

Baby/Child Dedication Service at Grace Community Church of Seal Beach

Why do we dedicate children?

While there is not a prescriptive mandate in Scripture for dedicating children (including infants), we think there are a number of principles from Scripture that suggest it is a profitable practice:

- In the Old Testament, there was a tradition of dedicating the firstborn son at the temple. (Deut 15:19, seen with Jesus himself in Luke 2:22-24)
- Gratitude to God is often marked by vows in the Scripture (Psalm 50:14, Psalm 56:12)
- The addition of a child to a family within the church is the addition of a family member to the whole church (Matthew 12:46-50)
- Jesus encouraged children to come to him (Matthew 19:13-15)

Who are the significant players in a child dedication?

- God - The three persons who love your child the most are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we dedicate him/her to God, we are honoring the One from whom all blessing flow.
- The parent(s) - While ideally both parents would participate wholeheartedly in the dedication, God is pleased by the faith and courage of the single (or single in faith) parent (2 Timothy 1:5, 1 Corinthians 7:14).
- Siblings, grandparents, other family and close friends - Raising a child is rarely an isolated effort, and other family members are welcome to come and stand with the parents, if they are willing and able (in good conscience) to commit to the vows below. Those who vow before God what they know not to be true risk the wrath of God (Acts 5:1-9)
- The congregation - The people of Grace Community Church are not simply witnesses, but rather active participants in the commitment. We are committed to helping, and never hindering (Mark 9:42), this child come to faith in Christ.

The dedication itself

1. The vow of the parents

Before God, your family and friends, and this congregation, do you promise to teach (child's name) the gospel of Jesus Christ, through your words, deeds, and pattern of life, and to do your best to show (him/her) the beauty, truth, and glory of knowing God?

2. The vow of the family (optional)

Before God, (name)'s parent(s), and this congregation, do you promise to continually point (name) to the goodness of God, (his/her) need for a savior from sin, and of Jesus' death and resurrection for (name)'s salvation?

3. The vow of the congregation

Before God and the (family name) family, do you promise to love (name) in the name of Jesus, and continually give (him/her) grace without measure, that (he/she) might know the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord?

4. Pastoral Prayer - What do we ask God to do in a child dedication?

- Bless the parents to teach and model the gospel well in the life of the child.
- Bring the child to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Equip our congregation to love this new member of the family of faith.

Notes for the day of the dedication

1. The dedication usually lasts about 3 minutes, and is in the middle part of the service. The pastor will call up the parents, the child (usually carried by mom or dad). Please sit in the first few rows, so that you can come up quickly.

2. We'd encourage you to invite family and friends to witness the dedication, even if they are not normal church attenders, and to stay through the whole service. They are welcome and encouraged to take pictures, video, etc, but please remember that the rest of the congregation would like to be able to see, too.