

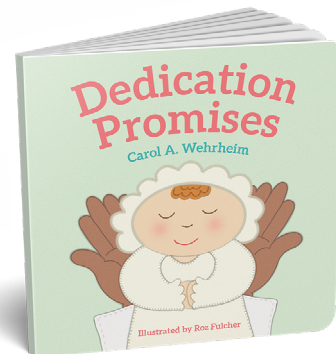
READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

Dedication Promises

By Carol A. Wehrheim

A dedication is a ceremony within a faith community in which promises are made by parents and the community as they seek God's blessing upon a child and commit to their intention to provide for the Christian nurture of the child. It has its roots in the dedication of Jesus at the temple by his parents as a young child, as people of faith had done for generations. It is a very special day in the life of a young one, even if they do not know it yet, because God's love is for everyone. *Dedication Promises* introduces your young child to, or reminds them of, their dedication to service and the promises and love surrounding them by family, community, and God. Four simple prayers are provided for you to begin a practice of prayer each morning, at meals, to say sorry, and at bedtime.



★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- In this story, what promises did the family make? What promises did the people in the church make?
- What did the pastor say when they held the child?
- What two things does everyone know about the child after the dedication ceremony? Why do you think those two things are so special?
- Look at the prayers at the end of the book. Why do you think there are prayers for when you wake up, eat, are sorry, and go to bed?
- When is another time you can say a prayer? What prayer would you like to say?

★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Talk together about your child's dedication ceremony. Who will be or was there? What promises will be or were said? Wonder in what ways you and your faith community will fulfill those promises.
- How does it make you feel that you will be or were dedicated to God? Draw a picture, move your body, or make music that shows this feeling.
- Make a plan to celebrate the anniversary of your dedication each year. What might that look like? What would you do on that day?
- Make a prayer poster with the following words: Thanks, Oops, Help, and Wow! Talk together about each kind of prayer: what you can be thankful for, times you've made a mistake or hurt someone, how you or someone else may need help, and what wows you about God, God's creation, and God's gifts.

PRAY

God of Love, thank you for my family and my faith community who love me and want me to know you as I grow up. Thank you for loving me at all times, even when I make mistakes or hurt someone. Help me to be a loving and kind person. You are amazing, God! Amen.



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The acts of dedicating children as part of worship are a meaningful milestone and a time for making promises to both the child and to God. Here are some ways to enrich your child's dedication:

- Create a ritual to mark the anniversary of the dedications, or baptisms, of family members. Ideas include singing a favorite hymn, lighting a candle, sharing memories of the day, offering prayers for the coming year, or ideas of your own.
- Read stories in Scripture about dedication and baptism, including Jesus' dedication (Luke 2:22-24), Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:29-34), or the baptism of the Ethiopian official (Acts 8:26-29).

If you have friends of other faiths or cultural backgrounds, ask them about the meaning of traditions and rituals that are important to them. Research other faith and cultural practices. While baptism is a uniquely Christian milestone that different denominations understand and practice in specific ways, the idea of marking the birth of a child (or the new life in Christ in older children or adults) is a practice that occurs in numerous ways, including:

- A bris (ritual circumcision) welcomes and claims a male child into the Jewish faith community.
- A Navajo first laugh ceremony celebrates that laughter is a vital part of being human.
- A naming feast in Ethiopia introduces the child to the community.
- The first bath is an event called an *omugwa* in the Nigerian Yoruba community or an *ubuyu* in Japan. It is usually given by a grandmother or a close female relative celebrating the role of extended family.
- The Baek-il, or 100th day after a child's birth, traditionally celebrated the survival of a child with prayer and food offerings. More recently a Doljanchi celebrates a child's first birthday with traditional food, clothing, and rituals to commemorate the day.

MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

ADDITIONAL BOOKS THAT CELEBRATE GOD IN OUR LIVES

- [*A Very Big Problem*](#), by Amy-Jill Levine, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, and Annie Bowler
- [*God's Big Plan*](#), by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Theodore Hiebert - Also available as a [board book](#)!
- [*God's Coming to Visit*](#), by Franz Hübner, Angela Glökler, & Rea Grit Zielinski
- [*When God Gave Us Words*](#), by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Darcy Day Zoells
- [*Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*](#), edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim

Guide written by Meg Elliot Rift. Created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](#)" (pcusa.org/aroundthetable).



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