



*B*aby *D*edication

BABY DEDICATION GUIDEBOOK

Ten Questions to Prepare Your Family
to Step into God's Best



Table of Contents

What is Baby Dedication?.....	5
What specifically happens during a baby dedication service?.....	6
Why is this step so powerfully important?.....	7
What's the difference between baby dedication and infant baptism?.....	9
Why is a prayer of 'blessing' so spiritually impacting?.....	11
How to avoid hindering God's blessing on my family?.....	12
How baby dedication can be a first step in becoming a better parent?.....	14
What if I am a single parent, can I dedicate my child?.....	15
How can I make the most of this baby dedication weekend?.....	15
What can I expect from the church after dedication?.....	16

Congratulations!

We are so excited for you as you take this step of Baby Dedication. It will be our honor, not only to pray a prayer of blessing over your child, but also to stand with you as you begin this new journey of parenting.

We are committed to your success as a family. Our desire is to make this dedication ceremony a part of your personal and spiritual progress.

*I have listed answers to **TEN QUESTIONS** that most often are asked regarding the baby dedication process. Please read over this dialog. If you have additional questions, or need clarification of some sort, please feel free to call and ask.*

At the end of this booklet, there is an interest form for you to complete and turn in prior to the ceremony. This document is NOT really about qualifying or disqualifying any baby from being dedicated. We want all babies to be dedicated to God's purpose. This form is more a method for us to interact and make the dedication more personal.

- *We want to make sure you have read the Guidelines and fully understand the commitment you are making before God.*
- *We encourage you to list your vision and dreams for your child.*
- *Select a Bible promise that we can pray over your child (there are below options listed for you to choose from – or you can select one of your own).*

Biblical promises to review and potentially select for the dedication.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jeremiah 29:11-14 | <input type="checkbox"/> Proverbs 14:26 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 139 | <input type="checkbox"/> Proverbs 22:6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 91 | <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 112 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 13:36 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 2:42 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 |

God Bless, and we look forward to dedicating your child.

TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT BABY DEDICATIONS

1

What is baby dedication?

The roots of this ceremony go back several thousand years to a moment when a Jewish woman named Hannah was unable to conceive. She cried out to the Lord for a child, and when God answered her prayer, she responded by dedicating her child to God's purpose.

"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.

1 Samuel 1:27-28

Even Mary has a moment of dedication with Jesus when He was just an infant.

**Joseph and Mary took
him to Jerusalem to
present Him to the Lord.
Luke 2:22**

And when Jesus was presented at the Temple, two older people of faith (Simeon and Anna) both had moments with the baby where they held Him, pronounced God's blessing over Him, and even prophesied what He would go on to do and become.

This is what we believe happens during a dedication moment:

- Parents present their child to God in an act of thanksgiving and dedication to God's purposes.
- Together, as a family, they worship God.
- Spiritual leaders bless, pray over, and declare God's best for the child. (At times the Holy Spirit may even speak prophetically about the child's future.)
- Parents and their new child begin their journey together confident that they are walking under the full blessing of God.

Here's how the dedication moment of Jesus concludes:

**And the child grew and became strong; He was filled
with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him.
Luke 2:40**

2

What specifically happens during a baby dedication service?

At some point in the service, we will **invite parents and their child** (some will bring the entire family unit) **to the front**. Pastor Ernie will briefly describe to the congregation the meaning and purpose of the dedication ceremony and greet the families who are guests for this occasion.

Then he will ask the parents the **dedication questions of commitment**:

- Do you present your child in dedication to God's purpose?
- Realizing that no one is perfect, will you do your best to model for your child a life of obedience to God's purpose?
- And when they are old enough, will you work to lead them to make their own decision to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior?

Following the commitments made before God and the congregation, the pastor will take the opportunity to **pray over your child** being dedicated. During this prayer moment, we like to **project a picture on the screen of your child** so that the congregation can get a better view of who they are and what they look like. So we will ask you to supply a picture of your choice.

During this prayer moment, the pastor may use the verses you selected to declare God's promises of their lives. The entire congregation is invited to agree in prayer for God's blessing to be poured out upon their life.



3

Why is this step so powerfully important?

There are several factors to consider:

1. **Moments of dedication (in the Bible) often directly precede moments of provision and breakthrough.** For instance, when Joshua was ready to lead the people of Israel into the promised land – he told them...

'Consecrate yourselves (which means to dedicate completely) for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.'

Joshua 3:5

The next day, the Jordan river parted and the people of Israel made their way into the promise God had for them. As you dedicate yourselves and your child to God, you position yourselves to receive the breakthrough answers that you need for your life and for your child's future.

