

BAPTISM BASICS



WELCOME

We're so excited that you desire to publicly proclaim your faith by being baptized! This booklet is designed to help you understand the meaning of baptism and give you some practical details about being baptized at GCO. The following pages answer several important questions about baptism and help prepare you for your own baptism.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

- A. Baptism is a public act of obedience on the part of a believer in Jesus Christ in which they are immersed in water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Bible is clear on this point; it teaches believer's baptism by immersion (Matthew 28:18-20).
- B. Baptism is the visible sign which Jesus has given to the church to outwardly demonstrate a believer's identity as a follower of Christ and member of His church (Acts 2:41; Acts 10:47-48).
- C. Baptism is the visible symbol which Jesus has given the church to indicate that a believer has died with Christ and been raised together with Him to new life (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21).

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM?

- A. To obey Jesus and follow Him.
- B. To testify to others of the grace of God in our lives. Baptism is an outward expression to our family, friends, and church body of our inward commitment of true faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior of our lives. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 3:27; 2 Corinthians 5:17)
- C. To visibly symbolize our union with Jesus Christ.
 - 1. We have believed in Jesus and repented of our sins (Acts 2:37-40; 16:30-34).
 - 2. We are partakers in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:11-12).
 - 3. There has been a transfer of ownership of our life over to Jesus (Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Romans 10:9-10).
 - 4. We have a deep commitment to and family bond with the Body of Christ. (Galatians 6:2; John 11:38-44).

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

The Bible is clear that baptism should follow faith in Christ. There are examples in the Bible of men, women, and children being baptized, but in each case, it is clear that the person being baptized possesses a *personal, genuine, cognitive* faith.

1. *Personal* faith means that one acknowledges Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. They accept God's free gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ, recognizing that salvation is not something to be earned but rather a pure gift from God (John 1:12; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-10). Being raised in a Christian home does not make one a Christian. Only God saves people and rescues them from Satan's power and sin's penalty (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6).
2. *Genuine* faith means that faith is rooted in the heart, not just the head. Saving faith in Jesus does not merely involve an intellectual assent to certain facts. It involves an internal transformation in which the believer comes to treasure Jesus Christ and love Him supremely.
3. *Cognitive* faith means that faith is also rooted in the mind, not just the heart. Faith in Jesus involves more than merely a thoughtless emotional decision. Saving faith is faith that trusts in the true gospel as it is revealed in Scripture.

In the case of young children especially, parents are encouraged to think, pray and seek counsel from others about whether or not their child demonstrates this kind of faith.

WHY SHOULD I GET BAPTIZED?

- A. Jesus Christ commanded it (Matthew 28:19).
- B. Jesus Christ and the Apostles taught and modeled it (Acts 2:37-38; 10:44-48).

I'M GETTING BAPTIZED... WHAT'S NEXT?

1. Write out your testimony (some helpful points are provided below).
2. Meet with a pastor (a pastor will reach out to you after you indicate your interest online).
3. Prepare for the day of your baptism (logistical details below).
4. Consider becoming a member at Grace (the Bible teaches that baptism and membership are tied together, as baptism is the visual sign of your entrance into Christ's body; you

can talk about this more extensively with a pastor when you meet together before your baptism).

GUIDANCE FOR WRITING YOUR TESTIMONY

Your testimony is an opportunity to express your gratitude to God for what He has done in your life. If you are a believer, you have been blessed with every imaginable spiritual blessing in Christ! God has forgiven you for all your sins, brought you into union with Christ so that you stand before Him clothed in Christ's perfect righteousness, and ushered you into the eternal joy of knowing and pursuing Christ. A believer's testimony is the most wonderful story that could ever be told. Below are some considerations that will guide you in the right direction as you start to write out your personal testimony of God's grace in your life.

- A. **Tell your story in plain language.** The best way to express your gratitude to God is speaking plainly from the heart about who you were before Christ, what God has done for you in Christ, and who you now are as a believer in Christ. It would also be helpful to talk about the way in which you first heard the gospel, and the process by which God brought you to put your trust in Christ.
- B. **Include the basic elements of the gospel.** Talk about the holiness of God and your own sinful rebellion. Talk about God's merciful action on your behalf at the cross, where Jesus died in your place to take the punishment that you deserved. Talk about Jesus' glorious resurrection which guarantees our hope. Talk about the fact God has saved you through nothing but your trust in Christ, and that through Christ you now enjoy the incredible blessing of knowing God and being in right relationship with Him forever. This is the gospel by which we have been saved!
- C. **Focus on Jesus.** It might be tempting to major on your own sinfulness or even your own spiritual progress as a believer, but Jesus is far and away the most important character in your testimony! He is the one who deserves the spotlight. Focus mainly on who He is and what He has done for you, and give Him all the glory.

DETAILS ABOUT THE DAY OF BAPTISM

What should I wear and where should I be?

- A. You need to be dressed to get wet. Please wear a modest one-piece swimsuit and a dark colored t-shirt, or shorts and a dark colored t-shirt.
- B. Bring a towel and a change of clothes for after your baptism.

- C. Plan to arrive 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the service in which you are being baptized. When you meet with a pastor to discuss your testimony, he will let you know which room you will meet in.
- 1st service starts at 8:15am
 - 2nd service starts at 9:45am
 - 3rd service starts at 11:15am

What happens in the water?

- A. The elder or pastor who is baptizing you will ask you to give your testimony (1-2 minutes).
- B. He will then ask you two clarifying questions:
- “Have you trusted in Christ as your Savior and Lord?” (Yes!)
 - “Do you want to be baptized out of obedience to Christ?” (Yes!)
- C. He will then immerse you three times (In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit).
- D. He will then pray for you, and when he is finished, you will exit the water the same way you came in.
- E. Someone will be waiting for you with your towel.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We are so thankful for Christ’s work in your life and excited that you desire to be baptized in obedience to Him. When you meet with a pastor, you will walk through the details in this booklet together, spend some time talking about your testimony, and then prepare for the day of your baptism. If you have any questions in the meantime, you can reach out to a pastor by phone at 714-633-8867 or by email at staff@graceorange.org.