

Baptism



A Guide
For Parents

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A NOTE TO PARENTS

So your child is interested in baptism - or perhaps it is you who wants your child to be baptized. We are so glad you have picked up this booklet! It is designed to help you know when your child is ready for Baptism and also to help you in the important work of discipling your children. We are excited to come alongside you in training your children in the way they should go.

**YOU ARE THE PRIMARY SPIRITUAL
INFLUENCE IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE**

Let's be honest: parenting is really hard work. We constantly wonder if our kids are eating the right foods, getting the right amount of sleep, and making the right kinds of friends. We teach them to be kind, to take responsibility for their actions, and to work hard at whatever they do, but we often spend more time breaking up childish fights, discerning who really is to blame, and trying to motivate good attitudes for simple chores. In the midst of chaos, how should we train our children to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Take heart! Discipling your children is as simple as finding the right time, place, and plan. Making a habit of one daily meaningful moment (time) in a consistent space (place) with a resource like this (plan) can help you become a better disciple-maker. Our hope is that the process of preparing your children for baptism is one small step in your commitment to a lifetime of disciple-making. Whether your children are in diapers or in college, the time to start is NOW!

Baptism is an integral part of discipleship, and we are so excited that your child is interested in taking this step of faith. As you work through this booklet, you and your child may feel confident about proceeding with baptism, or you may realize more time is needed to be prepared. Regardless, conversations about baptism are an answer to our prayers as parents, and we can trust that God will complete the good work He has begun in us.

Please know, dear parents: We love you, we are praying for you, and we want to serve you as you disciple your children. May God bless your conversations and grant your family a passion for disciple-making for His glory!



ABOUT CHILD DEDICATION

Allow us to clarify the relationship between child dedication, salvation, and baptism. Child dedication does not save a child; salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone (Acts 4:12). Child dedication primarily acknowledges the parent's desire for their child to be saved. Child dedication is also an opportunity for the parents to ceremonially ask their local church to join them in discipling their child. While a parent's job is to disciple their children, child dedication acknowledges the Church's role in assisting parents with that responsibility, including teaching the children to know and understand the Scriptures so that they would come to understand the gospel and trust Christ for salvation. The Church also commits to praying with and for the parents and child and encouraging them in their pursuit to know and love Jesus. Once a child has professed faith in Christ, they are ready to be baptized.



WHAT IS A BAPTISM INTERVIEW?

We love celebrating baptisms at Severn, but we also understand the responsibility to affirm a candidate's complete understanding of the gospel and the meaning of baptism. The baptism interview is an opportunity for a Severn Covenant Church leader to determine whether candidates are truly ready to exhibit this outward sign of an inward change.

We especially want children to confidently understand what it means to follow Christ and to know that baptism symbolizes their belief in the gospel. We realize that children of Christian parents can often feel pressured - however unintentionally - to be baptized before they clearly understand the gospel and the meaning of baptism.

During the baptism interview, a Severn Covenant Church leader will ask a variety of questions in an effort to determine your child's spiritual understanding. The goal is to attempt to determine whether the candidate demonstrates a heart changed by Christ and intellectually understands the basics of baptism and the gospel.

By providing the interview questions, we hope you, as parents, will know what to expect during the interview and how to prepare your child. The questions are meant to spark spiritual discussions and help you identify areas or topics that may require additional conversation. If the questions reveal that your child is confident in his or her understanding of baptism and the gospel, we look forward to the interview.



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Here are some questions you may want to ask your child as you consider baptism. Feel free to adjust and shape these questions or to add your own.

- What do you already know about baptism?
- Have you seen a baptism at church?
- What happens during the baptism event?
- Why do you think people clap after the baptism?
- How does watching a baptism make you feel?
- Has anyone else in our family been baptized?

We encourage you to share your conversion story and your baptism story with your child. Your testimony is a powerful opportunity to clearly model your faith in the gospel as well as help your child to understand how baptism symbolizes belief in the gospel.

Since understanding and believing in the gospel is the first step towards baptism, you may want to discuss the following questions to help determine your child's understanding of the gospel.

- What do you already know about the gospel?
- What is the gospel message?
- What does the gospel have to do with baptism?
- What is sin?
- What is the consequence of sin?



BAPTISM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions will be asked during the baptism interview. We have also provided suggestions as to how you might discern your child's understanding. Our objective is not verbatim responses, but we desire to help you as you discuss baptism with your child.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO GET BAPTIZED? Parents, consider what is motivating your child. Is it a sincere desire to obey Jesus or is it something else?

WHAT IS BAPTISM? It is an outward sign of an inward change. Baptism is to salvation what a wedding ring is to marriage. Baptism is merely a symbol of a commitment made to Jesus.

WHAT DOES BAPTISM SYMBOLIZE? Going under the water symbolizes our death with Christ. Coming out of the water symbolizes our resurrection with Christ (Romans 6:3-4). The water represents the blood of Christ that washes us white as snow (1 Peter 3:21).

WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED? Jesus was baptized (Matt 3:13-17). Jesus commanded it (Matt 28:18-20). Peter commanded it (Acts 2:38).

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED? Only believers (Acts 2:41, 8:12). We do not practice infant baptism.

HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED? All the way under the water. The original word means "to immerse" (Acts 8:36).

The interview also will include questions that will help us determine your child's understanding of the gospel. Again, the answers are to help you as parents, and your child is not expected to memorize them.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? The gospel is the good news of what Jesus has done on our behalf. He died for our sins, was buried and was raised on the third day. (1 Cor. 15:3-4). This amazing news has implications for every area of life.

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL? We must repent of our sin and trust in Jesus (Mark 1:14-15, Acts 2:22-41, Acts 20:17-38, Acts 26:12-29).

WHO IS JESUS? God's Son (Matt 3:17, 1 John 4:10). Jesus saves us from our sin (John 3:16-18, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 John 4:14). Jesus is our Lord, the boss of our lives (John 21:7, Acts 2:36, Romans 1:4).

HOW ARE WE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD? Only through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection. Our sin was not swept under the rug. Our sin was paid for by Jesus on the cross. When we repent of our sin and trust in Jesus, all our sin goes onto Jesus Christ and Jesus' righteousness is given to us. A great trade is made: Jesus takes our sin and gives us his righteousness.

IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO ON OUR OWN TO BE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD? Absolutely not. Consider asking, "What if I am a really good person, give my money away, or go to church and follow the rules, etc..." (Acts 4:12).

WHEN DID YOU SURRENDER TO CHRIST? Seek to identify when your child decided to make God the boss of their life.



NEXT STEPS

How did it go? If your child needs more time before they have adequately understood this material, continue the conversation until your child comprehends baptism and the gospel. On the other hand, if your child is ready to proceed with the baptism interview, please sign up at www.severn.cc/baptism. Once we receive the sign-up form, the leader will contact you to set up an interview with your child. We also would encourage your child to share their faith story with other spiritual mentors. Encourage grandparents, neighbors, or friends from your community group to follow up with your child about baptism.

Do not forget to celebrate this very important faith step with your child. Like the angels, we can celebrate with the evidence of saving faith demonstrated in a public baptism (Luke 15:10). Regardless of where you are in this disciple-making journey, our hope is that this booklet will motivate you toward a lifelong focus on discipling your children for God's glory. We will continue to pray with you that God would bless your hard work. May your children one day tell your grandchildren - and may they tell the coming generations - of the glorious deeds of the Lord (Psalm 78:3-4).

**TO SEE
LIVES
TRANSFORMED BY
JESUS**



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