



Grace Church Family Ministry
Spiritual Milestones

Milestone 1 Parent/Baby Dedication

Adapted from content provided by Legacy Milestones

The Most Important Thing...

Welcome to parenting! For some of you, this is your first step into an amazing adventure that will change everything. For others, this is not your first baby but another in the journey God has for your family. In both cases, life will change in every aspect. Time will be stretched and priorities will be increasingly more difficult to maintain. Life will quickly show us what we value as important simply because we won't have time or energy to do the extraneous things.

So, what is important for you to do as a parent?

- Take my child to church
- Love them unconditionally (and tell them I love them)
- Teach them about life
- Teach good hygiene practices
- Dress my child appropriately with changing seasons
- Change diapers fairly quickly

There is a lot that must be done! It's the tyranny of the urgent. In the midst of all the necessary, what is most important?

Introduce them to the God of the Bible and teach them to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and strength.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words that I command you today shall be on 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, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

This theme is repeated throughout Scripture. God calls parents to teach their kids the most important thing they could ever learn: to love God with all their heart, soul, and strength.

Take time to read the following texts and ask God to excite your heart around His passion for you to equip your child to follow Him:

Psalm 78:1-7; Deuteronomy 4:10; Deuteronomy 5:31; Deuteronomy 11:19; Psalm 34:11; Proverbs 1:8; Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10; 1 Chronicles 16:15; Psalm 45:17; Psalm 71:18; Psalm 102:12; Psalm 145:5

Milestone 1 - Parent/Baby Dedication is the first milestone along the path for parents to begin introducing their infant to who Jesus is. The following milestones can be found on Legacy Milestones website www.legacymilestones.com. We will develop these milestones further and encourage your participation as your child grows.

How does the path work?

Intentional Faith Talks – Begin to invest in your baby through intentional faith talks. Faith talks are intentional times set aside each week for conversations around the Scripture. While your baby may not engage in much conversation, she will remember the things you begin teaching her.

Capturing God Moments – God Moments will begin to happen as your child begins to communicate. These are informal moments where God is working in her life. As a parent, you can capture these moments and point her toward Christ.

Celebrating Milestones – Walking the path includes celebrating milestones as your child passes through them. Each Milestone has a

family celebration associated with it. Make these moments an exciting time in the life of your child.

What is Baby Dedication all about?

Principle 1: Children are a heritage and a gift...

Heritage: Psalm 127 is a Psalm of Ascent , which simply means it was often quoted as Jewish families would ascend to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage. This Psalm specifically speaks of the blessing of family. The presence of godly children in the home meant security for the parents in old age and unity in hard times. Children are the heritage of the generations to come. Keeping this in mind when raising our children helps us remember to treasure them but not spoil them. Responsible children bless the next generations by caring for their aging parents.

Gift: God entrusts parents to raise them well, teaching them to observe all that He has commanded. Children are literal gifts from God.

Principle 2: Children need parents, not friends or caretakers...it will take your very best...

Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.” This proverb teaches that parenting will require training. This will take our very best as parents.

Proverbs 13:24, 29:17 – Proper discipline is crucial to raising godly children.

Ephesians 6:4 – “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Proverbs 3:11, Hebrews 12:6-7 – A parent’s discipline models God’s discipline performed in love.

Principle 3: Children are His...

1 Samuel 1:28 – God blessed Hannah with a child, and she dedicated him to the Lord.

Luke 2:22 – Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to dedicate Him according to Hebrew law.

The ceremony of baby dedication follows in the spirit of these two texts. It is a time where parents decide to commit to raising their child in a God-honoring way. It involves being committed to the most important things.

What is Parent Dedication all about?

In essence, you are making a commitment to be the parent God called you to be. The ceremony of baby dedication will only be memorable to your children because of the story you will write on their hearts, teaching them to follow Christ. The commitments you make at the ceremony are simply the beginning.

Do you remember your marriage vows or at least portions of them?

Similar to your wedding day, the vow you made to one another was only the beginning. The words you promised are lived out day after day in your marriage. Otherwise, they are only words. The same is true with the commitment you make to teach your children to Love God with their lives.

Here are the following commitments taken from Scripture:

Commitment 1: I will choose this day to live with the commands of God on my own heart.

Commitment 2: I will accept responsibility to be my child's primary faith trainer and impress the truth and love of God on my child as we live life together.

Commitment 3: I will love my child with the unconditional love of Christ.

Commitment 4: I will pray for my child to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

After making these commitments, the body of Christ, the church, is then asked to partner with you to raise your child in a godly way throughout his life at Grace.

1. Are you walking the path? Commitment 1 is the first step to becoming the primary faith trainer of your child...are you walking in Milestone 7: Life in Christ?
2. Are you ready to lead? - Your kids follow your example and teaching. No parent is perfect but commitment two requires intentionality and effort to lead. Faith Talks, God Moments, and Celebrating Milestones are necessities to leading your kids.
3. Are you ready to love? – 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 lays out what biblical love practically looks like. It is a challenging passage to love unconditionally.
4. Are you ready to intercede? – Praying for your children is bringing their lives before God, asking Him to work in their hearts. The most clever arguments and eloquent words will not lead your child to Jesus Christ. But God opens their heart to receive the truth that you continually teach them.

What Parent and Baby Dedication is not...

Baby dedication is not infant baptism. Baby dedication does not impart salvation or play any practical role in salvation.

An infant or young child is not held accountable for her sin until she reaches an age where she can understand faith in Christ in order to make a decision. This has been called the Age of Accountability. While no specific age is mentioned in Scripture, the principle is demonstrated in 2 Samuel 12:15-23.

Salvation happens when a child is old enough to make a decision on his own; and the child chooses to receive Christ. Salvation is not a matter of any good thing a child does but a matter of grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). A child receives Christ into his or her life and begins a new life in Christ.

A Dad's Role

1. Love the Lord

“Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.”

2. Love your wife

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

3. Love your children

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4

Read Ephesians 4-5 and review these disciplines and instructions.

- Walk in a manner worthy of your calling (4:1)
- Humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, unified (4:2-3)
- Speaking the truth in love – grow up into Christ (4:15,25)
- Don't sin in your anger (4:26)
- Work ethic (4:28)
- Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth, only that which builds up (4:29)
- Put away bitterness, wrath, anger, slander, malice (4:31)
- Be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving each other as Christ forgave you (4:32)
- Be imitators of God, walk in love (5:1)
- Put away sexual immorality, all impurity, covetousness (5:3)
- No filthiness, foolish talk, crude joking – instead thanksgiving (5:4)
- Walk in wisdom, making the most of the time (5:15)
- Don't get drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit – give thanks! (5:16-21)

A Mom's Role

1. Love the Lord

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.”

2. Love and respect your husband

“However, let each of one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” Ephesians 5:33

3. Love your children

Read Proverbs 31: 10-31 listing characteristics of a godly wife and mom.

Is trustworthy (11)

Does good not harm to her husband (12)

Works hard (13-14)

Provides for her family (15)

Dresses with strength (17)

Giving and loves others (20)

Prepares ahead for her family (21)

Brings a good name to her family (22-23)

Walks with dignity and is confident in God about the future (25)

Teaches her children with kindness and wisdom (26)

Takes care of her children and home (27)

Praised by her family because of her treatment of them (28-29)

Fears the Lord (30) – valued more than beauty

Conclusion

Thank you for taking time to work through this valuable information from God's Word. Our hope is that it will remind you of God's calling on the lives of parents, as you celebrate the recent birth of your child. We are here to support and encourage you as you walk down the path and lead your child through life's transitions. We will also commit to pray for you and your family.