

Westlife Church

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# Baptism

"JESUS IS MY LORD AND I AM ALL IN"





## Baptism

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# What you need to know to be baptized at Westlife Church

### Who

Baptism is for everyone who has made a personal decision to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior. We have all sinned and sin separates us from God and brings death and brokenness to us, both spiritual and physical. Jesus, through dying on the cross and being raised from the dead three days later, "...has liberated us from the guilt, punishment, and power of sin." (Romans 3:24 TPT)

You are ready to be baptized if you have received forgiveness from Jesus, believed that Jesus died for you, and made Him the Lord of your life. Acknowledging Him as Lord of your life means that you are choosing to live in the way He wants you to rather than however you might want to. In fact, baptism is an act of obedience to His authority in your life! Even if you are nervous or feel awkward about this, you are choosing to be baptized because that's what He told His followers to do!



## What

Baptism is the physical public symbol of the new life you receive when you declare Jesus is Lord and an important aspect in the covenant relationship between God and us. Going down into the water and being raised out of it signifies our willingness to die to our old ways of living and experience new life in Jesus.

Baptism is not a magical rite that makes you a Christian. Baptism is not an innovation of the church, but a practice established by Christ. It is a step of obedience to Christ and a public demonstration of your commitment to follow Him and His ways for the rest of your life.

*Now, if anyone is enfolded into Christ, he has become an entirely new creation.*

*All that is related to the old order has vanished.*

*Behold, everything is fresh and new.*

*(2 Corinthians 5:17 TPT)*



## Why

There are three answers to the question of why get baptized:

- 1) You are following the example of Jesus. "One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River." (Mark 1:9)
- 2) Jesus Christ commands baptism in the Great Commission. "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age. " (Matthew 28:18-20)
- 3) It is a significant spiritual event whereby the Holy Spirit works out the mystery of joining you to Christ. "For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God who raised Christ from the dead." (Colossians 3:12)

## How

We practice believer's baptism, that is we baptize those old enough to make an informed, personal decision to follow Jesus. We also do full immersion, unless health concerns prevent it. We do this because the original Greek words—baptismo/baptisma— mean immersed, dipped, completely covered. This is how Jesus was baptized. We also believe that immersion fully represents the spiritual reality of those who have chosen to follow Jesus – a death and resurrection.

*Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in death. For we died and were buried with Christ in baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. (Romans 6:3-4 NLT )*



## When

As soon as you decide to receive Jesus into your life, you can and should be baptized. There is no 'level' you need to achieve before you are eligible. Our journey with Jesus is not about levels or being good enough or a finish line, but simply a deepening relationship that we live out one day and one step at a time!

## Where

We most frequently conduct baptisms during our Sunday services. However, we are open to discussion if you are passionate about another place and time!

## PREPARATION:

**Talk to a Pastor/Elder.** Let us know your desire to be baptized! You can choose any of the pastors at Westlife to baptize you.

**Prepare your Testimony.** Sharing your faith story publicly during your baptism is powerful! It is for you to declare and solidify what Jesus has done for you and for those who may be impacted by your story.

Do: Pray about what God wants you to share, be realistic throughout your testimony but positive, use at least one or two scripture verses that hold meaning for you, give enough detail that people can relate with your experience. Share your story with the pastor ahead of time and they can give you helpful feedback.



**Don't:** Make negative statements about denominations, churches or individuals, use explicit details that will be unnecessarily uncomfortable for listeners, use church language that non-Christians do not understand.

**Ask your Encouragers.** Most of us have had people who made a significant impact in our spiritual journey—family, friends, pastors, etc. You are invited to ask someone who has had a significant influence on your spiritual journey to join you for your baptism and share some words of encouragement. Please let them know they will have 1-2 minutes to encourage you in this public declaration.

**Read and Meditate on these Scriptures:**

Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 2:38; 8:35-38; Romans 10:9-13; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:12-15





## Testimony:

Your testimony will point people to Jesus.

