

***Welcome to
Parent Commitment and
Child Dedication
at Increasing Faith***



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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHILD DEDICATION AND BAPTISM

Because Increasing Faith is comprised of people from many faiths and cultural backgrounds, we want to be sure that your questions regarding the difference between child dedication and baptism are well explained.

DEDICATION

The child dedication is truly a parent commitment service. It is the parent's promise to offer their child to the Lord and to dedicate themselves to rearing the child for the glory of God.

OUR GOAL IS TO:

- Help parents recognize that children are a gift from God.
- Facilitate the parent's verbal commitment to raise their child in a Christian environment.
- Challenge parents to be examples in service and worship for their children.
- Assist parents in laying a firm foundation of learning about God and an example of the power of salvation for their child.

Parents cannot decide their child's salvation. Each person must make the decision to have a personal relationship with Christ. When children are old enough to understand the concept of sin and the responsibility for that sin, then they are ready to make the decision to accept Christ as their personal savior and assure eternal salvation.

Parents must however, lay a foundation through teaching and example that will help children to make that decision at the right time. The same is true of marriage. We cannot decide when or if our children will marry and we cannot guarantee them a happy marriage. But through positive example, we can lay a foundation for making good decisions when the time comes.

Dedication is not baptism. It is not a sacrament of any kind. It does not impart salvation on the child. Dedication is the parent's commitment to God to raise the child in His ways.

Increasing Faith dedicates children because we read in Luke 2:22-25 that as a baby, his parents dedicated Jesus. In Mark 10:16 we see Jesus bestowing blessings on the children. The dedication ceremony is a time to publicly make that commitment to pray for the child, love the child and guide the child toward a personal relationship with Christ.

BAPTISM

The Bible tells us in Acts 8:12-13 that all believers are to be baptized. Baptism does NOT get you to heaven. Only faith in Christ makes a believer and only by accepting Christ do we secure salvation and eternity in heaven. Jesus asks us to be baptized and modeled this to us by being baptized as an adult. Increasing Faith does not baptize children until they are old enough to articulate their understanding and belief.

The Bible tells us that baptism is a symbol of Christ's burial and resurrection. It is a symbol of new life in Christ—a symbol that tells others you are a believer. Much like a wedding ring, it is an outward sign of an inward commitment.

Baptism does not MAKE you a believer — it shows that you ARE a believer. *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith... it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.*
Ephesians 2:8-9

People often ask what happens if a baby or young child dies. A baby does not need to be baptized to go to heaven. A child is totally under God's spiritual care until old enough to make a decision for Christ. Salvation is guaranteed to children who die before the age of accountability. This is based on the nature of God as revealed through Christ. The child has not yet come to the age when he can accept or reject Christ. Therefore, Christ's atonement covers all who die before reaching the age of accountability.

PARENT DECLARATION

I will treasure my child as a gift from God on loan to me.

Behold, children are a gift of the LORD. Psalm 127:3



I will teach my child of God's love and of His gift of eternal life through His Son Jesus.

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 6:5-7



I will give grace to my child as grace has been given to me.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4



I will forgive my child as I have been forgiven.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32



I will accept responsibility for helping my child discover his/her God given purpose in life.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:13-14

TEN COMMANDMENTS TO PARENTS

1. **MY HANDS ARE SMALL;** *please don't expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture or throw a ball. My legs are short; please slow down so I can keep up with you.*
2. **MY EYES HAVE NOT SEEN THE WORLD AS YOURS HAVE;** *please let me explore safely. Don't restrict me unnecessarily.*
3. **HOUSEWORK WILL ALWAYS BE THERE.** *I'm only little for a short time. Please take time to explain things to me about this wonderful world and do so willingly.*
4. **MY FEELINGS ARE TENDER;** *please be sensitive to my needs. Treat me as you would like to be treated.*
5. **I AM A SPECIAL GIFT FROM GOD;** *please treasure me as God intended you to do, holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to live by and disciplining me in a loving manner.*
6. **I NEED YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT TO GROW.** *Remember, you can criticize the things I do without criticizing me.*
7. **PLEASE GIVE ME THE FREEDOM TO MAKE DECISIONS CONCERNING MYSELF.** *Permit me to fail so I can learn from my mistakes. Then, someday I will be prepared to make the decisions life requires of me.*
8. **PLEASE DO NOT DO THINGS OVER FOR ME.** *Somehow that makes me feel that my efforts did not quite measure up. I know it is hard, but please do not compare me with my brother or my sister.*
9. **PLEASE DO NOT BE AFRAID TO LEAVE FOR A WEEKEND TOGETHER.** *Kids need vacations from parents, just as parents need vacations from kids.*
10. **PLEASE TAKE ME TO MY CHURCH REGULARLY;** *setting a good example.*

adapted from Dr. Kevin Leman