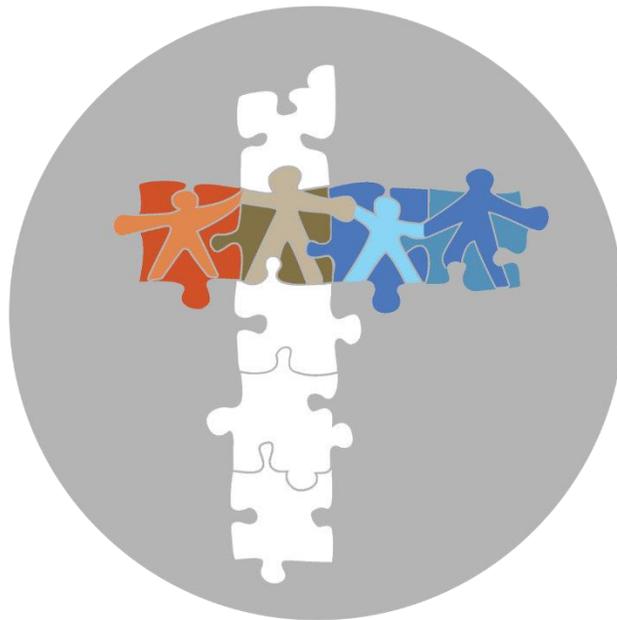


# Baptism Celebration Resources

A Collection of Templates, Models and Ideas for  
Lutheran Schools & Congregations from  
PSD Lutheran School & Congregations



PSD School Ministries  
June 2022



## Baptism Celebration Ideas

Baptism! What an event! Baptism Birthdays! What special days to celebrate what God has done for His children. Lutheran Schools! What special places to celebrate Baptism Birthdays or Faith Celebration Days!

Here are some ideas and thoughts on celebrating these milestones of faith!

- Assign school faith partners. Let each child create a napkin ring and placemat for the other to use at lunch on the Baptism or Faith Celebration Day. This project can span grade levels. All napkin rings and placemats can be made early in the year and organized for a timely distribution. Provide an extra special dessert for the faith partners to share.
- Upper grade children can make baptismal gift candles by melting used candles to be given as gifts to infants when baptized. The school child can even present the candle at the appropriate time in the worship setting.
- Use a quick-setting concrete to make stepping-stones. Each child can write his or her name and significant date in the mix. Special shells or other significant stones or items can be used. Add the stepping-stones to an outdoor walkway as the year progresses.
- Quilts can be made with class-assigned designs. The squares can be pieced and quilted by upper grade students and the presented by a school representative to infants at Baptism.
- Celebrate baptismal birthdays once a month at or after chapel. Call all teachers, students, and staff forward who have their baptismal birthday that month to receive a card and have a special prayer. Sing #238 in "All God's People Sing" hymnbook.
- Decorate the desk of the child celebrating, light a candle during class devotions as a remembrance of the candle lit at their baptism.
- Talk about the baptismal birthday gifts each child receives – Jesus' gift of forgiveness and eternal life! By faith we all celebrate together because in Jesus we all have these gifts!



## CHAPEL SERVICE - BAPTISM



### THE CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless a person is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."

**C: Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**

L: Let us worship our God, remembering the gift of Holy Baptism.

### THE INVOCATION

L: In the name of the Father,

**C: The eternal God, who has no beginning and no end, and all blessings flow from His Almighty hand.**

L: And of the Son,

**C: The Lamb that was slain, but now who lives and reigns forever and ever.**

L: And of the Holy Spirit,

**C: Who brings the fire of faith, and works the regeneration of the heart, Amen.**

L: Our Lord commanded Baptism saying to His children, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Surely I will be with you to the very end of the age."

**C: The apostles have said, "The promise is for you and your children," and "Baptism now saves you."**

L: Receive the sign of the holy cross both upon your forehead (+) and upon your heart (+) to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.

### HYMN OF THE DAY

**"FATHER WELCOMES"** (*All God's People Sing*, 94, © 1992 CPH)

### GOD'S WORD FOR TODAY

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON (*response spoken after lesson*)

L: Through Baptism God has called us to be His own people,

**C: To declare the wonderful deeds of our Savior, who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.**

L: The waters of Baptism remind us

**C: That our sins have been washed away!**

### THE GOSPEL LESSON

L: Let us read together how Jesus has opened the Kingdom of God to little children.

**C: People were bringing little children to Jesus to have Him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this He was indignant and said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."**

### THE HYMN OF PREPARATION

### SERMONETTE

### THE CONFESSION OF FAITH

L: What blessings does Baptism give?

**C: Baptism works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe, as the words and promises of God declare.**

# Baptism and Your Child

An explanation to parents about our beliefs  
and the practice of baptizing children

by

Pastor Steve Leinhos



*Then Jesus...said, "All authority in heaven and on earth  
has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples  
of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them  
to obey everything I have commanded you."*

*Matthew 28:18-20*

(Permission is given to personalize this and make it your own  
from your congregation/school)

Dear parents,

Thank you for sending your child to our Child Development Center! It is the privilege of our staff and myself to love, care for, and help in the total development of your children! We are honored that you place your trust in us to help them grow as *God's* children, for their joy and well-being.

Our mission is based on Jesus' command:

*"...go 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 also said,

*"Let the little children come to Me." Matthew 19:14*

Jesus wants little children to believe in Him and know Him as their personal Savior and Friend, and to be in His family and have eternal life in heaven. At our church and preschool, we believe that one of the ways God saves, forgives, and blesses children is through baptism. At New Community, we baptize infants and children as Jesus commanded and as Christians have done for many centuries.

This booklet is intended primarily for those who have not yet had their child(ren) baptized. *If you have already had your child(ren) baptized, please keep this booklet to help your child understand the importance of God's actions and promises to him/her through baptism, which will strengthen their faith in and love for God and nurture their lifelong relationship with Jesus and God their Father.*

For you parents who have not had your child(ren) baptized, please read the booklet to be better informed about this wonderful gift God gives for the spiritual well-being of your child(ren).

You are receiving this baptism booklet because it is our understanding, from the registration form you completed, that your child has not been baptized. If this is incorrect, please accept my apologies for the misunderstanding. Feel free to either keep the booklet as a resource to help your child understand baptism better or give to another parent who may benefit from reading it. If you would like additional copies, please let me know.

If you would like further information or be contacted, please complete and return the **Baptism Information Request Form**. Please feel free to talk with our director, \_\_\_\_\_, or myself, at your convenience. As pastor, I am happy to assist you in planning the baptism(s) and offer suggestions. I am available daytime at the church office Tuesdays through Fridays, and on Sunday mornings after our 8:30 and 11:00 worship services.

There is no pastoral or church fee for baptisms at NCLC. A free-will donation to the church is optional. If you want to send an email, my address is: [steveleinhos@verizon.net](mailto:steveleinhos@verizon.net)

God's blessings!

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At New Community Lutheran Church and Child Development Center, we believe that God loves us and all His children, and only wants what is best for us. We strive to communicate to everyone what God says about Himself and His promises.

"Show and Tell" is a student-participation method teachers use in classes, involving the students in helping other classmates learn what they themselves have learned.

In several ways, God "tells and shows."  
God **tells** us, "I am with you."  
God **shows** us He is with us by **sending Jesus**.

A "**visual**": the manger in which the baby Jesus was placed  
after being born  
God **tells** us, "I love you and forgive you."  
God **shows** us this by **Jesus' death on the cross**.

