Basics of Baptism

A Baptism Preparation Class Outline

This seminar provides the training outline for a series of three sessions lasting one and a half hours each in the period prior to participation in the service of baptism. While designed for teens and adults, the material also is appropriate for the parents of infants and small children who are presenting them for baptism or dedication. The leader of these seminars should fit the profile and requirements as outlined in the following document, Volunteer Job Description.

At the completion of these three sessions, the participants should have made a final decision about their readiness for baptism. The sponsors should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and promises of post-baptismal support. All participants should have a solid grounding in the theology and history of baptism as an entrance point into the body of Christ.

Session One: Biblical Foundations for Baptism

<Name of church> did not design or create the act of baptism as a way to get people to join the church. Through this act of worship, <name of church> joins in a tradition and practice that dates all the way back to the beginning of the church. And this service actually has its roots in the ancient Hebrew practice of presenting oneself clean before God. In this seminar, participants will consider the theological foundations of baptism so that they may know that this step that they are taking is a profound conclusion to getting right with God.

Content

- In the Old Testament, the Law commanded that faithful Jews wash themselves to be cleansed of dirt and dust from their surroundings. They also understood from the Law that they could cleanse themselves from disease, and ultimately, from sin. (Ex. 30:18; 40:30; Mark 7:1–23)

- John the Baptist called faithful Jews into the desert to retreat from the world and to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins as an act of repentance. (Mark 3:1–3; Luke 3:1–12)

- Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan—not to be cleansed from sin, but to fulfill the Law and to open the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit into a believer’s life. (Matt. 3:13–17)

- After Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension, the disciples baptized both Jew and Gentile to bring them into fellowship with God and with one another as the body of Christ. (Acts 2:37–42)

Questions

- How did you learn to wash with water? What was your bath experience like when you were a child? What do you think of the habit of bathing or showering more than once a day? Less than once a day?

- What does it mean to you to repent of sin? Does repentance happen only once in life, when you are baptized, or is it more of a Christian practice in your view?
Why is it important for baptism to be a public act in a principal worship service on Sunday, rather than a private act when others aren’t around?

What do you think it will feel like once you have gone through the act of baptism? How do you want to feel?

**Activities**

- Depending on the age of the participants, and the weather conditions, take on a car wash project for the church as a way of witnessing the power of soap and water to cleanse something—where they can see the “before and after” difference.

- Distribute a bar of soap and a washcloth (if possible, with the church’s name embroidered on it) as a practical application of the first lesson’s content.

- Pray together that God will give each candidate for baptism a spirit and mind of repentance. Pray that all who are baptized will feel truly included in the congregation as a part of the body of Christ globally.

**Session Two: The History and Practice of Baptism**

Every family has its set of traditions for special events and family celebrations. And every family has a heritage and a line of descendants. The congregation of <name of church> has a special pattern of observing baptism. But it has received this tradition from the <name of denomination or tradition> heritage and, even further back, from the long history of the Christian tradition in the West. This seminar will explore the background of the service of baptism at <name of church> and examine different attitudes towards the administration of baptism throughout church history. That way, all can understand why baptism is administered the way it is today.

**Content**

- From the New Testament, learn how the service of baptism became a point of entry into the Christian life and the receiving of the Holy Spirit—an entry point into discipleship and sacrifice.

- Learn how the early church administered the service of baptism once a year (in most cases) at the Vigil before the celebration of Easter—and that the theology was linked to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Consider also that the ability to receive Communion was dependent on baptism first.

- Explore how the growth and success of the church meant that baptism had to be administered more frequently, and that tribal and people groups would be baptized along with their leaders—and that this baptism included children and infants as well.

- Understand that infant baptism stemmed from the first centuries of the church, and provided a sense of safety for the child’s sold when infant mortality was frequent and fast.

