

Woodmen's Parent-Child Dedication FAQs

Woodmen knows that what happens at home is more important than what happens at church. It is our goal to partner with you in your parenting journey. Woodmen wants to be your strongest supporters and trusted guides as you raise your child to know what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Parent-child dedication is an opportunity for you to take some time as parents to think about what will really matter the most in the life of your child. It's an opportunity to decide what you value and what you can do today that will have the greatest impact on your child's future.

What are the requirements for Parent-Child Dedication?

- We ask that parents have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- We ask that the parent's beliefs align with [Woodmen's beliefs and values](#). In dedicating yourself to lead your child spiritually and dedicating your child to God, you are stating that you are willing to partner with God *and the church* to raise your child in cooperation with God's Word. It is important to know that you agree with the beliefs and vision of Woodmen, so you can be fully invested in your partnership with us.
- We ask that parents are currently or will become regular attendees of Woodmen's weekend services.
- We ask parents who are living together and who are not married to take steps to acknowledge and surrender to God's plan for their relationship before participating in a Parent-Child Dedication service.
- Woodmen requires that parents attend a "Parent-Child Celebration" event prior to their dedication service. We will be celebrating your child, you and your role as parent. A photographer will be onsite to capture a photo of you and your child.

What is the Biblical Foundation of Dedication?

The child side:

- *"For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord."* 1 Samuel 1:27–28 (ESV).

The basis for child dedication is found in the story of Hannah, a godly woman recorded in the Old Testament, who prayed year after year for God to give her a child. God answered her prayer and she gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel.

- *"And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord."* Luke 2:22.

Following the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph took the infant Jesus to the temple to dedicate Him.

In both Scripture passages, the **parents entrusted their child completely to God** through the act of dedicating their child to Him.

The parent side – the purpose:

Deuteronomy 6:5–9 describes God's plan for how a parent should raise up a child: *"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. 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."

Proverbs 22:6 restates this, "*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*"

Clearly, a child choosing to follow the Lord and living his or her life according to the commands taught in scripture, does not happen by accident, but through the intentional spiritual leadership of a parent.

Beyond dedicating your child to God, Parent-Child Dedication is your **commitment** as a parent **to raise your child by the Word of God, to consistently live out your faith and to point your child to Christ.**

Is Dedication baptism or a sacrament?

Dedication is not "baptism"; Woodmen believes baptism is a public display of a believer's commitment to Christ. Baptism does not make a person a Christian, but is symbolic of death to sin and resurrection to a new life in Christ. Baptism is by immersion and is done after one decides to follow Jesus Christ. We believe that baptism is a decision that must be made by someone who has reached the "age of reason," which is sometime around the age of 9. (Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19-20; Acts 2:41, 8:35-39; Acts 16:30-33; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12)

Dedication is not a sacrament; it does not impart salvation to a child. Salvation is a gift from God to each one of us. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can one be saved from sin's penalty. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into their life by faith. (John 1:12; 14:6; Romans 5:1; 6:23; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

What is the appropriate age for the child?

Woodmen does not have a set age for Parent-Child Dedication. Although the average age for a child to be dedicated is four to 12 months old, children as old as 10 years have participated in the dedication ceremony. Many parents dedicate these older children for the various reasons, including:

- The parents are new believers in Christ and their children were not dedicated when they were infants.
- The parents are having a younger child dedicated and want to have their older child dedicated at the same time.
- The parents have recently adopted an older child.

May Single Parents participate in Parent-Child Dedications?

Parent-Child dedication shows the commitment of parents (including single parents) to do their best to raise their child, in partnership with God and the church, to be a follower of Christ. We encourage single parents to discuss Parent-Child Dedication with the child's other parent, if available. Ideally, both parents—even if not married—would commit to live a life that honors the Lord while nurturing their child and leading him or her spiritually, through the help of the Holy Spirit.

We acknowledge this often is not possible, and it takes extra effort for a single parent to raise a child. As a church, Woodmen is committed to supporting single parents in providing a Christian foundation for their child's upbringing.