



valleychildren

Dear Children & Parents,

I am glad you have expressed a desire to be baptized! Since baptism is an important step in your walk as a Christian, I want to make sure that you clearly understand the meaning of this event. It is a time to publicly profess that you have asked Jesus to be your Savior and have decided to follow Him for your whole life! To be sure you are ready, you will need to go through the following steps:

1. Complete the attached packet and make sure to look up each of the Scripture verses. You and a parent should do it together. Be sure they have signed the parent consent form. Parents: Please read the article on children and baptism at the end of this packet taken from *The Faith of a Child*, by Art Murphy, published by Moody Press. You may want to get the book. It is great!
2. Part of this packet requires preparing your testimony. Be sure that you have completed that section.
3. Attend the baptism classes to review what you have learned, share your testimony and learn about the specific details of the baptism. Parents should attend with you. **Make sure you bring this packet!**
4. Meet with a church leader/deacon to share your testimony. Interviews take place on a Sunday morning a few weeks before the scheduled baptism. Have your parent(s) contact Lindsay Cooper in the church office at 860.673.6826 x122 to set up an interview time for you and your parent(s) to meet with a church leader/deacon.
5. During this interview, the deacon will help determine if you are ready for baptism. If it is decided that you are ready, then your parent(s) will need to contact Lindsay Cooper again to tell her which service you want to be baptized.
6. Invite your extended family and friends to the service that you'll be baptized! It is a great time to celebrate since this is a big deal! Don't forget a camera!

Sincerely,

Lois Hales
Director of Children's Ministry



Believer's Baptism

A Bible study for baptismal
candidates

Name _____

Date _____

Getting Started

Before you start to learn about baptism,
answer the following questions.

1. Why do you want to be baptized?

2. Who do you think should be able to be baptized?

3. What do you think is the reason we go under water to be baptized?

4. What does it mean to be a Christian?

Why Do People Get Baptized?

Let's start by looking in the Bible for our answers. Look up the following Scripture passages and answer the questions.

Read Matthew 3:1-6

Who was baptizing people in the Jordan River?

What did the people do along with being baptized?

So, we see that before people fully knew that Jesus was the Savior of the world, people were baptized to show they had repented or confessed their sins. That is part of why people get baptized today. But there is more.

Read Matthew 3:13-17

Who do these verses tell us was baptized?

Another reason people get baptized is to follow Jesus' example.

Read Matthew 28:18-20

What was Jesus telling His disciples to do?

Jesus commanded His disciples to go and make more disciples and to baptize them. So, another reason people get baptized is because Jesus commanded it, and if we love Jesus we want to obey Him!

Who Should be Baptized?

Look up the Scriptures and answer the questions.

Read Matthew 28:18-20

In order to be baptized, they had to be

Read Acts 2:41

What had the people done before being baptized?

Read Acts 16:30-34

What did Paul tell the Philippian jailer he must do to be saved?

From what was he going to be saved? See Matthew 23:33.

When was the jailer baptized?

Read Acts 10:34-48

Peter preached about Jesus to Cornelius and his household. At first he didn't want to baptize them because they were not Jewish. What made him change his mind?

So, in making your own conclusion after reading these passages, what must people do before they can be baptized?

Do these passages indicate that baptism should come before or after salvation?



What Does Baptism Mean?

Give some examples of symbols: _____

Baptism is a symbol of something that has already happened!

In the Scripture passage below, underline the phrases that show what baptism symbolizes.

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We 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. (Romans 6:3-4)

Three parts of being baptized symbolize something that happened in our lives. Draw lines to match the symbolism with the real event.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Getting into the water | Being buried with Jesus |
| • Going down under the water | Rising to new life in Jesus |
| • Coming up out of the water | Old self dying with Jesus |

Baptism is a public acknowledgement that the old man and his ways are

_____ (Romans 6:6) and the new man is raised to walk (live)

a _____ (Romans 6:4)

Read Galatians 3:27 below and fill in the blanks of the sentence underneath it.

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

It is by _____ in Jesus that you become a child of God. If you are _____ into Christ, you have Jesus covering you with His clothes, which is His righteousness.



What Other Things Are Important To Know About Baptism?

Water is needed, and the person being baptized must go under the water or be immersed. The original Greek work for baptism is *baptiso*. The definition is :“To make fully wet, to dip or immerse.”

