

CHILD DEDICATION



THEBRIDGE
COMMUNITYCHURCH

Congratulations!

Welcoming a child into your home is a wonderful and exciting time! And there is no more important aspect of child training than first recognizing that children are given by God and that as parents, we are responsible to Him for how we raise them.

At The Bridge, we practice a tradition for parents to both express their appreciation to God for entrusting them with the gift of a child, and also a time to publicly commit to training the child to know and follow Jesus. It's called Child Dedication.

What Child Dedication Is

Child dedications are for moms and dads to dedicate themselves as parents and present their child before the Lord. It is a public act of acknowledging God's sovereignty in giving them their child and committing themselves to be the kind of parents God wants them to be.

Child Dedication is not Baptism

While some churches practice infant baptism, at The Bridge, we choose to practice baptism the way the early Christians did in the New Testament. In the Bible, baptism was an immersion in water that a person went through to identify with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, and to express one's commitment to following Jesus. It was for those who were old enough to repent and believe the Gospel and to decide for themselves to follow the Lord in this important step.

Though infant baptisms were never performed in the Bible, child dedications were. In fact, Jesus was dedicated at the Temple in Jerusalem by Mary and Joseph in Luke 2:22.

Prerequisites

Moses taught the parents of Israel in Deuteronomy 6:4–7, that they must first be dedicated themselves to the Lord and then they should dedicate their 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.”*

That passage helps us to understand what is necessary for parents to truly dedicate themselves and their child to this task. First, in order to train a child in the way of the Lord, parents must be committed to loving God themselves, with all their hearts, souls and minds. This means that parents who are truly dedicating their child to God, must first be dedicated themselves to God. Training children to follow the Lord is a natural flow from the lives of parents who are following the Lord.

Is God number one in your life? Are you allowing anything else to be more important to you? What about your child? To truly dedicate your child to God, you must first be dedicated to God as your ONLY God, meaning He must be first place in your life. Only then can you honestly dedicate your child to Him.

Secondly, child dedication is a commitment by parents to train a child to know God, His Word, and to teach them why and how to follow Him. In the above passage, Moses instructed parents to talk about God and His Word constantly, and to take every opportunity to teach their children about God and how to love Him.

That is the commitment you as parents would be making when dedicating your child. You would, in essence, be saying, “God, this child came as a gift from you. We give him back to you and commit ourselves to both following you in raising him, and also to teach him how to know and love you.”

Sponsors or Godparents

Some parents choose to ask another couple (or individual) to stand with them at the dedication as “Godparent(s).” While this practice is not necessary, it can be a way to ask another Christian couple to help support you in being a godly influence on your child and to help hold you accountable to the promises you are making in the dedication. If you choose to have a couple stand with you, they should also be the people you have chosen to take your child if something were to happen to you (in your will).

If you choose to include another couple, it is vital that they both be sincerely committed followers of Christ who also attend a Bible-teaching evangelical church. Because they will be promising to help you in this task, they must also be practicing the things they are committing themselves to. When that is the case, including others can be a blessing.

Even if you do not choose to have sponsors stand up with you, we include the whole congregation in the dedication by asking the church to also commit to supporting you and holding you accountable to your commitments.

Dedication Class

Before every dedication, The Bridge holds a class for parents, led by our Bridge Kids director and one of our pastors. The class is required for both parents involved in the dedication. It is very helpful in learning Biblical principles for following through on the commitments you make the day of dedication, to train up your child to know and follow Jesus.

When you fill out the application on our web site (thebridge.church/childdedication), we'll get back with you quickly with the date of the class, as well as how to submit a couple of things that we'll need from you (a picture, and Scripture to be used).

The Ceremony

We include child dedications in our regular weekend services. To schedule a dedication, sign up at thebridge.church/childdedication. We will ask you to arrive twenty minutes before the service begins. At the appropriate time, the pastor who will be aiding you in the dedication will call you and your child to the platform.

The pastor will begin with a few introductory remarks, briefly explaining child dedication. Then, the mom will usually read a short appropriate Scripture passage (i.e. 1 Samuel 1:27-28, Psalm 139:13-14 or Mark 10:14-16). After the Scripture, the pastor will lead you in your public commitments. An example of the questions he asks are:

Pastor: “Before God and this congregation, do you commit yourselves to living as Christian examples before ‘child’s name’ to show him a life of following Jesus.”

Parents: “We do.”

Pastor: “Do you promise to do your best to teach him about God, how to know Christ, and what it means to live the Christian life?”

Parents: “We do.”

Pastor: “Do you also promise to surround him with other Christian influences by faithfully attending a Bible-teaching Christian church throughout the years you have him in your home?”

Parents: “We do.”

Pastor to the congregation (and to sponsors if appropriate): “Bridge family, do you promise to support the ‘last name’ family in helping their child to know Christ and to follow him?”

Congregation: “We do.”

After the commitments, the father offers a short prayer of thanksgiving and dedication. An example of a prayer like this would be:

“Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for the gift of “child’s name.” We prayed to have this little one join our family and we are so grateful for your answered prayer. We know that being a godly examples and the right kind of parents is an awesome responsibility. And we know that we cannot do this alone. We need your help, and we need the help of other believers supporting us. We commit ourselves today to live for you as a family and to teach ‘child’s name’ to know you and to follow you in his/her life. Please give us the help and strength to follow through on this promise. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

After the father prays, the pastor will take the child into his arms and also pray for both the parents and the child.

Celebrate!

Child dedications were celebrations for the Israelites. They should be for us as well! This is a great opportunity to invite family and friends to church. Many who otherwise would probably not visit our church, will come for an occasion such as this. So make lots of invitations! Include your parents, siblings and other family who live nearby, as well as neighbors, coworkers and friends. A number of people in our church today first came because of an invitation to a special event such as this.

At The Bridge, we want to be a big part in supporting you in the enormous task of raising your child. As with any great project, it starts with a commitment to do it right. With God’s help, you can. Begin your parenting journey with a commitment before God to honor Him with your parenting.

To schedule a child dedication, visit thebridge.church/childdedication.