- Think through the insights of the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the 16th century, with the conclusion that baptism involved a direct, personal decision by people with cognitive ability—not infants. Other branches of Protestantism, however, determined theologically that infants should continue to be baptized on the basis of parental and congregational commitment to see that the child would be raised in the body of Christ.
In these early years of the 21st century, a choice to receive the administration of baptism is a visible sign of a radical commitment to claim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Questions

- How is the 21st century commitment to baptism like the choice in the early days of the church for an individual to be baptized?
- For parents of infant candidates, what are the pros and cons, practically speaking, of infant baptism in this age? What challenges do parents face today when they make promises to bring up their children in the ways of Christ?
- What does it mean to live in a post-Christian age? How is a commitment to Christ, demonstrated in baptism, a radical step for a person to profess his or her faith?

Activities

- Discuss the Christian heritage of your family, if any.
- Describe how and why you found your way to <name of church>?
- Take some time to reflect on the nature of this Christian commitment in the life of the church. Write a “promissory note” to God that describes why you are making a public commitment to link with Christ in the waters of baptism at <name of church>.
- Join in prayer for all candidates for baptism, that they will grow in knowledge of the sacred nature of baptism in the history of the church, and the witness of their commitment in the 21st century.

Session Three: Baptism as an Act of Worship

In this seminar, participants will “walk through” the service of baptism. It will not be a “dress rehearsal.” Rather, it will be an opportunity to read together through the language of the service so that all may understand what it means for everyone present to experience a renewal of the baptismal covenant. In this way, participants can better understand that they are not simply presenting themselves to move through a routine, or to become a little wetter than normal, but to engage in a profound and meaningful act of worship.

Content

- Read through the Service of Baptism. Identify the specific actions of the Senior Pastor in leading this worship event.
- In reviewing the questions and answers asked of baptismal candidates (or those who speak on their behalf), emphasize that, in the early church, baptismal candidates would go through the rejection of Satan and all evil powers facing away from the body of Christ—and when publically committing to Christ, they turned towards the baptismal pool or font, and the Holy Table.
- Note that each service of baptism provided an opportunity for all Christians gathered in worship to renew their own baptismal vows.
- Note the blessing over the water of baptism, and help participants to understand that God does extraordinary things with ordinary, basic elements of life.
- Note the importance of baptizing persons in the name of the Trinity—the fullness of God.
Review how all present say the final prayer, “We receive you into the household of God….“ Note that, in this way, newly baptized persons are formally accepted into the body of Christ.

Questions

- Why do you think that it is important for Christians to renew their baptismal vows even after they have been baptized?

- Why do you think it is important to state formally and publicly that you reject Satan and all evil forces that rebel against God. Why can’t we assume that is what the person being baptized really wants without saying it?

- What is the meaning of the intercessions that follow the renewal of the baptismal covenant?

- What are some other ordinary things in life that God makes sacred? (Hint: remember bread and wine.)

- What are specific practices in <name of church> that help to make real the theology and history of baptism?

- Who are the individual candidates’ baptism sponsors? Why were they chosen? What is expected of them after the service of baptism?

Activities

- Walk through a rehearsal of the service and show people where they will stand, sit, and face the congregation. Where immersion is practiced, review the location for change of clothes and the use of robes, and when people should move from the sanctuary to change in and out of baptismal garments.

- Pray for each baptismal candidate by name and call for God to do a mighty work in each one who is being presented for baptism.
Baptism Preparation Class

Ministry Opportunity

The Baptism Preparation Class Ministry is open to individuals and married couples that wish to share their time and talent in a rewarding manner.

The Baptism Preparation Class Ministry prepares parents and godparents of children, and teen and adult candidates and their sponsors, that are to be baptized at <name of church> of the theological, parental, and community aspects of the celebration of the Service of Baptism in <name of theology or tradition>. Ministers are encouraged to witness to their faith and family traditions, share experiences in raising children and godchildren in the faith and in living out their faith as adults, and provide guidance for choosing godparents and sponsors. Baptism preparation classes are held each week for a three-week period, each session lasting approximately two hours. Baptisms are held on major Sundays throughout the year except during the season of Lent.

