

BAPTISM FAQs

Q. Do I have to be a Christian to be water baptized?

A. Yes. Christian baptism is only meaningful for those who've already put their faith in Jesus Christ. Once you begin a relationship with Jesus, your next step should be to publicly identify with Christ. Baptism is an outward sign of your inward faith; therefore, only those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour should be baptized. Baptism does not make you a believer - it simply illustrates what you already believe.

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Q. What is the Biblical meaning of Baptism?

A. Baptism illustrates Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It illustrates how the Christian's new life in Christ that's made possible by Jesus' sacrifice. Baptism allows us to personally illustrate the death and burial of our old life. As we are immersed in water, it identifies us with Christ's death and burial. We are declare ourselves dead to our old way of living. As we are brought up out of the water, it identifies us with Christ's resurrection. We are declaring that our sins our washed away and He has given us power to live a new life full of meaning, purpose, and blessing.

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 2:12)

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. (Romans 6:3-5)

Q. Why Should I Be Baptized?

A. We are baptized to follow Jesus' example.

One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. (Mark 1:9)

We are baptized to obey Jesus' instructions in His Great Commission.

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 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)

We are baptized to demonstrate we are true disciples of Jesus.

Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and everyone in his household believed in the Lord. Many others in Corinth also heard Paul, became believers, and were baptized. (Acts 18:8)

Q. Why do you baptize by immersion?

A. We baptize by immersion because Jesus was baptized by immersion.

After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. (Matthew 3:16)

We baptize by immersion because in the early Church, baptism was by immersion.

As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. (Acts 8:36–39)

We baptize by immersion because the word "baptize" means "to immerse in water". The original Greek word in the New Testament for "baptize" was "baptizo" which means to plunge, dip, or immerse something in water. We are confident that the early Church consistently baptized by immersion since this was the common meaning of the word in that time.

We baptize by immersion because it best depicts Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. The essence of the Gospel is about what Jesus did for us in these history shaping events. The sprinkling of water, however well intentioned, simply does not demonstrate this truth as clearly as the original idea of immersion does.

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. (1 Corinthians 15:3-5 NLT)

Q. Does baptism of infants mean the same thing as Biblical baptism?

A. No. The Bible describes baptism as a mature statement of faith made by someone who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ. Infant baptism is not necessary since it differs from the baptism taught in the New Testament, which was only for those old enough to believe on Jesus. An infant baptism by sprinkling of water may be a wonderful celebration of loving and committed Christian parents; however, the infant is not aware of what's happening. Biblical baptism is meaningful because it's a celebration of your own faith that you are fully aware of and participate in voluntarily.

As a church, we celebrate what we call "Baby Dedications" occasionally on Sundays to give our parents opportunity to acknowledge their responsibility in raising their newborns in a Christian home. It's a memorable moment for the parents; however, baptism is not included in this special time.

Q. When Should I Be Baptized?

A. As soon as you have decided to follow Christ, you can and should be baptized. There is no reason to delay. If you wait until you are "perfect," you will never feel "good enough". Plan to be baptized the next time True North offers a baptism service.

Q. Is there an age minimum for baptism? Can my child be baptized?

A. It depends. Even though our church has not established a minimum age requirement for baptism, we encourage parents with children to wait until an appropriate age (which they determine) for a couple reasons.

1) Even though some children may be mentally and spiritually ready earlier, they may not appreciate the event or remember it fully if they are baptized too young. Baptism should be an experience the candidate remembers. The older children are, the more likely they will remember and cherish the experience. We want people to look back on their baptism experience with confidence that it reflected a conscious and sincere resolve to follow the Jesus.

2) When children are very young, they often do things out of peer pressure or out of a good desire to please their parents. Parents must remember that baptism is only meaningful when it's voluntary and based on faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour. Baptism is a very positive experience that should be encouraged when a child begins following Christ but the age will vary. Parents will have to discern for themselves what the true motives are regarding their child's decision.

We baptize children who have decided to follow Christ every year. Ultimately, we leave the final decision with the parents, along with the cautions mentioned above. Every adult and child (with their parents) being baptized will be asked by the pastor why they want to be baptized and if they have already trusted Christ for salvation.

Q. Where Should I Be Baptized?

A. Baptism typically occurs within one's local church where they already attend or will be attending. At True North, baptism candidates include only those who have potential to walk in community with us. Here, we celebrate new life in Christ as well as growing as a disciple of Christ and we believe baptism should bridge the two. In Matthew 28, Jesus gave the Church the commission to disciple plus baptize people in the context of the Church community. True North Church holds a baptism service at least once a year, usually in the summer months. We do the baptisms immediately after a Sunday service in a private pool nearby and invite the church family to attend. The service usually lasts about 30 minutes.

Q. What should I wear when I am baptized?

A. Baptism candidates wear shorts or pants over their swimsuit along with t-shirt. When you sign up to be baptized, you will be given an information sheet with full details about what to wear, what to bring, and what to expect at the baptism service.

Q. Can I invite family and friends?

A. Absolutely! Actually, we encourage those being baptized to bring their family and friends to the baptism and witness this great celebration. It allows them the opportunity to see firsthand your desire to follow Jesus and hear also hear more about Jesus for themselves.

Q. Will I have to say anything?

A. Yes. At True North Church, we ask all those being baptized to let us pre-record them giving a short testimony so we can play the video for the congregation later. This helps us introduce you to the congregation and lets them hear in your own words why you are being baptized and what Jesus means to you. Part of being a growing Christian is learning to share your witness about Christ with others. Telling your story at baptism is a great way to begin doing this. Plus, if you don't like speaking in front of crowds, the video makes this part less stressful for you.

Check the online church calendar for upcoming baptism dates and information.

Scriptures quoted from the New Living Translation