

Child Dedication

Information Guide



What is Baby/Child Dedication?

Dedication is a sacred ceremony when attendees of Flushing Community Church acknowledge that their child belongs to God. It is a commitment to submit yourself to God's will in the care of your child, and publicly embrace your responsibility as a parent to raise your child in the ways of the Lord. This is also a time when your family, friends, and church family commits to join with you in prayer and support for your family by providing Biblical education and a healthy church environment.

Why is this an important step to take?

The Bible is our clear source to understand the purpose of taking this step. Consider these scriptures:

1 Samuel 1:27-28 ... *"I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord." And he worshiped the Lord there.*" Hannah made a decision here to make sure that Samuel was raised with a life devoted to God.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 ... *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 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 on 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."* Later in this chapter, Moses tells the people that when your child asks questions about our faith, be ready to share the powerful stories of our past. This is no different for us today ... We need to engage our children with our own story of spiritual transformation.

Mark 10:13-16 ... *"People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them."* If Jesus saw the Kingdom of God through the youthful excitement of children, then so should we.

What is the difference between Dedication and Baptism?

It is important to note that dedication is not a substitute for your child's ultimate personal decision to follow God. In the Church of the Nazarene, we view baptism as an expression of the mercy and forgiveness that God gives us through faith in his Son, Jesus, and not the means to salvation. Consequently, dedication marks the parent's recognition of their critical role in raising their child in an environment where they are taught and experience the love and loyalty that God provides.

Saying this, we also recognize that for many who were raised in other Christian traditions, having their child baptized is a significant experience. Provided the parents are clear on our understanding that the ceremony does not release their child from making a profession of faith once they've reach an age of moral understanding, we are happy to baptize them. Note: this baptism is not "Believers Baptism" and will sound very similar to a dedication service.

Are there requirements in order to have my child Dedicated?

Since Dedication is largely about YOUR commitments as a parental unit, keep these things in mind:

- Do you have a personal faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior?
- Do you see your child as a gift from God and be able to offer heartfelt thanks for His blessing?
- Do you see your role as parent is one of taking care of God's child here on Earth?
- Do you understand that this act of dedication commits you to the following:
 - Living a Christian life before you child—making Christ the foundation of your home.

- Keeping God’s Word—reading it, sharing it, living by it, and teaching it to your child.
- Fighting for your family by protecting your child from harmful outside influences, destructive relationships, and temptations that could cause them to turn from God.
- Loving them unconditionally—never giving up on them through childhood and into adulthood.

What will happen during the Dedication?

The date and time of the Dedication will be arranged through our Lead Pastor (though any ordained minister can dedicate children). They typically take place during one of our morning worship services, but on occasion, this sacred time can take place in a more private setting if that is desired.

- The Dedication begins with a challenge for the parents - to teach, model, and raise their child with God’s help.
- We then turn our attention to family members and close friends - to be your first wave of support and love.
- We then turn our attention to the Church Family - to be allies in teaching God’s Word and modeling God’s love.
- We will give the child a Life Verse - this is prayerfully selected by the Pastor coordinating the Dedication.
- Prayer of Dedication - the Pastor will hold the child, or pray over them a prayer of blessing and Dedication.
- Presentation of Bible, Certificate, and Flowers - we will give some things to remember this special day!

Special Elements:

Our media team would love to have a picture of your child or family to display during the presentation. This must be emailed 4 days in advance of the ceremony in digital format. More than one picture may be submitted but we reserve the right to choose which picture is displayed.

Special Circumstances:

We work with families with circumstances that are special, non-traditional, or otherwise unique. It is not our stance to judge your particular relational circumstance—they are, of course, your choice. However, we do strongly uphold the Biblical standards for marriage as God’s design for raising children. Therefore, we have created boundaries for Dedications that we believe include non-traditional families including the following: *divorced/separated parents, single parent, and unmarried couples living together*. In each of these scenarios, we ask that there would be adequate time for a member of the Pastoral team to meet with you to learn more about your situation. We will be able to plan an appropriate response at that time.

What is next?

If you are ready to have your child Dedicated, please fill out the bottom portion of this page and turn it in at our Welcome Center this Sunday! You can also email these questions to our Lead Pastor at terry@flushingcommunity.org. We will then set up a time to meet with you and make our final arrangements.

Sign my child up for the next Dedication!

Full Name of the Child: _____ DOB: _____

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Full Name of the Child: _____ DOB: _____

Father’s Name: _____ Mother’s Name: _____

Date of Dedication: Next time it’s offered We need this date if possible: _____

Who would you like to do the Dedication: Lead Pastor Pastoral Staff Member: _____

I/we have read this Child Dedication Guide and understand that Dedication is primarily for me/us as parents to give our child back to God and pledge to raise them in the church and as great Christian examples.