Let's see examples of this in the Bible:

- Read John 3:23. What does this passage say about the amount of water present for John's baptisms?

- Read Matthew 3:13-17. Where was Jesus baptized? _____

It says, “Jesus came _____ of the water.”

- Read Acts 8:36-39. Phillip led the Ethiopian eunuch to faith in Christ. The Bible says they got off the chariot and went _____ the water, then came _____ the water.

What mode of baptism does this sound like to you? Circle the right answer.
Sprinkling on the head Pouring water over the head Immersion

Jesus commanded what name(s) to baptize others in.

- Read Matthew 28:19 and finish this phrase ... baptizing them in the name of the _____, in the name of the _____ and of the _____.
- From all the examples you have read from the Bible so far, do you think you can baptize yourself? _____

Baptism involves other people: the one baptizing and those witnessing it.



Let's Review

Circle the correct answer for each question below:

Baptism is a _____ of something that has already happened.

- A. confirmation
- B. symbol
- C. guarantee

In order to be baptized, a person must first _____.

- A. join the church
- B. do service projects
- C. make Jesus his or her Savior and Lord

Salvation from hell only comes through _____.

- A. faith in Jesus to take our punishment
- B. doing good works
- C. baptism

When a person asks Jesus to be his or her Savior, Jesus gives them a _____.

- A. new life
- B. guaranteed place in heaven
- C. both A and B

In order for someone to be baptized, he or she must _____.

- A. go under the water
- B. be baptized by someone else
- C. both A and B

People get baptized in order to _____.

- A. obey Jesus
- B. declare to the world that they want to follow Jesus
- C. both A and B

Answer true or false to the following questions:

_____ Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River.

_____ Baptism is what you need to do to go to heaven.

_____ People who have not asked Jesus to be their Savior should not get baptized.

_____ Going under the water during baptism symbolizes being buried with Christ.

_____ One thing baptism shows is that a person has decided to repent of his sins.

_____ You should be baptized in the name of the God and in the name of the church.

Answer the following questions with your own words:

Have you repented, confessed your sins to Jesus and asked Him to be your Savior and Lord?

When did you do that?

Writing Your Personal Testimony

INTRODUCTION

- Name: _____
- Age/Grade: _____
- School: _____
- City: _____

What was your attitude toward God before you became a Christian?

Examples: I didn't think much about Him.

I ignored His rules and lived how I wanted to.

I love Him but didn't know how to become His child.

1. _____

2. _____

Explain how you became a Christian. How and when did you learn of the "Good News"?

What did you pray to become a Christian?

In what ways is your life different now that you are a Christian?

What do you do regularly to grow stronger in your relationship with Jesus?

Tips for Writing Your Testimony

When writing your testimony, be sure to include the following:

- What was your attitude toward God or life before you became a Christian?
- Who told you about Jesus?
- When did you first realize that you were a sinner?
- When did you ask Jesus to forgive all your sins and become your Savior.
- When you did that, what did He give you?
(cleansing, new life, the Holy Spirit)
- If you asked Jesus to be your Lord, that means He is the Ruler of your life. Did you turn your life over to Him to rule? That means you will follow Him and His instructions. Explain this in your testimony if this is true for you.
- Lastly, what helps you grow as a Christian?

Here is an example of one boy's testimony. Don't use his words, but you can see if he included all the things I asked for above.

Before I became a Christian, I lived my life as I pleased. I didn't care what I did. And then, when I was seven, I went to Summer Bible Club. There they asked me if I had Jesus in my heart. So, I prayed and admitted I was a sinner and that I needed Jesus to forgive my sins so I could go to heaven. Jesus became my Savior that day and the Holy Spirit came into my heart and made me a new person. Jesus is also my Lord. So, now He controls my life, not me. I try to follow His commandments and read my Bible and pray so I can get to know Him better.

Baptism

Parental/Legal Guardian Consent Form

Please be advised that I, _____, being the parent
(name of parent and/or legal guardian)

and/or legal guardian of _____, hereby
(name of child)

authorize Valley Community Baptist Church to proceed with

_____’s request to be baptized by immersion
(name of child)

on the _____ day of _____, _____.
(day) (month) (year)

Respectfully submitted,

(Signature of parent and/or legal guardian)

(Date)

Was baptized _____
Was not baptized _____

Children's Application for Baptism by Immersion

Child's Name _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth _____ Today's Date: _____

Parent's Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone ____/____ Business Phone ____/____

Email Addresses: Home _____ Business _____

How long have you attended Valley? _____ years _____ months

Have you completed a baptism class at Valley? _____ If so, when? _____

Why do you want to be baptized? Please use the back of this page if you need more space.