Responsibilities:

- Be a representative of the <name of church> faith community to a group of parents and godparents.
- Facilitate scheduled baptism preparation class sessions as assigned.
- Share your journey as a witness to your Christian faith.

Qualifications:

- Comfortable speaking to a group of adults.
- A good listener, hospitable, and able to relate to others.
- Able to learn and express the theology of baptism in the <name or type of theological position> and share your own faith journey.
- Striving to maintain an active prayer life.

Time Commitment:

- Approximately two hours per week for three weeks (three sessions).

Requirements:

- Be a faithful member of <name of church> and a mature Christian.
- Exhibit spiritual gifts of teaching, wisdom, and evangelism.
- Be open, flexible, and dependable.

Contact:
Baptism

<<NAME OF CHURCH>>

Editor’s Note: This booklet was adapted from a single church, which like any church has particular views of baptism: in this case, that it is an ordinance, for professing believers, to be done by immersion. Churches that differ on any of these points will need to tweak the document accordingly.
Introduction
You’re interested in being baptized . . . that’s great! We want to make your experience as meaningful as possible. Here are a few items for you to know as you take your first steps toward being baptized at <name of church>.

The Roots of Baptism
Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of the Christian church. An ordinance refers to a religious act that we do to express our faith. Jesus gave the early church the ordinance of baptism when He commanded the first church leaders to “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).

The concept of baptism goes back to the Old Testament law, which instructed ceremonial washing as a way to be cleansed from disease or sin. Washing was also part of the ceremony when people wanted to become Jews. They would strip off their clothing from their former life and bathe completely to symbolize leaving their old ways behind, purifying themselves, and accepting a new way of life under the Jewish law. After the washing, they were welcomed as new members of the Jewish community.

John the Baptist performed another type of baptism in the Jordan River. He preached repentance and called the Jewish people to purify their hearts and be baptized in preparation to receive the coming Messiah.

Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John. His baptism was unique because it was the culmination of all of the ceremonial washings that had gone before. Jesus said that His baptism was “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). All of the previous baptisms of purification and preparation came to a fulfillment when He was baptized. Through His baptism,

- Jesus linked Himself with those in the past who had purified themselves for His sake,
- He launched His messianic ministry, and
- He inaugurated a new kind of baptism that all future believers would follow—a baptism that was a symbol of your salvation.

Baptism as a Picture
Your baptism is like a mini-drama. As you are lowered into the water and drawn up again, you are acting out what happened to you spiritually when you trusted in Jesus as your Savior. Let’s take a closer look at your salvation to better understand the picture of baptism.

Salvation
The story of your salvation begins with your admission to God that you are a sinner. Your sin separates you from God and places you under His judgment. The penalty for sin is not like a fine that you can pay off with good behavior. Scripture states that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). That’s serious!

But God loves you and doesn’t want you to perish. So He sent Jesus to take the death penalty for you. He bore your sin on the cross and suffered the judgment that you would receive. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Jesus didn’t remain dead, though. He rose from the grave in victory over death and as a promise that one day we will follow Him and live eternally with Him after we die.

God’s only requirement is that you believe what Jesus did for you. “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31)

When you trust Jesus as your Savior, God spiritually unites you with His Son. The best word to describe this spiritual act is identification. God identifies you with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. When Jesus died, God considers you to have died; when He was buried, God sees you buried; and when He was raised, you are raised as well.

Spiritual Baptism
According to Scripture, your identification with Christ is a spiritual baptism.

Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Romans 6:3-4)

When God baptizes you into Christ spiritually, you don’t feel anything—you certainly don’t get wet! Even so, spiritual baptism is real. Water baptism is a way to physically experience what happens spiritually. It is an outward sign of an inward reality.

**Water Baptism**

When you go under the water, you can imagine yourself going into the grave with Jesus Christ. In the split second when the water washes over you, it’s as if you experience the death that your sin deserves. And then, in a flash, you are raised up—as if you are resurrected from the dead just as Christ was resurrected. Death has no hold on you just as it had no hold on Jesus!

