

Parent-Child Dedication

Parents partnering with God as they raise their children

We are very excited about your desire to dedicate your child to the Lord. West Highland believes children are a gift from God, and we are very excited that you are investigating Parent-Child dedication.

Parent-Child dedication is a public commitment you make before God, your church and your family. The dedication service provides you, the parent(s) an opportunity to express publically your desire to lead and spiritually nurture your child in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, so your child will develop a desire to love God and love others.

What is the biblical purpose and history of a child dedication?

The scriptural root of Parent-Child dedication is found in 1 Samuel 1:27-28 (NASB), where 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 chapter 2 of the New Testament, 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. The writings of Moses found in Deuteronomy 6:5-9 describe God's plan for how a parent should raise up 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."

One key step in marking your desire to nurture your child in the ways of God is to dedicate him or her to God publically, through a Parent-Child dedication ceremony

Do I need to be a West Highland member to have my child dedicated?

You do not need to be a member of West Highland to have your child dedicated in a group or public ceremony. We do encourage parents to make sure they are calling West Highland their home church. Why? In dedicating your child to God, you are stating that you are willing to partner with God *and the church* to raise

your child in cooperation with God's intentions. To partner with any church, a parent would be wise to decide if he or she agrees with its beliefs and vision, so they can be all-in in their partnership with the church.

When you choose to become a member at West Highland, you are stating that you agree with West Highland beliefs and values, and that you want West Highland to be your home church. For more information on membership, visit the membership page.

To have your child dedicated at West Highland:

- We ask parents to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- We ask parents to be sure their beliefs line up with West Highland Core Values.
- We ask parents to be regular attenders of West Highland services.
- We ask parents who are living together and who are not married to take steps to acknowledge and surrender to God's plan for their relationship **before** participating in a Parent-Child dedication service.

What can I expect during a Parent-Child dedication ceremony?

During the dedication service, parents express vows before God, their family, and the church, declaring their desire to raise their child in a God-honoring way. Because parents are the key role models for their children, they play a primary role in the dedication service.

Parents will be asked to affirm the following commitments:

- Do you receive this child with gratitude, as God's gift to you and your family?
- Do you commit to each other as parents, creating a stable environment in which your child can mature? Will you make a covenant to strengthen your marriage relationship?
- Do you commit to be parents of personal faith, recognizing your children are more likely to follow God's path by the model they first observe in you?
- Do you commit to lead a faith-filled home that honors God in all your relationships and in the choices you make in spiritually growing your family?
- Do you commit to be parents with patience, recognizing that with your inherent strengths and weaknesses, your desire to shape your child is a loving act that will require time, prayer, and God in order to produce in your children what He and you hope for?

Does West Highland baptize infants?

Scripture provides evidence that Baptism follows an individual's decision to trust Christ alone for salvation (Acts 2:41, 8:12, and 10:47-48). New Testament records the baptisms of adult believers only.

In the Bible, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them,

prayed for them, and told us to welcome them. But He did not baptize them and He did not tell anyone else to baptize them. West Highland believes Baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation, once they have the maturity and ability to understand what that means.

Dedication is not a sacrament; nor does it impart grace or salvation to a child. Salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ as each person recognizes their sinfulness and receives forgiveness and eternal life through Christ and His work on the cross.

Rather than baptizing infants or children, West Highland encourages Christian parents to dedicate their children and continually create an environment that leads to a personal relationship with Christ. This is a ceremony in which parents formally call upon God's blessing for their child and publicly commit to raise him or her in accordance with Scripture.

At what age can a child take part in a dedication service?

While West Highland does not have a set age requirement for child dedication, the average age for a child to be dedicated is four to eight months old, although many parents dedicate children much older than that, often for the following reasons:

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

Can a single parent participate in a Parent-Child dedication service?

Yes! Parent-Child dedication signifies the commitment of parents (including single parents) to do their best to raise their child to be a follower of Christ. Additionally, we highly encourage single parents to dedicate their child as they commit themselves to raise him or her without the presence or partnership of a spouse. The decision to dedicate a child is not dependent upon the beliefs of the ex-spouse; however we encourage single parents to discuss child dedication with their ex-spouse. Ideally, both parents - even if not married - would still commit to the dedication of their child to God. We acknowledge that this is often not possible, and that it takes extra effort for a single parent to raise a child. As a church, West Highland is committed to supporting single parents in providing a Christian foundation for their child's upbringing.

We think it is a great idea for you and your family to pick out a **life verse** for your child/children that we can read during the dedication service. Below are a few sample verses to get you started.

Isaiah 54:10 ESV - ***““For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.”***

Isaiah 41:10 ESV - ***“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”***

Philippians 4:19 ESV - ***“My God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”***

Proverbs 3:5-7 NLT - ***“Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the LORD and turn away from evil.”***

Psalms 91:1-4 NLT - ***“Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. This I declare about the LORD: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; He is my God, and I trust Him. For He will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. He will cover you with His feathers. He will shelter you with His wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection.”***

Romans 8:38-39 ESV - ***“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

Numbers 6:24-26 NLT - ***“May the LORD bless you and protect you. May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. May the LORD show you His favor and give you His peace.”***

Parent-Child Dedication Request Form

Name of Mother _____

Is the mother a born again Christian? _____

Name of Father _____

Is the father a born again Christian? _____

Are mother and father married? _____ If no, do you live together? _____

Child's full name _____

Date of birth _____

Child's life verse _____

Child #2 full name _____

Date of birth _____

Child's life verse _____

Child #3 full name _____

Date of birth _____

Child's life verse _____

If this process of parent-child dedication is something you agree with and want to participate in please sign here _____

We need an image of your child/children to be emailed to whbc1116@comcast.net for the dedication service.

