

PARENT COVENANT

The act of raising the next generation for the Lord is a responsibility of the church, and a specific responsibility of parents. In order to reinforce this role, Communion Church has chosen to place a renewal covenant between the parents and the church. This covenant exists for parents and the larger church body to acknowledge the accountability and responsibility that already exists due to the unity of the Spirit. The covenant will be reconfirmed at the birth of each child, giving us the opportunity to remember, but also celebrate as a church the great gift of life.

In order to covenant together, we must have a shared understanding of who children are, and what our (both parents and the church) responsibilities are toward them.

Theology of Children

1. Children are created by God

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. | Psalm 139.13-14

If this is true, then several implications follow:

A. Children are created as worshippers (1 Corinthians 10.31)

We all agree that adults are religious beings, but children are too! Every toy he covets, every princess she idolizes, they are worshipping. God then must be continually reinforced as the creator of all things and the source of all joy.

B. Children are created as creatures (Genesis 2.7)

Though they often act like it, the world does not revolve around a child. As a created being, children must answer to the Creator. They must be taught that their finite perspective is not the source of Truth.

C. Children are created unique (Romans 12.4-5)

God instilled in every little one a special set of gifts and talents. Though they may not know what these are, they must understand that our differences reveal the creativity of our Creator. They are not to be used as a source of pride or self-deprecation.

D. Children are image-bearers (Genesis 1.27)

Children bear the image of God. They are rational, creative, loving beings that are to be trained in what their lives are for: The worship of God!

2. Children are sinners

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . | Romans 3.23

It is easy to get caught in the trap of believing that children are innocent and thus free from God's wrath. The Bible teaches us that we ALL have a sinful nature and desire ourselves before God. Realizing that children are sinners gives us the urgency to continually teach them the gospel, not wait until they are of an accountable age.

3. Children can become adopted children of God

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. | Romans 8.15-17

Salvation is not something reserved for adults. Children can recognize their sin and turn to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts of children as well as adults.

4. Children understand truth differently than adults

“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” | Mark 10.14-15

Not only do kids receive the truth differently than their parents, you might say they receive it better. When Jesus is directing His disciples on belief, He encourages them to have faith like a child. Children are not as skeptical as adults; they do not come to the Bible with the callous of personal experience. This is why the training of children is so important. It is laying the foundation for a worldview, so children can read their experiences through their theology, not vice versa.

5. Children learn primarily from their parents

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. | Deuteronomy 6.6-7

It is nice to drop your kids off, and leave with it your responsibilities as a parent. Unfortunately, this is not how kids learn. Kids learn through the constant repetition of having God pointed out in the day. Children must be constantly reminded, disciplined, and nurtured in the Word so that when the trials come, they will be able to stand firm.

The Promises of the Covenant

A covenant is the binding of two parties to a specific set of promises. These promises are something that we already committed to by becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. The purpose of the covenant is: to be a reminder of the covenant that already exists, to make clear what it means to be God's people (and in turn teach who God is), and to create a human level of accountability to the promises made. The specific promises of the parental covenant are:

Parents

1. **We covenant** to take seriously the sacred duty entrusted to us as parents. We recognize the reality that every child is ultimately God's, to do with as He wills, and we will parent in this reality (**Ecclesiastes 11.5**).
2. **We covenant** to regularly pray with and for our child (**Job 1.5**).
3. **We covenant** to read the Bible to our child consistently, knowing that it is the Holy Spirit, through the Word that brings sinners back to God (**Romans 10.17**).
4. **We covenant** to use every opportunity to teach our child the call of gospel and the necessity of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins (**John 14.6**).
5. **We covenant** to discipline our child, as God disciplines those He loves, and to show them grace as we have been shown grace in Jesus Christ (**Hebrews 12.6**).
6. **We covenant** to live out the gospel in our home life (**Deuteronomy 6.6-7**).
7. **We covenant** to partner with the Communion church community, and to seek the help, accountability, and submit to the leadership of this community (**Hebrews 13.17**).

Community

1. **We covenant** to pray for this child and their parents (**1 Timothy 2.1**).
2. **We covenant** to be an example of gospel living, both individually and corporately (**Ephesians 5.15-21**).
3. **We covenant** to hold these parents accountable for the promises that they have made today (**Joshua 24.22**).
4. **We covenant** to teach the gospel to this child in whatever opportunity that may be (**Psalms 78.4**).
5. **We covenant** to support this family, in whatever way necessary to fulfill the promises that they have made today (**Philippians 1.27**).

Please fill out the following form to take part in covenanting together with Communion Church to raise your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Parent Covenant Form

Father's Name _____

Mother's Name _____

Child's Name/Gender _____

The Covenant

Please read below the promises that you make when you covenant with God and the church to be gospel-centered parents.

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You will read a verse and pray for your child. Then the pastor will ask you to publicly affirm your commitment to this covenant and the church will be asked to recognize their part. The pastor will then close in prayer.

Verse

Identify a specific verse in the Bible that you would like to use during the covenant ceremony. The verse should serve as meaningful expression of your hopes and desires for your child's future and your commitment to making that happen. Please be prepared to explain why you chose this verse.

Picture

Provide a picture of your child or family that we can project on the screen during the covenant ceremony. We can scan a picture you have or you can email one to us.

Prayer

Write a prayer for your child. Make it brief, but long enough to communicate to God what you are covenanting to and what you hope He does in your child's life.