**VISION DOC – CHILD DEDICATIONS**

**BOTTOM LINE –** We desire to partner with parents to help them raise their children to know Jesus. A child dedication experience will be offered as a formal commitment before the church, with intentional follow up to help the family connect with CedarCreek Kids for equipping and group life for encouragement.

**BIBLICAL ALIGNMENT:**

* Child Dedication is a Jewish custom that is no longer required due Jesus’ finishing work of salvation; however, it still provides an opportunity for parents to make a commitment before God and a community of believers.
* Child Dedication itself is a Discover Purpose step in the spiritual journey. Parents understand that their children are a gift from God and that their purpose as a parent is to raise them to love Jesus and love others.
  + If Child Dedication is not the parent’s next step, they may need to focus on another area of the spiritual journey; most likely Know God and/or Find Freedom.
* God’s Word will be the standard to which the church decides who we will agree to dedicate. While knowing that no one is perfect, our desire is to help parents find freedom and live a life that honors Jesus. We know that raising children to know Christ starts with the parent’s example.
  + Parents having a relationship with Jesus
  + Parents engaged in the Spiritual Journey

**VALUES:**

* Building a relationship with parents and understanding their story, their family, and what their best next step is.
* Providing an opportunity for those who are ready to dedicate to do so in a way that feels meaningful and celebratory.
* Equipping parents with resources to encourage and steward their child’s growing faith.
* Helping parents get connected to Group life where freedom and encouragement is found.
* Staying in relationship with the family by celebrating children’s birthdays and other important milestones.

**STRATEGY:**

**Application**

* Those interested in child dedication will submit an application to notify the church of their interest.
  + Dedication vision and application will live on the Kids website.
  + Applications will be live throughout the year but will close on the 2nd week of the month prior to the dedication experience to give campus teams enough time to hold meetings. They will re-open the Monday after the dedication experience.
  + The application will route to the Kids Director who will decide who needs to be involved in the meeting. For example, if it is a brand-new family or a family with known challenges, it will be best to bring in the Campus Pastor.
  + The Kids Director will contact the parents and set up a meeting.

**Family Meeting**

* The goal of the family meeting is to get to know the family (their faith journey, their parenting goals, etc.) and determine what their best next step is.
  + For the parents whose next step is dedication, the campus staff member will review the dedication content/process and discuss opportunities for group life.
  + For the parents whose next step is not dedication, the campus staff member will encourage whatever is most appropriate and follow up accordingly. Some other next steps to consider:
    - Salvation/Baptism
    - Marriage and/or Marriage Counseling
    - Celebrate Recovery
  + It is recommended that Campus Teams follow-up with families they met with months before the dedication to ensure nothing major has shifted. It also gives those families who had different next steps to take the time to do so. They may now be ready to dedicate. Campus Teams will need to own these relationships and document conversations and suggested next steps.
* A standard will be developed with dedication vision, questions and next step suggestions to guide the campus team through this process.

**Dedication Experience**

* A dedication experience will be offered twice a year for parents to make a public declaration in front of God, their family/friends, and their church body.
* To align with the Groups semester, the dedications will be held on the 2nd weekend of January and September.
* Campus Teams will have the option of hosting a post-service reception with light refreshments to celebrate families and to help them get connected to Kids and Adult group leaders.
* A PCO plan will be developed for vision and execution guidelines.

**Follow Up**

* Rock will track dedications and prompt Kids Directors to follow up with families (along with the child’s Group Leader) on birthdays and/or their dedication anniversary to check in on milestones, spiritual development and to offer encouragement as we continue to partner with parents.

**FAQ’s:**

*Why are we keeping the dedication service in the adult service?*

We know how important dedication is for parents. There are times when the few minutes we have in the adult service to introduce the family, give them a moment to commit, and pray for the family can feel rushed; especially if multiple families are dedicating. However, keeping the experience in the adult service allows us to honor parents publicly and gives the church an opportunity to pray with and for families. We have also seen unchurched family members attend. We will continue to keep the experience in the adult service but evaluate it with a critical eye to see if there is a better option in the future.

*What are the requirements for Child Dedication?*

We believe that following Jesus makes life better and makes you better at life. We will ask that parents are trusting and following Jesus with every area of their life. Yellow or red flags in those areas may indicate that child dedication is not the most appropriate next step for the parent. Experiences like GrowthTrack, Group and DreamTeam participation are always encouraged but not requirements for dedication.

*What about grandparents (Aunts, Uncles, Family Friends, etc.) who want to dedicate their grandchildren but who do not have legal custody?*

While we encourage grandparents to leave a legacy of faith, those with legal custody will be permitted to dedicate. Our value is to partner with parents rather than creating more tension or division between family members. When possible and appropriate, we want to help build a connection between the grandparents and the parents.

*What about couples where one parent is a believer, and attending church regularly, and another parent is not?*

A helpful question to ask – would you marry this couple? If not, dedication is probably not the best next step either. If there is already disagreement between how parents want to raise their child, a formal dedication may add more tension to the relationship. Rather than performing a service for the parent we are ministering to the family. In this situation, there is probably a better next step for the parents.

*Why would we ask a parent to refrain from child dedication if they are living in a pattern/lifestyle of sin?*

Our hope is to see every parent, every guest, live in freedom. While knowing that salvation is not earned, and that no one is perfect, we believe that raising a child to know Jesus starts with the parent’s example. If a parent is unrepentant or refusing to turn from sin that conflicts with their desire to follow Jesus and all the good He has for them, dedication is not their most appropriate next step. Even though dedication may not be their immediate next step, we want to come alongside the parent and help them find freedom.

Unique situations include but are not limited to:

* Parents who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.
* Parents who are not following the Biblical sexual ethic.
  + Honor God with your body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
  + Don’t be mastered by anything (1 Corinthians 6:12)
  + Don’t sexualize a relationship outside of marriage (Hebrews 13:4,

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)

\*Any decisions to dedicate that would fall outside of these parameters require Elder approval.