Service you would like to be baptized at (indicate your first and second choice)*

Avon Campus Saturday 5 p.m. Sunday 8 a.m. Sunday 9:30 a.m. Sunday 11 a.m.

*Please note that every consideration will be given to your first choice, however we limit the number of individuals being baptized at each service due to time limitations. You will be contacted by the Outreach Administrative Assistant a week before to confirm the baptism service time.

In signing this form, I give my permission for my photograph (if applicable) and my testimony to be published (parent please sign if child is under 18).

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Church Leader Signature _____ Date _____

Church Leader Signature _____ Date _____

Deacon Signature _____ Date _____

Baptism Day

Where to meet:

Meet the deacon, in the prayer room, 15 minutes before the service.

The prayer room is located in the hallway next to the choir room, behind the Sanctuary.

What to Wear:

Wear comfortable clothing that can get wet.

Girls should wear a bathing suit underneath their clothing.

Girls will be provided with a robe, if requested.

What to Bring:

Bring a change of clothing, towel, hairdryer (if needed) etc.

If you have any additional questions, please contact the Outreach Administrative Assistant, Lindsay Cooper, at lcooper@valleycommunity.cc or 673.6826 x122.

**Excerpt taken from *The Faith of a Child*, by Art Murphy, published by Moody Press.
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Children and Baptism

One of the best ways we can strengthen a child's understanding of the gospel is by separating salvation from baptism. Baptism often seems to overshadow salvation, especially in churches with frequent baptisms, and that is confusing to our children. Many children put more emphasis on the baptism than the salvation experience because it is what they can see.

Many churches and parents, out of fear of holding a child back, allow them to be baptized the same day they pray or express an interest in becoming a Christian. Since most children see baptism as a part of salvation, it is good to separate the two. Baptizing a child before they have had a personal transformation is not biblical.

Please give children enough time to truly experience salvation before you even discuss or consider baptism. I am not recommending that you wait until your child is twelve before they are baptized. Just make sure that they can understand the difference between salvation and baptism. Sometimes it's not obvious whether a child has had a salvation experience. You may not be positive one way or the other. Wait to have them baptized as long as you can so that they have time to produce evidence that they have truly been saved.

If your child expresses a desire to be baptized, talk with them about their decision to become a Christian and the changes that have occurred in their life. After adequate time, if your child has demonstrated a real change, a true conviction of sin, and a genuine faith, and they understand the difference between salvation and baptism, then feel free to go ahead with the baptism. Don't feel pressured to baptize your child until you have had enough time to observe them.

Understanding Baptism

Our Jewish friends wait until a child is twelve before they are allowed to fully practice in worship. At this time they are presented to the Jewish community. There is wisdom in this. I would recommend that if your young child desires to accept Christ, don't discourage it. Just wait some time before they are allowed to go public. Give them some time to grow. Help them focus on salvation and what it means before they join the church, are baptized, or participate in the Lord's Supper. Many times these special events happen too quickly after a child's decision to become a Christian and do not give them time to understand, appreciate, and enjoy them.

The Bible does not teach that our job as parents starts when our children reach the age of twelve, though some parents fix in on that age. Nor does Scripture teach that our job is even over when our children reach the age of twelve. But many times we act as if our spiritual responsibility is finished when our child decides to become a Christian. We quickly shift to a baptism mode. It's sad when parents act as if their only job as parents is to see that their child gets baptized. You can almost see them spiritually "check out" within a month after the child has been baptized.

Parents don't always know what the proper response should be. Two problems often occur at the time a child begins to accept Christ:

- Baptizing a child too soon after his initial interest in becoming a Christian
- Doing very little to help a child grow once he has become a Christian

Our job as parents does not end when our children begin to ask questions about God. It is just beginning. Baptism is not the solution or proper response at this moment. Its effectiveness and purpose will come later. The responsibility for a child's spiritual understanding is on the parents' shoulders, and many do not want it. Some parents are worried about their child's decision and just want to get it over with. Others put the responsibility on the church and do not get involved. Some use their child's decision as a time to receive public recognition.

