



# baptism





# A Parent/Child Guide to Baptism

*This is a brief guide to help you understand baptism and figure out whether or not your kid's ready for it. Use a Bible to look up the verses listed throughout this guide. (We've also printed them on the last page.)*

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**First things first: baptism is a BIG deal.** It's a one-time, grand announcement that you follow Jesus because you believe He rescued you. 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.

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# What is baptism?

The Bible tells the story of what Jesus did for us and how we can receive the gift God is offering to us.

## **Romans 6:1-14 (The Message interpretation)**

**6 1-3** So what do we do? Keep on sinning so God can keep on forgiving? I should hope not! If we've left the country where sin is sovereign, how can we still live in our old house there? Or didn't you realize we packed up and left there for good? That is what happened in baptism. When we went under the water, we left the old country of sin behind; when we came up out of the water, we entered into the new country of grace—a new life in a new land!

**3-5** That's what baptism into the life of Jesus means. When we are lowered into the water, it is like the burial of Jesus; when we are raised up out of the water, it is like the resurrection of Jesus. Each of us is raised into a light-filled world by our Father so that we can see where we're going in our new grace-sovereign country.

**6-11** Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call! What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection. We know that when Jesus was raised from the dead it was a signal of the end of death-as-the-end. Never again will death have the last word. When Jesus died, he took sin down with him, but alive he brings God down to us. From now on, think of it this way: Sin speaks a dead language that means nothing to you; God speaks your mother tongue, and you hang on every word. You are dead to sin and alive to God. That's what Jesus did.

**12-14** That means you must not give sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives. Don't give it the time of day. Don't even run little errands that are connected with that old way of life. Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full-time—remember, you've been raised from the dead!—into God's way of doing things. Sin can't tell you how to live. After all, you're not living under that old tyranny any longer. You're living in the freedom of God.

# 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 was created by God.** I was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), and God loved me even before I knew how to walk or talk (Jeremiah 1:5). God created me because He wants to be my friend, my savior, and my leader. The way God created me is good (Genesis 1:31).

**Sin entered the world.** 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, “If you eat its fruit, you are sure to 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 anyone who disobeys God—which is all of us—experiences the effects of sin in our lives, including death. (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 offer us a way to live forever with God (John 3:16). But when Jesus died, He didn’t stay dead; He came back to life. Jesus defeated sin and death by dying and 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’s nothing any of us can do to make up for the wrong things we have done. There is nothing we can do to earn God’s love (Ephesians 2:8-9). God loves us because that’s who God is. God’s rescue is a special gift God gives us all for free. And just like we have to open presents if we want to see what’s inside, we have to decide that we *want* God’s gift. Making that choice is like opening our present! When we do, God helps us see that we are His very own children (John 1:12).

**I follow Jesus.** Ephesians 5:1-2 says: “You are the children that God dearly loves. So be just like Him. Lead a life of love, just as Christ did. He loved us. He gave Himself up for us. He was a sweet-smelling 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)

# why get baptized?

If a person—kid or adult—is ready to make that announcement, we are ready to celebrate. Here are some reasons given in Scripture for why we practice baptism.

**Most importantly, people get baptized because they love God and want to follow Jesus.**

**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 to the people of all nations and make them My disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you.” Once we decide to follow Jesus (which is what it means to be a disciple) we get to celebrate baptism just like Jesus did. We are baptized into the name of all three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

**In Baptism we are participating in Jesus’ death and Jesus’ coming back to life.** When we go under the water, it reminds us of how Jesus died and was buried—and we choose to get rid of (or 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 (Romans 6:23). 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 (Psalm 103:10-12).

# Is my child ready?

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

**Here's the thing: There is no "right" age.** A child is ready when they can tell you they have accepted God's gift in Jesus and they want to follow Jesus their whole life. 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 has to 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.)

But if your kid comes to you and asks about baptism, talk about what baptism announces to people and why we do it (you can use the outline on page 4). 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.

# FAQ: Parents

## **If my child was baptized as an infant in another church should he/she get baptized again?**

Your child's infant baptism was certainly a very special moment for your family. But at Mill City Church, infant baptism is similar to what we call "child dedication." Once your child personally comes to an age where he/she can decide for his/herself to follow Christ, believer's baptism is the next step. Perhaps you also were baptized as an infant. Don't be afraid to get re-baptized as an act of worship and obedience to Christ. Getting baptized with your child is an incredible milestone to celebrate and share together.

## **Does the water wash away our sins?**

Children are concrete-thinkers. So it is common for kids to equate baptism to a "spiritual bath." While that metaphor is great, there's nothing special about the actual water that is used for baptism. The Bible is clear that we are saved by God's grace, not by baptism, not by our own works. Baptism is not salvation; Christ's death on the cross is really what washes away sins and pays our debt.

It's better to think of baptism like this: baptism is for Christians what a wedding ring is for a husband/wife. Most people who are married wear a wedding ring. The ring shows everyone that they're married. The wedding ring doesn't make someone married. It's just a symbol. In the same way, being baptized is an outward symbol of the change that's been made on the inside. Baptism shows everyone that you have believed and trusted God.

## **What if I, or my child, still believe it's a technicality?**

If you're holding off on being baptized because you feel it is unnecessary, take some time to examine your motives and pray for God to help you grasp His heart on baptism. Ask yourself, "Why is it that I don't want to be baptized? Am I willfully disobeying?" If you're waiting for God to directly prompt you to be baptized, you need not wait any longer. He already makes that challenge to each Christ-follower by His Word.