Here are some questions that will help you think through what you want to share in your 3-minute testimony:

What was your life like before you accepted Jesus as your Savior?

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What made you want to have a personal relationship with Jesus?

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How has having Jesus in your life made a difference?

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## ON THE DAY OF YOUR BAPTISM:

**Invite** friends and family to witness and celebrate your baptism.

**Wear** a dark shirt and dark pants or knee-length shorts.

**Bring** your written testimony, a towel, and a change of clothes.

**Connect** with a pastor 20 minutes before the service so you can get instructions on when the baptism will be happening.

**Remember** that people are praying for you and cheering you on! God has not given you a spirit of fear. You will be standing up in front of people, but you will not be alone and you will be directing the spotlight to Jesus—pointing others to Him and His goodness!





## THE EVENT:

The pastor will invite you to join him/her in the baptism water.

**Testimony:** You will be given opportunity to share 2-3 minutes of your prepared testimony. We encourage you to have it written down.

**Encouragement:** The encourager you have asked will be invited to share 1-2 minutes of encouragement. This may include prayer, scripture, prophetic words or encouragement.

**Questions to answer:** The pastor will ask you three questions to which you will simply reply, "Yes."

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for you and rose from the dead?
2. Have you repented of your sins and received him by faith as your Saviour and Lord?
3. Will you receive afresh today the filling of the Holy Spirit to give you the ability to follow Jesus all the days of your life?

### **The immersion:**

You will fold your hands over your chest while holding your nose. The pastor will hold your arms at the front and have their arm on your back. They will then say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." They will lower you into the water until you are fully immersed and bring you back up.



## **You've been baptized, now what?**

**Connect in Community.** We grow in community with one another. Seek out relationships with mature believers and also look for those you can share your story with. Talk to a pastor about joining a small group.

**Grow through Spiritual Disciplines.** Make healthy habits of spiritual disciplines in your life. Grow in your relationship with Jesus through reading the Bible, prayer, worship, giving, and rest.

**Serve Others.** God has created you with unique gifts that can strengthen the Body of Christ and demonstrate the presence and power of Jesus to the world around you. Discover what those gifts are (meet with a mature believer, pastor or elder) and find ways to use those gifts to the glory of God!

**Live on Mission.** Every day, everywhere you go, you carry the presence of Jesus. Live aware of how you can share His life and love everywhere you go.

*So if you're serious about living this resurrection life with Christ, act like it.*

*Pursue the things over which Christ presides.*

*Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with things right in front of you.*

*Look up, and be alert to what's going on around Christ - that's where the action is.*

*See things from his perspective.*

*So, chosen by God for this new life of love,*

*dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you:*

*compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline.*

*Be even-tempered, content with second place,*

*quick to forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you.*

*And regardless of what else you put on, wear love.*

*It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.*

*Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other.*

*None of this going off and doing your own thing.*

*And cultivate thankfulness.*

*Let the Word of Christ- the Message- have the run of the house.*

*Give it plenty of room in your lives.*

*Instruct and direct one another using good common sense.*

*And sing, sing your hearts out to God!*

*Let every detail in your lives - words, actions, whatever- be done in the name of the Master,*

*Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.*

*-Colossians 3:1,12-17*

*The Message*



## **The Lordship Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, I acknowledge my need of you and accept you as my Saviour,  
my Redeemer, my Lord and my Deliverer.

I invite you now to be the Lord of my whole life.

Lord of my mind and my attitudes  
and my mental health.

Lord of my body and my physical health.

Lord of my spirit and all my worship.

Lord of my family and all my relationships.

Lord of my sexuality and all its expression.

Lord of all my work and service for you.

Lord of all my material goods and needs.

Lord of all my finances.

Lord of all my emotions and reactions.

Lord of my will and my decisions.

Lord of the manner and time of my death.

Thank you that Your blood was shed  
that I might be set free.

Amen.

