

Baptism

At Cityhope we believe that baptism is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to the believer's faith in the final resurrection of the dead.

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

Romans 6:4-5, ESV

Teaching children about the Lord is so exciting! There are lots of great places to start when explaining baptism. Here are some answers to questions your kids may have about baptism, some tips on how to help them understand this concept, as well as some material for your older kids to read themselves. We hope that this will be of benefit to your family, encourage conversations and ultimately support your child's decision to be baptized.

God Bless,

Pj Siobhan Gale + the City Kids team



Tips for Parents

How to Help Kids Understand Baptisms

Here are some common questions and practical solutions for how to help kids understand baptism:

Why is baptism confusing for kids?

- Kids hear “becoming a Christian” and “getting baptized” interchangeably or in the same breath.
- Some kids will not understand the depth of their sin or their need for a Savior but know that they want to love Jesus so they ask to be baptized. This can cause confusion later as they ask if they really knew what they were doing or if they just got baptized to get baptized.
- Kids are concrete thinkers, so understanding baptism as a symbol of Jesus’ death and resurrection is difficult to grasp.
- Often times kids will want to be baptized because their friends are or it’s a novel concept.

How can we clarify the confusion about baptism with kids?

- Talk to children when they are young about the difference between asking Jesus to be in control of your life and baptism as a symbol of that new life with Jesus. Talk about it often.
- Be clear when you talk about your own salvation experience. Make sure to explain that your heart was changed first, and then you were baptized to symbolize what had happened in your heart.

Tips to remember

- **Facilitate the conversation**, but don’t dominate it. Kids are naturally curious. Commit to answering every question, no matter how silly, and let your child ask lots of questions.
- **Remember, walking with Jesus is not a race.** Baptism is the first step after salvation for everyone, kids included. But it’s possible your child might not be ready. And that’s OK! It’s always better to wait than to pressure children to take a step they don’t understand.
- As parents, we often want to make things happen for our kids. Our hearts are in the right place. We want what is best for our kids. But baptism is about their faith, not ours. What we choose and they do might last for a while, but what they choose and they do will last forever.

Are They Ready?

Knowing if a Child is Ready for Baptism

Is my child too young?

Age does not limit the Spirit's divine work.

Young children who have been taught from the Bible find it easy to believe in Jesus, in miracles and in the supernatural. However, a consciousness of the sinful nature, and consequently their need to be saved, develops only as children become older.

Once children understand their sinful nature and sense their need for a Saviour, and once they have asked Jesus to forgive them and make them new, they will more easily understand the significance of Baptism.

What does the Bible say?

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children" Matthew 11:25.

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" Luke 18:1.

A Conversation

Usually the best way to gauge if your child is ready for baptism is to have a conversation with them on the topic, in which you can ask them questions to determine their understanding and motives. We've included some questions below that may help guide this conversation:

Questions that could provide insight:

1. Why would you like to be baptized?

Question asked to determine the motive or conviction to be baptized - e.g. to please their parents or to obey God.

2. Who should be baptized?

Question asked to clarify in the child's mind that baptism is a special act linked to salvation.

3. What is baptism for?

Question asked to determine the level of understanding about the symbolism of baptism.

4. Do you think that being baptized will make it easier for you to follow the Lord?

Question asked to ensure that the child is not disillusioned about the Christian walk after baptism.



Common Questions Children Ask

What is baptism?

Being baptized is a way of publicly letting others know of your decision to follow Jesus. (Mark 16:16)

Baptism takes place in the water. It's not only symbolic of what Jesus did when He took the punishment for your sins but also a visual picture of your relationship with Him.

When you go under the water, it shows people that you believe Jesus died for you. When you come out of the water, you show others that you believe God brought Jesus back to life. It also shows others that your old way of life is gone and you are a new creation in Christ. You've been "washed" clean. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *"If anyone belongs to Christ, then he is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new!"*

Does baptism make you a Christian?

Nope. It's just normal water in there. Baptism tells people you follow Jesus. It is a public profession of faith. Baptism is a step that you make after you have committed to following Jesus and have dedicated your life to Him.

Does baptism wash away our sins?

No! Jesus is the only one who can take away our sins. Baptism is a symbol of what Jesus has already done for us. It shows others that our lives are new and different because we follow Jesus.

**A great example to use is of married couples wearing wedding rings. The ring doesn't make them married. If they take it off they are still married. It just symbolizes their marriage and shows everyone else that they are married.*

Why do we get baptized?

We baptize to follow the example Jesus set for us. (Matthew 3:13-17)

It is an act of obedience and a testimony (it tells others) about Jesus.

Baptism is a celebration! You've joined God's family and are telling the world about that decision.

Who should get baptized?

Becoming a Christian, a decision is made in your heart when you understand that Jesus died on a cross to save you from your sins. Jesus has to transform you inside first, before you can tell everyone outside. Only those whose lives are transformed by Him should be baptized.

Baptism

Have you ever thought about being baptized?

Or maybe wondered what it even meant to be baptized?

Firstly, you need to know that baptism is step that you make **after** you have committed to following Jesus and have dedicated your life to Him.

You understand that Jesus died on a cross to save you from your sins. Jesus has to transform you inside first, before you can tell everyone outside. Only those whose lives are transformed by Him should be baptized.

Being baptized is a: **testimony** (a way of letting others know of your decision to follow Jesus).
act of **obedience**, (we are following Jesus' example: Jesus was baptized).
celebration! (let's celebrate you've joined God's family!)

WATER – a symbol of our sins being washed away and of our sinful self being buried.

When you go under the water, it shows people that you believe Jesus died for you. When you come out of the water, you show others that you believe God brought Jesus back to life. It also shows others that your old way of life is gone and you are a new creation in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *"If anyone belongs to Christ, then he is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new!"*

Remember!

Getting saved and then baptized doesn't mean your life will be perfect. There will be times when you will sin and make wrong choices. When this happens, pray and ask Jesus to forgive you. Jesus took the punishment for all our sin. That means even though you will sin again, you don't need to be saved or baptized again. (1 Peter 3:18)

You can continue following Jesus day by day by reading the Bible, doing what Jesus says and praying every day. (Psalm 1:2)