The "**visual**": the cross on which Jesus died  
God **tells** us, "I conquer death for you."  
God **shows** us this by **Jesus' resurrection from the dead**.

The "**visual**": the empty tomb from which Jesus rose  
God **tells** us, "I give you life in heaven, forever!"  
*"God so loved the world that He gave His one  
and only Son, that whoever believes in Him  
will not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16*

Jesus **tells** us:  
*"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved."*  
*Mark 16:16*

God **shows** us in baptism what He does through the promises in His Word: His action to save, forgive sins and give new life to a person.

The "**visual**": water baptism  
Notice in all these ways of "telling and showing," it is God who is performing His actions for us. Just as none of us "birthed" ourselves physically, none of us can "birth" ourselves spiritually. Only God can do that. Jesus said,  
*"no one can enter the kingdom of God  
unless he is **born of water and the Spirit**."* John 3:5

Only God can forgive sins, and the Bible tells us that God forgives sins through baptism:

*"be baptized every one of you...  
for the **forgiveness of your sins**" Acts 2:38*

### **Should I have my child baptized?**

In making this decision,

**1. Learn all you can about baptism.** Study the Bible verses and listen to God "speaking" to you. Evaluate your personal beliefs and why you believe what you do. If you have questions, I would be happy to talk with you about baptism.

**2. Prayerfully think about what is best for your child** and what Jesus would want you to do.

Our belief is that Jesus wants children to be:

- baptized (including them in "*all nations*" Matthew 28:19)
- saved, born again, receive forgiveness, and have the Holy Spirit (Mark 16:16, John 3:5, Acts 2:38-39)
- in God's family

*Jesus said, "Let the **little children** come to me...for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14*

*"...be baptized, every one of you... The promise is for you and **your children** and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:38-39*

I know of a pastor who personally opposed infant baptism until, through the encouragement of his wife, he studied the Bible and Lutheran teaching more carefully. After the birth of their daughter (their first child) he consented to have her baptized as an infant. What made the difference for him? My observation was that he decided to support what was best for his own daughter by allowing God to fulfill His promises for her through baptism!

### **Would it be harmful to wait?**

Not necessarily, providing you (as parents) are teaching your child about Jesus and reinforcing his/her faith (which is most important to our preschool teachers).

We teach that children can be saved without baptism (by believing in Jesus as their Savior and God's promises). Some parents prefer to have their children baptized later after they have been taught about Jesus and better understand the Bible and their faith.

Many parents, however, simply do not fully understand all the benefits of baptism for their children or procrastinate in spiritual matters.

### **Unless you have a very good reason, why wait?**

Christian parents living in the first centuries had their children baptized, a commonly accepted practice never questioned or opposed until the 16th century!

Consider the spiritual benefits of baptism:

1. God saves, forgives, and gives new life and His Spirit (to protect, teach, and lead us).
2. God gives assurances of His love and blessings which strengthen faith.

Having your child baptized now would help his/her faith development and be a cause for celebration!

Why not allow your child to have these benefits now or as soon as possible?

### **Why do we get baptized if we don't need it to be saved?**

Apparently, God thinks we do need baptism. For those youth and adults who have believed the Gospel, baptism is needed as confirmation to us outwardly what God is doing inwardly (saving us, forgiving us, giving us faith and new life) and as testimony of all He promises in His Word. Baptism visually shows us through physical means that a spiritual reality has occurred. Our human nature is prone to questions and doubts about our “conversion experience” and faith (“Do I really believe? Am I really saved?”).

Feelings and beliefs based on personal experiences are insufficient and may even be dangerous because they may lead us to put faith in ourselves and not in God or His Word. God knows this and gave baptism as a means of His unconditional love (grace) so that our salvation is certain!

Our relationship with God and our salvation is ultimately a matter of faith. Baptism reinforces and strengthens faith and God knows we need all the help we can get!

For young children, baptism is the primary means of God’s grace through which God saves, forgives, creates faith and new life for a person who is not able to rationally understand the content of the Gospel, but who has the capacity for faith. God’s promises apply to infants and children, too. Through baptism God “plants a seed” of faith in children’s hearts and He wants that faith to grow so each child will be a lifelong believer and disciple of Jesus.

### **But can children really believe?**

Yes! Bible verses to support this are:

*For you have been my hope, O LORD,  
From birth I have relied on you; Psalm 71:5-6*

*[Jesus said,] “little children...believe in Me.”  
Matt 18:2-6*

### **What happens at a baptism?**

Participants position themselves (seated or standing)

- pastor stands near baptism bowl
- person being baptized stands or is held by an adult to the pastor’s left
- others gather around

*Note: Parents stand together, and godparents stand together. Children are welcome to stand with parents.*

**Baptism Ceremony Order** (may be modified upon request)

1. Invocation and/or Opening Prayer
2. Bible Reading(s) with explanation of baptism
3. (optional) Sign of the cross
4. Blessing (as Jesus did; Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15 may be read)
5. Questions addressed to parents and godparents:
  - to testify of faith in the Triune God
  - to fulfill spiritual roles and responsibilities for child's spiritual guidance

*Pastor hands a lighted baptism candle in a stand to one of the godparents.*
6. Baptism  
*(child's head held face up over the center of the water)*
7. Prayer
8. Blessing
9. Presentation of certificate

**Optional**

Bible Reading by a family member (included with #4 above)

**What about Godparents (selected by parents)?**

**The Role and Responsibilities of a Godparent**

Godparent: "a person who sponsors a child at baptism, assuming responsibility for the child's religious guidance up to confirmation." (Webster)

This means that an individual makes a personal and public commitment and promise to be a child's Godparent, and by that commitment and promise, intends to fulfill the responsibilities for the benefit of the sponsored child.

To be a Godparent or sponsor is to:

- support the parents in order for them to fulfill God's will in parenting their child
- care for, teach, and encourage the child
- pray for the spiritual well-being of the child
- teach the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith if the parents are unable to do so

**Expectations for a Godparent**

In the Lutheran Church, Godparents or sponsors are also asked to publicly profess the Christian faith into which the child is being baptized and, thereby, agree with the church's teaching about baptism for infants and children based on the Bible, God's Word. A summary of our teaching about Baptism is available by asking the pastor.

It is not necessary for a Godparent to be a member of a Lutheran church. It is required that a Godparent be a professing Christian and have personal faith in God the Father, believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, and believe in the Holy Spirit as the 3rd person of the Trinity.

*Note: If a Godparent is unable to be present at the baptism, a proxy individual or couple may promise to fulfill the sponsorship responsibilities and profess Christian faith on behalf of the godparent(s). It is advised that parents communicate their desires and the church's teaching about the stated responsibilities to the absent Godparent(s).*

**If we want our child(ren) baptized, what do we do next?**

**1. Decide if you want a public or private service.**

A public baptism is held in a church worship service.

At New Community, we have three weekend services:

Saturday 5 p.m.

Sunday 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

A private baptism may be held in the church (usually Sunday afternoons, 1:00 or 1:30 pm), or at a home.

**2. Schedule the date, time & location by consulting with the pastor.**

**3. Select and notify godparents or sponsors.**

*The pastor may help if needed.*

**4. Complete a brief form for a baptism certificate and for church records.**

*A baptism request form is available by calling the church.*

## Baptism Information Request Form

Please complete and return this form to the school office.

- My child has not been baptized.
- I'd like to receive a booklet explaining more about Baptism.
- I'd like the pastor to contact me to talk about Baptism.
- I want to have my child baptized.

