

# About Child Dedication at VBC

## What is a Child Dedication?

Child dedication is a public commitment that parents make before God, church, and family. Parents are committing to love and follow God, to teach their child about the Lord, and to guide them toward salvation.

The dedication service provides the opportunity for parents to express their strong desire to lead and nurture their child's spiritual development. In response, the church congregation expresses their desire to support the family, to pray for the child, and to seek their eventual coming to Christ in faith.

## Why does VBC have Child Dedication Services?

We provide an opportunity for parents to dedicate their children to the Lord, because:

1. Dedication is modeled in both the Old and New Testaments
  - a. Hannah dedicated Samuel (1 Samuel 1:20, 24-28; 3:19)
  - b. Joseph and Mary dedicated Jesus as a baby (Luke 2:22b, 33, 40)
2. Children are a gift from God who ultimately belong to him. Parents are called to be stewards of their children's souls and faith (Psalm 127:3)
3. Jesus encouraged his disciples to bring the children to Him (Mark 10:13-16)
4. Parents are called to model for their children how to love God with all their hearts, soul, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)
5. Members of the church are to teach the younger by words, example and prayer (Titus 2)

## Does VBC baptize infants?

VBC does not baptize infants.

Valley Bible Church believes that baptism is an expression of a faith-filled decision to turn to Christ for the forgiveness of sins and follow Him as Lord. Infants and young children aren't ready to make or articulate this decision; therefore, baptism is not a part of our Child Dedication Service.

During our Child Dedication Service, children are introduced to the church congregation by name and parents make a public commitment to raise their child in the ways of the Lord. This introduction and parental promise cannot make a child right before God; right standing before God can only come through a personal, faith-filled decision to trust Christ for salvation.

In Child Dedication, the parents and church community look forward in hope and prayer to the day the child will come to personal faith in Jesus unto salvation.

## What are the requirements to participate?

To participate in a Child Dedication Service, Valley Bible Church asks that parents:

1. Have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
2. Attend VBC regularly
3. Agree with VBC's statement of faith
4. Attend a brief Child Dedication Class

## **What commitments are made during child dedication?**

### **Parent's Promises**

Do you promise to do all in your power to love your children and to nurture them in the love and fear of the Lord? (We do)

Do you dedicate your children to the Lord who gave them to you, surrendering all worldly claims upon their lives, in the hope that they will belong wholly to Jesus Christ? (We do)

With God's fatherly help, do you intend to bring them up in the wisdom and instruction of the Lord? (We do)

Will you make it your regular prayer that by God's grace your children will come in time to trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins unto eternal life, to follow him as Lord, and to walk in his love? (We do)

### **Congregation's Promises**

Congregation, you are the first representatives of the body of Christ these children will ever know. Do you promise to do all that God calls you to do on their behalf; to bear witness to God's love to them and to pray for and minister to this family in keeping with your duty to love them as Christ loved us? (We do)

### **Do I need to be a member of VBC?**

No, you do not need to be a member of Valley Bible Church to have your child dedicated. However, we encourage parents to make sure they consider VBC their home church and that they agree with the beliefs and vision of the church. In the Child Dedication Service, the church congregation is also committing to come alongside parents in the raising of your child in the Lord. Attending the *VBC Membership* class is a great way to learn more about our beliefs and vision.

### **Can a single parent participate?**

Yes! Our Child Dedication Service gives parents (including single parents) the opportunity to publicly commit to raise their child in the ways of the Lord, and to receive the community's commitment in return. A parent's ability to do this is not dependent on the beliefs of the other parent. We encourage single parents to discuss the child's dedication with the other parent. Ideally both parents would commit to raising their child in the Lord; however, we recognize that that is not always possible. It takes extra effort to raise a child as a single parent and VBC is committed to supporting single parents in those efforts.

### **At what age are children typically dedicated?**

Typically, parents dedicate infants and young children (2 and under). However, please speak with us if you are interested in dedicating an older child.

### **Is Child Dedication required by God?**

Not at all. Though Child Dedications are modeled for us in both the Old and New Testaments, God does not command a child to be dedicated to Him. It is simply an option for those who wish to participate.