



***"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19)***

One of Jesus' last commands while on earth was that we're to be His disciples, baptized as believers. Just as Christ was dedicated as a child and baptized of His own free will later, we're to follow in His footsteps in our own journey with Him.

This is what we celebrate with great joy through our own baptism service.

## **What is baptism?**

Baptism is a significant event for anyone who has experienced God's grace and forgiveness and decided to follow Jesus. Everything in the service symbolizes God's work in our lives, identifying us as Christ-followers.

*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'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.*

*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. (Romans 6:1-11, The Message)*

**Baptism doesn't save a person from his/her sins, but it symbolizes the grace we have received from God.** As the verse above shares, part of being a follower of Jesus is identifying yourself with His death and resurrection. Baptism serves this purpose, as well as symbolizing the cleansing from sin and changing of our lives through God's grace.

For example, marriage depends upon a *commitment* and not just on circular bands of gold. Wedding rings do not marry a couple - they are fitting symbols, but without the reality of the commitment they are void of meaning. The same symbolism is true of baptism. What may outwardly identify you as a believer and Christ-follower does not make you one inwardly, but we shouldn't hold back from going public on something that's as incredible as this.



## Who should be baptized?

Contrary to some misperceptions, baptism isn't for highly advanced "super Christians." Rather, it is for ordinary people who know and have trusted in God's love for them personally through Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter what you've done in the past, but who Jesus will be to you from this day forward. This is shown in your life when you're ready to say:

- "I confess that my sins and sin nature has separated me from God."
- "I'm ready to stop trying to do things my way, for even my good deeds or religious activity will only take me so far. I need God's help."
- "I've reached the conclusion that Jesus Christ's death on the cross for my sins is the only thing that can bridge the gap between God and me."
- "I've decided to trust in Jesus for my salvation, and I invite His Holy Spirit into me to change me and lead me."

## What if I was baptized as a child?

Some people and churches baptize infants out of tradition. That's not bad, but keep in mind that the Bible defines baptism as for those who freely choose to follow Jesus. For those baptized as a child, it was likely the intent of your parents that you would one day be a follower of Christ. Your baptism now can be a celebration and culmination of that truth and in no way negates nor renounces your infant experience. Rather, it is often an opportunity to invite family and friends to celebrate the culmination of that hope they had for you, recognizing what God has done in your life.

## How do I know if I'm ready for baptism?

In the Bible we read that people were to not wait to be baptized but to do it right away and go public with their faith. Connection Church likewise encourages that anyone interested in baptism do the same, but not to rush into it out of mere pressure. Read through the Scriptures and talk with a pastor/leader before taking such an important step. In this way, individual concerns/questions can be addressed appropriately and in a timely manner.

Children and young teenagers should have the consent of their parents in order to participate, and the ability to articulate their faith without any prompting or questioning. No one is ever too young or old to take part in this awesome celebration, providing they have an understanding of what it means to God, His Church, and to themselves.



## What will happen at the baptism service?

Since baptism is an incredible symbol of what God has done in your life, expect a whole lot of support and encouragement from your Connection Church family! This is an incredible chance for us to not only lift you up in prayer, but also to hear your "story."



**Don't sweat this – it's just a brief slice/summary of how you chose to place your faith in Jesus, as well as what has happened in your life since. This is your "testimony" - one of the powerful ways we overcome the devil when he tries to deceive us with lies.**

Together, we'll celebrate how you are a *new creation!* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

### Some thoughts on preparing to share your story:

- Grow up somewhat distant from God? Consider writing along these lines:
  - Your life before Christ (How did you live differently or feel without Jesus in your life?)
  - How you came to know Christ (Who helped? Share a general idea of when it happened and what was your point of transition.)
  - Your life in Christ now (How has Christ changed you? How does He challenge you each day to grow even more?)
  
- Grow up near to God? Consider writing along these lines:
  - Your life growing up (How much was God a part of your family? Where did you attend church? What was your perception of God?)
  - How you came to personally own your faith (Who helped? Why the personal change? How did it happen?)
  - Your life in Christ now (How has Christ changed you? How does He challenge you each day to grow even more?).

### Other things to consider:

**You will get wet!** Please bring a change of clothes and towel, as well as appropriate dress for the baptism (Men: a dark t-shirt and a swimming shorts. Ladies: a swimsuit under a dark t-shirt and a pair of shorts)

**Invite as many friends and family as you'd like!** This is a great chance to share your faith with those in your life who've yet to become Christians.

### Please be on time and listen for your cue to get ready and change.

- Consider reading up on baptism from the Bible. Some passages include:
  - Mat. 3:13-17 (Jesus' baptism)
  - Acts 2:37-41 (church baptisms)
  - Mat. 23:16-20 (Jesus' words on baptism)
  - Acts 10:47-48 (one example)
  - Rom. 6:1-11 (identifying w/Christ)
  - Eph. 2:8-9 (salvation by grace)

# BAPTISM

## Thinking about getting baptized?

Please fill in the following and return back at least one week prior to the upcoming baptism.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Baptism quiz: (check the box if the answer is TRUE)

- I believe that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh.
- I believe that Jesus died on the cross for all my sins.
- I believe that Jesus rose again from the dead.
- I have personally asked God to forgive my sins through Jesus Christ and received His entire forgiveness into my life.
- I believe that because of what Christ did, I can have a growing, personal relationship with God that is guided by His Holy Spirit.
- Trick question: I believe that there are many paths to heaven besides Jesus.
- I believe that Jesus is the only way to God.
- I believe that I have a purpose on this earth that is unique to me and yet involves me being an active contributing part of God's Church.
- I believe that when I die I will spend eternity in heaven.

**The Big Picture:** The Bible says that once a person admits that he/she is a sinner and turns to Christ for forgiveness, he/she is now a "saved" and it's time to let the rest of the world know! Baptism has always stood as God's first public action for people who have moved from seeker to believer - from a lost sinner to a redeemed new creation. If you have come to this point in your spiritual journey, you are ready to be baptized!

### Fill in the Blank: (look up the passage in the Bible)

- Matthew 28:19-20** says: "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, \_\_\_\_\_ them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..."
- In passages such as **Acts 2:41, 8:12 and 10:47-48**, it is evident that baptism follows an individual's decision to \_\_\_\_\_.
- In **Romans 6:1-11**, the Apostle Paul explains the symbolism of the immersion mode of baptism (getting dunked under water). Share what at least one of these symbols are: \_\_\_\_\_.

**Now what?** Turn this form into the church or one of our lead team staff members. And start inviting all your family and friends... because that day is going to be AMAZING!