Child's Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Requests

I'd like information about:

- Sunday School
- how to become a Christian
- how to become a church member
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

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Parent name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Requests

I'd like information about:

- Sunday School
- how to become a Christian
- how to become a church member
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

### A personal message from Pastor Steve (*substitute your name and personalize*)

My wife Cathy (a teacher at our preschool) and I are the parents of three children. We realize they are really God's children, and that He has entrusted them to us as their earthly parents for a short time. Since these children are God's, we want to be faithful and obedient to His will and parent them as He would do (and also did for us through our own parents).

We believe that God wanted them to be brought into His family through baptism and that is why each of them was baptized as an infant.

Having each of our children baptized was our way of saying to God, "We believe You know what is best for us and for the children you 'loaned' us. Lord, we trust You at Your Word to fulfill all Your promises and that what You say is true and good."

This is the kind of faith we want to pass on to these precious children who will then, in answer to our prayers and through our Christian parenting, be God's human instruments to instill faith in their children beginning with their baptisms, and for future generations to continue in the Christian faith.

Your children are precious to you for whom you would only want and do the best for their happiness and well-being. They are also infinitely precious to God who wants and does only the best for them, and gives wonderful gifts through baptism. May God bless you as you entrust your children to His will and to know His love!

January 2022

Dear Circle of Love Parents,

On **Tuesday, January 25, 2022** at 9:30 a.m. our preschool chapel service will include the baptisms of children from our school's student body. This chapel will help kick off National Lutheran School's Week!

We are writing you this letter to extend to you the invitation to consider us the idea of us baptizing your child(ren) and to speak with them about it. If you have not been baptized, we also welcome you to be baptized as well. We know there are a lot of experiences and opinions on Baptism out there. For us, Baptism is **not** just a church tradition or religious act. It is a calling from God to be part of His family. It is an act of God. While God uses the church to carry out His will in Baptism, it is He who Baptizes. It is He who forgives sins. It is He who becomes the Heavenly Father of you, your child(ren) in Baptism.

It is in Baptism that God gives His promises of love and protection for His newly adopted child(ren). God wants to adopt your child(ren) through Baptism. Our entire congregation and especially our staff and students will count it a privilege to pledge to you our support as you bring up your child(ren) in the love of Jesus Christ.

If you are interested or if you have any questions, please feel free to call us. We are eager to talk with you. You can reach Pastor Bart at [pastor@first-lutheran.com](mailto:pastor@first-lutheran.com) or at the church office (310-545-5653) or Mrs. Durkovic at the school office at ext. 221. If you decide to celebrate a baptism with us, Pastor Bart would like to meet with you via zoom or a phone call to discuss our views and how chapel will proceed.

In the meantime, you may learn more at our school website:

<https://www.circleoflovemb.org/baptism>

May God bless and keep you as you make this very important and exciting decision.

Yours in Christ,

Nancy Durkovic

Pastor Bart Loos

October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Preschool Parents:

At Faith Community Lutheran Church and Schools, we make it a commitment every year to help our families grow in their relationship with their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

One of the great joys that our families, Preschool, Academy, and Church experience is when a child is baptized into the Christian faith. Baptism grants a new spiritual beginning in the life of a child! In baptism, God comes to dwell in a child and grants forgiveness to that child. In baptism, God gives the gift of eternal life to a child—the gift that Christ our Savior came to bring on that first Christmas, Good Friday and Easter.

Faith Lutheran Preschool would like to schedule a special Baptism event on **Wednesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>**, for families wishing to be baptized. During the event, your child’s classmates, and the attending families will be present. To keep in accordance with our social distancing guidelines, we will limit the number of classes and families in attendance.

Of course, baptisms can also be scheduled during any of our Church worship services or as a private baptism ceremony throughout the year.

To help families prepare or answer questions about baptizing their child, Pastor Bob is available to meet with parents. Meetings will take place at the Faith Community Lutheran Church Campus, 3505 South Town Center Drive, near the 215 on Town Center. Meetings will be scheduled with Pastor Bob. Please contact Pastor Bob to make arrangements. The meeting will last about 15-30 minutes, and gives you an opportunity to learn about baptism, the gifts that we receive in baptism, and how to live daily as a baptized child of God. You may also email Pastor Bob with any questions you may have about baptism. If you are interested in attending, or would like to find out more, please feel free to contact Pastor Bob at the Church 702-921-2700, [pastorbob@faithlasvegas.org](mailto:pastorbob@faithlasvegas.org) or Tonia Tate at the Preschool Office 702-921-2727, [tonia.tate@faithlasvegs.org](mailto:tonia.tate@faithlasvegs.org).

Blessings to you and your family!

In Christ,

Pastor Craig Michaelson  
Senior Pastor

Pastor Bob Sundquist  
Pastor of Discipleship

Tonia Tate  
Preschool Director

*\*\*We buy all the new students the book “God Makes Me His Child In Baptism”. Pastor Bob comes and reads it to the classes during Chapel. We send this letter out in the Spring and Fall. Pastor Bob makes time to be at the Preschool to answer questions parents have and when he meets with them, he offers for them to have the Baptism at our preschool so the child’s classmates can attend. We celebrate baptism birthdays with all our students during chapel and invite them up for a prayer and gift. \*\**



## Informational Packet

“He saved us from all that. It was all his doing; we had nothing to do with it. He gave us a good bath, and we came out of it new people, washed inside and out by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5, MSG).



5900 E. Santa Ana Canyon Rd. Anaheim, CA 92807  
(714) 637-0887 ext. 155

Dear parents,

First and foremost, it is a sheer delight for me to have the opportunity to share with you about the importance of Holy Baptism. In the waters of baptism, God marks us as His child. In this letter, I will attempt to answer, albeit very briefly, several questions about baptism. The questions are as follows: (1) What is baptism? (2) Why be baptized?, and (3) What benefits does baptism give? And finally, (4) what does Holy Baptism have to do with my daily life?

**What is Holy Baptism?** Centuries ago, Dr. Luther wrote these insightful words: “Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God’s command and combined with God’s Word.” God combines His life-giving Word with the waters of Holy Baptism, and thereby we are born of water and spirit. According to the New Testament Scriptures, *“Baptism now saves you” (I Peter 3:21)*

**Why be baptized?** There are many reasons to be baptized! First, our Lord commands baptism. In the book of Acts, we are told, *“Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins.”* It is not optional nor is it simply a nice “extra.” This is a commandment from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Matthew’s gospel tells us, *“Therefore go 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)*. Second, we need what baptism has to offer—namely—the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. To be sure, infants and children are both included in the words *“all nations” (Matthew 28:19)*. Like adults, infants and children are sinners that need what baptism offers. And finally, but certainly not least, Holy Baptism offers many wonderful blessings.

**What benefits does baptism give?** In Mark’s gospel, it says: *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”* In and through baptism, God cleanses us from all our sins, gives us eternal life, and snatches us from the power of Satan.

**What does Holy Baptism have to do with my daily life?** Our entire lives are lived trusting in the promises of God, given to us and through Holy Baptism. In times of suffering and temptation, life seems to be crashing in upon us, and when our sin and guilt haunt us, we say as Luther once said: *“... Pull out your Baptism and wave it in the devils nose and say, ‘I am baptized ... I have God’s bath.’ It is in Christ’s own blood.”* In baptism, we are given the grace, the Spirit, and the power to suppress the old man, so that the new man can come forth and grow strong. Therefore, baptism remains a precious gift throughout our lives, not just the day we are baptized.

