

4. Involve your kids in the life of the church.
5. Use family devotions to teach the doctrines of Christianity.
6. Talk to an elder if you think your child might be ready to be baptized.
7. Don't despise those who make decisions different from yours.
8. Pray. Then pray some more.

Good Resources

Forbid Them Not: Rethinking the Baptism and Church Membership of Children and Young People by Ted Christman (Self-published, n.d.).

"Baptism in the Context of the Local Church" by Mark Dever in *"Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ"* edited by Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright (B&H, 2006), esp. pp. 345-350.

"Baptism in History, Theology, and the Church" by Shawn D. Wright in *Baptist Foundations: Church Government for an Anti-Institutional Age* edited by Mark Dever and Jonathan Leeman (B&H, 2015), esp. pp. 126-129.

Questions? Comments? Feedback? Email Ryan at radams@cfcbermingham.org.

Equip—Baptism **Class 2: Baptizing Kids**



Infant Baptism: A Recap

1. Infant baptism applies the sign of union with Christ to those who are not yet united to Christ.
2. Infant baptism undermines the church's saltiness and lightness (Matthew 5:13-16).
3. Infant baptism does not appreciate the newness of the New Covenant.
4. Infant baptism misreads or over-reads some key biblical texts.

What About Children?

Arguments for Postponing Baptism

1. **Unconverted Church Members** – Delaying baptism allows time to test the reality of a child's profession, reducing nominalism and false conversions in the church.
2. **Love of Parents or God?** – "Children are childlike and trusting for a reason. To ask a pastor to try to separate out the tightly knit strands of affection for parents and for God, and to discern which is primary in a child is to ask more than may be best for the child. Time allows the child's faith to mature and evidence itself consistently." – Mark Dever

3. **Church Membership** – Children are not ready for the full responsibilities of church membership, which baptism confers on them.
4. **History** – Historically it was rare in Baptist churches for children under the age of 10 to be baptized. The trend toward baptizing younger children is largely due to social pressures on pastors.
5. **Experience** – Delaying baptism allows time for a child to be better taught and mature, also allowing him to better remember, cherish, and use the experience of his baptism.

Arguments for Baptizing Children

1. **Disobedience** – Jesus does not forbid children to come to him (Mark 10:14). Moreover, Jesus commands his church to make disciples and baptize them (Matthew 28:18-20). Delaying baptism disobeys these two commands.
2. **Discouragement** – Postponing baptism for children who are converted can discourage their faith.
3. **Testing** – It is possible to see positive evidences of grace in children who are truly converted.
4. **Church Membership** – Children may not be ready for the *responsibilities* of church membership (voting, teaching, etc.), but they should not be forbidden the *privileges* of church membership (pastoral oversight, Lord's Supper, etc.).

5. **Church Discipline** – The Bible has a way of handling cases where church members show evidence they are not saved: church discipline. This is how God means for his church to deal with the unconverted in the church, not through a protracted time of examination that can take years.

Points of Agreement

1. This is a difficult issue, where sincere believers can come to different conclusions.
2. Children can have true, saving faith.
3. As best as we can possibly tell, churches should only baptize those who show evidence of conversion, new birth in Christ.
4. Parents, elders, and church members must work to disciple children in the faith.

8 Tips on Walking Towards Baptism

1. Never miss an opportunity to speak to your kids about the gospel.
2. When we baptize believers in church, use it as an opportunity to talk to your kids about baptism.
3. Look for and encourage the seeds of repentance and faith you see in you kids.