

Transformation Church



Transformation
CHURCH
CHANGED LIVES CHANGING LIVES

CHILD DEDICATION INFORMATION PACKET & GUIDELINES

TC CHILD DEDICATION

COMMITTING TO WALK IN FAITH AS A FAMILY

Child Dedication

We are so excited for your family as you prepare for our upcoming Child Dedication service. It is our honor, not only to pray a prayer of blessing over your child, but to also stand with you as you begin (or continue) 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 are most often asked regarding the child dedication process. Please read over this information.

This process is NOT about qualifying or disqualifying any child from being dedicated. We want all children to be dedicated to God's purpose. This process is 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 options listed below for you to choose from – or you can select one of your own. Please complete and submit the form at the end of this document.

Jeremiah 29:11-14

Proverbs 14:26

Psalms 139

Proverbs 22:6

Psalms 91

Psalms 1

Psalms 112

Acts 13:36

Luke 2:42

I Chronicles 4:9-10

We look forward to dedicating your child(ren)! May the Lord bless you and prepare your heart for this wonderful step of faith.

Pastor Scott Lewis

TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILD DEDICATION

1. What is Child 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 worshipped 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 purpose. 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 the Lord.

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 on him. ~Luke 2:40

2. What specifically happens during a Child Dedication service?

At some point in the service, we will invite parents and their child to the front of the sanctuary. The pastor 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 Lord & Savior?*

Following the commitments made before God and the congregation, the pastor will take the opportunity to pray over each child being dedicated.

During this prayer moment, the pastor may use the verse you selected to declare God's promises over your child(ren). The entire congregation is invited to agree in prayer for God's blessing to be poured out upon each child.

Then, before returning to your seat, you will be given a gift as a reminder of this day when you dedicated your child to the Lord.

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."

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 and miracles 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 I am 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.

~Proverbs 18:21 "The tongue has the power of life and death."

POWERFUL PROMISES OFTEN PRAYED AND PROCLAIMED

‘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 are those who fear the Lord, who find great delight in his commands. Their children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever, even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous. Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice. Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever. They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.’ ~Psalm 112:1-7

‘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 of your heart. I will be found by you.’ ~Jeremiah 29:11-12

4. What’s the difference between child dedication and infant baptism?

In many Christian traditions, it is customary to do a ‘baptism’ of an infant, rather than just a ‘dedication.’ However, the Biblical practice of baptism was limited to those 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 it is based on the choice that parents make on their child’s behalf.

What’s the same?

Parents present their children to God.

A pastor prays over the 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?

In the New Testament, water baptism was always a step of obedience taken by the believer in Jesus to identify with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.

The word ‘baptize’ means ‘to dip under or immerse’.

A child dedication does not involve water.

A child dedication does not involve a conscious choice on behalf of the child being dedicated.

Every person baptized in the history of the Bible was an adult, or old enough to make the 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 immersed in water 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

A young child cannot yet choose to identify with Christ's death and resurrection, because they are not yet aware 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 to rise to a 'new life', because their life has just begun. We recommend children not be water baptized until at least 9 years of age. They should be old enough to understand the effects of their sin and the message of the cross.

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 on the cross. When they come to understand the power of the cross and the opportunity to have a '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 the most historically accurate and biblically consistent practice of baptism and child 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 when they can be held accountable for their own sin.

King David's child died in the first week of his life. David describes the eternal destiny of his deceased son in 2 Samuel ~2 Samuel 12:22-23

"While the child was 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 the 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 the prayer of ‘blessing’ so spiritually impacting?

During child dedication, we practice something that the Bible calls ‘speaking a blessing.’ This is somewhat of a lost art in our culture, but it is a very powerful practice. We encourage all of our parents to speak Biblical blessings over their children throughout their lives.

It is very powerful and meaningful to express and invoke God’s promises over someone else’s life.

