

Parent/Child Dedication at WCC

What is the Biblical foundation for Child Dedication?

In 1 Samuel 1:27–28, 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 2, 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.

Dedicating a child is a commitment parents make to partner with God in raising their children. The Parent/Child Dedication service provides parents an opportunity to publicly proclaim before God, church and family, their commitment to lead and spiritually nurture their children in cooperation with God’s intentions.

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.”*

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

At WCC we do not have an official “membership”. However, we do encourage parents to make WCC their home church.

In dedicating your child to God, you are also partnering with the church to raise your child in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, to help your child develop a desire to love God and others. To partner with any church, a parent would be wise to decide if he/she agrees with its beliefs and vision, so they can be “all-in” in their partnership with the church.

To have your child dedicated at WCC:

- We ask parents to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- We ask parents to be sure their beliefs line up with WCC’s statements of belief. *More information about our beliefs and values can be found online at warsaw.cc/beliefs-values/*
- We ask parents to be regular attendees of WCC’s weekend services.
- We ask parents who are living together, but not married, to take steps toward acknowledging and surrendering to God’s plan for their relationship before participating in a Parent/Child Dedication service.

We are open to having conversations with you on any of the above statements.

Why doesn’t WCC practice infant Baptism?

In the New Testament, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them and prayed for them and told His disciples to welcome them. But He did not baptize them, and He did not tell anyone else to baptize them. Baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation.

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If you were baptized as an infant, we feel confident it was with good intentions by your parents. However, as stated above, placing our faith and trust in Jesus Christ is a personal decision. According to scripture, it is not a decision made for us by another individual.

Here at WCC, we do baptize older children who have attended a Baptism Class and demonstrate having a clear understanding of the purpose and meaning of Baptism (i.e. to publicly announce they have placed their faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.)

At what age can children participate in a Parent/Child Dedication service?

WCC does not have a set age requirement for dedicating a child to God. Most parents dedicate their child as an infant or toddler. However, many parents dedicate children much older than that, often for the following reasons:

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

Can a single parent participate in a Parent/Child Dedication service?

Yes! Dedicating a child to God signifies the commitment of parents (including single parents) to do their best to raise their child to be a follower of Christ. 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, WCC is committed to supporting single parents in providing a Christian foundation for their child's upbringing.

Can parents assign godparents?

Although the term "godparent" is not used at WCC, we do welcome parents to invite friends and family members committed to supporting them, to attend the Parent/Child Dedication service, which is typically held on a Sunday morning during services. The presence of these significant adults symbolize their commitment to play a supportive role in the child's spiritual development.