

III. CHILD DEDICATION FORM A

After the singing of a suitable hymn, the minister shall take his place at the altar and shall call to take their places before the altar the parents, or guardians, of the child/children to be dedicated to the Lord. These shall take their places, with the child/children, after which the minister shall say:

Dearly Beloved, inasmuch as Christ, our Savior, saith, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God"; and as the holy apostle St. Peter declares that, "The promise is unto you and to your children," therefore this child has been brought to be consecrated to God and to His service.

I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous mercy He will grant that this child may early become a partaker of the divine nature and grow up into Christ our living Head in all things, and come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto perfect spiritual manhood, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and may God grant unto you the needed grace that you may properly discharge all the duties you owe to this child which God has given you.

Charge to the Parents/Guardians

The minister shall say to the parents, or guardians, of the child which is brought for dedication:

You have brought this child whom God has given you to be dedicated to God and to His service. By this act you therefore signify your faith in the Christian religion, and also your desire that he/she shall receive the benefits of consecration to God, and of the prayers of the church and congregation, and may early learn to know and follow the will of God; and thus doing may live and die a Christian, attaining in the end of this earthly life to everlasting life in the kingdom of God.

In order that this may be accomplished, it will be your duty as parents (or guardians) to early teach this child the fear of the Lord; to watch over his/her education, that he/she may not be led astray by false teachings or doctrines, to direct his/her mind to the Holy Scriptures as expressing the will and authority of God for all mankind, also to direct his/her feet to the sanctuary; to restrain him/her from evil associates and habits; and, as much as in you lies, to "bring him/her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Question: Will you endeavor to do so, by the help of God?

ANSWER: I will.

Charge To the Congregation

You have heard the charge given to these parents. Do you, as members of this congregation of Christ, acknowledge and accept your responsibility to do all within your power to aid and assist these parents in keeping the solemn vows that they have taken upon themselves and also to provide all necessary support for this child that he/she may early come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and grow up in Him? If so, will you say, "We will?"

ANSWER: We will.

Hear now the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, recorded in Mark 10:13-16: "Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly dis-pleased and said to them, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.' And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them."

Then shall the minister ask the name of the child, and placing his right hand upon the child's head, shall say:
_____ [Child's full name] I dedicate you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

Prayer

O God, Our Heavenly Father, grant that as this child grows in stature, he/she may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and being Your faithful child, strengthened and renewed by Your sanctifying grace, may serve You through all the days of his/her life. Amen.

Almighty God, source of all love, wisdom, and power, so guide and uphold these parents that they, by loving care, wise advice, and holy example, may lead this child into the life of faith whose strength is righteousness, and whose fruit is everlasting joy and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The minister shall then offer the Lord's Prayer or some other appropriate or extemporaneous prayer.

FORM B

Introducing the Ceremony

It is exciting when a new child enters a family. There is no greater moment than when parents sense that children are a gift from God. In these joyful moments, ministers have the privilege to share with the parents as they express their appreciation to God by dedicating their child/baby to God. That special event is what we celebrate today.

Dedicating a child acknowledges God's sovereignty not only over the child, but also over Mom and Dad. Parents present their child before God and His people asking for grace and wisdom in carrying out their responsibilities. Parents also come praying that their child might one day trust Jesus Christ as Savior for the forgiveness of sin and become a devoted disciple of Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 reads, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

This scripture commands parents to love God; if they truly wish for their child to one day love and follow God, their lives must be an example.

Deuteronomy 6 also makes it clear that the duty of teaching children belongs to parents. Church, Sunday school, and Christian schools can provide excellent Christian training, but parents must seize the teachable moments that arise throughout life. Parents are best suited to teach prayer and devotion to God by training and example and to teach the child to really love God and people. They also teach the mundane but necessary disciplines of life.

I now invite [father], [mother], [grandparents], and [children] to bring [child's name] for this special time of dedication.

Conducting the Ceremony

I would like [father], [mother], [grandparents], and [children] to stand to my/our right.

Minister should pray with the child's father closest to him; any other family may stand to the minister's left. Mother will hold baby and give to father for the vow of dedication who will give baby to minister for the dedication prayer —recognize everyone at the front of the church and their supportive role.

[If grandparents stand with the parents:]

"Standing here are three generations. Seeing this brings to mind Proverbs 17:6 which tells us that "Grandchildren are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of children."

I know the grandparents are very proud of their grand-child/grandchildren and are proud of [father] and [mother] for many reasons and certainly for their determination to dedicate their children to God. Mom and dad, we trust that the step of faith you're taking to-day will one day make [child's name] proud of your actions.

Psalm 127:3 proclaims that God in His goodness gives children as gifts to parents and with that comes the awesome responsibility of caring for this gift. Thus, it is only proper and appropriate that children be dedicated back to God. Hannah presented her son Samuel to the Lord. Mary and Joseph brought their baby Jesus to the temple in order to present him to the Lord. In the same way, [parents] today bring their child presenting first themselves and then [child's name] to our Heavenly Father.
[If siblings stand with the parents:]

Accompanying them in making this commitment is/are [sibling(s)].

Add any appropriate comments about being older siblings and teaching baby to love God and to obey parents.
[Father] and [mother], God's commands that I read in Deuteronomy said: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

God's instructions to you are plain. Love God with every ounce and fiber of your energy and teach [child's name] to do the same. As you love God, each other, [other children] and your neighbor as yourself you will model before [child's name] a wonderful love that he/she will want for him/herself.

God's instructions to fathers are plain. Ephesians 6:4 says: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

[Father] and [mother] by coming forward before God and his people, do you hereby declare your desire to dedicate yourselves and your son/daughter [child's name] to the Lord? If so, please respond by saying, "We do."

ANSWER: We do.

Having come freely, I ask now that you enter into the following commitment in the presence of God and his people. [Mother's name] would you please give [child's name] to [father] as a sign of his spiritual headship in the family. So that [child's name] may walk in the abundant life that Christ offers, do you as parents vow by God's help and in partnership with the church, to provide [child's name] a Christian home of love and peace, to raise him/her in the truth of our Lord's instruction and discipline, and to encourage her to one day trust Jesus Christ as her Savior and Lord? If so, please respond by saying, "We do."

ANSWER: We do.

The minister shall take the child and ask for the baby's full name.

_____ [child's full name], I dedicate you to God in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The minister may hand the child back to the parents.

Prayer of Dedication

The minister may pray an appropriate prayer of dedication.

Modeling this kind of love cannot be done alone. It requires the help of others. For this reason, [father] and [mother] call upon the help of all of their family and friends and the church.

I ask all of you to join in this commitment as well. Parents have the first responsibility. But parents need the help and support of family, friends, and church—we are stronger when we work together for the common goal. So I direct my question now to all of you.

Would you please stand? I ask now that you make the following commitment to this family: So that [child's name] may walk in the abundant life that Christ offers, do you pledge by God's help, to be faithful in your calling as family, friends, and as members of the body of Christ, to support [father] and [mother] in their Christian commitment to [child's name] so that he/she will one day trust him as Savior and Lord? If you accept this responsibility, please respond by say-ing, "We do."

ANSWER: We do.

If desired, an appropriate song may be sung.