As I said earlier, baptism is, indeed a wonderful gift! Today’s baptismal meeting will take about an hour and a half. During that time, we will look at the Christian teaching regarding baptism. In the course of our meeting, we will briefly discuss the service itself. Again, I deem it an honor and a joy to be able to share with you about the wonderful gift our Lord has for your children in baptism.

If after our meeting today, prayer, and thorough study of the materials in your packet you should have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at (714) 6347-0887 ext. 156. Or , if you wish, you may email me at aandrews@Hephatha.net

May the Lord Jesus Christ greatly and richly bless your family.

In Christ's service and yours, Pastor Arthur Andrews

## The Blessings of Baptism

1. **Forgiveness of sins** — Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16
2. **Salvation** — 1 Peter 3:21, Mark 16:16, Titus 3:5
3. **New Life** (regenerated, renewed, put off the old)  
**New Identity** (forgiven one, saved, clothed in Jesus Christ, His Child)  
**New relationship with Christ** (put on Christ) — see John 3:1-7, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 4:22, Romans 6, Titus 3:5,6
4. **The gift of the Holy Spirit** (i.e., the gift which is the Spirit) and the fruits or gifts of the Spirit. Acts 2:38,29, Acts 1:5, and 1 Corinthians 12, 14, Galatians 5:22, Romans 12:6, Ephesians 4:8, 1 Corinthians 1, Isaiah 11:2
5. **Membership in the Kingdom of God, the extension of His church.** See Acts 16:15, Acts 19:5,7, whole book of Acts.

Martin Luther's concluding comments on baptism:

**"Therefore, every Christian has enough in Baptism to learn and to practice 'all his life'; for he has always enough to do to believe firmly what it promises and brings: victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, the grace of God, the entire Christ, and the Holy Ghost and His gifts.** In short, it is so transcendent that if timid nature could realize it, it might well doubt whether it could be true. For consider, if there were somewhere a physician who understood the art of saving men from dying, or, even though they died, life of restoring them speedily to life, thereafter live forever, so that they would how the world would pour in money like snow and rain, so that because of the throng of the rich no one could find access! But here in Baptism there is brought **free** to every one's door such **a treasure and medicine as utterly destroys death and preserves all men alive.**

Thus, we must regard Baptism and make it profitable to ourselves, that when our sins and conscience oppress us, we strengthen ourselves and take comfort and say: Nevertheless I am baptized; but if I am baptized, it is promised me that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body. For that is reason why these two things are done in baptism, namely, that the body, which can apprehend nothing, but the water, is sprinkled, and in addition the Word is spoken for the soul to apprehend. Now, since both, the water, and the Word, are one Baptism, therefore body and soul must be saved and live forever; the soul through the Word which it

believes, but the body because it is united with the soul and also apprehends Baptism as it is able to apprehend it. We have, therefore, **no greater jewel** in body and soul, for by it we are made holy and are saved, which no other kind of life, no work upon earth, can attain."

## Baptism

Although baptism was not the first sacrament commanded by Jesus (communion was earlier), we discuss it first because it is the first one the believer experiences. As mentioned in our discussion of sacraments, like circumcision for Old Testament times, baptism is the action which initiates someone into the community of God's people. For this reason, the Church has consistently maintained one must be baptized before receiving communion. Baptism is indeed a sacrament for beginnings, and so it is appropriate to start with its origins.



### 1. The Origin of Baptism

Jews already baptized new converts when Jesus gave the command to do so at the end of his ministry. If a man wished to convert to Judaism, he was baptized, circumcised and then offered a sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the preaching of baptism begins in the New Testament with John, not Jesus (Matthew 3:1-12, John 1:24-28). Jews often believed that all Jews would go to heaven simply because they were born Jewish. John by telling them they must be baptized told them they were no better in God's eyes than a Gentile convert, and unless they changed their lives, they would be destroyed: *"Bear fruit that befits repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire"* (Matthew 3:8-10, Luke 3:8-9).

The baptism for repentance that John preached was not, however *Christian* baptism. Those who had received John's baptism later had to be baptized as Christians: *"So Paul asked, 'Then what baptism did you receive?' 'John's baptism,' they replied. Paul said, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, this is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus"* (Acts 19:3-5).

Christian baptism begins with the command of Jesus at the end of his ministry recorded in Matthew 28:19: *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father*

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<sup>1</sup> The two great schools of rabbinic thought in the first century differed as to whether a man ought to be baptized and circumcise on the same day or if he should be circumcised on the eighth day after baptism. The first point of view reflects an understanding of baptism as a ritual cleansing—one must be baptized to wash away pagan uncleanness. The second reflects an understanding of baptism as a new birth following the pagan's state of 'death' and that circumcision was commanded on the eighth day after birth (Genesis 17:12)—the baptized is "as the newborn child in Israel" (SLev 17:15). As mentioned below, both understandings are found in the New Testament as well.

*and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* Yet Jesus’ disciples did baptize people<sup>2</sup> and Jesus was himself baptized by John before this (Matthew 3:13-17).<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The Effects of Baptism

The simplest way to describe the effects of baptism is to quote 1 Peter 3:21: *“... baptism saves you—not the putting off of unclean flesh, but the pledge to God of a clear conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*

In this statement, Peter not only says baptism saves us. He also contrasts it with the past, says it connects us with Christ, and focuses on the future. Baptism, unlike circumcision in the Old Testament (“putting off of unclean flesh”), is not only an outward ritual. It saves us by an inner change brought about by connecting the person baptized to Christ’s death and resurrection. It is also not just a means of removing past sin but is the beginning of a new existence for the one who by being baptized is raised to life with Jesus. Baptism is not an action that looks back, an action we take to show we have come to a certain point in our relationship to God. It is an action which looks ahead, by which God saves us, and brings us into a relationship with himself through what his Son has done.

As you might expect from the picture that applying water presents, that the Bible speaks of baptism as removing sin just as water washes off dirt. That baptism forgives sins is stated by Peter at the end of his sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:38): *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...”*. The picture of baptism as washing is used by Paul at the end of his sermon at Ephesus (Acts 22:16): *“Get up, be baptized*

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<sup>2</sup> John 3:22

<sup>3</sup> Because John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance, the fact that the sinless Jesus presented himself for baptism by John was clearly a problem. For this reason, John himself resisted baptizing Jesus (Matthew 3:14-15): *“... John tried to deter him saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come for me?’ Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.”* Jesus’ answer cannot refer to fulfilling his righteousness, since he himself is sinless. It must be understood as a necessary part of the process of making us righteous. As discussed below, baptism is also connected with assuming a new identity. That this issue is present in Jesus’ baptism is shown by the voice from heaven proclaiming. “This is my Son... (Matthew 3:17 and parallels).” The close parallel to the Old Testament prophecy of Jesus in Isaiah 42:1: “Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight,” introduces the element of service. At his baptism, Jesus begins his ministry. He identifies himself with Israel, the child or servant of God (this connection is clearer in how the Greek Bible called the Septuagint, used by the early Church, translates Isaiah 42:1: “... Israel is my chosen, I have accepted him. I have put my Spirit upon him... 7. The dove, the form which the Holy Spirit takes to come upon him, is a frequent symbol among the rabbis for Israel. Jesus also repeats the pattern of Israel at its birth as a nation: Israel passed through the water of the Red Sea, followed by forty years of testing in the wilderness; Jesus passes through the water of the Jordan, followed by forty days of testing in the wilderness. In short, just as we in our baptism are identified with Jesus and take upon us his righteousness, which is foreign to our nature (on which see below), he in his baptism identifies himself with us, takes up our sin, which is foreign to his nature. Thus, he begins his work of making us righteous by suffering. cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21: “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

*and wash your sins away.”*

Paul also mentions it in his letters: *“You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God”*

**(1 Corinthians 6:11).** *“Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word” (Ephesians 5:26).*

*“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7).*

A similar idea is found in the letter of the Hebrews 10:22: *“... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (RSV).* Baptism forgives sins, then, by ‘washing’ them away. Because we usually baptized by pouring water on the head, this understanding of baptism and what it does is the first one people will think of.