The baptism drama pictures the new life that you have in Christ and the promise of life after death with Him in heaven.

**Baptism as Participation in God’s Family**

Baptism not only symbolizes your union with Christ as your Savior, it also represents your union with other Christians as your spiritual family. Your spiritual baptism includes the Holy Spirit’s work of joining you with Christ’s body, the church.

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Your union with all believers gives you a place to belong. And through the Spirit’s power, you receive spiritual gifts which you can use as you fulfill your role in the body of Christ.

**Baptism as Proclamation**

Baptism is a public event. It gives you an opportunity to display your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and your commitment to Him as your Lord. Making a proclamation in public of your faith solidifies what you believe in private.

If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9–10)

The person baptizing you often asks whether you have trusted Christ as your Savior and if you desire to follow Him as your Lord. Answer yes, boldly! Upon your proclamation of Christ as your Savior and Lord, you are then baptized.
Baptism FAQs

Is Water Baptism Necessary to Be Saved?

Baptism doesn’t make you a Christian; rather, it demonstrates the faith you already have. A person is saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9). To say that a person must be baptized in order to be saved adds a condition for salvation apart from faith.

If I Was Baptized as an Infant, Should I Be Baptized Again?

Your parents may have taken you before the church to be baptized when you were an infant. This rite is done by sprinkling and is thought to impart grace on the child’s life. Some churches view infant baptism as a dedication ceremony, and it is done in anticipation of the child’s future faith in Christ. Either way, infant baptism is not the same as believers’ baptism, which takes place after a person has trusted Christ as his or her Savior. If you were baptized as a baby we encourage you to consider reaffirming your faith in Christ as a public confession of your personal commitment that you have made to Christ. (We also encourage you to be baptized again as a sign of your faith commitment.)

Why Does <name of church> Practice <method of baptism>?

For churches doing immersion:

Most likely, Jesus was immersed when He was baptized by John, which would have followed the Jewish practice of complete ceremonial washing. Philip’s baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch is described as going “down into the water” and coming “up out of the water” (Acts 8:38–39). The best way to translate the root meaning of the Greek word for baptism is “dip, plunge, or immerse.” And, most importantly, immersion best pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Otherwise:

<Name of church> practices <method of baptism> because we believe that <theological rationale>.

When Should I Be Baptized?

Although baptism isn’t a requirement for salvation, it is a requirement for being a disciple of Christ. Jesus commands his followers to be baptized, and as soon as you can grasp what baptism means, you should be baptized. The model of the New Testament believers was they were baptized almost immediately after they were saved (Acts 2:41; 8:12–13).

What Do I Bring to My Baptism?

Bring a towel and a change of clothes. If you are baptized in the sanctuary, you can wear beach shorts or pants and a t-shirt or, for women, a white over your undergarments. You will be given a white robe to wear when you are baptized.

<Add another location and requirements for baptism in that place.>

The church office will supply you with a certificate of your baptism. Encourage your friends and family to attend . . . and take lots of pictures. This will be a day to remember!

Adapted with permission from the Soul Care Ministries at College Avenue Baptist Church, San Diego, California (www.cabc.orgt.)
Infant Baptism/Infant Dedication

Parent’s Guide to Christian Commitment

At <name of church>, we rejoice with you in the birth of your infant(s), or the adoption of a young child or infant, into your family. We know that you also desire to bring them into the body of Christ, and to give thanks to God for his goodness. You also desire his blessing on your child-rearing efforts, and the support of your brothers and sisters in Christ as you begin this journey in faith.

<Name of church> offers two options for presenting your child to the Lord for inclusion in the body of Christ, and as a first step in his or her Christian formation: **infant baptism** and **infant dedication**. <Name of church> is grounded in a theology and history that recognizes the value of each form of presentation of a child who is unable to declare a faith commitment directly. We also recognize that the parent(s) of a child come from faith traditions or points of view that may prefer one method over the other. We respect these different views. This guide will help you to understand the preparation and practice of each method.

