

A Child's Guide to Baptism - -

This is a brief guide to help you understand baptism and figure out whether your child is ready for it. Use a Bible to look up the verses listed throughout this guide. (They are also printed on the last page.)

First things first: Baptism is a BIG deal. It is a one-time, grand announcement that you follow Jesus because you believe He rescued you. Except instead of telling people one by one, you show a whole lot of them at once . . . by getting dunked in and out of water. Kind of like wearing a jersey to show you're a fan of a sports team. Or wearing a ring to show that you're married.

Talking to your Child - -

Any person – kid or adult – who gets baptized should understand what he or she is showing others. In kid-friendly terms, baptism is kind of like saying:

I need a Rescuer - - Everybody has done wrong things. It all started when God told Adam not to eat from one tree in the Garden of Eden. God said, "for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17). Unfortunately, God's enemy, the snake, tricked Adam and Eve into thinking God didn't really love them. So, they chose to disobey him (Genesis 3:1-6). That's when death and all the wrong things in the world began. Adam and Eve eventually died. And now everyone who disobeys God – which is all of us – deserves the same punishment (Romans 3:23).

God sent a Rescuer - - God created us to love Him and be close to Him, forever. And He loved us way too much to let death stand in the way of that. So, He sent His own, perfect Son Jesus – who didn't deserve death – to take our punishment (John 3:16). But Jesus didn't stay dead; He came back to life. Jesus took our punishment by dying – and got rid of it by coming back to life. Since Jesus beat death, now death can't separate us from God anymore (Romans 8:38-39).

Jesus is MY Rescuer - - There is nothing any of us can do to make up for the wrong things we have done. Even if we do a million good things, it's not enough (Ephesians 2:8-9). But this rescue is a special gift God gives us all for free. And just like we must open presents if we want to see what's inside, we must decide that we want God's gift. Making that choice is like opening our present! When we do, God sees us as His very own children (John 1:12). That means we are close to Him again.

I follow Jesus - - Ephesians 5:1-2 says: "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Leading a life of love in this world full of wrong

things is not easy (Romans 8:17). And we'll definitely mess up sometimes. But . . . if we accept God's gift and do our best to live like Jesus, we will one day live with Him forever in a perfect, glorious world, where there's no sickness or sadness or death or anything bad. And that will be worth the wait (Revelation 21:1-4).

If a person – kid or adult – is ready to make that announcement, here's why he or she really should get baptized:

Most importantly, Jesus wants us to get baptized. After all, He got baptized (Matthew 3:13-17), and following Jesus means doing what He did. Also, He told people to get baptized in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Once we decide to follow Jesus (which is what it means to be a disciple) we should obey Him by getting baptized.

Baptism is a picture of Jesus' rescue. When we go under the water, it reminds us of how Jesus died and was buried – and we choose to get rid of (bury) our old life of disobeying God and not being close to Him. When we come up out of the water, it reminds us of how Jesus came back to life, which got rid of death – and now we can learn to live like Jesus did and do what He wants us to do (Romans 6:3-4).

Baptism is a picture of how we have been made clean by God. When Jesus rescued us, it was like He wiped away all the wrong things we had done, just like water washes away dirt (Psalm 103:10-12). The water in baptism shows people that we've told God we're sorry for all the wrong things we've done. We've asked God to forgive us and make us clean through Jesus (Romans 6:23).

Maybe all you really want to know is whether your child is ready.

Here's the thing: There's no "right" age or action to indicate your child is ready. It's hard to know exactly when anyone is ready because baptism is an outward expression of an inward choice to follow Jesus. So let your child initiate the conversation. Don't force baptism upon him or her or make your child think it's something that must be done before a person starts following Jesus; it's not. (Remember Ephesians 2:8-9: there's nothing we can do to rescue ourselves.)

If your child comes to you and asks about baptism, talk about what baptism announces to people and why we do it (you can use the outline above). If he or she can

express a personal understanding of baptism and still wants to take that step, great! If not, use the discussion as an opportunity to talk more about Jesus and His rescue.

Next Steps –

If your child has come to you and asked about baptism and, after your talk you feel that he or she is ready, there is a Preparing Your Child for Baptism Guidebook for you to go through WITH your child to fully prepare them for baptism.

You can download the guidebook – [Preparing Your Child for Baptism](#) here. Please take as much time as needed to go through the information so that your child fully understands the meaning of their decision. At the end of the guidebook your child will need to write his or her testimony. Here is a [Kid's Testimony Worksheet](#) to help them with the process.

Once you have completed the guidebook please download the [Baptism Registration Form](#) and fill in the Information. Then, let one of the Pastors know that your child desires to be baptized and give them the completed Baptism Registration Form and your child's written testimony.

Here are the Bible verses in the order they appear in the guide above (ESV):

Genesis 2:17 - - but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Genesis 3:1-6 - - Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said

to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Romans 3:23 - - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

John 3:16 - - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 8:38-39 - - For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - - For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

John 1:12 - - But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Romans 8:17 - - 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.

Revelation 21:1-4 - - Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

Matthew 3:13-17 - - Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on

him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

Romans 6:3-4 - - Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Psalms 103:10-12 - - He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Romans 6:23 - - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.