agree to hold you accountable for raising this child to be spiritually sensitive. Their job is to pray for you and your child, to remind you of your commitments, and to invest themselves as well in the training of your child when possible.

Who should I ask to be my Partners in raising my child?

Someone who loves the Lord and the child and who is committed enough to your family that he or she will stick with you during the years your child is growing. In some traditions this is called a god parent.

How old can my child be and still be dedicated?

You'll have to answer that question. Normally children are dedicated as infants or toddlers. However, it would most likely be very appropriate to dedicate a pre-schooler or even an early elementary-age child, especially if you were dedicating other younger children at the same time. If you aren't sure, contact Brian Martin (bmartin@calvaryefc.org).

What if I want my child dedicated, but I can't get my spouse to agree?

Don't do it! Instead, go home tonight and tell the Lord **'yes'** to the three questions listed above. Maybe even find a partner who will covenant with you to raise this child to love the Lord. But do not go against the wishes of your spouse.

Is child dedication like infant baptism?

In some ways, but mostly it is not the same. In some churches, infants are baptized as a symbol that they are a part of the church community. Other churches baptize infants believing that unless this is done, a child who dies might not qualify for Heaven. Calvary respects where these churches are coming from but believes the Bible is clear that until a child is old enough to understand the basics of how to have a personal relationship with God, he or she is graciously protected by God even in death. Child dedication is a step of commitment for the parent, the partners, and for all the people in the Calvary family who are a part of the team in training and being examples to our children.