Baptism is an act of obedience, a very important act of obedience. However, it is not the only act of obedience, and children need time to understand and show signs of maturity before they are baptized. Give children the positive recognition and support they need at the time of their salvation. Then revisit that experience when they get baptized. That gives you two opportunities to spiritually encourage your child while providing the growth he needs between the two.

Infant Baptism or Infant Blessing?

Segments of the church have misunderstood the story of Jesus in the tenth chapter of Mark when He "took the children in his arms . . . and blessed them." They have used this to support their practice of infant baptism. If Jesus wanted us to observe infant baptism He would have told us. Jesus blessed these children; He did not baptize them.

What is wrong with baptizing infants or young children? Won't baptism help young children prepare to become Christians later? No. The Bible says that we must first repent of our sins before being baptized (Acts 2:38; 3:19). Infant baptism is based more on the covenant that parents are making than the child's own personal commitment to Christ. Baptism was never intended as a promise of things to come. It is a public confession of the personal repentance that has already taken place in a person's life. Many children are being raised to think that this act of baptism alone saves them from sin. But the Bible does not teach that.

Your church may practice infant baptism (or some form of dedication service) for the purpose of allowing a child's parents to make a covenant before God. You may want to participate in that type of service. But do not teach your child to equate that dedication service as the equivalent of his own personal baptism that will come later.

Baptism is not the same as a blessing. Baptism is a public confession of faith. Giving children a public blessing is a wonderful idea. It can be a very touching and powerful occasion of all who attend. Many churches do this through parent/baby dedication services. At this time the church recognizes the new baby, parents, and family. Usually, a pastor will publicly ask the parents to commit themselves to being godly parents and then pray for the child and parents by name. This should be a time for the parents to publicly dedicate themselves, their child, and their homes to the Lord.

God honors these special prayer services; however, a baby dedication service is more of a wake-up call for the parents and the church, not for the baby. This is not a time for babies to make a commitment or for parents to commit themselves to raising their child to know the Lord. It is a time for parents to say, "I will teach my child and live a life that will point my child toward Christ." We should not confuse the commitment a person makes when he or she becomes a parent with the commitment a person makes when he or she is being baptized.

We should look for ways and times to bless our young children. To bless means to make encouraging comments to them or say a prayer for them. We should pray for and encourage our children. These may be the greatest influences in our children's decision to accept Christ.

Proper Timing of Baptism

Baptism is often a sign of completion to a child. If handled incorrectly, it tends to say to the child and parent, "You have done everything now; you are finished." Baptism should not be used as a type of spiritual closure.

Baptism should also never be used as a status symbol. If a child (or parent) has the attitude "I have arrived" or "look at me" then he is not ready for baptism. Baptism is an act of humility, submission, obedience and celebration.

Parents should not be pressured or feel bad because their friends' children are being baptized. There should be no race or competition to see whose children are baptized first. We should each desire God's timing for our children. It is good to have a spiritual team that will give us advice about our children. Realities, friends, teachers, coaches, and pastors can also help as we look for signs of spiritual maturity in our children.

What should you tell a child who wants to be baptized if you feel he is not ready? "Just like God planned your birthday, He also has planned your baptism day. Be patient, and spend the next few months growing and learning. He will let us know when it is the right time. You *will* be baptized. God is preparing you for it. Baptism is one way of showing your obedience to God. But it is not the only way of showing obedience. God is still showing you what it means to be a Christian. One day He will show you what it means to be baptized. I am here to help you. Thank you for wanting to obey God with your life."

The church must decide what it will do about *children and baptism*. Parents and children both need help with this. The church should decide what ages it will baptize and what ages it will not baptize. It may want to handle each child on a case-by-case basis and not have a firm policy regarding age. But formulating some type of age guidelines will help the parents and teachers in your church. It will also help your pastor in his approach to meeting with children. Churches have a variety of beliefs about baptism. Some churches baptize babies, while others wait until the child is twelve. Other churches have no baptism guidelines at all. Churches should give parents (and children) clear guidelines on how they baptize children.

As a general rule, I recommend that you not baptize children who are younger than seven and a half years old or under second grade. Most children younger than that have not actually accepted the Lord. The Bible never specifically mentions children being baptized. It only mentions the baptism of men and women and households, which may or may not have included children. We know that children attended sermons. But we do not know whether they were baptized.