



Child DEDICATIONS



*A guide for how and why
we do them at Golden Hills*

What is Child Dedication?

Child dedication is an act of faith by which a parent or parents formally declare their intention to raise their child or children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ. We dedicate our children in the presence of God's people to show that we need each other in this holy endeavor. The church commits to assisting the family in discipling children, and the parents commit to instructing the child in the gospel by God's grace. Child dedication is how we can express our trust and hope in the Lord to parent our children in a way that brings honor and glory to God.

Why do we practice child dedications?

First, child dedication is a practice rooted in scripture. In the Old Testament, Samuel was dedicated to the Lord by his mother, Hannah, and in the New Testament, Jesus was dedicated at the temple by his parents.

Second, we believe children are gifts from God, and the responsibility to steward these precious gifts is essential. Faithfully raising children in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is no easy task. Every parent experiences a feeling of inadequacy. Our inadequacy is not the final word on our parenting because we can turn to the Lord and His people to find encouragement, strength, and grace in our time of need. God loves our children and us more than we realize, so we respond with gratitude by committing our children and ourselves back to Him for His purposes.

Third, when Jesus encountered children, he took them up in his arms, blessed them, and laid his hands on them (**Mark 10:16**). This reveals the importance God places on children. So, rather than drift aimlessly through life by neglecting our responsibility in parenting, we enthusiastically embrace the reality that “*children are a heritage from the Lord*” (**Psalms 127:3**). Therefore, we need to take the initiative to raise our children “*in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*” (**Ephesians 6:4**). Child dedication provides us the opportunity to commit ourselves and dedicate our children before God and His people. In essence, child dedication is how we say before God and His people that, as parents:

We will not drift through life, but we will be intentional. We will not raise our children to be neutral but to engage with the world God has created. We will commit ourselves wholly to the Lord and teach our children the gospel, which is the good news of great joy for all peoples.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to be a member of Golden Hills Community Church?

Answer: Yes. Since child dedications involve a commitment from both the families and the people of God, the families must be members of Golden Hills Community Church to indicate the mutual commitment child dedication clearly requires. Child dedication reflects the beautiful partnership between families and the people of God at Golden Hills Community Church to raise children in the Lord *[So, if you are not yet a member, we encourage you to consider making Golden Hills Community Church your home church through covenant membership to foster this mutual partnership]*.

Can I participate if I'm a single parent?

Answer: Yes. We acknowledge that it takes extra effort for a single, believing parent to faithfully raise their child in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. So, we are committed to supporting our single parents through mutual partnership in this holy endeavor. If the child's other parent is still involved in the child's life, we do encourage discussing child dedication to solicit their support.

Can I participate if my spouse is not a believer?

Answer: Yes. If your spouse is an unbeliever, we recommend an open discussion about child dedication to ensure there is support. However, it would not be appropriate for the unbelieving spouse to participate in the dedication itself.



What is the difference between child dedication and infant baptism?

Answer: For churches that practice infant baptism, it is likened to circumcision in the Old Testament and signifies membership in Christ's church, the covenant community. We, however, have covenant membership that is restricted to baptized believers. As a church that practices believer's baptism, we do not practice infant baptism. Believer's baptism has two purposes: **1) for the church**, baptism both affirms and portrays a person's union with Christ by immersing them in water; **2) for the believer**, baptism is a public commitment to Christ and His people, whereby a believer is marked off from the world. Children are part of the church community, not based on their baptism but their parent's membership in the local church. Child dedication is how we introduce children to the church community at large.

Is there an age limit for dedicating my child?

Answer: Yes. We recommend that only children under three years of age participate in child dedication. Since child dedications involve the parents' commitment to faithfully disciple their children in the gospel, it is best for children who cannot yet confess their faith to be dedicated. If your child is beginning to ask questions about Jesus, we would love to come alongside you to help you lead your child to faith in Jesus.

What do I do if my child is over the age limit?

Answer: We encourage you to instruct your child in the knowledge and discipline of the Lord Jesus Christ. When your child approaches adolescence, we recommend taking a baptism class to prepare them for baptism. Secondly, we recommend becoming members of the church. By doing so, you become a covenant member who commits to the church that you intend to raise your children in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. And by being welcomed into covenant membership by the church, you are receiving the church's support to help in that holy endeavor.

What you need to know to have your child dedicated at Golden Hills

- Child dedications are held 5 times each year.
- You can learn more about dedications and apply to dedicate your child [here](#)
- Once registered, a Kids Ministry representative will reach out to set up an interview with the interested parents. The interview will outline what child dedications are, why we do them, and is the final step of approval for parents.
- Once a family is approved for dedication, the final details will be sent via email and then the dedication will take place.
- Families need to be present at all services of GHCC for dedications.



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