At both the service of baptism and the service of dedication, it is the custom of <name of church> to invite all children present in the worship service to come to the baptismal area to have a close-up view of the actions happening to the infants and young children. In this way, children are reminded at their level of understanding about the nature of the commitment that parents and others are making to see that the child presented is brought up in the life of Christ in the church.

Infant Baptism

**Theology**

We believe that Christ spelled out the vital importance of baptism as Christ commanded his disciples in Matthew 28:19–20 to baptize all in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and to teach obedience to God’s commandments in order to support this relationship. In these words, Christ revealed God’s initiative to bring us to Him. We are his created people, redeemed in and through Christ, and sanctified by the coming of the Holy Spirit. The waters of baptism bring us into the community of faith, which can nurture and support a walk with Christ. Through water and the Word, we are brought into union with Christ,

Parents bring children into this world and acknowledge God’s grace. They receive this unmerited and prevenient grace on behalf of their children as a profound way of establishing the bond between the child and Christ himself. They and the child’s sponsors (or godparents) promise to sustain the child in this walk as the child not only takes the first steps in the flesh, but the first steps in the Spirit as well. Historically, the church has recognized that a parent has the authority to establish this relationship. As the child grows in cognitive ability and spiritual maturity, he or she can renew this commitment when preparing to take the next steps in the Christian life.

Baptism, we believe, is sufficient and unshakeable; it is a lifetime promise. Should a child fall away as he or she grows older, there are many times and many ways for him or her to renew this commitment to faith. The original act does not need to be repeated.
**Action**

In a principal Sunday service, the Senior Pastor (or another Pastor, by prior arrangement) will administer the act of baptism at the church’s baptismal area. All parents of children and infants to be baptized come together, and the remainder of the congregation remains in place, but joins in prayer, recommitment, and blessing. Baptism is administered in the child’s name as given by the parents. Each child is baptized with blessed water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A candle is given to each parent on behalf of the child to symbolize the light of Christ in the child’s life.

**Preparation**

Each parent, and the child’s sponsor/godparent, is asked to attend an orientation session lasting about an hour and a half and held about two weeks before the service of Baptism. This orientation session will help parents and godparents to understand the nature of the service, and to answer any questions that may be in mind prior to the service itself. This session is mandatory for all families in which children will be baptized.

**Infant Dedication**

**Theology**

We believe that a child is a special gift from God, and that Christ died for him or her and offers new life in him as part of the body of Christ. Following the lead of some in the Reformation, as well as the rise of the Anabaptist movement in the 18th century, parents may not believe that a child is capable of being baptized because baptism is an act of the will and a decision of the heart and mind to be made when a child “comes of age.” In many cases—and we agree—that age occurs at around seven years.

Nonetheless, parents who hold this view still desire to give thanks to God for the birth of the child and, like the Old Testament Jews presenting a male child for circumcision on the eighth day after birth, commit to raising him or her to become a faithful disciple.

**Action**

At a principal Sunday worship service, the Senior Pastor (or other Pastor by appointment) invites the parents of the child to be dedicated, together with sponsors, by presenting each child by name at the front of the sanctuary. The Senior Pastor then blesses each child by name and prays for the development of the mind of Christ in each one, and the fruits of the Spirit in a commitment to baptism at the coming of age. The members of the congregation join in a prayer of commitment to support the children in their growth in Christ.

Children in the congregation also are invited forward for this service so that they can witness first-hand the commitment that the parents are making, and to reflect on their own spiritual development and readiness for mature commitment.

**Preparation**

Each parent, and the child’s sponsor/godparent, is asked to attend an orientation session lasting about an hour and a half and held about two weeks before the service of Dedication. This orientation session will help parents and godparents to understand the nature of the service, and to answer any questions that may be in mind prior to the service itself. This session is mandatory for all families in which children will be dedicated.
Final Thoughts
Once you have made a decision regarding the steps you want to make regarding baptism or dedication, please contact the church office. You can learn more about dates in the church’s worship calendar when baptism will be administered and when dedication will be featured. You also can request that a form to register the child or children for the specific action you desire. You also will receive a schedule of dates involving education and preparation.

