

Baptismal Class Leader's Guide

Creating a Baptismal Class helps the person being baptized:

- to have a biblical understanding of baptism.
- to express their personal faith as a follower of Christ.
- to be personally prepared for the actual baptism.

There will be three meetings with the group. The first meeting is a short meeting to give an overview of the whole process and hand out their study sheet of the Bible study and their testimony. The second meeting is your first class. It will cover the teaching about baptism. The third meeting (second class) will be to hear their testimonies and go over what is needed for their actual baptism. If there are only one or two people, you may get all this done in one class. If a child/teen is being baptized, their parents should be required to attend the classes as well.

The Teaching on Baptism

- Review your church's teaching about baptism from your doctrinal statement and your constitution & bylaws. This gives those in the class a knowledge of the kind of baptism your church practices (believer's/infant) and the mode your church practices (immersing/sprinkling/pouring).
- Biblical Teaching about Baptism

The following teaching is specifically for a church that practices believer's baptism, though the same passages may be used for other practices. Your teaching about baptism can be developed from the following verses. Each verse(s) will give a summary of the primary teaching from the passage. You will be expanding on this summary.

The verses you will be covering will also be a part of the study sheet for the person being baptized. The class is built around their personal study of the Bible about baptism so they can share their understanding before you do the actual teaching.

- **Matthew 28:19-20** – The mark of a disciple is that they are baptized and they are taught to obey all that Jesus taught.
- **Acts 2:37-38** – In the early church the first thing they did was baptize the believers. This passage is specific with the command to the audience that **all of you (plural)** “Repent for forgiveness and receive the Holy Spirit” and **you individually (singular)** “Let each of you be baptized.”
- **Acts 8:35-39** – As Philip preached the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch, he believed and Philip “baptized him.”
- **Acts 19:1-5** – This is an important passage for those who have been baptized as an infant and are wondering about being baptized a second time. These were disciples who had been baptized by John the Baptizer, but now were being baptized “in the

name of Jesus.” They expressed their faith in the Messiah and were now baptized in His name.

- **Romans 6:1-4** – This passage expresses the mode of immersion. It is a picture of being “buried with Him,” going under the water, and being “raised from the dead” with Christ. It is a picture of our salvation.
- **1 Corinthians 12:13** – You can decide if you want to use this verse. It does point out that there is another baptism and it is by the Holy Spirit. It is this work of the Holy Spirit that secures their salvation and places them into the body of Christ.

Illustration of a Wedding Ring

When I take off my wedding ring, I am still married. In fact, a wedding ring does not make anyone married. The marriage comes from the vows the person makes to their future spouse and in front of the witnesses at the wedding. However, after the ceremony, the wedding ring is the outward sign of the affirmation of love to your spouse. Even so, baptism does not make one a Christian. One is a follower of Christ by their expression of faith in Christ to God. Baptism is the outward sign to others, along with your public confession, that you are a follower of Christ.

The person to be baptized will study the same verses that you will be teaching; have the class share their answers. If a child/teen is being baptized, their parents should be required to attend the class. And if it is a child, instruct the parents to help their child with the study but to write down the child’s answers as they understand the scriptures.

Final Class Instructions

This is the final part of your baptismal class, but it is one of the most important and causes the greatest stress. So don’t rush through this part of the class. They have not done this before and they want to do it right.

Before covering all the instructions, describe and demonstrate how you actually baptize a person. Explain your process, then show them with a person what to do.

Here is one explanation for the sake of demonstration. Have them hold their nose with their right hand and grab their right wrist with their left hand. Keep their arms close to their body and tighten their muscles and don’t let go. You will place your hand on their back and hold their wrists, lowering them into the water and pulling them back up. This is one way to do a baptism. Whatever your practice is, explain it to them and then demonstrate it with one candidate and with children; practice with each one. This reduces fears, anxiety, and stress for everyone.

As you go through these final instructions, do it slowly and allow for any questions. Again, you want this to be a time of celebration for them and the congregation. The best way for that to happen is for them to be very prepared.

Baptismal Class Study

1. From the following passages, what are some observations or lessons to learn about baptism?

- Matthew 28:19-20
- Acts 2:37-38
- Acts 8:35-39
- Acts 19:1-5
- Romans 6:1-4
- 1 Corinthians 12:13

2. Your personal testimony is how you came to faith in Jesus Christ. Read through Paul's testimony.

Paul's life before Christ (Acts 26:4-11)

How Paul came to Christ (Acts 26:12-18)

Paul's life after Christ (Acts 26:20-29)

3. Write your personal testimony to share with us in the class. Use as much space as you need to share your story.

- My life before Christ:

- How I came to Christ:

- My life after coming to Christ:

- My favorite Bible verse:

Instructions for the Baptismal Service

If the baptismal service is not held in a church with a baptistry, make the appropriate adjustments. These instructions are to identify the kinds of things to think about and talk about with the candidates and their parents.

1. All baptismal candidates will meet with the pastor prior to the baptism service in order to walk through a Bible study on baptism and to share your salvation experience. If children are involved, a parent or parents must attend this meeting. Let me know who will be baptizing you, pastor/parent/other.
2. Determine during the service when the baptism will occur. Give proper instructions on when to get dressed for the baptism.
3. The women and girls may wear slacks or shorts, and a shirt or blouse (not white). If the church uses robes, these clothes will be worn under their robe.
4. Men and boys, shorts and a shirt are appropriate to wear. If the church uses robes, these clothes will be worn under the robe.
5. Use the bathrooms to change your clothes before and after your baptism.
6. Bring your own towel(s) to dry off, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes, unless the church provides this for the people. You may also wish to bring flip flops or water shoes to prevent slipping on wet floors.
7. This is the time of your public profession. Please consider a few words to say, either of your testimony or a favorite Bible verse. This may also be recorded in advance and the video played prior to your baptism. This can reduce a lot of stress on some people.
8. An option based on the size of your baptistry and your preferences: We welcome fathers, mothers, spouses, friends into the baptistry with the one doing the baptizing as a visible portrait of the church and the home working and serving together. Those participating must be approved by the pastor prior to the baptism.

Please call the church office or pastor with any questions.