



*Family
Dedication*

Family Dedication

Family Dedication is a time when parents publicly express their commitment to raise their child in a home that honors Christ. Maryland Community Church believes children are a gift from God, and we are very excited that you are investigating family dedication.

Family dedication is a public commitment you make before God, your church, and your family. The dedication service provides you, the parent(s), an opportunity to express publicly your desire to lead and spiritually nurture your child in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, so your child will develop a desire to love God and love others.

It is, of course, the hope of the parents, as well as their church family, that by providing this home environment the child will someday come to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Dedication focuses on the parents' commitment to raising the child in a home that honors Christ. By living out your faith in Christ, the likelihood of your child making their own personal commitment to Christ is greatly increased.

Listed below are frequently asked questions about family dedication. Take time to review them to find answers to any questions you may have.

COMMON QUESTIONS:

WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL PURPOSE AND HISTORY OF DEDICATION?

The scriptural root of a child dedication is found in 1 Samuel 1:27–28 (NASB), where a godly woman named Hannah prayed year after year for God to give her a child. He answered her prayer and she gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel. When Samuel was born, Hannah prayed these words:

"For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord."

In Luke chapter 2 of the New Testament, following the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph took the infant Jesus to the temple and dedicated Him. In both Scripture passages, the parents entrusted their child completely to God.

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To have your child dedicated at MCC:

- We ask parents to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- We ask parents to be sure their beliefs line up with MCC's statements of belief.
- We ask parents to be regular attenders of MCC weekend services.
- We ask parents who are living together and are not married to take steps to acknowledge and surrender to God's plan for their relationship before participating in a family dedication service.

The writings of Moses found in Deuteronomy 6:5–9 describe God's plan for how a parent should raise up a child:

"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. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates."

One key step in marking your desire to nurture your child in the ways of God is to dedicate him or her to God publicly, through a family dedication ceremony.

DOES DEDICATION ENSURE SALVATION?

Dedication does not ensure salvation; it is a time for parents to publicly demonstrate their faith and intention to raise their child in a home that loves God. Dedication is not the same as baptism. Salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. As the Apostle Paul says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB)

DO I NEED TO BE A MARYLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH MEMBER TO HAVE MY CHILD DEDICATED AT MCC?

You do not need to be a member of Maryland Community Church to have your child dedicated at MCC. We do encourage parents to make sure they are calling MCC their home church. Why? In dedicating your child to God, you are stating that you are willing to partner with God and the church to raise your child in cooperation with God's intentions. To partner with any church, a parent would be wise to decide if he or she agrees with its beliefs and vision, so they can be all-in in their partnership with the church.

When you choose to become a member at MCC, you are stating that you agree with MCC's beliefs and values, and that you want MCC to be your home church. For more information on membership, visit the [membership page](#).

WHAT CAN I EXPECT DURING A FAMILY DEDICATION CEREMONY?

During the dedication service, parents express vows before God, their family, and the church, declaring their desire to raise their child in a God-honoring way. Because parents are the key role models for their children, they play a primary role in the dedication service.

Parents will be asked to affirm the following commitments:

- 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 home in which your child can mature? • Do you commit to be parents of personal faith, recognizing your children are more likely to follow God's path by the model they first observe in you?
- Do you commit to lead a faith-filled home that honors God in all your relationships and in the choices you make in spiritually growing your family?
- Do you commit to be parents with patience, recognizing that with your inherent strengths and weaknesses, your desire to shape your child is a loving act that will require time, prayer, and God in order to produce in your children what He and you hope for?

***NOTE:** If you have registered to participate in a family dedication service, you will receive an email approximately two weeks before the date of the service with information regarding what to expect, including the service order and times.*

DOES MCC BAPTIZE INFANTS?

Scripture provides evidence that baptism follows an individual's decision to trust Christ alone for salvation (Acts 2:41, 8:12, and 10:47–48). MCC does not baptize infants while they are not able to make a personal decision to trust Christ.

Rather than baptizing infants, MCC encourages Christian parents to dedicate their infants in a Family Dedication ceremony. This is a ceremony in which parents formally call upon God's blessing for their child and publicly commit to raise him or her in accordance with Scripture. Once the child has grown in maturity and ability to understand what salvation means, then MCC encourages the child to take their next step of baptism.

DOES MCC BAPTIZE CHILDREN?

Yes, MCC believes baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation, once they have the maturity and ability to understand what that means. Dedication is not a sacrament; nor does it impart grace or salvation to a child. Salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ as each person recognizes their sinfulness and receives forgiveness and eternal life through Christ and His work on the cross.

Once a child has grown in maturity and ability to understand what salvation means, they can begin the process of taking a step in their faith through baptism. The process includes sitting down with the child, a parent, the Ministry Director and/or the Children's Pastor. During the meeting the group walks through a salvation guide that the parent(s) and child complete at home with guided help from a pastor or elder. After completion of the guide and discernment of the child understanding their next step, the family schedules the baptism.

AT WHAT AGE CAN A CHILD TAKE PART IN A DEDICATION SERVICE?

While MCC does not have a set age requirement for family dedication, the average age for a child to be dedicated is four to eight months old, although parents may dedicate children much older than that, often for the following reasons:

- The parent(s) are new believers in Christ and their children were not dedicated as infants.
- The parent(s) are having a younger child dedicated and want to have their older child dedicated at the same time.

CAN A SINGLE PARENT PARTICIPATE IN A FAMILY DEDICATION SERVICE?

Yes! Child dedication signifies the commitment of parents (including single parents) to do their best to raise their child to be a follower of Christ. Additionally, we highly encourage single parents to dedicate their child as they commit themselves to raise him or her without the presence or partnership of a spouse. The decision to dedicate a child is not dependent upon the beliefs of the ex-spouse; however we encourage single parents to discuss family dedication with their ex-spouse. Ideally, both parents—even if not married—would still commit to the dedication of their child to God. We acknowledge that this is often not possible, and that it takes extra effort for a single parent to raise a child. As a church, MCC is committed to supporting single parents in providing a Christian foundation for their child's upbringing.

For more information about family dedication at MCC, please contact Jason McLeod, Children's Pastor, or call the office at (812) 234-7100.