

1. **What is baptism?** Baptism is a ceremony in which a person is dipped under water to demonstrate his or her faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism before witnesses is a *public* confession of one's *personal* commitment—an outward, physical sign of an inward, spiritual work.

Mark 1:4-5

⁴ And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a **baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. **Confessing their sins**, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

1 Peter 3:21

²¹ and **this water symbolizes baptism** that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but **the pledge of a good conscience toward God**. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

2. **Why should we be baptized?** There are two good reasons to be baptized: (1) Baptism is one tangible way to obey the Lord, who said that new believers should be baptized as a first step in their discipleship; (2) Like “show-and-tell,” baptism lets others know about the new life we have in Christ. It's the perfect time to invite others to witness your commitment.

Matthew 3:13-15

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; **it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness**.” Then John consented.

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ Therefore go and **make disciples of all nations, baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

John 4:1-2

¹ **The Pharisees heard** that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John,

² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.

3. **Who should be baptized?** Everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has asked for forgiveness of sins, and who has made a commitment to follow the Lord should be baptized. (Note: We *dedicate* babies to the Lord but do not *baptize* them since they do not yet have the capacity to repent from sin or make a decision to follow Christ. One should be able to understand both sin and forgiveness—as well as Jesus' sacrifice on the cross—before being baptized.)



Acts 2:37-38

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter replied, “**Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

4. **How should we be baptized?** The original New Testament word *baptize* literally meant “to immerse, to dip, to cleanse.” This is why we baptize by *immersion*—by dipping the person completely under the water. In this way, baptism signifies the burial of our old,

sinful nature (going under) and our resurrection to a new life in Christ (coming up). Baptism identifies us with Christ's death and resurrection. It is a symbolic picture of a spiritual reality—we have died with Christ and are now raised to new life in him.

Romans 6:3-4

³ Or don't you know that **all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death**? ⁴ We were therefore **buried with him through baptism into death** in order that, **just as Christ was raised from the dead** through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life**.

Colossians 2:11-12

¹¹ In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹² **having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead**.

5. **Is there a formula we should use for baptism?** Some emphasize the choice of specific words for the baptism ceremony, but we see the *spiritual* significance of baptism as being more important than any verbal formula. Typically, we simply use the words Jesus gave: “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 28:19

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**,

6. **When should we be baptized?** When a person first recognizes the need to surrender to the Lord, he or she should follow the Lord's instruction to be baptized. Baptism should be an early step of obedience for new believers. It is a mistake to think of baptism as a sign of Christian *maturity*. Rather, it indicates a change—a new direction for those who want to go God's way instead of their own way.

Acts 8:36

³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is

water. **Why shouldn't I be baptized?"**

Acts 22:16

¹⁶And now **what are you waiting for?** Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

7. **Do those baptized as infants need to be baptized again?** We admire those with the conviction to have their babies baptized, but we believe the Bible calls for something more. Baptism can be an early step in a person's journey of faith, after repentance from sin and receiving God's free gift of salvation. Those who confess their sins, receive Christ's work on the cross for their salvation, and turn away from their previous life are ready to be baptized. This *personal* decision goes beyond relying on a parent's faith.

Acts 2:41

⁴¹**Those who accepted his message were baptized,** and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 8:12

¹²But **when they believed** Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

8. **What are the results of someone being baptized?** Since we are saved by grace through faith alone, a person's salvation does not depend on baptism. But baptism identifies us with Christ—as though clothed in a new uniform. A person's spiritual growth and development can be hindered if he or she avoids this step of obedience. In addition, baptism can have a positive impact on others: your baptism encourages believers as you join them in following Jesus; it also challenges unbelievers to consider the claims of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13

¹³For we were all **baptized by one Spirit into one body**—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Galatians 3:26-27

²⁶You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷for **all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

9. **What will happen at the next baptism service?** You will receive detailed instructions about the procedures for the baptism service, which may vary from time to time. Feel free to ask the one doing the baptizing any specific questions you may have. You may want to ask the person who led you to the Lord or the one who has had significant impact on your spiritual life to baptize you.

As part of your testimony, be prepared to answer questions such as: *How did you decide to commit your life to Christ? How has the Lord worked in your life? What does being baptized mean to you?* You will be asked to fill out a card recording your personal information prior to baptism, which will be used to provide you with a certificate of baptism.

Wear a shirt or blouse (heavy or dark enough so it will not become see-through when wet) over a swimming suit. Also bring an extra change of clothes and a towel.

Want more information? Call the church office at 879-6765.

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"Helping each other take the next step on their journey with Christ"



Baptism Basics

Answers to Questions About Water Baptism