2. **Seasons of agreement in prayer can produce powerful answers from heaven.** During this service, hundreds of people will be agreeing in prayer over the life of your child. Listen to the words of Jesus...

"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 18:19-20

3. **The prayers we pray and the promises we declare will make a difference in the health, protection, direction, and anointing that is on your son or daughter.** Collectively, the entire church will use its lips to declare God's promise to be fulfilled in your child's life. Something happens in the spiritual realm at this moment.

In Proverbs 18:21 it says,

'The tongue has the power of life and death.'

POWERFUL PROMISES OFTEN PRAYED

And I myself will be a wall of fire around (them),’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will be (their) glory within.’

(Zechariah 2:5)

Praise the LORD. Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in His commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man. Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever. He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

(Psalm 121:1-7)

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you.

(Jeremiah 29:11-12)



4

What's the difference between baby dedication and infant baptism?

In many Christian traditions it is customary to do a 'baptism' of an infant, rather than just a 'dedication.' But the Biblical practice of baptism was limited to those who are old enough to choose to take that step as a matter of choice. **Baptism is an expression of personal faith in Christ. The dedication service is designed to bless infants and is based on the choice that parents make on their child's behalf.**

What's the same?

- Parents present their child to God.
- A pastor prays over that child.
- The congregation witnesses the moment and agrees in prayer over the child.
- The Holy Spirit marks this moment in the child's life as a moment when they were intentionally dedicated to God's purpose.

What's different?

The only thing that is different is theology behind the moment.

In the New Testament, baptism was always a **step of obedience** taken by a believer in Jesus to identify with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The word 'baptize' means to 'dip under' (much like the word capsizes means for a boat to tip over).

Every person baptized in the history of the Bible was an adult (or old enough to make a decision for themselves to turn from sin and follow Christ). There is no record in Biblical history of infants being baptized. It is absent from the early history of the church.

The picture of baptism is all about death, burial, and resurrection.

- Just as Jesus died and was buried, so we symbolically bury our old life of past sin and disobedience. (We are dipped as a symbol of death/burial.)
- Just as Jesus rose from the dead, so we symbolically rise out of the water as a declaration of a fresh start and a new life.

We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 6:4

In reality, a baby cannot yet choose to identify with Christ's death and resurrection because they are not aware yet of what is happening around them. They have no need to die to the past, because they have not yet willfully sinned. There is no need yet to rise to a 'new life' because their life has just begun.

At some point in their future, when they are old enough to choose – they will choose to sin and disobey God. We all do. As a result, they will need to receive forgiveness of sin through the work that Jesus did for us all on the cross. **When they come to understand the power of the cross and the opportunity to have 'new' and 'spiritual' life in Christ – then they can be water baptized in the Biblical sense of the word.**



But in their infancy, the best thing we can do for them is to present them to God in dedication and to pray God's powerful blessing down upon the beginnings of their life. **This is actually the most historically accurate and Biblical consistent practice of baptism and dedication.**

Some parents have asked, what about my child's soul? If they die at an early age (God forbid) and are not baptized, will they go to heaven? **The Bible seems to indicate that children are under God's grace prior to the age where they can be held accountable for their own sin.**

King David's child died in the first week of his life (as is recorded for us in 2 Samuel 12:22-23). David describes the eternal destiny of his deceased son.

"While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

The phrase 'I will go to him' implies this idea that the boy was in heaven and that one day they would be reunited. In a similar way, we trust that our children live under the grace of God until they are old enough to begin to choose their own way.

So neither dedication nor baptism is necessary to preserve their soul at this moment in their early life. What

is important, however, is that they **begin their life on earth with the launching moment of being properly presented to God and pointed toward God's promise and purpose.**

5

Why is a prayer of ‘blessing’ so spiritually impacting?

During baby dedication we practice something that the Bible calls ‘**speaking a blessing**’. This is somewhat of a lost art in our culture. But is a very powerful thing to do, not just at this moment, but in an ongoing way in the life of your child.

Blessing involves picturing a **positive future for someone else**, through both spoken words and meaningful touch that is in agreement with God’s promises for their life (expressing and invoking God’s promises over someone else).

And He took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them.

Mark 10:16

It seems that there were some baby dedication moments that Jesus practiced while he was here on earth:

Blessing is NOT the same as prayer. It is more a **declaration than a request**. It is a bold declaration that pronounces over someone else the promise of God. It’s like a representative of the military conferring an honor on a soldier or a king extending the sword to confer knighthood.

It declares this, ‘heaven separates you for a special purpose!... God has designed you for a mission on earth... You are special... May God give you victory and success as you ride forth into this battle of life.



