

# Child Dedication FAQ

The Child Dedication Ceremony is a time for celebrating the birth or adoption of a child in a ceremony of naming and dedication. It is a time for celebrating the growing years of the young children in the family. It is a time for welcoming our children into the world, into the family and into the RRUUC community. It is a time for acknowledging that each child's life is sacred and hold that truth in the light of our faith.

## When is this ritual held?

Upon the birth or adoption of a child, families often chose to have a child dedication and naming ceremony. This typically happens on a Sunday morning service with the congregation present. Families new to Unitarian Universalism may select to have their children dedicated on a Sunday morning as part of a process of deepening their journey of membership and commitment to the Unitarian Universalist faith.

There are also times when a family wishes a private ceremony and these can be arranged directly with the Senior Minister. This sometimes happens when families of differing faith traditions would like to incorporate individual elements that are difficult to accommodate in a congregational service.

## Can we have a dedication in our home or special location or does it need to be held at River Road?

The simple answer is yes, it may be possible depending on the minister's availability.

The longer answer is a child dedication ceremony **recognizes the important role the congregation has in the supporting the child and family**. The congregation is both participant and witness to the act of dedication. The event is most meaningful when a gathered community takes responsibility for supporting the child and the parents in the growing years.

If you chose to have the ceremony in a private location, we encourage you to gather a community of family and friends to bear witness to this sacred event in yours and your child's life.

## Do we need to be members of the congregation?

The simple answer is no. The longer answer is a child dedication ceremony is most meaningful when the children, parents, friends, and families feel a connection with the congregation and with our Unitarian Universalist faith and values.

## **Can we include a recognition of god-parents, grandparents or special friends for our child/children?**

Honoring and creating special relationships between the child and other members of the family or circle of friends is **encouraged**. The child dedication ceremony is a perfect time to recognize the various committed relationships that will support, nurture and bear witness to the spiritual development of your child.

## **Our child/children have not been baptized or dedicated and are no longer infants. Can we still have them dedicated?**

Yes. We will adjust the dedication ceremony to fit the age of your child or children. The minister will work with you to create a ceremony that reflects the ages of the children being dedicated.

For older children (especially teens) parents and caregivers are encourage to include their children in the decision process. A conversation with the minister to help the child and family understand the significance in this ritual of dedication.

## **Is there a fee for having our child dedicated?**

No. We are honored to celebrate new life and growing children and expanding families.

(Source: adapted from the Arlington UU congregation website).