If you have any other questions, please contact the church office by phone or e-mail to set up an appointment or to ask additional questions. The phone is (123) 456-7890 and the e-mail is (insert e-mail address).

Adapted with permission from a brochure entitled What Does It Mean to Receive a Child Into the Church © The Evangelical Covenant Church.
Baptism Information Card

Name: ________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________ City: __________________ Zip: _________

Home Phone: (____) _______________ Cell Phone: (____) _________________

Email: _________________________________________________________

Describe how you became a Christian.

Why would you like to be baptized?

Used with permission from College Avenue Baptist Church, San Diego, California (www.cabcorg).
Baptism Process and Registration Forms

What's The Process?
If you are ready to get baptized, you will need to complete two steps prior to the baptismal service:

**Step 1**
Completely fill out all of the registration materials and return the forms to the church. We ask that you complete this by the appropriate deadline to help us plan our weekend service order and prepare to assist you in final arrangements.

**Step 2**
Prepare for practical elements of baptismal service such as: inviting family and friends, preparing your story, clothing, checking times and location, service logistics, etc.

**Step 1 – Baptism Registration Instructions**
We ask that anyone intending to be baptized at <your church> complete and return the Baptism Registration Form. The registration forms are included in this packet. Please fill them out and return them to the church by the Wednesday before the weekend baptismal service. Our baptismal services are usually the second weekend of each month.

Completed forms may be submitted one of three ways:

**Drop-off**
Drop off completed forms at <location>.

**Mail**
Send completed forms to:

<your church>
Attention: Next Steps / Baptism

1234 Road Name
Chicago, IL 60637

**Fax**
Fax completed forms to: xxx-xxx-xxxx
Step 2 – Prepare For Practical Elements of Baptismal Service

Prior to the baptismal service, we ask each participant to prepare in the following areas.

**Invitations**
This is a great occasion for you and we want others to celebrate your decision to follow Christ. Invitations are included to assist you in letting your family and friends know about this special event in your life.

**Preparing Your Story**
As a part of the registration process, we ask that you write two or three paragraphs describing how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation. It is helpful for you to recognize the difference Christ has made in your life. Some of the stories may also play a significant role during the baptismal service. It has been our experience that believers find these both encouraging and an opportunity for celebration. Seekers are also challenged by the spiritual journey of others.

**Check-in Times and Location**
<your church> has three weekend services: Saturday evening at 6:00 PM, two Sunday morning services at 9:00 AM and 10:45 AM. ** Due to the time restraints during the Sunday morning 9:00 AM service, we limit the number of participants for this service time. We are encouraging participants to be baptized in either the Saturday evening service or the Sunday morning 10:45 service. There are changing rooms / restrooms near the chapel for the men off the south hallway of the stage and women off the north side hallway of the stage. We are requesting each participant to be prepared at least 10 minutes before the service. The check-in location will be in the music room / creative arts office on the north side hallway of facilities near the chapel - behind the platform / stage. Someone will share with you concerning service order and assist you during this time.

Please note that this is a very busy area. Due to the expansion of the children’s ministry, there will be many kids walking through the north hallway in this area. Also, the musicians utilize this room before and during the service. Please be patient before and during this time. We are sorry for the inconvenience.

**Clothing Recommendations**
There is no specific attire required for water baptism. We ask you to wear modest and dark clothing for obvious reasons. Please bring your own towel.

**For Any Questions or Further Clarification**
Contact the church office at xxx-xxx-xxxx
Baptism Registration Form

Please detach the registration forms and return them to the church by the Wednesday before the weekend baptismal service. Our baptismal services are usually the second weekend of each month. This will help us plan our weekend service order and prepare to assist you in final arrangements.

We will contact you if there are any problems with your registration form. You may assume your form has been processed if you do not hear from us.

