

# From our Churches

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## **Welcoming the Child into the Faith Community: A Service of Consecration**

### **Visual Items:** (placed on communion table)

A silk rosebud

Banner that symbolizes congregational life

Consecration Blanket

Faith chest (certificate, rosebud, copy of this bulletin, group picture, tape of service, Bible storybook, tape or CD of hymns of the church)

**Hymn :** 89 (HWB) *For the beauty of the earth*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Mark 10:13-16

### **Minister:**

Today is a special day in the life of this congregation as we celebrate the gift of a new life that has joined our community of faith. Each new life is a miracle, a unique expression of the handiwork of our loving Creator. In this service of consecration of baby \_\_\_\_\_ and her/his parent(s), we offer our praise and thanksgiving to God, acknowledging the relationship that already exists with this new life and the One who loves us from the very beginning, and who has called us by name into a lifelong relationship. Today, in hope and trust, we receive a new life, precious in God's eyes and given the name, \_\_\_\_\_.

I invite the parent(s) and siblings of this child to come forward as an act of dedication to God.

### **Parent(s):**

As Christian parents we present our child, \_\_\_\_\_, to God in the presence of our faith community here at \_\_\_\_\_. Today we dedicate our child back to God recognizing that she/he does not belong to us along, she/he also belongs to God. We believe that the home is the primary setting for faith to unfold and grow in our daughter/son, and we commit ourselves to nurture her/him in the values and spirit of Christian love, faith and service. We welcome the support of our families, friends and this congregation as together we raise our child(ren), whom has entrusted to our love and protection.

**Minister:**

I invite extended family, close friends, faith sponsors or godparents, to surround the family to indicate your willingness to participate in this family's faith nurture.

**Extended Family, etc:**

We know that we have a special relationship with \_\_\_\_\_(parents) and this child, \_\_\_\_\_ (name additional children, too). We want to share responsibility for her/his nurture and care. We are prepared to support this family with our love, encouragement and prayers, and we are willing to assist them in the nurture of this new member, \_\_\_\_\_. We promise to enfold them all with Christian love and acceptance.

**Minister:**

To show your support and responsibility in the care of this child and her/his family, would the congregation please stand.

**Congregation:**

As members of your congregation, we are the faith community into which \_\_\_\_\_ has been born. Your children are our children and we share in your joy of this new life and your willingness to dedicate her/him to the strong and tender providence of God. We commit ourselves to provide a hospitable environment in which \_\_\_\_\_ can grow and flourish. We promise to support you in passing on the Christian faith to your child(ren) through our prayers, encouragement, worship and education ministries, pastoral care, and by providing unconditional love and acceptance. We pray that our shared life and witness will nurture \_\_\_\_\_ to continue to respond to the grace and love of God as revealed in Jesus. With open arms, we welcome and receive this new life, the smallest and most vulnerable gift that new belongs here with us.

**Prayer (unison):**

Gracious God:  
like a father who nurtures his children  
you have cared for us:  
like a mother you have called us by name  
and claimed us as your own;  
you have loved us into being,  
placed us in human families,  
and blessed us on our journey.  
By the presence of your Spirit  
consecrate this child and parent(s)  
for their journey together through life,  
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

(taken from *Minister's Manual*, p.124)

**Minister:**

*(invites extended family to lay hands on the parents and child(ren) as she/he offers his blessing):*

May the God of love who has entrusted you with this child, grant you abundant love in raising her/him. May God give you a life of faithfulness to the gospel before your children so that they, too, will know the ways of God.

**Minister:**

*(wraps child in the blanket, offering this blessing as she/he lays hands on the child's head)*

\_\_\_\_\_, may God, your loving Friend, bless you and keep you; May the very face of God shine upon you; and he gracious to you. May God 's presence embrace you and give you peace. Amen.

**Hymn:** 620 (HWB) *Child of blessing, child of promise*

*(during the song the minister walks amidst the congregation with the child, giving people permission to touch and bless.)*

**Minister:**

As a symbol of the congregation's partnership with this family in nurturing her/his relationship with God, we present you with this "Faith Chest" In this chest are some items for the journey of faith that is beginning now in this community. These are reminders that this child, that came from God, belongs to God and has been entrusted to *our* care.

**Blessing (unison):**

\_\_\_\_\_, may the love of God, the gracious Spirit of Christ, and the fellowship of God's people bless your life. Amen.