But, when the Jewish Senator Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night, Jesus tells him, *“... no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born from above [NIVn].”*<sup>4</sup> This new birth is described as birth by *“water and the Spirit”*: *“Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to Spirit...’” (John 3:5-6).*

This refers to baptism.<sup>5</sup> The quotation from Titus 3:5 above also says something about this, even if the main idea in it is washing. If baptism is a *“washing of rebirth,”* how are we reborn? What do we become?

The answer is already hinted at when Titus 3:5 speaks of those baptized as heirs. Those who are baptized become God’s sons and daughters: *“... those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God... The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs” (Romans 8:14, 16-17 NIV).* *“You are all sons of God. Through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ” (Galatians 3:26-27 NIV).*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Or *“... born again.”*, or even *“... born from the beginning”*—the Greek can mean all three. It is typical in the conversations of Jesus in John’s gospel that Jesus says things capable of being understood in two ways (also in 3:8, 4:10, 7:8). The unenlightened listener takes it the wrong way. Hence the intention is that Nicodemus must be born from above, as are all God’s children (John 1:13), through Jesus, who is begotten from the beginnings. Nicodemus, however, takes him to mean *“born again”*, and so is confused.

<sup>5</sup> Not, as some would have it, an allusion to the two births, natural (which is accompanied by the breaking of ‘water’, and spiritual from God. When John wishes to indicate natural, ‘fleshy’ birth he describes it as birth ‘of blood,’ ‘of the will of the flesh’, or ‘of the will of a man’ (John 1:13).

<sup>6</sup> That this removes, as far as salvation is concerned, the distinctions of the Old Covenant with its rite of circumcision is shown by Paul in the next verse: *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free,*

Often the New Testament speaks of the believer as being ‘in Christ’ or of Christ being ‘in us’: *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me...”* **(Galatians 2:20 RSV).**<sup>7</sup>

This creates a unity of the believer and Christ, as well as a unity of believers with each other in the Church. That baptism does this is indicated by St. Paul in Galatians 3:26-27, quoted above, and also in Romans 6:2-6: *“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him...”* (RSV).

The individual who has been baptized is, then, identified with Jesus, the sinless Son of Man raised in resurrection glory.<sup>8</sup> What is true of him now is also true of us. God deals with us or counts us as his Son, Jesus Christ. In baptism, we have been made to share his destiny: *“For in Christ all the fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead”* **(Colossians 2:9-12 NIV).**

Here baptism looks forward as well as back. Luther in his *Small Catechism* describes this as the Old Adam, our sinful nature, being drown in baptism, and the new nature, the Christ in us, being brought forth. This happens on a daily basis as we confess our sin: *“What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drown and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever”* **(SC Baptism iv).**

Baptism, then, brings about a change of status for the one who is baptized (“newness of life”—Romans 6:4). This change of status expresses itself through faith, as Colossians 2:9-12, quoted above, mentions. Often this is the faith which baptism itself produces.

The benefits of baptism must be received by faith, since it is through faith that we are saved by

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there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Because they could not be circumcised, women were considered inferior by Judaism.

<sup>7</sup> Other examples of Romans 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17. This identification in baptism of the Christian with Christ of course corresponds to Christ’s identification with us in his baptism as discussed above in note 3.

<sup>8</sup> This identity goes beyond the mere ownership already implied in Hebrew usage by having someone’s name put upon something or someone, see Isaiah 43:19; Jeremiah 14:9, etc. We are not just slaves of Christ, but also God’s children, Romans 8:14-17.

God. Sacraments, including baptism, are not magic. <sup>9</sup> Baptism does not produce its benefits simply because we do it, but because it is the beginning of a new life of faith in Jesus Christ brought about by the Spirit: *“You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11 NIV)*. The Spirit is, then, both the Giver and the gift in baptism: *“For we all were baptized by [or ‘with’ or ‘in’] 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 NIV)*.<sup>10</sup>

Even though the Spirit would have already been present in and led to faith those who responded to Peter’s sermon on Pentecost, he still speaks of them as receiving the Spirit as a result of baptism: *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:38-39 NIV)*.

Because it is the eternal and timeless God who does this by his word working in the water, and who make baptism effective, baptism has an indelible character. Any Christian baptism,<sup>11</sup> then, is effective, even if the person baptized may leave the faith temporarily.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Roman Catholic church, in particular, views them as working *ex opera operato*, that is, simply by virtue of performing them. In this they share the view of the Corinthian Christians whom Paul corrected in 1 Corinthians 10.

<sup>10</sup> Note that Paul states *all* Christians were given the Spirit (see also John 3:5 and Titus 3:5). There is no distinction made between a so-called 'water baptism and 'Spirit baptism. The contrast in Matthew 3:11 between baptizing in water and baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire is merely the contrast between John's baptism and Jesus', as discussed above. If in the book of Acts, the Spirit sometimes comes upon Gentiles before they are baptized (as he always does with those who are led to faith and repentance from outside the Church, and so seek baptism) with signs such as speaking in tongues, it is because of the special problem being dealt with in Acts, namely, that Gentiles are accepted by God apart from circumcision and the Law.

<sup>11</sup> A Christian baptism will be one which uses water as the element and the word of God. The formula, "in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, will be the normal form of that word, but some other form which still confesses the Trinity and acknowledges that through the action of the baptism, the individual is joined to Christ might still be a Christian baptism. Such a change, however, should strongly be discouraged. Also, the context in which it is spoken must also be taken into account. If a Church which does not believe in the Trinity were to use these words, they would not in that context signify the Trinity. Thus, though the outward form was used, the baptism would not be a Christian baptism since it is the reality behind the form that is effective. Consequently, the baptism of groups such as Mormons or Unitarians is not valid.

<sup>12</sup> Nowhere in Scriptures are people called upon to repeat Christian baptism, but they and not are often called back to their baptism (e.g., 1 Corinthians 1:13: Romans 6:3, 1 Peter 3:21, etc.). The effectual character of baptism was also held by many in the early Church to work negatively on those who fell away from the faith. The sacramental action of baptism made the crucifixion of Christ once again present, and like the word of God, this must either save or condemn. They derived their understanding from two passages in Hebrews, 6:4-8 and 10:26-29. In the first passage, images associated with baptism in the early church are certainly used drinking or tasting the Spirit, the earth watered by rain, enlightenment. But the conclusion drawn from these verses that once a person was baptized, if he sinned again, he could not forgive was certainly incorrect—for one thing, the letters of Paul correcting offenses in the Church would be pointless. Because of this improper belief, for a time some people deferred baptism until their deathbeds. One of these was the first Christian emperor, Constantine. This in no way supports the assertions of some in our own day that adult baptism was the norm and requirement in the early Church.

Those who return to the faith are consequently not rebaptized: “... *one Lord, one faith, one baptism...*” (Ephesians 4:5).

