

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?

Parent/Child Dedication is an opportunity to stand before the church community and state your intention as a parent to raise your child to know, love, follow, and serve Jesus. It is also an opportunity to ask your church community to be your partners in raising this child in faith, and a way to welcome your child into the church community.

Is child dedication the same as infant baptism?

In a word, no. 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.

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

The parent[s] will be asked to come forward with the child; siblings are also welcome to join us on stage! After giving a description of what we are doing, and reminding the Calvary church-family and the parents involved what this means, a pastor will ask a series of questions and commitments to three groups of people. First, he will ask the parents for their commitment to raise the child to know, love, follow, and serve Jesus. Second, he will ask the family's "immediate community" – close friends, extended family, small group, etc. – to commit to their support of this child and these parents. And third, he will ask for a commitment of the entire church to support the family and others like them through giving, service, etc.

Families will also receive a plaque with the date of dedication as well as some parenting resources.

What about "God-parents" or "Sponsors?" Are they involved as well?

Since this ceremony is partially about inviting partnership with parents to raise their child(ren) in faith, we support the tradition of naming specific partners and inviting them into the process of helping nurture the faith of every child. While the church isn't typically directly involved in this process, we would recommend that you are thoughtful about who you ask to do this, and further recommend that you seek out people whose faith is strong, admirable, consistent, and genuine.

As described above, we typically acknowledge these partners within that second level of questions and commitment – the immediate community. That said, if it is the family's desire to have God-parents/sponsors join them on the platform for the dedication, we are happy to accommodate that! (That has certainly been done at Calvary, though most commonly it has just been the parents and siblings of the child being dedicated.)

How old can my child be and still be dedicated?

Typically, 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, reach out and we can discuss it.

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 it is your commitment to raise your child for Jesus so that he or she will trust Jesus and become all he or she was created to be. Maybe even find a partner who will covenant with you to help you help this child to grow to love the Lord. But do not go against the wishes of your spouse.