

The Purpose and Meaning of Baptism

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What is Baptism?

Baptism is one of the two ordinances of the church. The purpose of water baptism by immersion in water is to symbolize and proclaim. Water baptism serves as an outward picture of the inward reality of salvation. Baptism symbolizes the believer's regeneration – being “born again” to spiritual life (John 3:6–7). It pictures our spiritual baptism where the believer is put in union to Christ in His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3–4). Water baptism is also the public proclamation of commitment to Christ by the believer. In baptism, the believer publicly commits to following Christ as a disciple (Matthew 10:32–33, 28:18–19).

Though not necessary for salvation, baptism is an act of obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord. If a person has received salvation in Christ, in obedience to Him as Lord, that person should be baptized.

Why Should a Person Be Baptized?

- To obey Christ's command (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 10:47–48; 2:38).
- To imitate Christ's life (Matthew 3:13–15; John 4:1–2).
- To share publicly one's love and commitment to Jesus Christ (Acts 19:4–5).
- To identify with Christ and His church (Acts 2:41; Romans 10:9).

When Can a Person Be Baptized at CBC?

A person should be baptized after they have been born again and believed in Christ for salvation (John 3:3–8; 1 Peter 1:23; Romans 10:9) and committed their life to Him as a follower. There are no instances in the New Testament where a person is baptized before following Christ (Acts 2:41, 8:12).

Baptism of Children — At CBC, our general guideline is not to baptize a child who has professed faith until the age of 12. Each year, many adults get baptized despite being baptized as a younger person. This may be because they were baptized before they were actually born again. It is very difficult to discern genuine faith in a young person who is under parental care. While we recognize that it is not uncommon in the church at large to baptize children under the age of 12, we see this as unhelpful in the spiritual life of a child, who may view their baptism as proof of their salvation. Our desire is not to arbitrarily hold back a child from baptism but to wait until they have matured both mentally and spiritually in a way to confirm they understand both the gospel and what baptism means. We would ask parents with professing children under the age of 12 to shepherd their children to trust in and joyfully submit to this guideline of the Elders.



What is the Baptism Process?

1. Visit cbcvallejo.org to register for the Baptism class.
2. Complete the Baptism class.
3. Complete the Baptism Application.
4. Participate in a Baptism interview.
5. Approved applicants must:
 - a. complete a signed photo release form
 - b. submit their public testimony of faith, reviewed by their interviewer
6. Approved applicants will be scheduled for baptism at the next Baptism service. All baptisms will be conducted by a pastor or elder of CBC.

Assignment (if applicable)

- ☐ Personal Testimony (1 page, double-spaced)
- ☐ Update to specific questions from the interview

☐ Other: _____

Email the document(s) by this date: _____

- ☐ dan@cbcvallejo.org ☐ jeremy@cbcvallejo.org ☐ julian@cbcvallejo.org
- ☐ michael@cbcvallejo.org ☐ phil@cbcvallejo.org ☐ thomas@cbcvallejo.org
- ☐ Other: _____@_____

Instructions for Baptism Candidates

A. Arrival

- Arrive at least 20 minutes before start of service and look for baptizee seating area.
- Direct family members/friends to arrive early to get good seating.
- Place belongings in seats to the far left of podium.
- Most importantly, PRAY! Pray for Christ to be exalted! Pray for His Word and for His Person to be glorified in the service and in the testimonies to be shared. Pray about what the Lord would have you share with the congregation.

B. Suggestions on What to Wear:

- Dark-colored shirts
- Dark-colored shorts/ sweats
- Flip-flops/ sandals
- (For Women) Dark-colored shirt over tank-top and hair pulled back

C. What Not to Wear:

- White or light-colored shirts/ shorts/ sweats
- Jewelry, watches
- Socks
- Contact lenses

D. What to Bring:

- Duffel bag/backpack for belongings
- Extra clothes (undergarments, pants, shirt, socks, shoes, etc.)
- Two large towels
- Plastic bag for wet clothing
- Brush/comb

Preparing a Personal Testimony

When you get baptized, you will give a personal testimony of your salvation in front of the church. The Apostle Paul provided a good example to follow when he gave his testimony before King Agrippa in Acts 26:1–23.

A. Life Before Conversion (Acts 26:4–11)

Paul had a religious life but was opposed to God.

B. Conversion (Acts 26:12–18)

Paul had a recognition of a need for Christ and a commitment to Christ.

C. Life After Conversion (Acts 26:19–23)

Paul had a changed life and became a witness for Christ.