### 3. Whom should we baptize?

An obvious difference between Christian denominations centers about this question. While there is little disagreement that adults who come to faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized after instruction in that faith,<sup>13</sup> a number of churches do not baptize infants. Infant baptism, however, has always been the practice of the great majority of Christians. That it is not specifically commanded beyond the general instruction to baptize all nations (Matthew 28:19) is explained simply enough: it was everywhere assumed to be the normal practice.<sup>14</sup>

That it is completely consistent with Jesus’ attitude is shown by his insistence that the children be allowed to come to him and not be hindered, “*for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these*” (Mark 10:14). In Luke’s telling of that story, it is mentioned that “*even infants were brought to him*” (Luke 18:15).

Objection to infant baptism generally focuses on the idea that infants cannot have the faith needed to benefit from baptism. Faith is then defined in terms of ‘knowing’ God as Savior and requires that one be old enough to be consciously aware of him. This places the emphasis in baptism on what we do, rather than on what God does. Also, that infants can also have saving faith is clear from Scripture: “*For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth. From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother’s womb. I will ever praise you*” (Psalm 71: 5-6 NIV). “*...you made me trust in you even at my mother’s breasts. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God*” (Psalm 22:9-10 NIV).

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<sup>13</sup> That instruction precedes baptism for those who are old enough to understand that instruction is the ancient practice of the Church, even if the instruction might be as short as that which Philip gave the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26-40.

<sup>14</sup> According to Acts (11:14; 16:15, 33) and 1 Corinthians (1:16), whole households, which normally would have included children, were baptized. Further evidence is probably to be found in 1 Corinthians 7:14: “For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. This reflects the question whether marriage is to be considered inclusive or exclusive. This question arose in Judaism with regard to whether babies born of mixed marriages were to be circumcised on the eighth day. Here Paul says that Christian marriages are to be considered inclusive, and children born to them are “holy, that is, as often in Hebrew usage, set aside for special treatment. In this case, that would mean eligible for baptism. The terms ‘sanctified’ or ‘holy’ in this passage clearly cannot mean saved; no one, neither spouse nor child, is saved by the faith of someone else. The first writer to object to infant baptism was Tertullian (AD 160-215), whose unorthodox views on original sin and other things led him to leave the Church for the heretical Montanist sect. As discussed above in note 11, some later Christians also postponed baptism for fear they could not be forgiven for sinning after. Even then, infants in danger of death were baptized. Early evidence for infant baptism is found in the second century. Polycarp says, “Eighty-six years have I served the Lord Christ,” likely indicating that he was baptized as an infant (Mart. Pol. 9:3). Irenaeus writes, “Jesus] came to save all through himself—all, I say, who through him are born again to God infants and children, boys and youths, and old men (Adv. Hær. 2:22:4). Origen speaks of it as being done from the time of the apostles (Comm. in Rom. 5:9).

*“Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it”*  
**(Mark 10:15 NIV).**

Saving faith is trust or confidence in God, an orientation toward him brought about by him as a response to his grace toward us. It is not factual knowledge about him, although it will normally develop to include such knowledge. If it were knowledge, the amount of faith one could have would be in proportion to his mental ability, and all of us would lose faith whole we were unconscious in sleep!

The main reason that the Church baptizes infants is that they need it. It is the only means of grace appropriate to give the forgiveness they need, since everyone is born with a sinful nature. That grace is specifically promised to children in Acts 2:38-39, quoted above (page 9). A number of other reasons could be given, such as the clear parallel between circumcision, done on eight-day old infants to bring them into a covenant relationship with God, and baptism, which also brings us into the new covenant relationship with God.<sup>15</sup> But the need and the promise are reason enough.

#### **4. How Should We Baptize?**

The only essential thing is that water and the word be used. How the water is applied is not essential. In earlier days of the Church, the normal method would have been the immersion of infants. Due to practical considerations, over time this was replaced by pouring or even sprinkling.<sup>16</sup> Although the Greek words used in the New Testament generally mean dipping, they also can mean washing (Mark 7:4) or pouring out (Acts 1:5, 2:17-18—of the Spirit).

Although baptism will normally be done in Church by a pastor to ensure that it is done properly, in an emergency any Christian may baptize. Sponsors are not necessary (nor even appropriate in the case of adult baptism) but are helpful in providing witnesses to the baptism and to the faith into which the child is baptized. They assist the parents and child in such ways as by praying for them. They also join in the promise to raise the child in the Christian faith.

#### **5. An Unanswered Question**

What about infants who are stillborn or who die before they can be baptized, or adults who have expressed faith and yet died unbaptized? What happens in their case is not made clear in Scripture. John 3:5, *“no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit,”* seems to make baptism absolutely necessary for salvation. Yet from Mark 16:16 we can see that it is unbelief, not the lack of baptism which condemns: *“Whoever believes and is*

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<sup>15</sup> See Colossians 2:9-12 quoted above (page 8).

<sup>16</sup> Adults were also immersed naked. Coming up out of the water they would put on new white robes. This custom is probably reflected already in Galatians 3:27.

*baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned*".<sup>17</sup> Still, it is clear that one who rejects baptism, although they know it is commanded, cannot truly believe.

In the case of infants, we may presume that God has not told us the answer to this question for good reasons. If he said they were condemned, not only would people be angry with God, but it would not fit well with the loving image of himself which he reveals to us. On the other hand, if he said they were saved without baptism, it would mean people would put it off or treat it lightly. All we can do is know what our God is like and leave things in his hands.

## Confirmation

Confirmation is a rite practiced by many churches, but not included in the Bible. Consequently, different churches have understood and practiced it very differently, and even in the Lutheran Church there is no consistent understanding or practice of the rite. In the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, it is understood sacramentally and often administered by anointing with oil at baptism. In both the Roman Catholic and Episcopal Churches, it must be performed by the bishop.

The Lutheran Church does not consider it to be a sacrament but does connect it with the sacraments of baptism and communion. Instruction in the faith prior to confirmation is understood as a part of the process of formal education which parents and godparents pledged at a child's baptism, and also as the instruction necessary prior to the reception of communion. The rite itself usually consists of a confession of faith by the confirmand, together with prayers for his or her behalf by the congregation and the laying on of hands. Often first communion takes place in the same service, but many Lutheran congregations practice early communion of children, after, of course, they have been instructed about the sacrament.

### Why is it ok to baptize kids?

1. **Christ's baptismal command is general.** It does not exclude kids. *"Teach all nations, baptizing them..." (Matthew 28:19).*
2. **Baptism's promise is also for children.** See Acts 2:38-39 *"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.'"*
3. **The apostles baptized whole families.** Surely these included families that had children. See 1 Corinthians 1:16; Acts 16:15; Acts 16:33.
4. **Baptism has taken the place of circumcision,** which, was performed on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the child's life. See Colossians. 2:11-12 *"In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the*

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<sup>17</sup> The Church early on recognized that those who were martyred for their faith before they could be baptized would be saved.

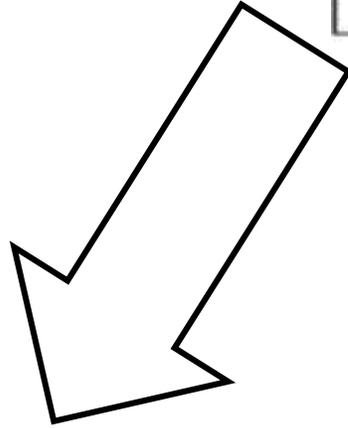
*circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."*

5. **The early church practiced infant baptism.** *"The church has received from the apostles the tradition (command) to baptize also little children."* (Origen)
6. **Kids need what baptism brings** for they are born of the flesh (John 3:6) and so must be born again of water and of the spirit (John 3:5) before they can enter the kingdom of God. Kids are born with original sin and need the washing which cleanses, i.e., baptism. *"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me"* (**Psalm 51:5 NIV**).
7. **Some argue kids can't believe and belief is necessary for baptism to have any benefit, therefore kids shouldn't be baptized. But kids can believe!** *"...you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast"* (**Psalm 22:9 NIV**). *"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea"* (**Matthew 18:6NIV**).