*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 child dedication moments that Jesus practiced while he was on earth: Blessing is NOT the same as prayer. It is more of a declaration than a request. It is a bold declaration that is pronounced over someone else using the promises 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 go boldly 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 the ‘blessing’ moment in a public way – but we encourage you to continue to privately dedicate your children to God and declare God’s best over their life in the future.

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

The New Testament is filled with amazing truths. It reveals to us that God has already decided to bless your life. He wants nothing but the best for you, for your marriage, and for your children. He gave His very life to rescue you from your sin and all of 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 by 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 His 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.

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 this wall to give His best to us and to our kids. When we choose disobedience, we reject God's blessing in our lives. This choice also impacts the lives of our children.

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 kinking up the hose with the other hand, so that the water could not be released.

That's what it is like for a couple who is:

- **Not married, having sex, and possibly living together**, while trying to dedicate their baby to God and asking for His 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 to change. The addictive choices will clog the flow of God's grace for your family.
- **Filled with bitterness, hatred, or rage, while remaining unrepentant and proud**. We must be **humble enough** to ask for forgiveness and assistance in order to get our lives back on the right track.

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 to 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. Feel free to set up an appointment to speak with a pastor by calling 724-992-9668.

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. Child 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 need help from any source that we can get. Here's a recommended approach to **grow in your skills and confidence**.

- a. **Recognize my need for God's grace** – dedication is an open declaration before God and a request for His help.
- b. **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 in your life.
- c. **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.
- d. **Study** – some of the gifts we give to parents during the dedication process are tools for further help. Parenting is a skill that you can grow into.
- e. **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.
- f. **Join a small group** – finding friends who are on the same journey is also helpful. We offer a number of small groups throughout the year. Stop at the Welcome Center for a list of small groups currently operating.
- g. **Stay focused on the goal – when life gets tough** and our children are exhausting us, we tend to lose focus due to 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, purpose, and result.

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 up front. It might be one or both of your parents, a sibling, 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 child dedication weekend?

- **Prepare Spiritually** – after reading this packet and filling out the Request 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 the floodgates of God's blessings will be opened wide over your child as we pray!

- **Consider a day of fasting and prayer** – maybe on the Friday preceding the dedication service, take a day and fast and pray for the release of God’s power at this significant moment when hundreds of believers will agree in prayer for your child.
- **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.
- **Invite your friends and family to church** – 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 one moment when your family is most likely to attend church with you. We want to make the most of this opportunity for you and your loved ones.

10. What can I expect from Transformation Church after the 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 & Youth Ministries** – available from nursery through age 18 with a family pastor and many volunteers devoted to investing in your children.
2. **Tools, Teaching, and Resources** – we also want to be a source of help in how to do life and relationships. Our Sunday services, small groups, and resource center 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 prayer, or want some coaching – our staff is always available for you.

CHILD DEDICATION REGISTRATION – TRANSFORMATION CHURCH

NAME OF CHILD TO BE DEDICATED (FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)

CHILD'S BIRTHDATE _____

DEDICATION DATE _____

NAME OF PARENTS DEDICATING:

MOTHER'S NAME _____

MOTHER'S PHONE NUMBER _____

FATHER'S NAME _____

FATHER'S PHONE NUMBER _____

MARITAL STATUS: (CIRCLE ONE)

MARRIED SINGLE LIVING TOGETHER

SEPARATED/DIVORCED WIDOWED

HOME ADDRESS _____

NUMBER OF GUESTS YOU ARE EXPECTING AT THE DEDICATION _____

ANY QUESTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK OR INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE:

PERSONALIZING YOUR DEDICATION CEREMONY:

Here are some questions that you can answer that will help you personalize your ceremony. You do not have to answer all of them. This is a menu of options, or you could share something else that would add to your Dedication moment. During the Child Dedication Preparation Class, we will gather this information so that we can prepare for your Dedication Service.

Does your child's name have any special significance?

What is your vision for your children's life?

What are you praying for you 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?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DESIRE TO DEDICATE YOUR CHILD(REN)! WE WILL PROCESS YOUR APPLICATION AND SEND YOU INFORMATION ABOUT NEXT STEPS.