



Are You Ready for Baptism?

Independent Bible Church

1) How do I know if I'm ready for baptism?

The short answer is that you are ready for baptism if you have entered into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The New Testament pattern is repent, believe and be baptized. In other words, the Bible assumes if you have become a follower of Jesus Christ, you declare these things by being baptized. If you aren't sure what that means, baptism will be much more meaningful if you receive some instruction in these areas. Baptism is the outward expression that the Lord Jesus appointed to declare to others what we believe about how He saves us and that we have received Him and the salvation He provides. What we believe must be based upon what we understand.

2) How do I prepare for baptism at IBC?

Complete this Baptism Packet. Hard copies are available at the Connect Counter on Sundays as well as from the Church office Monday – Thursday.

Review the outline entitled "the meaning and practice of baptism" included in the Baptism Packet.

Complete the "IBC Testimony Worksheet" included in the Baptism Packet. It is best to have at least one other copy for you to keep, as pastors and elders will want a copy for review.

Take the next step. To request a date and time to be baptized, contact Pastor Aaron or Pastor Tom.

3) What if I am afraid to speak during my baptism?

An important aspect of baptism is that it is done before witnesses. It is a public confession of faith in Christ, not a private, personal spiritual ritual. For some people, the fear of speaking before a large crowd (or even a small one!) is *the* reason they have put off being baptized. We are now videotaping baptism testimonies beforehand which are then shown during the baptism service. This is often preferable to speaking directly to the public as it allows for the opportunity of a "retake" if desired. We do our best to make you comfortable and prepare you to briefly share how you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. No one expects a polished speech at a baptism. Everyone understands a person being nervous when sharing during their baptism. We encourage many baptism candidates to read their written testimonies. It keeps them on track, helps them to be clear, and removes some of the fear of speaking. And the pastor doing the baptizing can help you "on the spot" as needed, by asking questions or helping you clarify. Again, simple, brief testimonies are preferred and more effective than long, wandering, or flowery ones.

4) If I was baptized as an infant, or before I believe I was really saved, should I be baptized again?

We believe the scriptures teach that baptism is for believers who can give a clear testimony of saving faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, if a person is convinced that he or she was baptized before truly understanding and possessing saving faith in Christ, it is not wrong, and may be helpful, to be baptized again. However, we would not press that decision upon anyone. Ideally, a person should study the biblical teaching on baptism (such as outlined in the Meaning and Practice of Baptism paper included in this packet), seek counsel, and make a choice they believe best fits the biblical pattern and their own conscience.

As for infant baptism, the principle that baptism is for believers who can understand saving faith in Christ and give testimony to their own faith in Him applies. An infant cannot believe nor testify to its belief. But we still desire for people who were baptized as infants to study the matter and come to a conviction of conscience through the Scriptures. Pastoral staff and elders are available to help.

5) What if my child or teen wants to be baptized?

It is a wonderful truth that many people have known Jesus from childhood. Jesus welcomed children in His days on earth, and He is pleased to save children now. At what age can or should a child be baptized? It depends on one's understanding and readiness to follow Jesus.

If you as a parent of a grade school child are convinced your child is ready for baptism, please contact one of the pastors for confirmation of the next steps. Parents of middle and high school students who believe their child may be ready for baptism should speak to our NextGen Youth Director, Will Gunn.

Baptism is a very significant step in anyone's walk with Jesus Christ. We want to help you and them make a wise decision about their baptism. Whether they are ready for baptism now or not, we have children's and student ministry staff who are committed to assisting you in the discipleship of your children and youth in knowing and following Christ.

The Meaning and Practice of Baptism

- 1) **Baptism is immersion *into* water:** this is the basic meaning of the word “baptism.”
- 2) **Baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord’s command and follows His example.**
 - a) Matthew 28:18–20
 - b) The Bible seems to know of no unbaptized Christians. Acts is full of references to baptizing those who had confessed faith in Christ. Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12–13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:37, 47–48; 11:16; 13:24; 16:15, 33; 18:8, 25; 19:3–5; 22:16.
 - c) Matthew 3:13–17, “...permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness...” Jesus submitted Himself to baptism.
- 3) **Baptism is a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus.**
Romans 6:3–4; 1 Peter 3:21.
- 4) **Baptism is a symbol of what God has accomplished in the life of the believer.** Romans 6:3–11; Colossians 2:9–14; 1 Peter 3:21.
- 5) **Baptism is a symbol of washing/cleansing from sin.**
 - a) Titus 3:5
 - b) Acts 22:16, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.”
- 6) **Baptism is a symbol of our entrance into the Body of Christ, the Church.**
1 Corinthians 12:12–13
- 7) **Baptism is a public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.**
 - a) In baptism we express, with our whole body, our heart’s acceptance of Christ’s Lordship. Becoming a Christian involves the body as well as the heart. In conversion, the heart is freed from sin to be enslaved to God. Since the Lordship of Christ lays claim to our whole body, it is fitting for us to express our surrender to His Lordship with our whole body “from head to toe.”
 - b) Romans 6:12–13; 12:1; Acts 2:38, 41.
- 8) **Baptism is only for believers.** In light of all the above Scriptural points, it is clear that baptism is only for those who have a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

What can give a believer genuine assurance?