Few believers have as dramatic a testimony as Paul, but all believers can follow the same general outline: Life Before Conversion, Conversion, Life After Conversion. To implant this testimony outline firmly in your mind, you should develop a “ten second” testimony that forms the basis for a more complete testimony. For example:

Writing Your Testimony

A. Life before conversion

Try to use descriptive words that a non-believer will understand which would characterize your life prior to knowing Christ (examples: selfish, no meaning, guilty, troubled, without hope, full of anxiety, always trying to be #1, etc.).

B. Conversion

Describe your conversion in terms that a non-believer will readily understand. Phrases such as “got saved” or “had my sins covered by the blood” or “knelt at Calvary,” while meaningful to believers, will probably not be understood by a non-believer. You might describe your conversion experience with phrases such as: “I discovered God loved me” or “I realized Jesus was God’s Son” or “Someone told me that God had a plan for my life.”

C. Life after Conversion

Use words familiar to a non-believer to describe your life now (examples: I stopped worrying. I found peace. My guilt is gone. I have found the only way to real living). Remember to keep your “ten second” testimony simple without going into detail. Details are reserved for your expanded testimony versions.

Testimony Examples

A. 10-second testimony

Before

"There was a time in my life when I was hopeless and confused; I had no lasting peace and joy, but someone told me that was because I didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

Conversion

"then I had an encounter with Jesus Christ that changed my life. Someone shared the Biblical Gospel with me..."

After

"Ever since then, I have had a purpose for living. I discovered the reality of true peace and joy."

B. 30-second testimony

The above ten-second testimony can be expanded into a 30-second testimony:

Before

"When I was younger, I couldn't find lasting peace and joy in anything or anyone. My friends and activities could not fill that emptiness in my life."

Conversion

"One day, a friend of mine told me how Jesus had died so that my life could have meaning and direction. I then realized that I was a sinner in need of God's forgiveness. So I asked God to forgive me, and genuinely believed in Jesus as my Savior, receiving Him into my life."

After

"Since turning my life over to Jesus, I have discovered that the Bible provides all the answers I need. No matter what comes along, God's peace and joy are mine forever."

C. 60-second testimony

The above thirty-second testimony expanded into a sixty-second testimony:

Before

"When I was younger, I couldn't find lasting peace or joy in anything or anyone. Even though my friends and I always were on the move, it seemed there should be more to life than what I was experiencing. My friends even agreed with that."

Conversion

"One day, a friend and I were talking about some problems I was having; and he explained that my biggest problem was not having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He showed me that no one was perfect, which means that all have sinned, as the Bible says in Romans 3:23. And, I learned that the Bible, in Romans 6:23, says my sins had earned a definite wage for me, which was death. However, God didn't leave me in that position. Jesus died for me so my sins could be forgiven, and I could enjoy a relationship with God and receive His gift of eternal life."

"All I had to do was to believe genuinely that Jesus died to pay the penalty for my sins and that He rose from the dead so I could have a new life. My next step of commitment was to ask Him to forgive me of my sins. My prayer was simple; I said, 'God, please forgive me for my sins. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to die for me and to live so I could have eternal life. Please save me from my sins, and take control of my life, Lord Jesus.' "

After

"Since turning my life over to Jesus, God's lasting peace and joy have been mine as I have obeyed God's Word to overcome problems. I don't mean that I don't have trials, but I am now confident that God will help, guide, and strengthen me when problems come. Have you ever considered the difference that Jesus Christ could make in your life?"

Photography Consent Form & Model Release

A. Adult Release

I, (print name) _____ hereby grant permission to Community Bible Church, its employees or representatives, to take and use (check all that apply):

- ☐ Photography, digital images, video
- ☐ Audio recording or quoted remarks
- ☐ Promotional materials

I understand that the above media of me would be for use in promotional or educational materials. These materials might include printed or electronic publications, web sites or other electronic communications, such as social media. I further agree that my name and identity may be revealed in descriptive text or commentary in connection with the image(s). I authorize the use of these materials indefinitely without compensation to me. All digital files, prints, reproductions and video and audio recordings shall be the property of Community Bible Church.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

B. Release for Minors (Under 18)

I, (print name): _____, parent/guardian of

(Child's name): _____ hereby grant permission to Community Bible Church, its employees or representatives, to take and use (check all that apply):

- ☐ Photography, digital images, video
- ☐ Audio recording or quoted remarks
- ☐ Promotional materials

I agree that my child's name and identity ☐ **MAY** be revealed ☐ **MAY NOT** be revealed in descriptive text or commentary in connection with the image(s). I authorize the use of these materials indefinitely without compensation to me. All digital files, prints, reproductions and video and audio recordings shall be the property of Community Bible Church Youth Ministry.

Signature of parent or guardian: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____