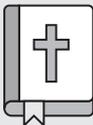


PARENTING MATTERS:
SPIRITUAL MILESTONES

THE BLESSING

LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

...the wait is over and your sweet child is here! There is a new, darling, powerful life that has been entrusted to you. You have a million choices to make, from what to feed them to what they wear to what medicine they take to who they spend their time with. One of the most beautiful things about parenthood is the opportunity to pass your faith on to your child. This first milestone is about committing to raising your child to know, love, and trust God, and inviting your community to support your journey.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BLESSING

WHAT IS THE BLESSING?

The blessing an event put on by the church that provides- an opportunity to gather with your community and commit to raising your child to know God's incredible love and to experience his beautiful and powerful kingdom. You, as a parent, are the primary discipler of your kids. What happens in the home has significantly more impact on a child's relationship with God than what happens at church. One of the most profound and joyful things you can do as a parent is to share the love and truth of Jesus with your child. The Blessing is your chance to proclaim your faith and commit to raising your child in God's kingdom.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT IT?

Scripture points out that children are an awesome blessing and a gift from God (Psalm 127:3, Genesis 33:5). The caveat of this gift is the expectation that children will be raised in a way that glorifies God (Proverbs 22:6). This means not just raising a child who knows their ABC's and can tell right from wrong, but intentionally committing to teaching them about God. In the Bible, Samuel's mother Hannah goes as far as to leave him at the tabernacle so that he can be raised belonging to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:19-24). While that's not customary these days (please don't leave your unattended child to grow up at church!), there is still power in committing to bringing your child before Jesus and raising them under his blessing (Mark 10:13-16).

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT TO US?

Parenting is overwhelming. There are a million thoughts opinions from a thousand different sources influencing a hundred different decisions that need to be made. When you participate in The Blessing, you are committing to setting your focus on God. You are committing to seeking him in each parenting decision, to reciting his word when stress and chaos set in, and to speaking and showing his love to your child. Even without seeing the whole journey, you can take the first step in publicly declaring your intent to raise a faithful child.

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

CHOOSE A SCRIPTURE

Thoughtfully and prayerfully decide on a verse, series of verses, or story for your child. This can be something that exemplifies who you hope they will be, how God can work in their life, or something that has been influential to you as a parent. Here are a few examples, but be intentional in choosing something special and significant to you.

- Galatians 6:9
- 2 Timothy 1:7
- Esther 4:14
- Isaiah 41:10
- Psalm 16:8

When you've chosen a scripture, put it somewhere that you will see it regularly. Write it out, print it off, or do something creative to display it.

TAKE NOTES

These early years are a whirlwind. There is so much change and so much growth that it can be hard to see how far you and your child have come. Grab the baby book, a journal, or even a few index cards and start taking intentional notes. Write down funny moments, observations, and prayers and watch your baby learn who God has created them to be. Here are some prompts for inspiration:

- What characteristics does your baby have right now?
- What have they learned in the last month? Week? Day?
- How do you see yourself in your child?
- In what ways has parenting this child pointed you to God?
- What do you want to remember about this day?
- How have others come alongside you recently?
- What do you hope your baby grows up to know?

REGISTER FOR THE BLESSING EVENT

Go to Mountainpark.org/blessing to register for The Blessing! These take place twice a year and include an orientation and a brunch. If you don't attend Mountain Park, ask about baby dedication at your home church.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 10:13-16

And He took the children in His arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of this sweet child. Thank you for choosing me to be their parent. Thank you for creating them so wonderfully and for knowing everything about them before they even arrived. Help me to love them well. Point me consistently in your direction. Surround me with people who can help me on this journey. Please be active in my daily parenting. Show up for my child and draw them to you. Thank you for being so loving and so compassionate to each of us, and for creating us to know and praise you. Amen.

RESOURCES

Jesus Calling: 365 Devotions For Kids
by Sarah Young

Praying the Scriptures for Your Children: Discover How to Pray God's Purpose for Their Lives
by Jodie Berndt and Fern Nichols

The Book of You: For My Child, With Love
by Kate Marshall and David Marshall

The One-Minute Gratitude Journal Journal
by Brenda Nathan

Phone App - 1 Second Everyday



PARENTING
MATTERS