

Christ Church

Baptism Preparation Guide

Sacraments are ordinary material things that point beyond themselves to God the Creator. God created the world and called it "good." Further God took on human flesh (the "incarnation") launching Gods Re-creation. Jesus established water baptism and Holy Communion as the on-going sacraments of the church.

In baptism, we are not depending on the act itself, but on Christ with whom we are united. "Baptism is a God-given handle by which our faith embraces Christ."

Biblical passages that teach about baptism

Matthew 28 The Great Commission

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

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

Luke 3 Jesus' Baptism

²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Acts 2 The Birth of the Church at Pentecost

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles,

"Brothers, what should we do?" ³⁸Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." ⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Romans 6 A picture of death, burial, and resurrection to new life

³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.

⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:27,28 A new identity in Christ

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 2 New life by God's power

¹²When you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Frequently Asked Questions:

.. **Why is Baptism Important?**

Baptism and Communion are sacraments, “visible words;” “sermons to the eye” that communicate spiritual realities. Sacraments (or ordinances) do not accomplish spiritual results by themselves – apart from the truth of God’s Word and the power of God’s Spirit.

Baptism is important because it marks us as Christ-followers. It is like a vow of allegiance to Christ our Lord and Leader. Baptism is like a ceremony of initiation; a “drama of our willing decision to enter into a new lifestyle based on a relationship to God through His Son.” “Baptism is an outward confession of an inward commitment to be Christ’s disciple.”

.. **What does Baptism signify?**

Washing, forgiveness accomplished
Identification with Christ and His Body the Church
Transfer of ownership (“into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”)
Death, burial, and resurrection with Christ
Being sealed with the Holy Spirit – belonging to God

.. **Who should be baptized?**

Those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior from sin and death and who desire to be His fully devoted followers should be baptized.

Many devoted Christians through the centuries have practiced the baptism of infants of believing parents. The Evangelical Covenant Church in holding to the necessity of new birth in Christ and to the unity of the church, allows for both believer and infant baptism as well as infant dedication. It must be understood that this kind of infant baptism is not a substitute for personal faith and commitment and may be followed by a time of publicly confirming faith in Christ. Those who choose the service of dedication of infants delay baptism until the time when the child consciously believes and understands the meaning of following Christ.

.. **How should baptism be done?**

The practice of the early church (and Judaism) was probably immersion in water. This symbolizes the death to the old life and being raised to new life. However other methods like pouring or sprinkling have been practiced in the church as they also picture washing, the out-pouring of God’s Spirit, etc.

.. **How do I need to prepare for my baptism?**

Be prayerful, asking the Lord to use this step in your life to confirm and strengthen your faith.

Words at the time of baptism – Each person will be asked to share briefly that they are followers of Christ and the personal importance of this step of baptism. Write out your thoughts. You can memorize or read your testimony or have someone read it for you. See the outline following.

At the time of Baptism, you will be asked to respond to questions similar to these:

Question: Do you renounce the evil powers and sinful desires that would draw you away from the love of God?

Question: Do you put your whole trust in the grace and love of Jesus your Savior and Lord?

Other details: Wear bathing suit or shorts, and a shirt. There will be 2 people (1 on either side) to hold you as you go under the water. You will be under for only 1 or 2 seconds. Normally we have you go backwards. Some prefer to bend forwards. If for some reason – you cannot go under the water we will pour the water over your head as you kneel down.

After the baptism, you will be handed a towel, we will pray for you, and then you can stand with loved ones and friends to watch as others being baptized.

Other instructions will be given at the time of baptism.

Telling Your Story at Baptism

An “ABC” of sharing your story is to aim at being **A**udible, **B**rief, and **C**hrist-centered. It is recommended that you not mention specific churches or denominations in your background, especially if you see your experience as less than positive.

1. **Past** - what was your life like before your awareness / exploration of Christ?

2. **Process** - how did God work in your life to bring you to the greater awareness and experience of Christ? (experiences, or the way in which your faith became ‘your own.’)

3. **Change** - what are some ways that God has transformed your life and continues to make a difference in and through you?