Registration - Please Print

Personal Information

Name ___________________________________________________________
Address ________________________________________________________________________________
City _______________________ State ______________ Zip ____________
Daytime Phone (____) _____________ Evening Phone (____) ______________
E-mail Address _______________________________________________________
Age ______________

Which Service Will You Be Participating In Baptism?

Please check a box for your choice of baptismal service:

- [ ] Saturday Evening 6:00 PM
- [ ] Sunday Morning 9:00 AM
- [ ] Sunday Morning 10:45 AM

Which Pastor Do You Prefer To Baptize You?

________________________________

Any member of the pastoral team may baptize you. Please check with them concerning their availability. Their phone numbers and e-mail addresses are included in the weekly bulletin. We will try to accommodate your preference; however this may not always be the case.

How Many Guests Will Be Accompanying You On Stage?

____________________________

You are welcome to come on stage by yourself. Some baptism participants ask a close friend, family member, or small group members to accompany them on stage for their baptism. If you are planning to bring more than 6 guests with you on stage, someone from the church will contact you.
With Which Church Ministries Are You Connected?

(Attending, serving, participating in a small group) Check all that apply.

- KIDSTOWN - Children’s Ministries
- Childcare Corner / Preschool
- YWAV Jr. / Sr. High
- FUSION 20-Somethings
- Young Marrieds
- Single Purpose
- MSG – Men Seeking God
- WINGS – Women In God’s Service
- Seniors Unlimited
- Small Groups
- Community of Care Support Groups
- Music & Creative Arts
- Crossroads Café
- Not currently connected in any ministry
- Other (Please specify) ________________________

Please Respond To The Following Questions:

1. How long have you been attending <your church’s> services? (Select only one.)

- Less than 12 months
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- More than 5 years

2. Where would you describe yourself spiritually when you first started attending <your church>? (Select one.)

- Cynic – Disbelieving
- Skeptic – Doubting
- Spectator – Observing
- Seeker – Searching
- Nominal Believer – Unsure
- New Believer – Recently Received Christ
- Growing Believer – Maturing
3. Approximately how long ago did you receive Jesus Christ as the one and only forgiver and leader of your life? (Select one.)

- Less than 12 months
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- More than 5 years

4. Who besides the work of the Holy Spirit, most influenced you to become a believer? (Select one.)

- Family member
- Friend
- Co-worker
- Church Service
- Small Group
- Other

5. What barriers prevented you from getting baptized sooner?

________________________________________________________________

6. Are you currently in a small group?

- Yes
- No

7. What, besides the work of the Holy Spirit, has mostly motivated you to get baptized at this time? (Select only one.)

- Family or Friends
- Pastoral Teaching
- Small Group
- Membership Process
- Church Announcement
- Bible Study
8. Looking back, what factors would have likely influenced you to get baptized sooner?

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<th>Less Likely</th>
<th>More Likely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Group Leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family / Friends</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible Study</td>
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<td>Other ___________________</td>
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Preparing Your Story

As a part of the registration process, we ask that you write two or three paragraphs describing how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation. It is helpful for you to recognize the difference Christ has made in your life. Some of the stories may also play a significant role during the baptismal service. It has been our experience that believers find these both encouraging and an opportunity for celebration. Seekers are also challenged by the spiritual journey of others. Please indicate whether you give the church permission to share your story during the services:

I give the church permission to share my story during the baptismal services:

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Have you ever made a personal decision to receive Jesus Christ as the one and only forgiver and leader of your life?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

When writing your story, be sure to explain it in such a way that someone hearing it would know what to do to become a Christian. Do your best to focus on these points:

➢ What was your life like before you decided to trust Christ?
➢ Describe how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation.
➢ How has this decision made a difference in your life?
Sample Announcement

BE BAPTIZED

January 25th
In the Gym

Please attend the Baptism Class on January 4

Used with permission from College Avenue Baptist Church, San Diego, California (www.cabc.org).
Sample Baptism Service

Service of Baptism

Editor’s note: This service order’s language might need to tweaked according to your church’s beliefs (“sacrament” instead of “ordinance,” for instance). The format may also prove too strictly liturgical for many congregations but could still offer ideas for how both the baptismal candidates and congregation can participate.

