



17645 W. Bernardo Drive . San Diego, CA . 92127

Why We Do Child Dedications

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Dear Parent(s),

We are excited about your desire to dedicate your child/children!

At LifeBridge, we dedicate children to God without baptizing them. We believe that baptism should be done after someone has made a decision to follow Jesus. We respect the practice of other churches who choose to dedicate children through baptism. We understand that this doesn't make us right or them wrong. We just differ in how we lead parents to dedicate themselves and their children to the Lord.

Dedicating children to God has a long history in the Bible. We first see it in the book of Genesis with Abraham. God told Abraham to set his children apart by circumcising the male children.

"Your part of the agreement," God told Abraham, "is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised; the flesh of his foreskin must be cut off. This will be a sign that you and they have accepted this covenant. Genesis 17:9-11

The act of circumcision was very symbolic because in cutting away the flesh, it implied that God followers are willing to die to their own desires and to wholly dedicate themselves to God's desires. It set them apart for God both physically and spiritually. (The word "holy" means "set apart for God").

There's another Bible story that points to the idea of dedication. There was a woman by the name of Hannah who longed to have a child. She was so desperate that she made a deal with God. This is what the Bible says...

In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, ...1 Samuel 1:10, 11

Hannah was offering to turn her son over to the priest to raise him in the Temple. Well, God answered her prayer and gave her a son, by the name of Samuel. And so, as promised, Hannah dedicated her son to serve God in the temple.

When the child was weaned, Hannah took him to the Tabernacle in Shiloh. They brought along a three-year-old bull for the sacrifice and half a bushel of flour and some wine ... I asked the LORD to give me this child, and he has given me my request. Now I am giving him to the LORD, and he will belong to the LORD his whole life." And they worshiped the LORD there. 1 Samuel 1:24-28

Now, there are a couple things here that you as parents can be grateful about. First, you can be thankful that you don't have to bring a live bull, a large quantity of flour, and wine. And then, you can be really glad that you don't have to leave your child with us! We really don't know what we would do if we had to bring home a herd of bulls and a bunch of babies! 😊

We can see throughout the Bible that God calls us, not only to *follow him* but to raise our children in the knowledge of the LORD. And so when you bring your youngster(s) to be dedicated, you are following a long line of Godly parents who have dedicated their children to the LORD. People have been dedicating their children for over 4000 years. It's a pretty amazing thing when you think about it!

Years ago Moses gave this charge to the Israelites (and us):

"These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe ..., so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you ..., just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 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 doorframes of your houses and on your gates.**" – Deut 6:1-9*

If all this makes sense to you and you have no questions, then all you have to do is to show up on Sunday morning and wait to be called up during the service. You will be asked to stand up front, along with other couples and their infants, and simply wait to be prayed for publicly. The good news is that you won't have to say anything. After we have prayed for you and your child, we'll hand you your dedication certificate and a small gift from the church. Afterwards, you will be released to bring your infant to the nursery or children's ministry and then join us for the rest of the service.

If you have any questions, please call us at 858-487-7676 or e-mail us at info@lifebridgesd.org. We are looking forward to sharing this important moment in the life of your family!