

Making Baby Dedications Meaningful

With thanks to Baptist Churches around NSW for contributing the following ideas.

Involving Meaningful People

Involving Family Interstate & Overseas *Contributed by Parramatta Baptist Church*

Many families are spread across the world, so we encourage parents to consider ways to invite those interstate or overseas to take part in the dedication. In a recent dedication, key family members (particularly grandparents) who could not be there in person pre-filmed short messages of blessing, which were played during the dedication. We also set up Skype facilities, so that family members and special friends could connect from around the globe.

Involving Close Family Friends *Contributed by Northside Baptist Church*

We invite parents to include close family friends or other meaningful people in the dedication. These people are invited to read a Scripture, pray for the child, or speak words of affirmation over the parents and/or child.

Involving Other Children *Contributed by Rouse Hill Community Baptist Church*

In any special church celebrations at RHCBC, including dedications, we include children. Kids might be asked to say a prayer, or ask a question. We believe that having children involved is incredibly important and helps them feel included and connected into church. It also is a great display of the whole body of Christ celebrating together.

Involving Kids' Ministry Leaders *Contributed by Toongabbie Baptist Church*

At one of our baby dedications, children's ministry volunteers were asked to stand, recognising that they are the ones whom the church has appointed to teach the children. Then the rest of the congregation stood indicating that they too would have an influence on this baby.

Involving the Whole Church *Contributed by Maroubra Baptist Church*

The week prior to celebrating a baby dedication, we include a paragraph in our church newsletter, announcing the dedication, explaining the church's role, and inviting them to engage, support and pray as this time of thanksgiving and dedication takes place in the church. This reminds the church of the important part they play in building a spiritual community in which the child will be raised.

Personalising the Service

Photos & Videos *Contributed by Springwood Baptist Church*

We invite families to create a short photo montage or video of their child for the occasion. Families often include bible verses, or meaningful quotes. This personalises the service, and enables the whole congregation to get to know the family better.

Letters

Contributed by Parramatta Baptist Church

Parents are invited to write a letter to their child. They may write about how the child has been a great blessing to their family, their hopes for their child to grow up knowing Jesus, and affirmations or prayers. The letter is then publically read out during the service, and kept to give to the child when they are older.

Music

Contributed by NewHope Baptist Church

Parents are invited to choose a song, and share with the congregation why this particular song is meaningful to them. The song is then played as a soundtrack, or sung congregationally.

Name Reflection

Contributed by Morling College

Names are often chosen for specific reasons such as family history, friends, or the meaning of name. Baby Dedication can be an opportunity to tell some of the family story and add further meaning and significance to the event. This component is often very appreciated by family and takes the role of the popular 'naming ceremony'.

Celebrating Together

Giving a Gift

Contributed by Northside Baptist Church

We put together a gift bag for each family whose child is dedicated. This includes a children's bible (*The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones), a parenting book (*Loving Our Kids on Purpose* by Danny Silk), a guide to baby & child specific first aid (*A Life, A Finger, A Pea Up a Nose* by Sarah Hunstead), and a Dedication Certificate.

Morning Tea/Lunch

Contributed by NewHope Baptist Church

A special time after the service can be a great way to continue the celebration, and include any special visitors who have come along for the dedication. We usually share in a special morning tea after the service, and then families head off to have their own celebratory lunches.

Taking Missional Opportunities

Gospel Opportunities

Contributed by Seaforth Baptist Church

When one of our church families who comes to mainly music dedicated their daughter, they made it an opportunity for the mainly music community to come to church.

They organised with the Lead Pastor that on the day of their daughter's dedication there would be an item by the mainly music children. They announced at mainly music an opportunity to 'perform' their mainly music item in church, so that the parents and grandparents who normally don't come to mainly music could see what the children do on Monday mornings.

They made a printed invitation to come to the church service to 'perform' their song, and to join with their family as they dedicate their child; and following the church service to come back to their home for a BBQ lunch and celebration cake.

Quite a few families came along to church and on to the lunch.