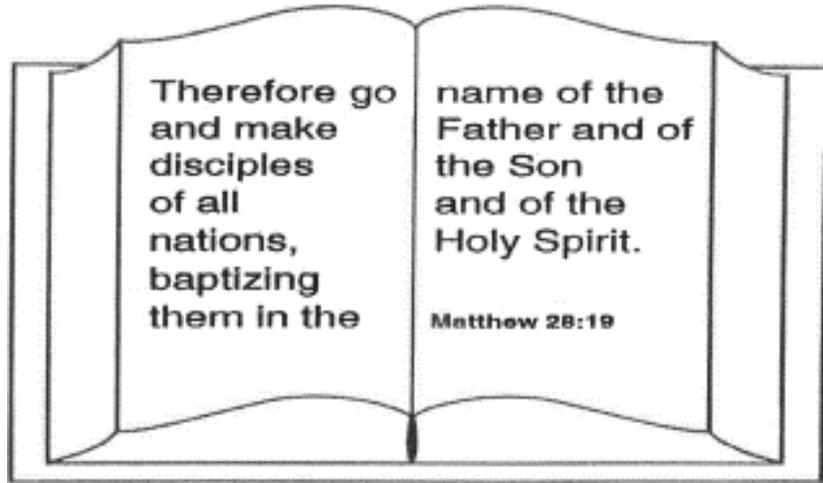
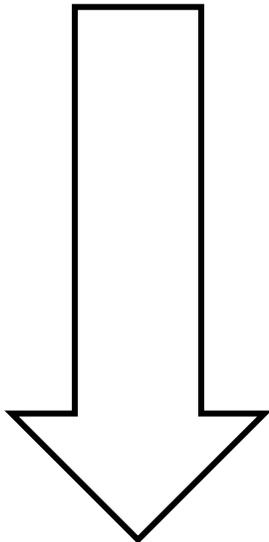
# The Nature of Baptism

Baptize = to wash

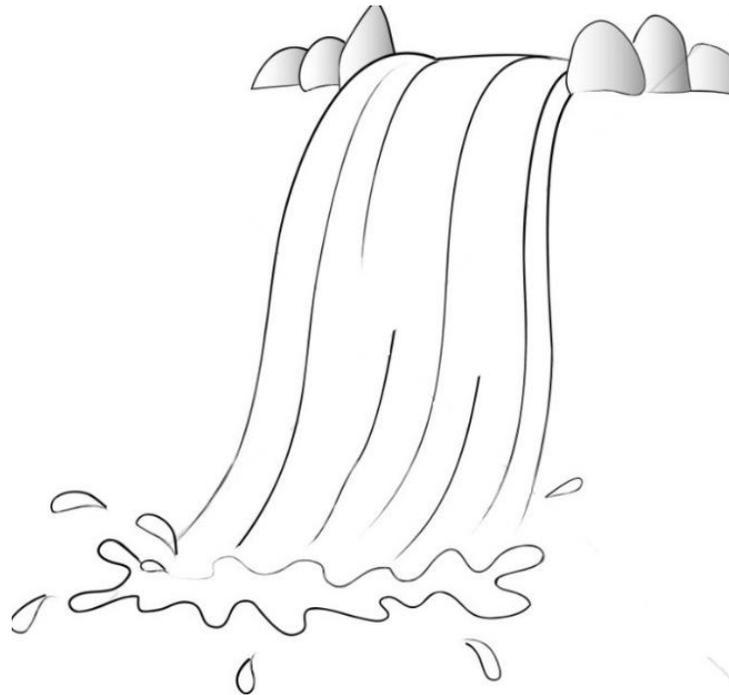
Baptize = WATER+



**ALL NATIONS**



*included in God's command and combined with God's Word*



## Who is to be Baptized?...

### ALL NATIONS

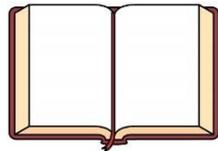
- A. Those who can receive instruction are first instructed in the main articles of the Christian faith.
- B. Little Children are brought to Baptism by those responsible for their care.
  - a. Little children are included in "all nations"
  - b. Jesus especially invites them to come to Him.
  - c. As sinners, babies need what Baptism offers.
  - d. Babies also are able to have faith.



### Sponsors\*

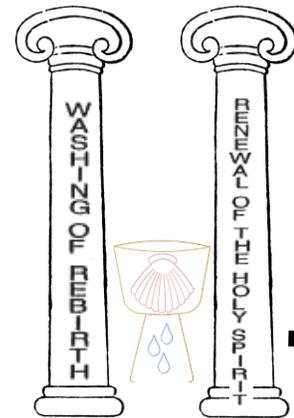
- Witness the baptism
- Prayer for the person baptized
- Help with the person's Christian upbringing

## The Blessings and Power of Baptism



**Water + Word**

**=**



**Baptism Blessings**



**Faith**

**Baptism**

**Forgiveness of sin**

**Rescue from death and devil**

**Eternal Salvation**

## Part One

### Denying Baptism to Infants: Questions to Ask

- A. Where does the New Testament forbid baptism to infants?
- B. Where does the New Testament command infant dedication?
- C. Where does the New Testament teach that a child of Christian parents be baptized “when he is old enough to understand?”
- D. When is a person truly “old enough” to “understand” the Christian Gospel? Who will play God to decide if a person is “old enough” to understand and be baptized?
- E. Where is an *example* in the New Testament, where a child of Christian parents decided to be baptized “when he was old enough?”
- F. Where does the Bible teach that “babies can’t believe?”
- G. Where does the New Testament teach that baptism must be “meaningful” to those baptized? How “meaningful” does it have to be? Who will play God to decide?
- H. Where does the New Testament teach that children of Christian parents must decide about Jesus Christ and baptism themselves?

- Steve Roberge, March 2002

## Part Two

### Biblical Reasons to Include Infants in Baptism

- A. “Make disciples of all nations (peoples) by baptizing, etc.” (Matthew 28:18-20) includes infants.
- B. Baptism replaces circumcision, which is given to both adult converts and their babies (Colossians 2:9-12).
- C. All born of the flesh must be born again, through baptisms, of water and Spirit—this includes infants (John 3:1-7; Titus 3:4-7).
- D. Entire families were baptized, which would have naturally included infants (1 Corinthians 1:16; Acts 16:15, 33, etc.).
- E. According to the church father Cyprian, all the disciples of the Apostles themselves universally practiced infant baptism. Did the Apostles miscommunicate the Christian faith? Did their disciples misunderstand it?
- F. Baptism gives the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit to “*you and your offspring,*” (Acts 2:38-41).

## Objections and Answers

**Objection #1:** Babies can't repent. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized."

**Answer:** Yes, babies can repent in Hebrew thinking, as part of group repentance (see for example, Joel 2:12-16). A person of any age is able to repent whenever the Holy Spirit enters his life (See Ezekiel 18:32: Ezekiel 36:25-27; John 16:7-13: Acts 5:31-31: 11:18: Romans 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:3, 13; 2 Corinthians 7:10; 2 Timothy 2:25). The Holy Spirit is promised in baptism to you and your offspring" (Acts 2:38-39). Therefore, infants repent at baptism.

