

# BAPTISM GUIDE



TRINITY CHURCH

— EST. 1926 —

# BAPTISM GUIDE



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PART ONE

*WHAT IS BAPTISM?*

*WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM?*

*WHY BE BAPTIZED*

### PART TWO

*WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?*

*WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?*

*HOW SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?*

### PART THREE

*BABY BAPTISMS*

*CHILD BAPTISMS*

*BAPTISMS AT TRINITY CHURCH*

# PART ONE

# PART ONE



Christians participate in two God-ordained sacraments that celebrate what God has done for us: Holy Communion and Baptism. Communion is celebrated on a regular basis by eating the bread and the juice; symbolizing the body and blood of Jesus that paid for our sins. Baptism is a one-time declaration of a lifetime of devotion to God.

---

**It is important to know that the act of Baptism isn't what saves us.**

---

Scripture is abundantly clear that our faith placed in Jesus is what saves us. The work of salvation is a finished work by Christ on the cross (**Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:10-14**).

Tragically, some people believe they are going to heaven when they die just because they have been baptized. They have no genuine personal faith, have never made a personal decision to receive Christ as Savior and Lord, and are trusting in a ceremony to save them. If Baptism itself could save, why did Jesus die on the cross? If we could be saved merely by being sprinkled or immersed, would Jesus have had to die for our sins? No. If a person's faith is in the sacrament and not the Savior, they are trusting in a powerless ritual.

# WHAT IS BAPTISM?

## 1. Baptism is a command of Jesus and an act of obedience.

First, we believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord. What we mean by this is that the Lord Jesus commanded it — he ordained it — in a way that would make it an ongoing practice of the church. We find this most explicitly in **Matthew 28:19-20 NLT** <sup>19</sup> *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.* <sup>20</sup> *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.”*

As followers of Jesus, we are instructed by Him to do this for all disciples until He returns at the end of the age. When we are baptized, we are displaying obedience to Jesus in our lives and showing Him we truly love Him. Jesus declared in **John 14:21** <sup>21</sup> *Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”*

## 2. Baptism is a public declaration of a person’s faith in Christ.

Making the decision to become a follower of Christ is the best decision you’ll ever make. When you make a life-changing decision like this, you want to tell everyone about the new hope you’ve found in Jesus! You want to let people know your belief in God is real. Our faith should be personal, but not private. Baptism is about going public with your faith. Baptism is a pronouncement of your belief. It is a public way of saying to everyone that you have decided to give your life to Jesus Christ.

### **3. Baptism is a point of departure from your old lifestyle and the start of life as a new creation.**

When we're baptized, we're reminded of what Jesus did for us. When we go down into the water, we're reminded of Jesus' death on the cross and His payment for our sins. But when we come out of the water, we're reminded that three days later, Jesus rose from the dead! **2 Corinthians 5:17** tells us that if we're in Christ, we're new creations. Baptism reminds us that the old is gone, and the new has come!

### **4. Baptism joins us with Jesus in His death and resurrection.**

**Romans 6:3–4 NLT** <sup>3</sup>*Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death?* <sup>4</sup>*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.*

The imagery of baptism is death, burial, and resurrection just as Jesus died, was buried, and raised to new life. In baptism, by faith, we are united with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism dramatically portrays what happened spiritually when you received Christ: Your old self of unbelief, rebellion, and sin died, and a new you of faith and submission and treasuring Jesus has risen. That's what you confess to the world and to heaven when you are baptized.

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Christian baptism is rich with beautiful meaning and symbolism. Consider what baptism illustrates:

## 1. It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NLT** <sup>3</sup>*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.<sup>4</sup> He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.*

**Colossians 2:12 NIV** *"For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ."*

## 2. It illustrates the cleansing of sin.

In **Acts 22:16 NIV** Ananias instructed Saul (later know as Paul, the Apostle) to "Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on the name of the Lord." This is why immersion is so significant, it illustrates the complete cleansing in which we are forgiven of all our sin

**Acts 2:38 NLT** <sup>38</sup>*Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

## 3. It illustrates our new life as a Christian.

As mentioned above, when someone becomes a Christian, they become a brand-new person.

**Romans 6:4 NIV** *"By our baptism then, we were buried with him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead... so also we may live a new life!"*

# WHY BE BAPTIZED?

As a follower of Jesus, there should be no hesitation to baptism, especially now that we have seen what baptism is and the significance behind it. We should be baptized for many reasons, including:

## 1. Because you want to follow Christ's example.

**Mark 1:9 NIV** *"At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river."*

If it is important enough for Jesus to do, isn't it important enough for us to follow?

