

Praise Center Church Baby Dedication

For the Bible-believing Christian



2012 Ceremony Dates:

February 11, June 9, October 13

(Applications due no later than two weeks prior to the ceremony.)

Visalia, California

What is a Baby Dedication?

A baby dedication is a ceremony that expresses your desire as parents to raise your child in the ways of the Bible and to ask God to use your child for His purposes. You submit your will for your child to His will. The act of dedication must not be thought of as a ritual or ceremony that has saving merit to it. The child can never be automatically a born again Christian as a result of being dedicated. The Bible says that a baby is a blessing from God. When you decide to dedicate your child, you are acknowledging the awesome responsibility God has given you in raising your child.

Why should I dedicate my child?

The Bible provides an example for us in that Mary and Joseph took baby Jesus to the temple to be dedicated to God. As followers of Christ, we should want to also make the public declaration to our family, and our church. It is invaluable to be able to tell your children as they are growing up that they belong to Jesus and that you have asked God to use them in a formal declaration.

Where in the Scripture does it say to dedicate your child?

Scripture does not mention anything about dedication of children; however, Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:27,28).

Jesus was dedicated to the Lord as a baby (Luke 2:22) and baptized as an adult (Matthew 3:13-17).

In Mark 10:11-13 we read: *“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch 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. I tell you the truth; 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, put His hand on them and blessed them.”* It is primarily from this passage of Scripture that we model our service of dedication and present a child to the Lord.

How old should the child be?

While there is no set age for a child to be presented to the Lord, children are generally presented within the first year or two of their life. We do encourage parents who have not dedicated their child to God to do so if the child is still in grade five or below.

Why do you not baptize infants?

According to the Bible, everyone (adult or child) who recognizes his or her need of a Savior and then repents and believes in Christ should be baptized (Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-38). However, in the Scripture there is no record of infants or very young children being baptized. This is because they are unaware of right and wrong and have nothing of which to repent. They are not yet able to understand the need for a Savior.

What if my baby dies before being dedicated (or baptized)?

A child who dies without being dedicated (or baptized) is received into the love and presence of God. God places a high priority on children. If God forbade children from being sacrificed (Leviticus 20:1-5), He would not order those same children to be placed in the eternal fire of hell.

Can I as a grandparent dedicate my grandchild?

Yes, if you have full custody and the child lives with you. The person making a public vow should be the child’s parents who, as caretakers, are responsible for the upbringing of the child.

What about godparents?

There is nothing mentioned in the Bible about godparents. Parents themselves have the responsibility to raise up their children in the things of the Lord; they cannot shirk this responsibility to someone else. Some parents may like to call witnesses to confirm their commitment, *“At the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established”* (2 Corinthians 13:1). These may be relatives or loved ones who know the parents well and who are themselves Christians and faithful to the Lord. While godparents are welcome to attend the ceremony, they will not stand with the parents. While many families participate in the dedication ceremony, there is not sufficient space to accommodate everyone’s godparents around the altar area.

What if I am a believer but my spouse is not?

If only one parent is a believer, the dedication of the child can be done if the unbelieving parent has given permission. *“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.”*

1 Corinthians 7:14

What if I am not married yet live with the child’s father/mother?

Dedication does nothing for the child; it is actually a declaration (vow) where the parents dedicate themselves to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is very difficult to make such declaration when living in unrepentant sin. Such an ongoing sexual relationship raises questions about a couple’s sincerity to enter into a solemn covenant with God as is described in Genesis 2:23-24; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9; Deuteronomy 22:28-29. We are very supportive of parents and do encourage them to make their union legal and then proceed with the Baby Dedication.

What happens during the actual ceremony?

Arrive a little early with your guests. During the ceremony, the minister will ask the parents to bring their children to the front of the chapel. You will vow before God and the congregation, much like wedding vows, that you will raise your child in the Christian faith, that you will be his or her example, and that you will train your child in Christian disciplines: Prayer, Bible reading, church attendance, etc. The minister will then hold and pray for each child. You will then receive your child’s Dedication Certificate and be seated following the minister’s concluding prayer. The ceremony will typically last about thirty minutes.