This is such a powerful thing to do for your children on a regular basis. Place your hands on them and declare God’s purpose and promise over them...as they go off to school, or get ready to play in a big game, or just because you want them to understand the purpose God has for their life.

We will practice this ‘blessing’ moment in a public way – but we encourage you to continue privately dedicating your child to God and **declaring God’s best over their life in the future**.

6

How to avoid hindering God's blessing on my family?

The New Testament teaches us some amazing truth. **God has already decided to bless your life.** He wants nothing but the best for you, for your marriage, for your children. He gave His very life so that you could be rescued from your sin and all its consequences.

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?

Romans 8:32

God's will is to bless you and your child. He has a plan for you and He is choosing to back up that plan with all of the resources of heaven. **When you speak blessing over your child, you are agreeing with what God has already chosen.** We are aligning our words with the Word of God for our kids. That alignment releases something in the heavens on our behalf.

Consider even the most famous prayer in the Bible. It's called the Lord's Prayer and it teaches us that we need to align our words in prayer with the will of God.

*Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come, your
Will be done on earth as it
is in heaven.*

Jesus teaches us to call down the will of God. What God has already willed in the heavens, our prayers of agreement release that will to be completed on the earth. Our prayers open the door to the full will of heaven to be brought to bear on our situations here on earth. Wow!

That's amazing. **Your prayers as a parent can unlock God's best promises for your child's life here on earth.** Such an honor!

God's best is unlocked through our prayers. It is also increased through our OBEDIENCE. **In fact, the grace of God flows in the direction of our obedience.** When we obey the Word of God and do His will, we become like a magnet for God's blessing to be released in our world.

But the opposite is also true. **Disobedience is like a clog in the flow of God's grace.** When we live in rebellion against God's Word, and choose to reject His direction in our life – we build a wall against the flow of God's grace. So God is trying to break through to give His best to us and to our kids. But we are working against that by our lifestyle of disobedience.

We need to consider some very direct realities. It is impossible to stand before a congregation in a ‘religious’ ceremony like dedication and expect God’s full blessing on our family, when we are living a life of willful disobedience.

It would be like turning on the faucet with one hand – and with the other kinking up the hose so that water cannot be released.

That’s what it’s like for a couple who is...

- **Not married, having sex, maybe even living together,** and yet trying to dedicate their baby to God and ask for God’s blessing.
- **Living a lifestyle of addiction without repentance.** (We’re not talking about a person who is trying to be free and is struggling – but one who is refusing change). The addictive choices will clog the flow of God’s grace for your family.
- **Filled with bitterness, hatred, or rage and yet is unrepentant and proud.** These attitudes will also be a wall against the flow of God’s best.

Understand – you don’t have to be perfect to be eligible for God’s blessing. You just have to be **humble enough** to admit you need help and **willing enough** to begin the steps to get your life in line with obedience.

WE WILL DEDICATE YOUR CHILD TO GOD REGARDLESS OF YOUR LIFESTYLE CHOICES. No one is disqualified because of how they are living today. We want to pray for your child and ask God to protect and bless their life.

But realize this: **No ceremony can guarantee God’s blessing.** No pastor can confer what God is not providing. If you are living a life of willful disobedience, your choices are preventing God from releasing His best in your life. No religious ceremony in and of itself can remove the clog that you have created by your own lifestyle choices.

Our hope is that this step of dedication will be a step in the right direction of helping you get your life aligned with God’s best. **We are committed to helping you** get there. So if there is an issue that you need to talk through, we want to help you deal with it.

The **goal** is that when you stand before God during the dedication moment, you are **confident that you are living a lifestyle that God can completely and totally bless.**

7

How baby dedication can be a first step in becoming a better parent?

Parenting is obviously one of the most intimidating roles any of us can ever fill. None of us feel equipped to do it well. All of us are in need of help from any source that we can get it. Here's a recommended approach to **grow in your skills and confidence**.

1. **Recognize my need for God's grace** – dedication is an open declaration before God and a request for His help.
2. **Get aligned with His Word** – take steps to get your life right with God. That might mean getting married or getting help for some issue that you need to address.
3. **Continue to bless your child** – every day take time to speak in faith over your child. Claim God's promises. Pray for them in your personal devotional times. Pray over them before bed or prior to them leaving for school.
4. **Study** – parenting is a skill that you can grow into.
5. **Find a model and seek a coach** – some of us may have had a great model of effective parenting in our own mom or dad. Some may be lacking that. But there are models out there that you can observe and learn from. Maybe you could even seek them out and ask them to coach you when you have a need.
6. **Join a small group** – finding friends who are on the same journey is also helpful. There is a group designed specifically for moms called MOPS (mothers of preschoolers). Groups like this can add a dimension of strength and sanity to the early years.
7. **Stay focused on the goal** – when life gets tough and our children are exhausting us, we tend to lose focus out of fatigue. During those moments, we need to point our parenting compass at 'true north' What is that? **The goal is to raise GREAT CHILDREN.** We are working to see them become great in every way... character, skills and purpose.



