

Parent – Child Dedication

Introduction:

Children are an incredible gift from God. To thank God for the gift of life Hannah and Elkanah took Samuel to the temple to dedicate him to God (I Samuel 24). Eli took care of Samuel and urged him to listen to God's voice. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to thank God for him (Luke 2:22-39). Anna and Simeon praised God for Jesus and saw glimpses of the fullness of God's salvation for the world. They were filled with joy and hope.

This morning these parents are bringing their children to worship. They come to dedicate themselves and their child to God, and to commit themselves to raising their child in the way of faith and faithful living. They come to thank God for a gift, and to ask God to give the gifts of faith to their child.

Invite the parents to come forward, while we sing – Jesus Loves the Little Children

To the congregation:

When parents bring their children for dedication, the church is being asked to do three things: to praise God in celebration of a birth, to assist the parents with prayer, support and counsel in their task of raising a child; and to welcome a child into the larger community of God's children, just as Jesus welcomed and blessed children.

Are you ready to praise God, and welcome these children? Will you, along with these parents, dedicate yourselves to the care and nurture of these little ones? Will you affirm these parents, and pledge your support in their role as Christian parents? If so, then answer in unison, "we will".

People: We will.

To the parents:

The birth of a child is a reminder to us, a sign of hope, that God is still at work in the world, taking care of things, creating newness, wonder, beauty and life.

In bringing your child here today, you are engaging in an act of worship – a recognition that ultimately, children are not our possession; they belong to God and are given to us as a

trust. We want to stand with you in this act of worship, and support you in the commitment you make.

It is your task as Christian parents to see that your child is instructed in the teachings of God's Word, the Bible, and the principles of faith. In every way, by word and deed, you are to lead your child to know the love of God and to have faith in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor to parents:

Will you accept your child as a gift from God? Will you commit yourselves to raising your child in an atmosphere of Christian love and nurture? Will you seek God's wisdom, patience, and playful spirit for your journey as parents? Will you dedicate yourselves and your child to the care and direction of God? If so, then answer in unison, "I will".

Parents: I will.

Naming and parental word:

Minister: What is the name of this child?

Parent: *(state full name of child)*

**We praise God for
This day is important to us...**

Minister: *(holding child)*

_____, child of God:

It is good to hold you and welcome you into our midst.

We give thanks for your birth, your life, and all that you may become.

We pray that God will grant you strength to meet the challenges and joys of living, and will provide for all that you need to grow in life and faith.

We pray that the God who created you,
who sent his Son to redeem you,
and his Spirit to dwell in you,
may watch over you, enabling you to seek, to find and to know him.

May God bless you and keep you. Amen.

Prayer:

God of our mothers and fathers,
we thank you for the gift of children,
and for the privilege of molding and guiding them as they grow.

We pray for these parents -

May you give them delight, strength, patience and the gift of humor.
May they be open to learning about your amazing love
as they care for these children and see signs
of your divine gift in everyday ways.

We pray for these children -

That may they learn to know and serve you Lord Jesus,
and to live their lives guided by your love
and experiencing your joy.

We pray for the brothers and sisters -

Grant them joy in family life,
and a new awareness that their parents and the church
also promised to teach them about Jesus.

We pray for the extended families, for all of us who are gathered here, and for the many not
present, but who will have a part in the lives of these children.

May we learn the awesome task of supporting each one of these children
as they grow in faith and life.

Help us to know when to lift them up and when to let them fall,
when to hold them tightly
and when to let them go.

As we pledge ourselves to care for these children,
and to support their parents.

We also pledge ourselves to care for our world,

so that peace and justice, mercy and hope
may come to pass for all God's children.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Responses:

Extended family/close friends to parents:

To stand and read in unison

We praise God for you and your child(ren).

We commit ourselves to love, support, and encourage you
in your task of Christian parenting.

Congregation to parents:

Hymnal Worship Book 791 – stand and read in unison

Gifts

This box is a faith chest. A box to collect important memories related to faith. It is also a box to be filled with resources to help children to grow in faith. It is the task of the church and extended family and friends to help to fill the faith chest for each child with resources and experiences. Now, as a congregation we want to encourage each household to choose your own boxes, and we will give you some things to put in your "faith-chests".

As a reminder of this day and the promises we have made to God and to each other, _____
on behalf of the Board of Deacons, will present you with a certificate.

In order to help you in your task of passing on the faith, we will give each child a music CD to be used when going to sleep or just having a quiet time. This will help each child learn the hymns that speak of our faith in God. Hopefully those hymns and prayers will be strength to draw form in the years ahead. This presentation will take place while we sing
Hymnal Worship Book 514 – In the Bulb there is a Flower.

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