Should the child be dressed a special way?

No. You can dress the child in whatever clothes you wish.

Can we take pictures during the ceremony?

Picture taking is permissible if done orderly and without interference. The vows being made at this time are important and serious to the Lord. Please make sure that your guests are aware that they should use great discretion when taking pictures during the ceremony. Time will given immediately after the ceremony for those that wish to take pictures with their families, godparents, minister, etc.

What is expected of me after I dedicate my child?

Dedication is a pledge to cultivate a spiritual atmosphere in the home. One must never underestimate the incredible influence a parent has on the faith of their children. Infant dedication expresses the intention and faith of the parents to do everything they can to lead their child to salvation. It is a public pledge to circle the child with a positive environment that will nurture the child’s faith in God. Scripture tells us that we are to train a child in the way he should go (Proverbs 22:6). This includes meeting together regularly as Christians to spur one another onto love and good deeds (Hebrews

10:23-24). Dedication of children to God is a promise to model a Christian lifestyle to the children worshipping with a church family regularly. In a sense, a Christian Dedication of a child is a dedication of the parents to be godly role models. 2 Timothy 1:5 states, *“When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.”*

Do I need to meet any requirements?

It is sad to see parents who go through the ritual of a baby dedication who have not even dedicated themselves to the Lord, much less their children. This makes a mockery of the whole event and it loses its significance. Therefore, we would expect that those parents who want to publicly dedicate their child to the Lord meet the following requirements:

Saved: Those parents who want to publicly testify that they will dedicate their child must first be saved. They must know they are born again or else how can they hope to teach their children to be born again when they come to age?

Faithful church members: It is strange how parents who are not even members of a church want to dedicate their children to the Lord. The church was established by Christ to be a place of spiritual nourishment and encouragement for God’s people. How can a parent say, “I will dedicate my child to the Lord but I will not become a member of a church which He established?” Or perhaps one is a member of the church but is not faithful to the services. This parent is not dedicated! How can he or she dedicate their child? Is this parent committed to bring their child to church faithfully so that the child can learn and grow in the Lord?

Surrendered to God: Dedication is all about surrender. It is the parent saying before God, “Lord, I surrender this child to You so that You may accomplish Your purpose in their life. I give this child back to you.” Develop a life of daily devotion to Him by studying the word of God, worship and sing praises to Him, and pray for His direction and will for your life.

What do I need to do to dedicate my child?

After carefully reading all the material in this packet, you must:

- Agree with our teaching
- Fill out the application on the last page
- Submit application to the office **NO LATER THAN TWO WEEKS** prior to the ceremony
- Await a call from our pastoral staff granting approval of your application
- You may need to meet with the minister for a scheduled appointment

Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

Should you have any questions, you may contact Edie at the church office, Monday-Thursday, at 559-733-2744, or by e-mail at edie@praisecenterchurch.org

INFANT DEDICATION APPLICATION

Please complete the following application and return to the church office
NO LATER THAN TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE CEREMONY.
Late applications will be considered for the following ceremony date.

Child's Full Name:

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth (City/State):

Sex of Child: Male Female

Mother's Name:

Father's Name:

Home Address:

Home Address:

Best Telephone Number to Reach You:

Best Telephone Number to Reach You:

Email Address:

Email Address:

Have you attended Membership class at PCC?

Yes No

Have you attended Membership class at PCC?

Yes No

Mother's Date of Salvation:

Father's Date of Salvation:

Are you legally married? Yes No

I have read the material and agree to a Christian Dedication for my child and pledge to fulfill what is expected of me as a parent according to scripture.

Mother's/Father's
Initials

____ / ____ I understand that dedication doesn't mean my child will automatically go to heaven when he or she dies.

____ / ____ I understand my child is not becoming a member of Praise Center Church or the Christian church at large.

____ / ____ I understand that by dedicating my child, I am committing before the Holy God that I will live in a manner pleasing to Him. I believe in and uphold the word of God, the Holy Bible, as the Supreme Authority and standard for my life, recognizing it is placed above secular standards and ways.

Mother's Signature

Date

Father's Signature

Date