Divi Child Themes

Hello and welcome to the lesson about the Divi Child Themes. There might be a lot of different things you might have heard or read about child themes. Some developers say you always need to use one, others say that you shouldn't, so in this video, I would like to explain the confusion and discuss what exactly is a WordPress Child Theme, how to create one, and when and why you might want to use it.

So let's start from the beginning. Now, iI do recommend visiting the WordPress Codex and reading about child themes - that is always a great place to learn, and child themes are in no way specific to Divi. This is a WordPress functionality, and on the Codex page, you can find out that "a child theme is a theme that inherits the functionality and styling of another theme called the parent theme", so before learning what is a child theme, we need to understand how the parent themes work.

So any WordPress theme such as Divi, or a theme you would get off of a Themeforest, or a custom-made theme - it usually contains a lot of files. Mainly PHP files, CSS files, and JavaScript files. all these files are providing the functionality and are defining the appearance of a website that uses the theme. Now, you can see all the code in the theme files and make edits and additions, but you should never edit the main theme files! That is, unless you never want to update it again. Because theme update basically replaces all the theme files with the new ones, so updating the theme will overwrite any changes or customizations you made. And to work around this, WordPress allows us to use a child

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theme - a separate website layer basically, where you can place any custom CSS, PHP, or other custom code, or edit any of the parent theme files. I will explain how exactly we can create a child theme in a moment, but just so you understand the concept - when you create a child theme, and you define that it is a child of a particular parent's theme - then all the styling and all the functionality of that parent theme will be automatically used by the child theme.

And child theme would be the active theme in your WordPress panel. Meaning, WordPress will look into child theme folder first, and if there is a file in the child theme's with the same name as the file in the parent theme - then WordPress will use child theme's version of the file instead of the parent theme's version. And this allows us to modify the parent theme files simply by copying the file from the parent theme to your child theme folder and making your edits there.

Blank and Premium Divi Child Themes

Now, when discussing child themes with Divi - I need to mention that there is additional distinction, and basically two types of child themes you might be thinking of. So we have what is considered a "blank child theme" - the standard WordPress child theme that is created to strictly customize the parent theme. but we also have the concept of "premium child themes", which are used for different reasons despite the same name: "Divi child theme" used to refer to both. So what exactly is the difference? A premium child theme is similar to a blank child team in that it sits as a top layer of the parent theme, however premium divi child themes are usually fully designed website templates, that are created and sold to be used as a starting points for a new website project. They typically also have additional files with different customizations as well as allow you to import sample website content

demo data, which you can use as a starting point instead of creating all your website pages from scratch. So the goal is to speed up your development time.

Always use a child theme?

Now, I know many developers say that you should always use a child theme, but it's not entirely true. Using a child theme won't hurt, but you don't always need one. Divi basically gives you full control over the appearance of your site and before Divi and other page builders, themes were not as flexible - and that was when you did need a child theme, even for basic customization.

There aren't that many situations now where you have the need to edit PHP files in Divi Theme these days. And if you are not planning to add a lot of custom CSS or JavaScript, the chances are you don't need a child theme, because even if you do use custom CSS and a few JavaScript snippets, there are different places in Divi, where you can add this code. It doesn't necessarily has to go inside the child theme and we'll talk more about this in the next lesson.

How to create a child theme?

Now, let's look exactly how you can create a child theme. And you have a few options: you can create one manually, download the sample child theme you'll find where you watch this video, use a child theme generator, or use a plugin. I do want to show you how to build it from scratch, you can download the child theme we created from the download section, and I am sure a quick Google search will give you a few Divi child theme generators to use (but I haven't tested any, so can't recommend anything specific). There is a plugin I sometimes use - a Child Theme Generator, but usually, I just do it manually.

So child theme only really needs two files to work: the style.css file and the function.php file.

Style.css

Inside the style.css file, we need to include information about the parent theme so that they are connected, and we can add additional information which will be visible inside the WordPress Appearance page.

Functions.php

And the functions.php needs to include an enqueue function, which loads the parent theme and the child theme CSS.

Child Theme Thumbnail

We can also include an additional file: a screenshot.png (or jpeg) to display a child theme thumbnail in the in the WordPress Dashboard. And, you know, clients love to see their logo here. That is basically it.

Now, we can use the child theme style.css file for our custom CSS, and we can include additional files if needed. And all of the child theme files should be inside a folder which we can upload manually to our website through FTP, or we can zip it and then upload the ZIP file and just simply install the child theme from within WordPress just like any other theme.

So hopefully, this clarifies this topic for you a bit. Thank you so much for watching and see you in the next lesson.