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Baptism Kit

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Check every name, pronoun and detail before you use this.

Start here

This kit is the full Sunday package for baptism: what we believe, the conversation beforehand, the day itself, the words in the water, and what comes after. Work through it in this order:

1. **Read Resource 1** and settle what you believe and will teach.
2. **Have the conversation** with each person using Resource 2.
3. **Plan the day** from the run sheet in Resource 3. It has its own section on spontaneous baptisms.
4. **Write your words for the water** in Resource 4.
5. **Follow up** using Resource 5.

What We Believe About Baptism

Start here

He tells us what to do, and we gladly do it.

It doesn't need to be creatively thought through, changed up, or dressed up. We fill the tank, and we baptize in the water.

That is the spirit of this whole kit. Baptism is simple. Most of our job is to teach it clearly and get out of the way.

The short version

We practice believer's baptism. A person is baptized after they have given their life to Jesus, as their own public response to him.

Baptism does not wash sins away. Jesus does that.

Why we baptize

1. **Obedience to a command.** Matthew 28:19. "Baptism is the first step of obedience, then the great commission. How can we be obedient to the great commission without having first been baptized?"
2. **Jesus instituted baptism as a practice for His church.** There are two ordinances in Scripture, the Lord's Supper and baptism. "An ordinance is prescribed by Jesus and practiced by the Church. The church practices these ordinances because Jesus told us to do so."
3. **The early church baptized.** Philip and the Ethiopian official (Acts 8:36-39), the conversion of Paul (Acts 9:18), the jailer and his household (Acts 16:30-33), and Ananias to Paul (Acts 22:14-16).
4. **Jesus led by example and was Himself baptized.** "Jesus modeled perfect obedience to the Father." See Mark 1:9-11 and Matthew 3:16.

A question to put to people

If Jesus was baptized, why do I think I don't need to be baptized? If Jesus commanded that I be baptized, why do I think I don't need to be baptized?

Three reasons in one breath

1. Following the example of Jesus

2. An outward expression of an inward transformation
3. Obeying Jesus' commands

What baptism is not

Baptism is not required for salvation. It is not when you are filled with the Spirit. It is not for washing your sins away.

Baptism does not save you, but declares your salvation in Christ.

Salvation leads to baptism, but baptism does not lead to salvation.

Two passages people ask about

- **Acts 2:38.** Forgiveness comes through repentance and faith in Jesus, and baptism is the public response that goes with it, not the thing that removes sin.
- **Acts 22:16.** Sins are washed away by calling on his name, and baptism is the outward picture of that cleansing.

Read both passages with the person if the question comes up. Be clear and unhurried. This is worth getting right.

Who we baptize

Every "born again" believer in Jesus.

Faith and repentance always precede baptism. If you've never repented of your sins and put your faith in Christ, that is the first step. The next step is believer's baptism.

Passages that show repentance, faith and baptism together: Matthew 3:5-6 · Acts 2:38 · Acts 19:4 · Acts 22:16 · Acts 16:31 · Romans 10:9.

Three ways I say it

It is an outward expression of an inward decision to follow Christ.

It is a public declaration of a private decision.

It is a physical picture of a spiritual reality.

More than water

Baptism is more than water, it's a moment of identification of being a disciple (follower) of Jesus. It's your first and most profound message you could ever preach and all you have to say is "yes."

How we baptize

We believe the Bible clearly instructs baptism by immersion.

- **It pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.** Romans 6:1-4; Colossians 2:12.
- **It pictures the believer dying to self and being raised to walk a new life in Jesus Christ.**
- **The word itself.** "Baptism: the word in Greek is baptizo. It means to dunk, wash, or immerse."
- **The pattern in the text.** Jesus "went up immediately from the water" (Matthew 3:16). Philip and the official "went down into the water" and "came up out of the water" (Acts 8:38-39).

You are identifying in His death and His life.

Baptism, membership and communion

- Baptism is required for church membership.
- Baptism is not required for communion.
- Communion is for believers only.

Baptized before?

I do not believe in "rebaptism." I believe in being baptized.

- Someone who believed, was baptized, walked away and has come back is not baptized again.
- Someone who was baptized as an infant is baptized as a follower of Jesus.
- Someone who was baptized before they gave their life to Christ is baptized.
- Someone who was baptized as a religious tradition, or because their parents wanted it, and not as their own act of obedience, is baptized.

