

Baptism Class

The purpose of the baptism class is to give you a Biblical understanding of why a person needs to be baptized and to help you clearly share your testimony of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in your life to others. After the completion of the class and your interview with one of the Elders, you will be considered as a candidate for baptism.

The attached material is designed for three sessions. Before the first session, you will need to complete the study of baptism that is included with this packet of materials and bring a completed copy with you to leave behind. During this session, the teacher will discuss the importance and imperative nature of baptism. It will be a time for exploring any questions that you may have concerning your faith in Jesus Christ and your desire for baptism.

For Session Two you will need to have written out your testimony according to the outline that is included in this packet. In Session Two you will present your testimony orally to fellow members of the baptism class. This session will allow you to become comfortable with standing before people and help you present your experience of coming to know Christ as your Lord and Savior. It will be a time of encouragement for your faith and will build your confidence in presenting Christ to those who don't know Him.

Session Three will build on Session Two by allowing you to again present your testimony before your fellow class members. This session will build more confidence in your life in presenting Christ to those in your daily walk of life. By the time you finish with the interview, you will have confidence to share your testimony with those around you.

Before you start each session's work, spend time praying to God the Father that He will illuminate your mind concerning baptism and that you will be obedient to His will concerning baptism.

Opportunities to Share Your Testimony

As a believer in Christ, you will always be looking for ways to share your testimony to others who don't know or believe in Jesus Christ. This process will give you a great tool you can use to share the gospel whenever you have an opportunity, and you can also take advantage of the baptism event in many ways.

First of all, you can ask people if you can practice your testimony with them. You would explain that you are being baptized on a certain date, and you are required to give your testimony before the baptism. Most people are very gracious and will even give you feedback on your presentation to them. Also, it is an opportunity to invite this person to your baptism. Communicate to them how important it would be for them to attend and how it would make you feel if they came to the baptism service. The baptism service provides yet another venue for people to hear the gospel. Both of these opportunities could lead to sharing more in-depth concerning Christ.

Another way you could get people to listen to your testimony is by inviting people over to your house for dinner. After dinner you would assemble in the living room for the purpose of "practicing" your testimony on them. You would invite them with their full knowledge of needing their help. You would explain that you have to give your testimony before you are baptized on the day of the service. Most

will gladly come - especially if there is a meal involved! An option would be having an Elder or pastor finish your evening by summing up all that has happened in your life and the reason you are being baptized. Talk to your Care Group leader or one of the Elders to help set up such a dinner.

Inviting Friends and Family to Your Baptism

You could send out invitations to people inviting them to the baptism service. Baptism is a public testimony of confessing Christ Jesus as your Lord and Savior and who better to have at your baptism than those in your sphere of influence who don't know or believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Start making a list of people you would like to invite.

Session 1

Why do I need to be baptized?

1. What does Jesus Christ command His followers to do to make disciples in Mt. 28:19?

2. How long are we to continue this practice?

3. In Acts 2:38, when the people ask Peter what they should do concerning the message of Jesus Christ, he tells them to repent and do one other thing. What was that second item that Peter told them to do?

Why do you think Peter told them to do this?

4. Read Matthew 3:13-17. This passage gives us a glimpse of Jesus' early days of His ministry. What was one of the first acts of obedience that Jesus responded to concerning His Father's will?

5. What was the Father's response to Jesus obeying His will for baptism (v.17)?

6. What should your response be to the commandment to be baptized?

One of the commands given in Acts 2:38 is "to repent." Repent means to turn from your old way of life to the new life in Christ Jesus.

Who needs to be baptized?

1. Read Acts 8:25-40. In this passage of God's word, you find an Ethiopian (v.27) leaving Jerusalem to return home. He probably had heard about Christ while in Jerusalem. What was the Ethiopian reading in his chariot (v.28)?

2. Did he understand what he was reading (v.30-32)?

3. The exact reference in scripture is Isaiah 53:7-8. Isaiah is a book of the Old Testament which the Ethiopian had with him and was studying. Philip was asked to explain the passage to the man. Isaiah 53 is a prophecy concerning a Man taking upon himself

*A **prophecy** is God speaking to a prophet concerning something He has done or is doing or is going to do. The prophet then speaks the words to the people.*

suffering and sorrows of a group of people. This Man is pictured as someone who God is smiting, afflicting, piercing, crushing, chastening, and scourging because He has taken upon Himself the sins and wrongs of a group of people. This Man is pictured as a sheep that is led to die for the wrongs He did not commit.

4. What is the question that the Ethiopian asks Philip concerning this passage (v.34)?

5. What is Philip's answer (v.35)? _____

6. What else may have Philip taught him (vs.35, 36)? (The implication is from the first thing the Ethiopian wanted to do in v. 36.) _____

7. The person inserting v. 37 was trying to convey a confession of faith that could have been made by the Ethiopian. What could have been his confession (v.37)?

8. Also notice that if the Ethiopian did make such a confession, he would have made it in front of his entire entourage. You can see in verse 38 that he gave an order to someone to stop the chariot. Also, the writer of the book of Acts tells us in verse 27 that this Ethiopian was a finance minister. We can then assume that he was traveling with an entourage of people and servants

9. Therefore, when can you assume that the Ethiopian believes in Jesus -- before or after he was baptized? _____

10. After the Ethiopian was baptized and Philip had left, what was the emotion of the Ethiopian (v.39)?

Why do you think he had this emotion? _____

11. Read Acts 16:22-34. In this passage the Apostle Paul and Silas were thrown into prison for speaking about the good news of Jesus Christ. There was an earthquake that shook the prison, and the prison bars were open and the jailer was aroused from his sleep. What did the jailer ask Paul in v. 30? _____

There is a right order to certain things. How silly and wrong it would be to have someone buried before they die. Someone has to die first before they are buried.

