



## CHILD DEDICATION AT REDEMPTION GATEWAY

At Redemption Gateway, we enjoy celebrating child dedication with your family. The dedication ceremony takes place before the congregation from stage on a Sunday morning. Before going through the child dedication process, it's important to understand what child dedication is, as well as how it functions within the church.

Child dedication is not a sacrament like baptism or communion—you won't find instructions for it anywhere in the New Testament. There's nothing magical about it—it doesn't save your child or guarantee that they will eventually come to trust Jesus as Savior and Lord. However, child dedication can serve as a powerful moment, for both family and church, as both parties commit to working together to raise the child in a way that honors God.

We perform child dedications to give parents a formal opportunity to publicly proclaim their intentions to worship Jesus in childrearing. There is a two-fold benefit to this: first, it's a step of boldness for parents to truly declare that all of life—even parenting—really is all for Jesus. Second, it creates built-in accountability for parents within the church body, as now there will be several hundred witnesses before whom the dedication vows will be made.

The child dedication vows are listed below, along with what the Bible says about each topic and why we feel that these vows are important. Please read through these prayerfully together as a couple (or individually, if you are single) and come ready to express your commitment as outlined below.

### VOW #1

Do you dedicate yourself to wholeheartedly pursue your relationship with God by trusting in the finished, saving work of Jesus Christ and depending on the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your life, knowing that the life you model will shape your children even more deeply than the words you say?

If so, say "I do."

### EXPLANATION OF VOW #1

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." -John 15:1-5*

This vow is important because: Everyone wants to be a good parent, but apart from Christ we can do nothing good. Those who desire to be good and godly parents must first have a vibrant and growing personal relationship with their Heavenly Father. It's only as parents experience the perfect love, grace, mercy, discipline, and instruction of our heavenly Father that they can begin to demonstrate those qualities well toward their own children. Additionally, this passage and vow both serve as reminders that a parent's identity is found not in their fruit ("good" or "bad" kids), but rather in the One to whom parents are vitally connected.

## **VOW #2 (APPLICABLE FOR MARRIED PARENTS)**

Do you dedicate yourself to faithfully pursue a vibrant relationship with your spouse: sacrificially loving each other, dating each other, prioritizing each other over your work and children, and seeking help and guidance from your church family to help your relationship thrive, knowing that one of the best gifts you can give your children is a joyful, godly marriage?

If so, say “I do.”

### **EXPLANATION OF VOW #2**

*“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies...This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”*

*–Ephesians 5:22-28, 32*

This vow is important because: A great marriage is a powerful picture of the Gospel. It’s not always easy to explain the Gospel to children. Sacrificial love is not a natural part of our DNA. However, a marriage marked by mutual submission, love, respect, affection, and a powerful sacrificial desire to see the other partner flourish is an incredibly powerful proclamation and demonstration of God’s love for his people—perhaps even more powerful than the most eloquently crafted evangelistic presentation.

## **VOW #3**

Do you dedicate yourself to actively participate in the church community: investing in people, learning from friends, and using your gifts for the sake of Jesus’ Kingdom, knowing that your children need input and examples from the church family in addition to your family?

If so, say “I do.”

### **EXPLANATION OF VOW #3**

*“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love” –Ephesians 4:15-16*

*“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” –Hebrews 10:24-25*

This vow is important because: Parenting is hard, everyone needs help, and you do not have to do it alone. The body of Christ—including the local church—is designed to help one another grow, bear one another's burdens, and love and encourage one another. Not only can others in the church community provide wisdom, support, and guidance to you as you raise your children, but your experiences may also present you with an opportunity to do the same for others.

## **VOW #4**

Do you dedicate yourself to raise your children with biblical love, instruction and discipline? Will you take every opportunity that life gives you to diligently teach your children to love the Lord Jesus and observe all that he commanded, knowing that your primary responsibility as a parent is to train your child to be Jesus’ disciple?

If so, say “I do.”

## **EXPLANATION OF VOW #4**

*“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” –Proverbs 22:6  
“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” –Ephesians 6:4*

*“...from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” –2 Timothy 3:15*

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And 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, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” –Deuteronomy 6:5-7*

This vow is important because: The goal of Christian parenting is to introduce kids to Jesus and help them learn to love and trust him. There are certainly many things—the local church included—that can help in this process, but ultimately the responsibility for spiritually leading your child falls squarely on you, the parent(s). There’s not “one right way” to parent; every child learns and develops differently, and so parents must adapt and adjust as they go along. However, the one constant in Christian parenting must be teaching children to love God with “all their everything” by exposing them to God’s character through God’s Word.

These are big vows, because parenting is a big deal. Read them again. Pray through them. Talk with friends and family about them. Do not take them lightly, because at the dedication we will ask you to say, “I do” to each of these vows, similar to what you would hear at a wedding ceremony. You will be committing before God and many witnesses to raise your children God’s way, and God takes oaths very seriously.

In all of this, remember these two things:

1. You will fail and break these vows many times, but Christ has already forgiven you. Because of his grace, you have been freed from the pressure of being a perfect parent. This allows you to view parenting as a gift and privilege that you can use to worship God and thank him for the work he has done in your life.
2. It is Christ’s perfect life, death, and resurrection that has the power to save your kids; not you. Your parenting will include both successes and failures; the successes are evidence that God is working in and through you, the failures give you the opportunity to repent, rejoice in God’s forgiveness, and change. You can use both to point your kids to the saving work of Jesus.

We are very excited to celebrate with you as you dedicate your child here at Redemption Gateway. Thank you for the privilege of allowing us to be a part of this commitment you are making. The leadership of Redemption Gateway is eager to support you as you continue to pursue God’s best for your family.

The basic order of the dedication will be as follows:

- Parents and children come up on the platform
- Introduce parents and children (may include brief personal remarks by dedicating parents)
- Pastor briefly explains what child dedication is (a commitment by the parents to raise their child according to God’s instruction)
- Pastor recites the vows, parents reply with “I Do” after each vow
- Pastor has all supporting friends/family in congregation stand and be recognized
- Pastor prays for each family
- Parents/children return to seats