

Grow Series: Baptism

Welcome Question

“Why do Christ followers get baptized?”

Recap From Last Week *(Only do this section if you are using in a series)*

This is our third week of our Grow Series, where we learn how to grow as a follower of Jesus. The first week we talked about Worship and last week we talked about the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is an act we participate in that symbolizes the breaking of Jesus Christ’s body and the shedding of His blood on the cross for us and our sins. It is to help us remember His sacrifice, worship, pray and confess our sins.

Large Group Lesson

This week we are talking about baptism! Baptism is a very important act of obedience for a believer of Jesus Christ. But what is baptism exactly?

What is baptism?

Baptism is a visual picture of person’s relationship with Christ by going through His death (going under the water) and His resurrection (being pulled out of the water). It shows others that our old way of life is gone and now we are a new creation in Christ. We’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!”*

Now does baptism really wash away our sins? No! Jesus is the only one who can take away our sins. This is a symbol of what Jesus has already done for us. *(hold up your wedding ring)* Does this wedding ring make me married? No. I had to have a wedding ceremony and sign a legal document. This ring is a symbol, it shows people that I am married. If I take it off, am I still married? Yes. This is just a “picture” showing I am married. Baptism is a symbol. It shows others that our lives are new and different because we follow Jesus.

Why do we get baptized?

Our welcome question today asked, “Why do Christ followers get baptized?”. Let’s go over some of your answers. *(Go over their answers).*

Baptism is an act of obedience and a testimony (it tells others) about Jesus. That is why we believe we should be immersed (put totally under water) in baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We also do this because Jesus did it first. Jesus was actually baptized by a guy named John the Baptist. John was Jesus' cousin and his job was to prepare the way for the Messiah (as prophesied in Isaiah). He was telling everyone, "Hey, the Rescuer is coming!"

Let's check out in this video what the baptism of Jesus might have looked like:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMNO2MAmWA>

Now that we've got that picture in our head, let's read the story from Matthew 3:13-17

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; 17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

This was a major moment for a couple of reasons. 1) Jesus starts his official ministry now. No longer is he going to work for his earthly father, Joseph, as a carpenter. He's going to do His Father, God's, work and God is very pleased with him! This is also the start of Jesus' road to righteousness through His death on the cross. 2) Jesus is identified, by God's audible voice, that this is the anointed one, this is the Rescuer.

When we are baptized like Jesus, we tell everyone our true identity is now found in Jesus Christ. Jesus told the world with His baptism, "hey, I'm God's son, I'm the Rescuer" and we tell the world "Hey, I'm with him!" Romans 6:11 says, "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." Baptism shows to everyone that we are done with all that sin and alive in Christ.

Who should get baptized?

Does baptism then magically make you a Christ follower? Nope. It's just normal water in there. Becoming a Christ Follower a decision made in your heart when you understand that He 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.

When do we do baptism? *Please fill this section in with how your church does baptism. I have left my original lesson in as an example.*

Our church likes to celebrate baptism with one big service a few times a year. Anyone who wants to be baptized meets with a pastor to make sure they understand and can share their

story of how they became a Christ follower. Then, they get to share their story on camera. Everyone who gets baptized gets to talk about their decision on a video. This is really neat way to proclaim to everyone that you are now a follower of Jesus. It can also be a great witness to others and lead them to trust in Jesus as well.



Conclusion

Baptism is a celebration! You are joining God's family and telling the world about that decision. Jesus even told His disciples before He left them, "*Go therefore 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. Jesus wanted to add more to His family, he wants people to know of His sacrifice on the cross because He loves them so much. It can be a little scary getting up there in front of everyone, but it's important to proclaim to everyone that you belong to Jesus.

Close in Prayer

Grow Series: Baptism Small Group Questions

Discussion:

Introduce yourself and learn the kids names. Then use the following questions to lead a discussion.

- What is baptism?
 - *Baptism is a symbol that tells people you answered God's call to follow Jesus*
- Does baptism make you a Christian?
 - *No, it tells people you follow Jesus. It is a public profession of faith.*
 - *So when we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. We were buried with him so that we could live a new life, just as Christ was raised from death by the wonderful power of the Father.— Romans 6:4*
- Does the water wash away our sins like we can wash dirt off our body when we take a bath or shower?
 - *The water is a symbol of our sins being washed away and of our sinful self being buried.*
 - *If anyone belongs to Christ, then he is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new! — 2 Corinthians 5:17*
- Why do we get baptized?
 - *We baptize to follow the example Jesus set for us. It is an act of obedience.*
- Who was Jesus baptized by? *He was baptized by his cousin John the Baptist.*
- Why was Jesus being baptized a major moment? *1) Started His Ministry 2) Identified Him as God's Son, the Rescuer*
- Baptism is an important part of your relationship with God and it shows obedience to Jesus Christ. Baptism is not something we do because friends are doing it or because it looks kind of fun. We are baptized out of obedience and love for Jesus to tell everyone we are following Him.

Bible Challenge:

This week's Memory Verse: *"If anyone belongs to Christ, then he is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new!" 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Last Week's Verse: *"Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show others about the Lord's death until he comes." 1 Corinthians 11:26*

Kinder-1st Grade Mural Madness

Each small group will have a piece of poster board or large paper and markers. The leader will write the memory verse at the top of the page. Talk to the children about what the verse means. Then allow children to draw what the verse means. Leaders can even draw a line down the middle and instruct one side to be the "old things" and the other to be "made new". If time allows, practice the memory verse together.

2nd-4th Grade: Bean Bag Toss Verse

Each small group will need a bean bag and set of index cards with one word from the verse written on each card. The small group leader will spread the cards out in their area. One child at a time will try to land the bean bag on the first word of the verse. If they land on the correct word, they can pick it up. This continues until each word is picked in the CORRECT order. Children will assemble the verse as they go. After you complete one round, if time remains play again as a "speed challenge".

Prayer:

Ask children if they have any prayer needs and then close in prayer.

If time allows, return to Large Group. Choose one child to share what they learned for Large Group Recap.