



GOSPEL CENTER

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 questions that are most often 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 or ask.

At this end of this document, 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"/> 1 Samuel 2:26 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 2:40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Chronicles 4:10 |

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

Pastor Courtland Younger
Gospel Center

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

***Joseph and Mary took
him to Jerusalem to
present Him to the Lord.***

Luke 2:22

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

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)
- Parent and their new child begin their journey together confident that they are walking under the full blessing of God.

Here is how the dedication moment of Jesus concludes:

***And the child grew and became strong,
filled with wisdom. And the favor of God
was upon Him.***

Luke 2:40

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 altar**. 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.

The pastor will then ask the parents the **dedication questions of commitment**:

- Do you receive this child with gratitude, as God's gift to you and your family?
- Do you commit to each other as parents, creating a stable environment in which your child can mature? Will you make a covenant to strengthen your marriage relationship?
- Do you commit to making Jesus Christ the foundation of your home and will you place your trust in God's grace for your life and for your child.
- Will you love your child unconditionally as God loves us and will you teach your child what it means to be a follower of Christ and guide them towards Him?

There will also be a charge to family and friends to support your family with prayers and encouragement. Following the commitments made before God and the congregation, the pastor take the opportunity to **pray over each child** being dedication. The entire congregation is invited to agree in prayer for God's blessing to be poured out upon their life. During this prayer moment, the pastor may use the verses you selected to declare God's promises over their lives.

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, people will be agreeing in prayer over the life of your child. Listen to the words of Jesus.

Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among 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 will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the LORD, and I will be the glory in her midst." (Zechariah 2:5)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, (Jeremiah 29:11-14a)

Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments! His offspring 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. Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous. It is well with the man who deals generously and lends; who conducts his affairs with justice. For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord. (Psalm 112: 1-7)

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BABY DEDICATION AND INFANT BAPTISM?

In many Christian traditions it is customary to do a dedication of an infant rather than a baptism. 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 the 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?

What 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 mean to 'dip under'.

Every person baptized in the history of the Bible was 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 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 new life.

We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of 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 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 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 biblical consistent practice of baptism and dedication.

WHY IS A PRAYER OF ‘BLESSING’ SO SPIRITUALLY IMPACTING?

During baby dedication we practice something 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 hand 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 move forward in 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 want to encourage you to continue to privately dedicate your child to God and **declare God’s best over their life in the future.**

HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF THIS BABY DEDICATION WEEKEND?

1. **Prepare Spiritually** – after reading over this document and filling out the interest form – discuss the spiritual implications of the 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 proceeding the dedication service, take a meal and fast and pray for the release of God's power at this significant moment when other believers will prayer over your child.
3. **Plan a 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** – This may be the one moment where your family is most likely to attend church with you. We would love to have your friends and family join us for this special occasion.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM GOSPEL CENTER AFTER DEDICATION?

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

1. **Children's and Youth Ministries** – available from preschool through high school with devoted staff committed to investing in your children
2. **Tools, Teachings, and Resources** – we also want to be a source of help in how to do life and relationships. Our services, life 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 team is 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 _____

City of Birth _____

Dedication Date: _____

Mother's Name _____

Married Single Separated Divorced Widowed

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

When did you receive Christ as Savior? _____

Father's Name _____

Married Single Separated Divorced Widowed

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

When did you receive Christ as Savior? _____

LIST THE NAMES AND BIRTHDATES OF OTHER CHILDREN

<i>NAME</i>	<i>BIRTHDATE</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

CHECK THE FOLLOWING TO COMMUNICATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- | Mother | Father | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have read the Baby Dedication document and understand the purpose of the ceremony. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 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. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a lifestyle that is not aligned with God's Word – and I would like to talk to a pastor about what steps to take next. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a lifestyle issue that is not aligned with God's Word – but I am not ready at this time to address it. I would like to go ahead with the dedication ceremony anyway. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I am a follower of Christ and have prayed a prayer asking Jesus to be my Savior and Lord, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I am not currently a follower of Christ, but would like to take that step to invite Him to be my Savior and the leader of my life and family. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 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 your child's name have any special significance?

What is your vision for your child's life?

What are you praying for 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