- 1) Do I have a present trust in Christ for salvation? Am I trusting in Christ and His death and resurrection alone to save me? Am I confident He is a sufficient Savior?
- 2) Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?
 - a) The fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22.
 - b) The fruit of good works, Matthew 7:16–20
 - c) Believing the solid teaching of the Scriptures, 1 John 2:23–24; 4:6.
 - d) Day by day trusting in Christ; seeking Christ continually, John 15:4, 7
 - e) Obedience to God's commands, 1 John 2:4–6.
- 3) Do I see a long-term pattern of growth in my Christian life? Philippians 1:6; 2 Peter 1:3–11.

When you are baptized, you will share your testimony (see the Baptism Worksheet.) It should be brief. You can read it if you wish.

When you are baptized, you will be asked the following questions:

- 1) Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—both fully God and fully man?
- 2) Are you now trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins and for eternal life, because of His death and resurrection for you?
- 3) Do you renounce (forsake, turn your back on) the works of the world, the flesh, and the devil in your life?
- 4) Do you intend, with God's help to obey Jesus' teachings and to follow Him as your Lord?

IBC Baptism Testimony Worksheet

Today's Date: _____

Name: _____

Age*: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

I would like the following to assist in my baptism: _____

I have chosen to pray for me after I am baptized: _____

**If your child would like to be baptized, we suggest that you and your child talk to either Pastor Tom Lotz, who provides oversight to Christian Education for children in grade school, or Pastor Corey Durbin who oversees Student Ministries (middle and high school ages).*

Prepare your testimony and bring with you to the baptism class.

Please explain how and when you came to know Christ as your Lord and Savior. You can write this out in the space below. We encourage you to have a copy with you the day of your baptism. It will be best for many of you to read your written testimony rather than do it from memory. If you have questions about how to write out your testimony, please contact Pastors Aaron or Pastor Tom.

Here is an outline to help you draft your testimony:

1. Life before receiving Christ.
 - a. This may be non-applicable when someone has received Jesus as child.
 - b. Don't spend too much time emphasizing or glorifying sinful past.
2. How you came to receive Christ.
 - a. How you came to know your need for Christ.
 - b. Circumstances in which you received Him.
3. Life after you received Christ — changes He has made, what He means to you now!

Preparation for Videotaping Session

The pastor working with you will give counsel as to what to expect, and how to come prepared for your videotaping session. Bring your written testimony with you to your videotaping session, or email your testimony to the pastor working with you: Pastor Tom (tomlotz@ibcofpa.org) or Youth Director Will (willgunn@ibcofpa.org).

Due to live streaming of services and ability to find and watch services from our website, a signed media release is required. Please sign the appropriate version (Adult / Minor) (forms included in packet).

Items Needed for Baptism Service

Females

Please wear a bra, panties, socks, a heavy dark-colored t-shirt and fairly heavy slacks or jeans. You should also bring a large towel, a complete change of dry clothing and a plastic bag in which to take home your wet things.

Males

Please wear shorts, socks, dark colored t-shirt and fairly heavy trousers or jeans. You should also bring a large towel, a complete change of dry clothing and a plastic bag in which to take home your wet things.

Arrival Time

Please plan to meet at the church one-half hour before the beginning of the planned baptismal service.

Please contact one of our pastors with any questions about baptism. We look forward to helping you take this significant and faith building step in your life in Jesus Christ!



Independent Bible Church Minor Media Release Form

I certify that I, _____, am the parent, legal guardian, or other person in legal control of the below referenced children and request and authorize and consent to the use of images or videos of my child/children listed above, with or without their names(s) by Independent Bible Church, for purposes including but not limited to: promotional materials, printed publications, internet posts including social media, television, and other media sources.

I do this with full knowledge and consent and waive all claims for compensation for use or for damages. I release Independent Bible Church, its officers, trustees, employees, and agents from liability for any claims by me or any third party in connection with the use of the image of my child/children listed below.

Children:

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date



Independent Bible Church Adult Media Release Form

Participant's Name: _____
Last First Date of Birth Gender

Address: _____

Phone: _____

I hereby authorize the above and consent to the use of images or videos of me, with or without my names by Independent Bible Church, for purposes including but not limited to: promotional materials, printed publications, internet posts including social media, television, and other media sources.

I do this with full knowledge and consent and waive all claims for compensation for use or for damages. I release Independent Bible Church, its officers, trustees, employees, and agents from liability for any claims by me or any third party in connection with the use of my image.

Participant's Signature

Date