If the Holy Spirit is convicting you of baptism, don't delay.

Resource 2 covers how to talk this through with a person.

Seven reasons people haven't been baptized

Name them out loud when you teach. Most people are sitting on one of them.

1. You were never taught the importance of it
2. Your religious tradition is holding you back
3. You are afraid of water or being seen wet
4. You are afraid of what others might think
5. You don't think it's that big of a deal
6. You are prideful
7. You believe in God, but choose to live in disobedience to Him

Numbers 1 to 5 usually need teaching and a little reassurance. Numbers 6 and 7 are heart matters, and a direct, kind conversation is what helps. For number 3, tell people exactly what will happen in the water. Fear shrinks when the steps are clear.

When? As soon as possible

I'm going to ask you the same question that Ananias asked Paul: why are you delaying?

We've made baptism an experience meant to create a moment for you to feel something, instead of what it is biblically, which is immediate obedience to God.

Make it yours

Write your own church's position in a few plain sentences before you use the rest of this kit. If you cannot say it simply, the person in front of you will not be able to either.

The Baptism Conversation

Why a conversation and not a class

We do not run a baptism class. We always have a conversation. The person shares their testimony, and leaders use discernment about whether they have given their life to Jesus.

That conversation is also what lets us baptize someone the same day, and baptize spontaneously, without skipping the part that matters.

Before you start

- Find a spot where the person can talk without an audience.
- Decide ahead of time which leaders in your church may have this conversation and say yes.
- Have a Bible open to Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16.
- You are listening more than you are teaching.

Questions that draw out their story

Pick the ones that fit. You do not need all of them.

1. Tell me how you came to follow Jesus.
2. What was your life like before that?
3. What changed?
4. Who is Jesus to you?
5. What do you believe he did for you?
6. Why do you want to be baptized, and why now?
7. What do you think baptism does?
8. Have you been baptized before? Tell me about that.
9. Who do you want to be there when it happens?

What you are listening for

- They know they have sinned and need a Savior.
- They are trusting Jesus, not their own effort and not the baptism.
- It is their own decision, not someone else's.
- They understand baptism is a public response, an outward picture of what Jesus has already done.

If they say baptism will wash their sins away or save them, stop there and open Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 together.

Children and parents

There is no set age. A child needs to understand three things:

1. Jesus loves them.
2. They have sinned.
3. Jesus rose and can save them.

We rarely baptize a child under 5. Seven or older is the norm.

We ask for a parent's consent. With a teenager it is a discussion instead.

- Ask the child to tell you in their own words. Let them answer before a parent does.
- Use simple questions: "Who is Jesus?" "Why do you want to be baptized?" "What is sin?"
- Decide ahead of time what you will do when a teenager wants to be baptized and a parent is not on board.

When you are not sure

- Ask one more question and keep listening.
- Bring in another leader or the pastor.
- It is fine to say, "Let's keep talking and do this soon." Set the next conversation before they leave.
- Decide ahead of time who makes the final call in your church.

When they have been baptized before

Ask them to tell you about it, then listen for which of these it is:

- **They believed, were baptized, walked away and came back.** They are not baptized again. Celebrate that they are back.
- **They were baptized as an infant, or as a child before they truly believed.** They are baptized.
- **They were baptized as a religious tradition or because their parents wanted it.** They are baptized.

Be careful but lenient when the Holy Spirit has convicted someone. Always bring theological clarity: what baptism is, what it is not, and why they are doing this now.

Baptism Day Run Sheet

Decide ahead of time

- Where the baptism happens and where in the service it falls.
- Who has the conversation with each person (Resource 2) and who confirms it is done.
- Whether each person shares their story live, on video, or not at all.
- What people wear in the water and whether you provide shirts.
- Who takes photos and video, and how you ask permission before sharing them, especially for children.
- What each person is given afterward (Resource 5).

Who baptizes

- A pastor baptizes as the standard.
- Only the pastor may invite someone else to take part.
- That person must be a baptized believer who will be part of the person's long-term spiritual journey.
- The pastor says the words. The exceptions are a husband baptizing his wife or a dad baptizing his kids, after coaching.

The week before

- Confirm each person, the conversation and, for children, a parent's consent.
- Tell each person what to wear and what to bring: dark clothes that are modest when wet, a towel, dry clothes, a bag for wet things.
- Encourage them to invite family and friends.
- Coach anyone who will be in the water with you, and any husband or dad who will say the words.
- Check the water: clean, filled, and warm enough.