8

What if I am a single parent, can I dedicate my child?

ABSOLUTELY!!! In fact, being able to be surrounded by your church family as you begin the journey of parenting is a very important thing to do. It is a fantastic symbol of the reality that you are not doing this alone.

Many single parents will have someone come and stand with them on the platform. It might be one or both of your parents, or a sibling, or a small group leader, or a friend. **Feel free to make this moment one that you feel you can celebrate with confidence.**

9

How can I make the most of this baby dedication weekend?

1. **Prepare Spiritually** – after reading over this booklet, and filling out the interest form – discuss the spiritual implications of this dedication moment with those closest to you. Begin to take steps to get your life in line with God’s Word so that when we pray over your child – the faucets of heaven can be turned on full blast.
2. **Consider a day of fasting and prayer** – maybe on the Friday preceding the dedication service, take a meal and fast and pray for the release of God’s power at this significant moment when hundreds of believers will pray over your child.
3. **Plan the celebration** – moments like this are a fantastic time to have a party and mark this moment with family. So plan a post-service gathering of some type to commemorate this time.
4. **Invite your friends and family to church** – we would love to provide you invitations to send. If you want, just let us know how many. We promise that we will design the service with your guests in mind and that the topics taught will be relevant to their lives. This may be the one moment where your family is most likely to attend church with you. We want to make the most of this opportunity for you.

10

What can I expect from the church after dedication?

We want to be partners with you in raising a **GREAT** young man or woman. **We want to stand with you in your journey as a parent.**

1. **Children's and Youth Ministries** – available from nursery through age 18 with several volunteers who are devoted to investing in your child.
2. **Tools, Teachings, and Resources** – we also want to be a source of help in how to do life and relationships. Our weekend services and small groups are all designed to be a place of practical support.
3. **Pastoral Care, Prayer, and Coaching** – if you ever need to talk through an issue, need pray, or want some coaching – our pastor, elders and deacons are always available to you.



Baby Dedication Information Form

*The purpose of dedicating your child to the Lord is two-fold in nature; both to present **your child** to God and to present **yourselves** to God for the help that you will need as parents to raise this child.*

NAME OF CHILD TO BE DEDICATED (First, Middle, Last)
BIRTH DATE
PLACE OF BIRTH/CITY
DEDICATION DATE _____

MOTHER'S NAME _____

MARRIED SINGLE SEPARATED DIVORCED WIDOWED

ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP
HOME PHONE
WORK PHONE
CELL PHONE
E-MAIL ADDRESS
WHEN DID YOU RECEIVE CHRIST AS SAVIOR?

FATHER'S NAME _____

MARRIED SINGLE SEPARATED DIVORCED WIDOWED

ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP
HOME PHONE
WORK PHONE
CELL PHONE
E-MAIL ADDRESS
WHEN DID YOU RECEIVE CHRIST AS SAVIOR?

LIST NAMES AND BIRTH DATES OF OTHER CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME

CHECK THE FOLLOWING TO COMMUNICATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Mother *Father*

- I have read the Baby Dedication Booklet and understand the purpose of the ceremony.
- I feel confident that my life is aligned with God’s Word and that I am ready to believe for my family to experience God’s fullest blessing.
- I have a lifestyle issue that is not aligned with God’s Word – and I would like to talk to a pastor about what steps to take next.
- I have a lifestyle issue that is not aligned with God’s Word – but I am not willing at this time to address it. I would like to go ahead with the dedication ceremony anyway.
- I am a follower of Christ and have prayed a prayer asking Jesus to be my Savior and Lord.
- I am not currently a follower of Christ, but I would like to take that step to invite Him to be my Savior and the leader of my life and family.
- My goal will be to one day lead my child to become a follower of Jesus.

TO PERSONALIZE YOUR BABY’S DEDICATION PLEASE LET US KNOW IF THERE IS ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE. For Example:

Does the child’s name have any special significance?

What is your vision for your child’s life?

What are you praying for your child that we could pray with you?

Is there anything that you would like us to share with the congregation as your child is dedicated?

Is there a special scripture you have for your child.

Mother’s Signature

Date

Father’s Signature

Date

- Please provide additional comments if necessary.
- Please submit a picture of your baby that we will display on the overhead screen during your baby’s dedication. You can e-mail photo with application e-mail to Pastor Ernie at enorth@nycap.rr.com