

PARENTING MATTERS:
SPIRITUAL MILESTONES

BAPTISM

LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

...a celebration! Your child has encountered God in a way that is so real, so powerful, so emotional, and so impactful that they want to take another step. They have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and they want to tell the world. There is a slew of questions ranging from salvation to age to understanding, but more than anything, baptism is about living a life for God and understanding the daily choices and the eternal impact of their decision. Your role is to walk your child through this process and help them determine if baptism is the right step. This milestone is about publicly declaring your faith in God and your commitment to follow him.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BAPTISM

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is a declaration to God and to other people that you are committed to following Jesus. During baptism you are submerged in the water and brought back up to symbolize your old lives being buried with Christ and emerging free from the penalty of sin to live eternally with God. This doesn't mean that sin doesn't matter, or that it won't happen, but it does mean that all sins have been washed clean by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Baptism is not salvation, but rather the next step in committing to become more like Jesus. The act of baptism is not an end goal; it is the beginning of a beautiful relationship with your Creator.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT IT?

The New Testament is filled with teachings and illustrations of baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13, 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16, Colossians 2:12). Jesus himself is baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, and when he is lifted from the water, the Spirit of God shows up and says, "This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17). In this story – which is mentioned in three of the gospels and referenced in the fourth – both God the Son and God the Father are recognizing, celebrating, and participating in the act of baptism.

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT TO US?

Baptism is a powerful declaration of a salvation commitment that has already been made. You cannot be saved by baptism alone, and you can be saved without baptism (for more information, check out the Salvation Guide). Baptism is significant because it's telling God and your community that you are changing your life because of your love for Christ. God gave us baptism so that we could celebrate our relationship with him through repenting, declaring our sins, admitting we aren't perfect, and committing to love, serve and follow him always.

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

BAPTISM OBJECT LESSON

Gather your family together and tell them that you're going to do an activity that will help you learn what baptism is. Pick one person to go first, gather the listed supplies, and follow these steps:

Supplies: roll of toilet paper, towel, bowl or bucket of water, large enough to fit a hand inside.

Say: Hold out your hand, I'm going to wrap it up in sin

Do: Wrap their hand in toilet paper about ten times, tight enough so that they can't wiggle their fingers

Say: Your hand represents how we are wrapped up in sin. Sin makes it so that we can't be free. Can you wiggle your fingers?

Say: Because of Adam and Eve's choice, we all sin. Our sin separates us from God. But! Jesus came to forgive our sins and bring us close to God again. When we accept the gift of salvation and believe that Jesus is our Savior, then we can be baptized. Baptism is a declaration to God and to other people that you are committed to following Jesus.

Do: Have them place their wrapped up hand in the water, then count to 20

Say: Can you spread your fingers apart? Try it, then pull your hand out and leave all of that sin behind.

Wrap Up: The Bible tells us that when we believe in God, we should be baptized as a way of telling others about our commitment. When we get baptized, we are obeying God's word. Through salvation and baptism we are forgiven of all our sins and we get to live our life with God. Baptism is like being buried in the tomb like Jesus, and being raised again with him.

ARE THEY READY?

To find out if your child is ready to be baptized, talk through these questions:

- What should someone do before they are baptized? (Know what Jesus did for them, accept his sacrifice, and trust in God)
- Why should someone be baptized? (To tell God and others about their commitment, and because the Bible tells us to declare our salvation publicly)
- When should someone be baptized? (When they are ready to follow Jesus with their whole heart and for their whole life)
- What commitment are you making when you get baptized? (To following, sharing his good news, making disciples for Jesus, staying close to him in prayer, reading your Bible for guidance.)

SCRIPTURE

Romans 6:3-5

Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS

Dear Lord, give us wisdom in leading our kids to know who you are and accepting your gift of salvation. Help us find peace along the journey and know that you are present and in control always. When the time comes that our kids truly realize who you are and what your Son has done for us, help us celebrate in a big way. We know that salvation and baptism are only early steps in an exciting spiritual journey that you have waiting for them. Please give us the wisdom and the patience to support and encourage them as they navigate what it means to live a life committed to following you. When we feel fear over their role or their future, help us rest on your provision and trust you fully. Amen.

RESOURCES

Lifeway.com - How to Explain Salvation and Baptism to Kids

MountainPark.org/Baptism



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