## 2. Because Jesus commands it.

**Matthew 28:19-20 NLT** <sup>19</sup> *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.* <sup>20</sup> *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."*

If it was important enough for Jesus to command, isn't it important enough for us to obey?

## 3. Because it demonstrates you are a believer.

We are told that after the people believed, they were instructed to repent and be baptized.

### **Acts 2:37-38**

<sup>37</sup> *Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"* <sup>38</sup> *Peter replied, "Each of*

*you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

**4. Because obeying Christ's command shows you know him.**

**1 John 2:3 NIV** "We know that we have come to know him, if we obey His commands."

**5. Because it is the appeal we make to God for a clean conscience.**

**1 Peter 3:21 NIV** "and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

**6. Because it unites you with Christ in a very special way.**

**Galatians 3:26-27 NIV** "You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

# PART TWO

# PART TWO



## WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

### 1. Every person who has believed in Christ.

Every person in the New Testament who was baptized first believed in who Jesus was—the Christ, the Son of the Living God. They also believed what Jesus did—died on the cross, was buried in a tomb, and was raised back to life three days later.

**Acts 2:41** *“Those who accepted his message were baptized. . . .”*

**Acts 8:12** *name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”*

**Acts 8:13** *“Simon himself believed and was baptized.”*

*“But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News... and the*

### 2. Those who have repented of their sin.

Closely connected to belief is repentance. Peter encouraged the people at Pentecost to *“Repent... and be baptized”* (**Acts 2:38**).

Repentance means to have a change of mind. It means to make a U-turn or to do an about face. You were going down the road of destruction, death, and hell; but you repented, you turned around, changed your direction, changed your mind. Therefore, baptism is for believers who have repented of their sin.

# WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

**As soon as you have believed in Jesus Christ as God's Son and Savior of the world!** The bible shows us again and again that baptism quickly followed repenting and believing.

**Acts 2:41** *"Those who accepted his message were baptized . . . that day."*

**Acts 8:35-38** *"Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, 'Look, here is water! Why shouldn't I be baptized right now?' Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' The man answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So, they went down into the water and Philip baptized him."*

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Jesus into your life, you can and should be baptized. There is never a more perfect time than today. Many people feel unworthy or unclean. Remember that you have already been forgiven and made worthy the moment you chose to put your faith in Jesus. The truth is if you wait until you are "perfect," you'll never feel "good enough!"

# HOW SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

**Like Jesus was baptized – by being fully immersed in water.**

**Matthew 3:16 NIV** *“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He came up out of the water.”*

The Greek word translated “baptize/baptism” is the word baptizo (βαπτίζω) and it literally means to “immerse, dip under, or submerge beneath.” Every baptism in the New Testament was by immersion. When Jesus was baptized, the Bible uses the Greek word baptizo (βαπτίζω) to describe that event.

Full immersion into the water is the best way to picture a burial and resurrection. At Trinity Church, our baptistry provides the opportunity to be fully submerged.

# PART THREE

# PART THREE



## WHAT ABOUT BABY BAPTISMS?

Since baptism is for those who have believed and repented, we do not practice infant/baby baptisms. An infant cannot believe. An infant cannot repent.

We believe the New Testament clearly teaches baptism to be a personal response of a repentant believer in Jesus Christ. This is only possible for someone who has reached an age of accountability and consequently is old enough to hear, understand, believe, and repent.

Many denominations continue to sprinkle infants even though there is no example at all in the New Testament of such practice. Some consider it to be an act of dedication for the parents. Others see it as a sort of down payment for the infant's salvation. They say that the infant is being baptized that he/she may one day be saved, rather than to save him/her.

It is appropriate to dedicate a baby (though more appropriate to dedicate the parents). On a regular basis, we offer parents of newborns an opportunity to have their babies brought up front in a church service as they dedicate themselves to raising their child to know and love God.

This is also done as a reminder that our church has dedicated itself to partnering with parents in their responsibility to lead their children to faith in Christ. Please keep in mind, however, that this is a dedication ceremony, not a baptism.

## **What if I was baptized as an infant or small child, what should I do?**

First, you should be grateful that you had parents who cared enough about you to set you apart for God. Because of their devotion, you have an opportunity to complete their prayer by willingly submitting to adult baptism.

