



child

DEDICATION



Energizing the next generation to
love God, love others & make disciples.

Hey parents!

Parenting is one of the greatest privileges, and one of the most awesome responsibilities. Whether you are fostering, adopting, or having your own biological child Oakwood Church would like to congratulate and partner with you in shaping the eternal destiny of your children.

One way we are seeking to do this is by intentionally creating family experiences that we call Waypoints. Waypoints are specifically designed to energize and equip you and your family to love God, love others and make disciples.

According to dictionary.com a legacy is “anything handed down...” So, in the general sense we are all handing down a legacy to our children. I pray that you are leaving a legacy you would be proud of for generations to come. We hope that you and your family will choose to intentionally leave a SPIRITUAL LEGACY built on Jesus’ finished work on the cross and the disciplinemaking priorities that He taught, lived, and handed down.

We hope that you will simply take the next step and read through this short journal about child dedication, and then prayerfully consider taking other “next steps” along your parenting journey.

If you have any questions along the way, please don't hesitate to call, email or set up a time to talk with me.

Be the light,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nate". The letters are fluid and connected, with a large, sweeping 'N' and a cursive 'ate'.

Nate Stenholtz, Family Life Pastor
nate@oakwoodnow.org | (262) 367-1212

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parenting is disciplemaking!

God teaches us through scripture that parents are to impress, or pass on, their faith to their children. In dedicating their child to the Lord, parents are stating that they are willing to lead by example, and provide the kind of home environment that will energize their child to love God, love others and make disciples. Accomplishing this is a challenge that will require God-dependent parenting.

Leading by example will demand:

- taking the next step to partner with the church;
- taking the next step in order to demonstrate a love for God;
- taking the next step in order to tangibly love others;
- taking the next step in learning how to parent intentionally, with dependence on God;
- parent(s) taking the next step in widening the circle of those who influence their child.

That will not happen automatically! If we do not plan, and hold one another accountable to this plan, our children will not be taught, as God desires.

Thankfully, our guide for living out God-dependent parenting is the Bible.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

“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 on 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.”

What these verses are telling us is that as we go about life—when we sit in our house, or when we take a walk, or when we lie down to rest, or when we get up—we are to teach our children the truths of God.

Proverbs 22:6

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

This verse declares it is the duty of the parents to create a taste or desire for the things of God in a child, in accordance to him, to his peculiarities, his interest, his individuality, his ability, and his age level. Then, when the child becomes mature, he will not depart from his spiritual training.

what exactly is child dedication?

God has given parents the most influence in the lives of their children, and dedicating your child is a way to commit to modeling what it means to follow Jesus. This doesn't mean that you're going to be perfect—no one is—but it does mean that you're going to give them opportunities to explore who Jesus is. So child dedication is really more about your role as parents, than it is your children. Dedicating your child is a way to commit, in front of God and your church family, to modeling and teaching your kids what it means to follow Jesus.

what's the difference between dedicating and baptizing your child?

Some families come from traditions where infant baptism is part of their heritage, while others do not. There is a long tradition in some Christian denominations of baptizing infants. This practice comes from the belief that baptism replaced circumcision as the mark of the covenant between God and his people. In the Old Testament, boys were circumcised to picture the covenant God had made. In the New Testament, baptism was the sign of the new covenant God had made through the death of Jesus.

Other traditions within the Christian faith have chosen to dedicate infants for concern that an infant baptism may be confused with a believer's baptism (where an individual publicly acknowledges his/her decision to follow Jesus).

Regardless of whether a child is baptized or dedicated, they will still have to personally choose to follow Jesus when they are older. Neither infant baptism, nor dedication affect a child's salvation; rather it is a commitment that parents make to God, declaring that they will do their best to raise their child to love and follow Him.

Again, our guide for living out God-dependent parenting is the Bible. We believe that the Bible does not instruct us to baptize infants. Here are some scriptural examples of child dedication.

- Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:27, 28).
- Jesus was dedicated to the Lord as a baby (Luke 2:22) and baptized as an adult (Matthew 3:13-17).
- In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed his followers to go and make disciples and then baptize the new believers. (Matthew 28:18-20).

What does the doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Church of America say about baptism? “We believe that water baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances to be observed by the church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation (Article VII.)”

are there any pre-requisites for having my child dedicated?

It is important that the family considering child dedication be closely connected to the Oakwood community, as both the parents and faith community commit to play a part in the spiritual development of the child. That is why we ask the following requirements be met prior to the child dedication ceremony:

1. At least one parent must be a Christ-follower. Because Oakwood is an open community for those who are seeking biblical truth, there may be many in our community who have not yet made a commitment to follow Jesus. We want people to be free to investigate the truths of the Bible for as long as they would like, but it is important that at least one parent has a personal relationship with Jesus in order to guide their child's spiritual formation.
2. At least one parent must regularly attend Oakwood.
3. At least one parent must attend the Spiritual Legacy Waypoint.



can we invite friends and family to the ceremony?

Absolutely! As this is a commitment on the part of the parent(s) AND their faith community, we encourage friends and family to attend. Some family members or friends even choose to participate in the ceremony. It is also a time when some of our friends and family members who have not trusted in Christ alone for salvation will come to show support. This is a great opportunity to display the Gospel.

how do i sign up to participate in the next child dedication ceremony?

Follow these next steps:

1. Email carrie@oakwoodnow.org or call (262) 367-1212 to sign up for the next Spiritual Legacy Waypoint.
2. Go to oakwoodnow.org and print off or request the Child Dedication Form from carrie@oakwoodnow.org.
3. Attend the Spiritual Legacy Waypoint.
4. Schedule your child's dedication, and invite friends and family.

ceremony logistics

Before the church service begins:

- Please plan to arrive 15 minutes before the church service begins.
- Please choose to sit near the front, on either the left or the right side, of the Worship Center.

During the church service:

- Families will be invited on stage.
- A staff member will briefly speak on the Gospel and about Child Dedication.
- A staff member will introduce your family to the rest of your church family.
- One parent will read your selected scripture verse or verses.
- A staff member will pray for your child and your family.
- A church elder or grandparent then will be invited to hold, or take the hand of, your child, and walk among your church family. This is an opportunity for all to see and pray over your child; and celebrate with your family. A short slide show of the children being dedicated will be shown during this time.

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