

A Guide to Baptizing Someone

Make it about Jesus! Not just the person. (It's great to compliment their willingness to learn and repent, but we shouldn't be talking about how wonderful they are; the essence of baptism is admitting we need a savior.)

Baptism is an ancient practice in Christianity. The Scripture's words on baptism are many and complex, in need of being studied, considered and acted upon with prayerful discernment. Below is a brief guide to do just that. It is a resource for people who are baptizing others. A typical baptism will consist of a brief message given before the baptism, the baptism itself, and can contain a number of other practices and activities. Below are some suggestions for each of those things.

The Baptism Message:

As a community that places the Word of God in the highest possible esteem, we feel it is important to include Scripture in the practice of baptism within our community. Below are some subjects as well as Scriptures you might use in the time directly before a baptism to be shared with the individual being baptized as well as any witnesses that may be in attendance (although having witnesses is not necessary). You can read them yourself as the baptizer, have the person being baptized read them, or you can ask others to read them aloud. Prayerfully choose for yourself which Scriptures you will include and share with those present why you are sharing the scriptures you chose. You can also ask the person being baptized if they want to share an applicable scripture. You might also consider reading scripture both before and after the baptism.

Subject: The significance of baptism

Scripture: John 3:3-7, Titus 3:3-7, Acts 2:36-39 (or 41)

Subject: The need for repentance

Scripture: 2 Co. 7: 8-11, Mark 1:14-15

Subject: The forgiveness of sins, the nature of God's grace

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:18-22, Eph. 2:8-10

Subject: The connection of baptism to God's people

Scripture: Eph. 4:2-6, 1 Cor 12:12-14

Subject: The need for ongoing relationship with God and obedience

Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 6:1-4

The Baptism:

We suggest that the baptism itself should include some simple but important confessions of the person being baptized. It would be wise to explain these two confessions and their purpose to those in attendance. Those confessions can look something similar to those listed below:

Confession of faith:

1. Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God?
 - a. This question can be answered with a “yes” and is meant to affirm the divinity of Jesus Christ and his position in relation to the Lord.

Confession of repentance:

2. Will you make the good confession, “Jesus is Lord”?
 - a. This question is meant to be answered with the response “Jesus is Lord”. This serves as their simple and verbal acknowledgement of the commitment they are making to follow Jesus for the rest of their lives, come what may. It affirms Jesus’ lordship over their lives and signifies their willingness to submit to his authority as their highest and most important life decision.

When those confessions are made, we suggest the baptizer uses simple but clear wording signifying the work God is doing in the baptized in baptism. It is acceptable to add short and applicable statements to the end of the baptizer’s statement. Below are some examples:

“I now baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” (from Matthew 28:19)

“I now baptize you in the name of Jesus... .” (from Acts 2:38)

“I now baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Be made new.”

“I now baptize you in the name of Jesus for the washing away of your sins, and so that times of refreshing may come.”

“I now baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (From Acts 2:38)

Some Important Considerations:

Other practices:

There are a number of other meaningful practices that can be present at a baptism:

- Having the person to be baptized share their testimony and why they’re being baptized.
- The baptizer sharing about the person being baptized.
- Having other people present at the baptism share about the person being baptized. (*Remember: this is to be a ceremony honoring Jesus. This is not a time to just talk about the positive traits of the individual being baptized.*)
- Singing songs of worship. (Consider the lyrics and think about choosing songs that express commitment.)

- Asking the assembled community to make the confessions mentioned above before the person to be baptized makes them.
- Closing by praying/laying hands on the baptized individual.

Some practicals:

- Go over the "Rebirth" study and homework of Focus on Jesus with the person asking to be baptized.
- If at all possible host baptisms in places that are comfortable enough not to be distracting. A good idea is someone's pool/hot tub, an apartment complex pool/hot tub (but be sure to clear with the complex and give parking instructions), etc.
- If the water temperature isn't comfortable, share the baptism message outside of the water and only get in the water to do the baptism itself. Also consider sharing outside the water so you can have notes with you.
- Bring towels and wear clothes appropriate to being in water.
- Invite people that are close to the individual, core members, etc. We would suggest that baptism is not primarily about some outward display, and as such we don't think it's necessary to wait to be baptized so that people can attend (see Acts 8:36-38).
- If the person who is being baptized has parents who are believers then it would be wise to ask them if they want to share, and acknowledge their valuable influence on their child's life for Christ.
- Take notes about what you're going to do and say so that you can stay on track.
- Make sure everything said can be heard by those in attendance. Move people as necessary to make that possible.