Set up

- Water filled and at a comfortable temperature.
- Non-slip mat or towels at the steps, in and out.
- Towels for every person, plus extras.
- A private changing space for men and one for women, close to the water.
- Spare dark shirts and shorts in a few sizes.

- A microphone that stays out of the water, with someone to hold it.
- A printed list of names in order, with how to say each one.
- Your words for the water (Resource 4).

Who stands where

- **In the water:** the pastor, and anyone the pastor has invited.
- **At the steps:** one helper to steady each person going in and coming out, and to hand them a towel.
- **At the microphone:** someone to introduce each person by name.
- **Photos and video:** one named person, placed where they can see the face of the person being baptized.
- **Changing space:** a host of the same gender to point the way.

In the water

- Tell the person exactly what will happen before you do it.
- Show them how to hold their nose and where to put their other hand.
- Have them bend their knees. Support their back and bring them straight back up.
- Give the room a moment to celebrate before they leave the water.

Spontaneous baptisms: be ready every time

We baptize the same day, and we do spontaneous baptisms. There is no class to finish first. There is always a conversation: the person shares their testimony, and leaders use discernment about whether they have given their life to Jesus.

A spontaneous baptism is only possible if you were ready before anyone said yes. Everything below is getting ready.

Giving the invitation

- Decide ahead of time when you will open the water to anyone who is ready, and who gives that invitation.
- Say plainly what baptism is and who it is for (Resource 1) as part of the invitation.
- Tell people exactly where to go and who they will meet there.
- Say out loud that clothes and towels are ready, so nobody holds back for that reason.
- Decide ahead of time whether you tell the church beforehand that the invitation is coming.

The conversation on the spot

- Have leaders ready and in place before the invitation is given. Decide ahead of time who they are.
- Use the same conversation as Resource 2, kept short: their story, who Jesus is to them, why they want to be baptized.
- Find a spot a few steps away from the crowd so the person can talk freely.
- Decide ahead of time who a leader turns to when they are not sure.
- If the answer is "not today," set the next conversation before the person leaves.

Children

We ask for a parent's consent. A child needs to understand that Jesus loves them, that they have sinned, and that Jesus rose and can save them.

- A parent is present for the conversation and before the child goes in the water.
- Decide ahead of time what you do when a child comes forward and no parent is in the room.

Clothes, towels and a place to change

- Keep spare dark shirts and shorts in a range of sizes, for adults and children, every time you baptize.
- Keep more towels than you expect to need.
- Have a private place to change for men and one for women, with a host of the same gender.
- Have bags for wet clothes.
- Decide ahead of time who washes and restocks everything afterward.

Before they leave

- Write down each person's name and contact details, so follow-up happens (Resource 5).
- Ask permission before sharing a photo or video.
- Make sure they know who will be in touch.

Afterward

- Mop the floor at the steps.
- Collect the towels and wet clothes.
- Hand the list of names to whoever leads follow-up.

What Is Said in the Water

The plain structure

1. **Introduce the person.** Say their name and, if they are sharing it, a sentence of their story.
2. **Ask the confession question.** They answer out loud.
3. **Baptize them** in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
4. **Celebrate.**

What I say

"[Name], have you made Jesus Lord of your life?"

They answer out loud.

"Based on that public profession of faith, and in obedience to our Lord's commands, I have the privilege to baptize you in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Spirit."

"Buried with Christ in baptism."

Take them under the water. As they come up:

"...are raised to walk in newness of life."

Use these words as they are, or write your own before the day and read them out loud once.

Who says the words

The pastor says the words. A husband baptizing his wife, or a dad baptizing his kids, may say them after coaching.

Coaching means they have read the words out loud to you and practiced the motion before the day.

After the Baptism

The same day

- Celebrate with the person and the people who came for them.
- Make sure someone has their name and contact details.
- Decide ahead of time what you give each person, such as a certificate, a photo, a Bible or a note from the pastor.

The week after

- Decide ahead of time who follows up and by when.
- Send the photos and video, with their permission.
- Ask how they are doing and what they want to do next.

Membership

Baptism is required for membership. Once someone is baptized, that step is open to them. Tell them how to take it.

Next steps

Decide ahead of time what you invite a newly baptized person into. Pick one clear step, not a list.

For the person who walked away and came back

They are not baptized again. They still need a next step and someone walking with them.