Presentation and Examination of the Candidates

The Minister says
The candidate(s) for baptism will now be presented.

Adults and Older Children

The candidates who are able to answer for themselves are presented individually by their sponsors, as follows

Sponsor I present N. to receive the ordinance of baptism.

The Minister asks each candidate when presented Do you desire to be baptized?

Candidate I do.

Infants and Younger Children

If the church permits the baptism of infants and young children, then the candidates unable to answer for themselves are presented individually by their Parents and Godparents, as follows

Parents and Godparents I present N. to receive the ordinance of baptism.
When all have been presented the Minister asks the parents and godparents
Will you be responsible for seeing that the child you present is brought up in the Christian faith and life?

Parents and Godparents  I will, with God’s help.

Minister
Will you by your prayers and witness help this child to grow into the full stature of Christ?

Parents and Godparents  I will, with God’s help.

Then the Celebrant asks the following questions of the candidates who can speak for themselves, and of the parents and godparents who speak on behalf of the infants and younger children

Question  Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?
Answer  I renounce them.

Question  Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?
Answer  I renounce them.

Question  Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?
Answer  I renounce them.

Question  Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?
Answer  I do.

Question  Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?
Answer  I do.

Question  Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?
Answer  I do.

The Minister addresses the congregation, saying
Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support *these persons* in *their* life in Christ?

*People* We will.

*The Minister then says these or similar words*

Let us join with *those* who are committing *themselves* to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant.

**The Baptismal Covenant**

*Minister* Do you believe in God the Father?

*People* I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

*Minister* Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

*People* I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*Minister* Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

*People* I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting.

*Minister* Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
**People** I will, with God's help.

**Minister** Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
**People** I will, with God's help.

**Minister** Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
**People** I will, with God's help.

**Minister** Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
**People** I will, with God's help.

**Minister** Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
**People** I will, with God's help.

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**Prayers for the Candidates**

_The Minister then says to the congregation_

Let us now pray for these persons who are to receive the ordinance of new birth [and for those (this person) who have renewed their commitment to Christ.]

_A Person appointed leads the following petitions_

**Leader** Deliver them, O Lord, from the way of sin and death.
**People** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader** Open their hearts to your grace and truth.
**People** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader** Fill them with your holy and life-giving Spirit.
**People** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader** Keep them in the faith and communion of your holy church.
**People** Lord, hear our prayer.
Leader  Teach them to love others in the power of the Spirit.
People  Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader  Send them into the world in witness to your love.
People  Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader  Bring them to the fullness of your peace and glory.
People  Lord, hear our prayer.

The Minister says

Grant, O Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ your Son may live in the power of his resurrection and look for him to come again in glory; who lives and reigns now and forever. Amen.

The Baptism

Each candidate is presented by name to the Minister, who then immerses, or pours water upon, the candidate, saying


When this action has been completed for all candidates, the Minister, at a place in full sight of the congregation, prays over them, saying

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon these your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen.
Certificate of Baptism

This certificate is evidence that

_____________________________________________________________

received the Christian ordinance of

Holy Baptism

with water, in the name of
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

on _______________________________ A.D. __________
at _______________________________

and thereby has been made a disciple of Christ
and a member of the body of Christ.

Pastor’s Signature _____________________________________________

Sponsors ______________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Date of Birth _________________________________________________

Name and Address of Church                                  Logo
The Service of Baptism

Sponsor’s Certificate

This is to certify that

______________________________

as

SPONSOR

to

______________________________

has accepted, with God’s help, the responsibility for seeing that this person is nurtured in the Christian faith and life and has promised that through prayer and witness will help this person to grow into the full stature of Christ.

on ____________________________

at ____________________________

during the Service of Baptism

______________________________

______________________________ Sponsors’ signatures