**Objection #2:** Babies can't believe.

**Answer:** Yes, babies can believe, in the sense of having "trust" in God for salvation (Psalm 22:9-10; Psalm 8:2; Psalm 71:5-6; Isaiah 44:3; Isaiah 46:3; Isaiah 49:1: Matthew 21:16: Luke 1:15, 41, 44).

**Objection #3:** There's no explicit example of infant baptism anywhere in the Bible.

**Answer:** It is clearly implied in the New Testament. See Biblical Reasons above.

**Objection #4:** There's no explicit command to baptize babies anywhere in the Bible.

**Answer:** It is clearly implied in the New Testament. See Biblical Reasons above.

**Objection #5:** Everyone should decide about Jesus Christ and baptism on their own.

**Answer:** No, children of Christian parents shouldn't decide this on their own (Eph. 6:4).

**Objection #6:** Baptism is meaningless to a baby.

**Answer:** In the New Testament, meaningful instruction about baptism is normally given after it takes place (Rom. 6: 1 Cor. 6: 12: Col. 2: Titus 3: Heb. 6; 1 Peter 3, etc.).

-Steve Roberge, March 2002

## Water Flows

- ... over an infant
- ... over a child
- ... over an adult

Lutherans say Christ is present in the Sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion) because he is present in all creation. In his argument with Zwingli, Luther said Christ was in the bread at Holy Communion because Christ was present in Luther's cabbage soup. What makes the Sacraments unique is **the promise of God** connected to the physical element and the human action—washing, eating, and drinking.



The presence of pain, violence and evil in the above list does not lead us to conclude that God causes evil. Rather, we believe God is **present in the evil, suffering with his creation.**

Through water God touches a weak and vulnerable crown of his creation and says YES!

- + **You are incorporated** into Christ and into his body, the church.
- + **You are** initiated, **adopted** into my covenant people.
- + You are **called! Chosen! Saved! Born again!**
- + You are **forgiven**—free to live without excuses.
- + You are ordained, set aside to be a minister.
- + You are **marked with the cross of Christ forever.**
- + You are **given the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

In the baptismal water we died with Christ. We were crucified and buried in order that we might be raised with Christ to live the new life, to dwell in a new reality, a new order of existence.

Because of Baptism we are Christians. Never does our status before God depend on...

- + How we feel
- + Having the right experience
- + Being free of doubts
- + What we accomplish
- + Our success or our position

We are Christians because God surprised us, because of the incredible initiative of God. Coming in water, God washed us and grafted us into Christ. Our identity for all the days of our life is set! We are children of God, priests of the king, Disciples of Christ, a servant people, a holy nation, the communion of saints, the followers of the Way, and proclaimers of the wonderful deeds of God. Jesus' story becomes our story. Baptized into his death, we are raised to live as the Body of Christ in the world today.

Many Lutherans were raised with an understanding of Baptism as only a preparation for death, an assurance of heaven in the afterlife. Notice that the New



**Baptized into Christ**

Testament understanding of Baptism presented on this page teaches Baptism as a beginning of a way of life to be lived in the world.

The Lutheran understanding of Baptism is **radical**: i.e., Baptism claims a person for a life of **total obedience to Jesus Christ**. This claim of Baptism is often lost by the misuse of the sacrament. For example, having a baby baptized only because of family tradition or only as a naming ceremony. An understanding of the radical nature of Baptism is being recovered by (1) emphasis on pre-baptism instruction, (2) including teaching about Baptism in preaching and in educational ministry and (3) inviting persons to renew their baptism in daily prayer and in renewal ceremonies at times such as Easter Eve.

## Baptism Information Sheet

Appointment Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Baptism \_\_\_\_\_ Service/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Mother's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(First) (Middle) (Maiden Last)

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Emails \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Member(s) Yes

No

Sponsor(s) Yes

No

SponsorName(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Special Requests/ Comments:

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Dear MS Faith Families,

As we prepare for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, we are reminded of the many blessings we have in Jesus our Savior, including the gift of baptism. Therefore, in line with our mission statement, "Everyone Prepared, Everyone Saved," each January during Lutheran Schools Week, we offer the opportunity for any student who has not been baptized to be baptized during our chapel service. Also, this is an opportunity for any of your family members to be baptized as well.

Baptism is often talked about as a "washing away of sins," and – even though He never sinned – even Jesus himself was baptized. In addition, He made baptism a part of the Great Commission in Matthew 28 when He commanded His disciples go and "make disciples of all nations, BAPTIZING them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

The historical Christian church teaches that Holy Baptism is a "means of grace," a way in which the Holy Spirit forgives us and works faith in our hearts. What an awesome gift God has given to us.

The date for the Baptism Chapel this year is January 27, 2022, Derek Klem, the Senior Pastor from Mountain View Lutheran Church, will officiate. If your child and any member of your family desires to be baptized into the Christian faith, please contact our theology Department Chair, Anna Beyer, at [anna.beyer@flhsemail.org](mailto:anna.beyer@flhsemail.org). She will then give you further information and details.

God's Richest Blessings,

Sarah Harper  
Middle School Principal

Dear Parents,

Our annual Baptism Chapel is scheduled for Thursday, January 27, 2022, during Middle School Chapel. I would love to answer any questions you may have about this special event. Please feel free to contact me anytime, my email is [anna.beyer@flhsemail.org](mailto:anna.beyer@flhsemail.org).

The text below comes from [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org) which explains what our school believes and teaches regarding baptism.

*Lutherans believe that the Bible teaches that a person is saved by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone.*

*The Bible tells us that such "faith comes by hearing" (Rom. 10:17). Jesus Himself commands Baptism and tells us that Baptism is water used together with the Word of God (Matt. 28:19-20).*

*Because of this, we believe that Baptism is one of the miraculous means of grace (another is God's Word as it is written or spoken), through which God creates and/or strengthens the gift of faith in a person's heart (see Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 12.13).*

Once again, please contact Ms. Beyer for more information.

Blessings on your day!

Anna Beyer

If you decide to get your child baptized, please let me know and fill in this spreadsheet\* like you would like her name on the Baptism certificate. (\*create your own form to link here)



## Baptism Chapel 2022

Faith Lutheran Middle and High School

**So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Galatians 3:26-27**

Dear Parents and Students,

How exciting that you have selected to be baptized at our upcoming Baptism chapel on **Thursday, January 27th at 9:30am**. Pastor Klem, Senior Pastor at Mountain View Lutheran Church, will be officiating this special day and delivering our chapel message.

We would like to meet with students and parents that are being baptized beforehand so we can walk you through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, how things will work that day and where you will be sitting. **Please be here by 8am on this day**. We will meet in the lobby of our Chapel of Performing Arts Center (CPAC).

Immediately after the service, professional pictures will be taken, and a brief reception will be held for you and your families in the Student Center Teacher's Lounge. Light refreshments will be served.

The text below comes from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), which explains what our synod and school believes and teaches regarding the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

*Lutherans believe that the Bible teaches that a person is saved by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone.*

*The Bible tells us that such "faith comes by hearing" (Rom. 10:17). Jesus Himself commands Baptism and tells us that Baptism is water used together with the Word of God (Matt. 28:19-20).*

*Because of this, we believe that Baptism is one of the miraculous means of grace (another is God's Word as it is written or spoken), through which God creates and/or strengthens the gift of faith in a person's heart (see Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 12.13).*

We are looking forward to celebrating this day with you and your family. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Blessings,

Anna Beyer (anna.beyer@flhsemail.org)