Adult baptism is not a sign of disrespect for what your parents did. In fact, it can be seen as a fulfillment of their prayers. Be thankful for the heritage of concerned parents, but don't be negligent of your responsibility as an adult to make your personal commitment and obedience to God in baptism.

Many who are now members of this church were baptized as infants and then, upon coming to personal faith, were baptized by immersion into Christ. God has led you to this point and we pray that you will take this step as soon as possible.

# WHAT ABOUT CHILD BAPTISMS?

Children can be baptized, and we have baptized children in the past. However, keep in mind that Biblically speaking, baptism is appropriate only for those who have made a personal decision to trust in Christ alone for their salvation.

At Trinity Church, we do not baptize children unless they are mature enough to understand what they are doing and can willingly place their faith in Christ. It is important for them to understand the true meaning of baptism and receive Christ as their Lord and Savior. We take children baptism on a case-by-case basis.

## BAPTISMS AT TRINITY CHURCH

### 1. Church Partnership and Participation

At Trinity Church, it is a requirement that everyone wishing to become a Partner (formerly known as membership) must be a baptized believer in Christ. If you were baptized (full immersion) at an earlier point in your life, or at a different church it is not necessary to be re-baptized.

### 2. Multiple Individual Baptisms

Many people feel the need to be re-baptized as a sign or re-dedicating their life to God. If you were baptized at an age of understanding, did it out of repentance, and were fully submerged into the waters of baptism, there is no need for you to be re-baptized. You are already a part of the family of God.

### 3. What should I bring with me?

You can wear a dark colored plain t-shirt and shorts (or something similar). Gowns are provided for women should you chose that option. We also suggest a towel, a change of clothes, a plastic bag for your wet clothes, and any other items you might need post-baptism.

Before the preaching pastor begins the altar call, they will ask you to make your way to the back of the stage, where you will receive further instructions from our deaconship team. To help commemorate the occasion a t-shirt will be given to you and a baptismal certificate will be mailed to you.

## **5. What if I have special needs?**

If your situation requires special accommodations, please specify in detail on your Baptism Application and we will be glad to work with you whatever the case.

# BAPTISM GUIDE

## REVIEW

1. Christians participate in two God-ordained sacraments that celebrate what God has done for us: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. It is important to know that the act of Baptism isn't what \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Baptism is a \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus and an act of obedience.
4. Baptism is a public \_\_\_\_\_ of a person's faith in Christ.
5. Baptism joins us with Jesus in His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Baptism illustrates our \_\_\_\_\_ as a Christian.
7. Who should be baptize? \_\_\_\_\_.
8. We consider Infant Baptisms are non-biblical because they neither \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The Greek word used to describe baptisms in the bible means to \_\_\_\_\_.
10. When is the perfect time to be baptized? \_\_\_\_\_.

### Answer Key:

1. Holy Communion, Baptism
2. Saves us
3. Command
4. Declaration
5. Death, Resurrection
6. New Life
7. Every person who has believed in Christ.
8. Believe, Repent
9. Submerge
10. As soon as you can.

# TRINITY CHURCH GROWTH TRACK



## NEW TO TRINITY CHURCH?

WE CAN HELP YOU FIT RIGHT IN. FOLLOW OUR EASY STEPS TO HELP YOU GROW AND GET THE MOST OUT OF WHAT TRINITY CHURCH HAS TO OFFER.

1

### LIFE GROUPS

We believe connection to God & each other is key to our spiritual growth. We want to help you become integrated with other people just like you. Life Groups are a perfect way to be plugged in & grow in your faith. Visit our website or info center for a full list of Life Groups.



2

### NEW BELIEVER STARTING POINT

It's important to understand what God has for us & what He wants from us. If you are a new follower of Jesus, we have a New Believer's Course (online & in person) that will help you form a good foundation for your faith. Visit our website or info center for more information.



3

### BAPTISM

Because Jesus instructed us to be baptized, baptism is an act of obedience. Baptism shows submission to God & confirms our decision to follow Jesus in our new life. Baptism classes are held throughout the year to answer any questions you may have. Visit our website or info center for a full list of dates.



4

### SERVICE TRAINING

God wants to use you to make a difference! He has created us with unique talents & skills for the purpose of impacting the lives of the helpless & hopeless. Our Servant's Heart Course will prepare you to effectively serve Jesus & others, and will help get you started with opportunities to serve at Trinity Church. Visit our website or info center for details.



WWW.TRINITYCHURCHSF.ORG