12. How did Paul respond in v. 31? _____

Water baptism is the same way. A person must believe and trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior before they can be baptized!

13. Did the jailer believe? _____ How do you know? (Hint: The jailer did something in v.33 that let's you know that he believed.)?

14. In v. 34, what emotion do we see after the jailer believed and was baptized?

15. Therefore, are you believing in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Explain”?

What Does Baptism Picture?

Since you have seen that baptism is done after someone believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, what then does baptism illustrate?

1. Read Romans 6:3-6. Does it mention anything about “water” in this passage, even though it mentions the word “baptism”? _____

2. In these verses, Paul (the writer of this book) gives a picture of someone who has believed in Christ. He says that they have been “baptized” in Christ Jesus. So, the word “baptism” is used to describe what God did to you, that is, God baptized you into Christ. This is called the spiritual baptism.

Spiritual baptism happens at the time that a person believes upon Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

Now, what does the word “baptism” mean? During the times of Paul’s writing, one of the meanings of the word “baptism” was “to dip something into a dye”. So, if you dipped or immersed a piece of white cloth into blue dye, what color would the piece of cloth be after you took it out of the dye? _____

3. Therefore, if God “baptized” you into Christ, how does God see you now?) _____

4. Specifically in Romans 6:4-6, Paul gives two works of Christ, which you are baptized into. The death and burial of Christ and His resurrection. What does the baptism of the death of Christ mean (v6)? Or what happens when somebody dies? Does he exist anymore?) _____

5. If we have been baptized into His death, are we not baptized into His resurrection? (v. 5) _____

6. What is the purpose of God of baptizing you into Christ’s resurrection? (v. 4) _____

7. Therefore, what does water baptism picture or illustrate to those who have believed upon Jesus Christ?

What is the method of baptism?

1. In Acts 8:38, 39 what did the Ethiopian go “down into” and what did he come “up out of”?

2. In Mark 1:5, what are the people that were being baptized going down into?

3. In Mark 1:10, what did Jesus come out of?

4. Remember the word baptism means “to be immersed” or “to dip completely into something”. So, when a person goes into the water for baptism, what should happen to that person once in the water?

5. Now try and bring all that you have learned together. What does it show when a person goes into the water and is immersed completely into the water? (Remember Romans 6:3-6)

6. Also, when a person arises from the water and walks out of it, what does it picture?

7. Therefore, in your own words, what does water baptism show or picture to you?

8. If water baptism shows the above, has this happened in your life?

9. Pray over these scriptures and answers for the next session. As you do, God will make baptism clear to you.

Session 2

Your Personal Testimony of Jesus Christ

You will prepare for this session by writing out your testimony of Jesus Christ in your life. There is an outline following this page that will help you organize your testimony for sharing with others.

A testimony is a verbal or written witness of a personal conversion from your old sinful life to a new life in Christ Jesus. When a witness is asked to testify in a court of law, he is asked to tell about the events that led up to what he witnessed, to tell what happened during that event and what happened after that event. He would be asked how he felt and what he experienced. This is the same thing that you are asked to do concerning your salvation that you have found in Jesus Christ. You will give a witness of the fact that Christ has come into your life to save you and you are committed to live for Him the rest of your life.

Also at this session, you will be asked to give your testimony verbally to those who are in attendance. You will probably find this hard to do at first. As you testify to the grace of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you will gain confidence in your presentation.

Your testimony should be given in a time frame of three to five minutes at the most. This time frame allows you to articulate the main points of your testimony and gives time for others to share theirs as well. Writing your testimony out will help you stay in that time frame.

Once you have written out your testimony, please make a copy of it to turn it in. The church will keep this copy for the pastors to look over prior to your interview with them and it is something you can share with others.

Testimony Worksheet

(it is not necessary, or possible, to include everything listed here – but these will give you some ideas!)

1. **What I was like before I was saved:**

My family, friends, interests were . . .

My most important value was . . .

My religious background and attitude about Christ was . . .

2. **What God used to begin to open my eyes:**

I was awakened to my need by (people, books, circumstances, verses in the Bible) . . .

What I thought or noticed (about myself, God) at this point was . . .

The aspects of the gospel that touched me were . . .

I came to understand that Christ . . .

I saw my need was . . .

3. **How my life is different since He saved me:**

What changed was . . .

My desires now are . . .

I'm now doing . . .

A difficult area of obedience is . . .

Scripture verse that encourages you now?

Session 3 – Final Preparation for the Baptism Service

This session will be a time of reviewing testimonies, encouragement and prayer. We will also plan to go up to the baptismal area and give you a feel for how the day of your baptism will go. You will be asked to give your testimony again and confirm your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Clothing

You will be given a baptism robe to wear for your baptism. You should wear white undergarments under light colored shirt and shorts. Once you have been baptized, you will need a change of clothing that is appropriate to wear back into the worship service. Although the church provides towels, it is always good to bring an extra towel from home. If you need one, you will need to bring your hair dyer from home.

Days that Follow

It is important in the days following your baptism that you share your testimony with as many people that God gives you opportunity to do so. Your mission is to share the good news of Christ to those in your sphere of influence that God has given you. Be in prayer for this and for boldness to share.

Also, if you are not currently a member of the church, as a baptized believer, the next step would be to identify with the local body of believers. You would begin to understand what this means and complete this next step at the next New Members class which is offered every few months.