## **What if my child is afraid of a crowd?**

If your child would like to be baptized but is afraid of speaking in front of a large crowd or having a bunch of strangers watch his/her baptism, please don't let this deter you or your child. Simply contact the Family Life Pastor and we can arrange for your child to share his/her story on a video that will be shared with the congregation on the day of the baptism. This way your child can still be baptized publicly but doesn't need to speak in front of a large group of people if he/she prefers not to.



### **What should my child wear when they are baptized?**

Boys can wear a t-shirt with their swim trunks. Girls can wear a t-shirt over their swimsuit or can simply wear a t-shirt and shorts. Be sure your child wears shoes of some sort. There are sharp rocks along where we step into the river.

### **Who will baptize my child?**

You and your child can choose which of the pastoral staff you'd like to baptize your child. You and/or your spouse can also help baptize your child – if you've also been baptized yourself.

### **What does Mill City offer parents who want to raise Christian children?**

While infants can't choose baptism, we do give parents an option for guiding their children in toward personally choosing a relationship with Christ. Parent-Child Dedication is a time of public and personal commitment where parents promise to raise their children with godly principles, so that one day when they are ready and understand, they will choose to accept Christ. If you are interested in dedicating your child, contact the Family Life Pastor ([anne@millcitychurch.com](mailto:anne@millcitychurch.com)).

# FAQ: Kids

## **What should I wear?**

You can wear a t-shirt and shorts. Boys can wear a swimsuit and t-shirt. Girls can wear their swimsuit under baggy t-shirt, or can simply wear a t-shirt and shorts. \*Make sure you wear shoes! There are sharp rocks on the bottom of the river and you won't want to accidentally cut your feet.

## **What should I bring?**

A towel, some dry clothes, Swimming shoes or a pair of shoes that can get wet, and flip flops or a dry pair of shoes to wear afterwards

## **Who should I invite?**

Mom and dad (of course!)

Brothers and sisters

Grandmas and Grandpas

Aunts and Uncles

Other family members and friends you want to share in this special day

## **What should I say?**

You'll be asked two simple questions:

\* Have you chosen to trust Jesus as the Leader of your life and Savior from your sins?

\* Do you commit to live your life so that others will know you are a follower of Jesus?

All you need to do is answer "yes" to both.

## **Who will be in the water with me?**

A pastor from Mill City Church – whichever one you'd prefer.

And if you'd like, your mom, dad, or other family guardian – just as long as that person has been baptized.

## **Can I hold my nose when I go underwater?**

Yes. The person baptizing you will show you how.

## **Does baptism make me a Christian?**

No. Your trust in Jesus as your rescuer and leader makes you a Christian. Baptism is simply a way of showing everyone that you believe in and trust Jesus as your Savior.

# Tell Your Story

Please write a paragraph or two describing how and when your child decided to follow Christ, using the following questions to help them articulate their own story:

When did you decide that you wanted to follow Jesus? Where were you, who was with you, how did you feel?

How would you describe who Jesus is and what he means to you?

Have there been any situations where Jesus has helped you or made a difference in your life?

child's name


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

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make human beings so that they are like us. Let them rule over the fish in the seas and the birds in the sky. Let them rule over the livestock and all the wild animals. And let them rule over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed you in your mother's body I chose you. Before you were born I set you apart to serve me. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.

Genesis 1:31 God saw everything he had made. And it was very good. There was evening, and there was morning. It was day six.

Genesis 2:17 But you must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you can be sure that you will die.

Genesis 3:1-6 <sup>1</sup> The serpent was more clever than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. The serpent said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden'?" <sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, "We can eat the fruit of the trees that are in the garden. <sup>3</sup> But God did say, 'You must not eat the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden. Do not even touch it. If you do, you will die.'" <sup>4</sup> "You can be sure that you won't die," the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> "God knows that when you eat the fruit of that tree, you will know things you have never known before. You will be able to tell the difference between good and evil. You will be like God." <sup>6</sup> The woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good to eat. It was also pleasing to look at. And it would make a person wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. And he ate it.

Romans 3:23 Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory.

John 3:16 God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.

Romans 8:38-39 <sup>38</sup> I am absolutely sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can do that. <sup>39</sup> Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation can do that. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God's love because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.

Ephesians 2:8-9 <sup>8</sup> God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. <sup>9</sup> It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it.

John 1:12 Some people did accept him. They believed in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God.

Romans 8:17 As his children, we will receive all that he has for us. We will share what Christ receives. But we must share in his sufferings if we want to share in his glory.

Revelation 21:1-4 <sup>1</sup> I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth were completely gone. There was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem. It was coming down out of heaven from God. It was prepared like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> I heard a loud voice from the throne. It said, "Now God makes his home with people. He will live with them. They will be his people. And God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sadness. There will be no more crying or pain. Things are no longer the way they used to be."

Matthew 3:13-17 <sup>13</sup> Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. He wanted to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to stop him. He told Jesus, "I need to be baptized by you. So why do you come to me?" <sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, "Let it be this way for now. It is right for us to do this. It carries out God's holy plan." Then John agreed. <sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened. Jesus saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. <sup>17</sup> A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him."

Romans 6:3-4 <sup>3</sup> All of us were baptized into Christ Jesus. Don't you know that we were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> By being baptized, we were buried with Christ into his death. Christ has been raised from the dead by the Father's glory. And like Christ we also can live a new life.

Psalms 103:10-12 <sup>10</sup> He doesn't punish us for our sins as much as we should be punished. He doesn't pay us back in keeping with the evil things we've done. <sup>11</sup> His love for those who have respect for him is as high as the heavens are above the earth. <sup>12</sup> He has removed our lawless acts from us as far as the east is from the west.

Romans 6:23 When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.