

Baby (Child) Dedications and Blessings

At the Church of God Chapel we celebrate the birth of a child, and join with families in welcoming every new child into this world, believing that as Scripture teaches, "Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward (Psalm 127:3)." One of the ways in which we recognize the gift of children is in a special service where the child is presented by parents in a ceremony, which takes either of two forms: a Baby Blessing or a Baby Dedication. (This may include children as well as infants.)

Q. What is the difference between a Baby Dedication and a Baby Blessing?

A. The main difference has to do with the parents, rather than the children. Even though in both ceremonies, the infants (children) are blessed, only parents who are practicing, born-again Christians are asked to dedicate their children to the Lord, and commit themselves to certain disciplines in order to raise their children so that they will follow in the faith of their parents. The **Q** and **A** below will give a fuller understanding of the similarities and differences.

Q. What do Baby Dedication and Baby Blessing ceremonies have in common?

A. There are several things these ceremonies have in common.

(1) In both ceremonies parents are asked to prepare a written blessing for their child, which they read during the ceremony.

(2) Secondly, in both ceremonies, the pastor will anoint the child and pray a blessing over him/her.

(3) God-parents and other family members may stand with the parents at the front while the ceremony is conducted.

(4) A written certificate is presented to the parents, indicating that the child has been blessed and/or dedicated to the Lord.

Baby Dedication

Q: What is a baby dedication?

A: The word "dedication" means "to consecrate" or the act of setting apart people or things to serve God. In the Old Testament, we see how Hannah prayed for a child and promised God that the child, Samuel, would be given to the Lord all the days of his life (1 Samuel 1:11, 28). In the New Testament, we see how Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to "present" Him to the Lord (Luke 2:22).

These parents took this act very seriously and were making a commitment in presenting their children to the Lord. Bringing a child before the Lord is not a secret formula for keeping them from ever experiencing harm or pain. Rather, it is a commitment that the parents make to do their part in raising their child before the Lord. Just as the Nazarite children in the Bible had set boundaries and lived their lives set apart to God from birth (Judges 13:5), parents today, through baby dedication, commit to a lifestyle of raising their children separated from the world and its values.

Q: What kind of commitment am I making?

A: As parents, you begin by publicly acknowledging your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As you present your child to God in the presence of the pastor and congregation, you are recognizing that he or she belongs to God and has been born to experience His love and to serve Him.

You are committing, as Christian parents, to teach the truths of God's Word in your home and participate in regular worship with your children. You are also committing to be a Christ-like example and seek to lead your children to a personal faith in Christ as soon as they are ready.

Q: Are there any requirements?

A: Yes, the parent(s) must be a committed Christian(s) and be actively involved in the life of the church through regular attendance.

Q: When & where are baby dedications held?

A: Baby dedications are generally held on the fourth Sunday of the month during the morning worship service in the sanctuary. There are a few exceptions contingent upon the COGC-GT church calendar.

Q: How do I schedule my baby's dedication?

A: All parents interested in scheduling a baby dedication may begin by completing an application form. Once your application has been received one of the Pastors will contact you to schedule the first parent meeting.

Q: If I am a single parent, may I still have my baby dedicated?

A: Absolutely! A parent's marital status has no bearing on the baby being dedicated. However, as mentioned above the parent must be a committed Christian.

Q: Being a new Christian, I am a little nervous about all of this.

A: Baby dedications are a joyous occasion. If you are a new Christian, we are delighted to be a part of this important step in your newly found walk with Jesus. Our intent is to come alongside of you and help ensure that the baby dedication is an easy going process. We pray that your child's dedication is significant and rewarding to you and your family.

Baby Blessings

Q: What is a baby blessing?

A: A Baby blessing is the act of parents presenting children to the Lord in order to receive His blessing on them. It is an act of thanksgiving and recognition that God is not only the author of life, but his blessing is supremely important for a successful life both now and eternally. The most clear example in the Bible is found in the Gospels, where parents brought their children to Jesus that he might touch them. Mark 10:13-16 reads as follows:

¹³ **And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them,** and the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁵ Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." ¹⁶ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

We recognize that salvation only comes to a child through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, the prayer of blessing by the pastor does not pass on salvation to a child through baby blessing.

Q: When & where are baby blessings held?

A: Baby blessings are generally held on the fourth Sunday of the month following the morning worship service in the sanctuary. There are a few exceptions contingent upon the COGC-GT church calendar.

Q: How do I schedule my baby's blessing?

A: All parents interested in scheduling a baby blessing may begin by completing the application form. Once your application has been received one of the Pastors will contact you to schedule the first parent meeting.

Q: Do I need to be a member of your church to have my baby blessed?

A: Parents do not need to be members of Church of God Chapel - GT for their child to be blessed. It is our privilege to bless children and their families. We encourage parents to live their lives in such a way that will bring glory to God.

Q: If I am a single parent, may I still have my baby blessed?

A: Absolutely! A parent's marital status has no bearing on the baby being blessed.

Q: Since I've not done this before, I am a little nervous about all of this.

A: Baby blessings are a joyous occasion. Even if you are not yet a committed Christian, we are delighted to be a part of this important step in your life as a parent. Our intent is to come alongside of you and help ensure that the baby blessing is an easy going process. We pray that your child's blessing is significant and rewarding to you and your family.

Application for Baby (Child) Dedication/ Blessing

Name of Infant/Child: _____

Male Female Infant/Child's Date of Birth: _____

Name of Hospital: _____

Mother's Name: _____

Father's Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Mother's Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

Father's Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

Maternal Grand Parents: _____

Paternal Grand Parents: _____

Godmother: _____

Godfather: _____

Request date of Ceremony: _____

Special requests:

Song: Song context to be appropriate of our worship service (mp3 format) _____

Photo: Please provide a portrait style photo (head and shoulder, upper body, png or jpg)

* Please ensure the above special requests are submitted in their proper format one week prior to the scheduled ceremony.

Signature of parent(s)

Date

For Office Use

Approved Date of Ceremony: _____

Parent Sessions Facilitated by: _____ Number of Sessions completed _____

Blessing requirements reviewed with parents _____ Yes _____ No

Blessing to be ready by: _____

Blessing received and approved _____ Yes _____ No

Photo of child received and approved _____ Yes _____ No

Additional Notes: _____

