

MADE NEW*

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism declares to the world you've trusted Jesus, joined God's family, and made a commitment to follow Jesus, heart and soul. It's pretty special! If you have never been baptized after salvation, baptism is your first step.

Your decision to follow Jesus is personal, but it's not meant to be private. It's a decision that should be celebrated. Baptism is that celebration.

Like a wedding ceremony, baptism invites others to witness a commitment and celebrate a cherished personal relationship. It tells the world we are not ashamed of our commitment to Jesus, and we are willing to follow Him wherever He leads us ([Luke 9:23-26](#)).

After asking Jesus into our lives, baptism is the first way we demonstrate our willingness to obey God. Jesus left instructions specifying

that baptism should be the first thing all new believers should do ([Matthew 28:18-19](#)). Even Jesus submitted to baptism ([Matthew 3:13-17](#)). As the good news of Jesus began to spread, baptizing new disciples was the regular practice ([Acts 2:41](#), [Acts 8:12-13](#), [Acts 8:36-39](#), [Acts 16:31-33](#), [Acts 19:2-5](#)).



Why We Baptize by Immersion

Baptism is symbolic of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection ([Romans 6:3-11](#)). Being lowered into the water represents the death and burial of the sinful person we used to be. Coming up out of the water represents Jesus giving us a brand new start and the promise of eternal life with Him ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#), [Ephesians 2:4-6](#)).

Baptism is an important milestone in every Christian's life. **The water itself does not remove our sin or make us clean**, but baptism serves as a constant reminder that we now have a clean conscience before God because Jesus cleaned us of our sin ([1 Peter 3:21-22](#)).

Because of the spiritual implications of baptism, we fully immerse believers into the water. In fact, the word *baptism* means to be completely immersed into or surrounded by water, and every recorded example of baptism in the Bible describes believers being immersed into the water ([Mark 1:10](#), [John 3:23](#), [Acts 8:36-38](#)).

Six Common Questions Asked about Baptism

1. What is baptism?

Baptism is an outward expression of an inward change. It's a public declaration of how Jesus changed your life. Being baptized shows others that you've decided to follow Jesus, and allows them to celebrate this decision with you ([Acts 16:31-34](#)).

Baptism doesn't save a person; it's a symbol and celebration of salvation ([1 Peter 3:21](#)). The power that brought Jesus back to life is the same power Jesus uses to change our lives – and that's worth getting excited about!

2. Why should I be baptized?

Why does baptism matter? Jesus instructs us to be baptized and set the example by being baptized ([Matthew 28:19-20](#), [Mark 1:9](#)).

Obedience to Jesus shows we believe and follow Him. ([1 John 2:3](#)). Because Jesus went public about His love for us, we can go public about our love for Him. Being

baptized shows that we turn away from a life of sin toward Jesus, the only one who can change us ([Acts 2:38-41](#)).

3. When's the best time to be baptized?

For everyone who decides to follow Jesus, baptism is the next step. Anyone who commits his or her life to following Jesus is ready to be baptized ([Acts 8:12](#)).

4. Do you baptize children?

As parents, we can help point our children to Jesus, but they are the ones to decide if they will commit their lives to Him ([Romans 10:9](#)).

Any instance of baptism follows a person's decision to trust Jesus for his or her salvation and commitment to follow Him ([Acts 10:47-48](#)). At SVA Church, we wait until children are old enough to express their own decision to follow Jesus and understand the meaning of baptism.

If your child has already asked Jesus into their life, explain what baptism is and what it means. Facilitate the conversation, but don't dominate it. Read more tips for talking to your kids about baptism on the next page.

5. What's the difference between immersing, sprinkling and other ways of baptizing?

Baptisms in the Bible were by immersion. The original word for baptism most often referred to being immersed or submerged in water. Jesus was baptized by being immersed in the water and rising out of it ([Matthew 3:16](#), [Mark 1:10](#)).

Submersion in the water symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus ([1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#)). Being submersed underwater represents our death to sin and old way of life, and being raised out of the water is a picture of how Jesus raised us and gave us a fresh start in life ([Romans 6:3-5](#)).

6. Do I need to be baptized again?

If you haven't been baptized by immersion since you decided to follow Jesus, we want to help you take your next step of being baptized. Once you've taken that step, there's no need to be baptized again – even if you are coming back to Jesus and

following Him after a season of walking away. But, this is always a conversation we are open to having! Reach out to a Pastor today to begin this discussion.

Tips For Talking to Kids About Baptism



Being the primary spiritual influence in our children's lives is a big responsibility. These are the conversations we pray for, but when the opportunities come, figuring out where to start and what to say can be a little overwhelming.

- **If your child wants to get baptized, ask questions.** Baptism comes after salvation, so start with the basics: Can you tell me who Jesus is? What did He do for you? Here's one way to explain salvation in a way kids can understand:
 - God loves you! He made you and knows everything about you. ([Psalm 139](#))
 - When all people mess up and do wrong things, it's called sin that comes from inside our hearts. As a result of sin, our relationship with God has changed from what He created it

to be. But because God loves us so much, He sent His Son Jesus to take the punishment for us. ([Ecclesiastes 7:20](#))

- To follow Jesus, you have to admit that you're a sinner and that you've messed up. You tell God you're sorry and ask for His forgiveness. ([Acts 3:19](#))
- God loves you so much He sent His son Jesus to earth. Jesus took the punishment for the sin of everyone who would believe in him by dying on a cross. But Jesus didn't stay dead! God brought Jesus back to life. To follow Jesus, you have to believe Jesus died for you and that God brought Jesus back to life. ([Romans 10:9-10](#))
- Finally, we commit to following Jesus by praying a prayer similar to this:

God, I know you love me. I admit I have done wrong things and I am truly sorry. I believe in my heart that Jesus, your son, died for me and you brought Him back to life. I commit to following you. Jesus you are my leader, the Lord of my life! Amen.

- **If your child has already asked Jesus into their life, explain what baptism is and what it means.** Here are some suggestions and places to point to in their Bible:
 - Now that you've committed to following Jesus, you need to let others know by getting baptized. ([Mark 16:16](#))
 - Baptism takes place in the water. It's a picture of what Jesus did when He took the punishment for you sins. 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. ([Romans 6:4](#))
 - 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](#))
- **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.