

was buried and died, so in baptism we are “buried”. And through faith, by the power of God that raised Christ from the dead, we emerge from the watery grave as one raised from the dead. Do we dare substitute sprinkling for submersion when we consider such a weighty matter as our union with the burial and resurrection of Christ?

Discussion Questions

- Describe in your own words the connection between baptism by immersion and biblical imagery from Romans and Colossians.
- What are some other ways the bible uses baptism imagery?

Day 5 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

We have discussed the evidence from grammatical interpretation, Christ’s instructions and his example, the practice of John the Baptist and the Apostles, and the imagery used by Paul to show a cohesive view of baptism by immersion. All of these were taken directly from scripture, or by analyzing the words found in scripture. Finally, we will look at a secondary source that corroborates what we have already found to be true in the scriptures. In the early Christian church, we have what may be the first catechism, a document drawn on by many of the pre-Nicene fathers of the church. The collection of teachings known as the Didache (pronounced Did-ah-KAY) is believed to be dated in the first century. Here is a portion of what it says regarding instructions for baptism: *And concerning baptism, baptize this way: Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have no living water, baptize into other water; and if you cannot do so in cold water, do so in warm. But if you have neither, pour out water three times upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit.* Didache Chapter 7. While it is important to our rule of faith be the scriptures alone, we have seen that the mode and the formula as laid out in the scriptures was confirmed by the practice of the earliest Christians.

Discussion Questions

- If you were stranded on a desert island, and you wanted to be baptized, would it be okay to be sprinkled from water from a nearby stream? Why or why not?
- What are the two main points of this week’s catechism, and how are they connected to the ancient, extra-biblical witness regarding baptism?

Baptist Catechism

Family Worship Guide



West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, September 14th, 2025)

Baptist Catechism Question #100

Q: How is Baptism rightly administered?

A: *Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the party in water, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ’s institution, and the practice of the apostles, and not by sprinkling or pouring of water, or dipping some part of the body, after the tradition of men.*

Suggested Memory Verse

Matthew 3:16 *And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him . . . (ESV)*

Day 1 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

The past few weeks we have considered the “who” of baptism- that is, who should and who should not be baptized. Now we will look at the method of baptism, specifically, the words being said during the sacrament, and how the sacrament is to be administered. As the answer to this week’s question tells us, there is a right and a wrong way to baptize. We know this for several reasons, and we’ll explore each in turn. We’ll begin by looking at the grammatical case for baptism by immersion. The catechism’s answer contrasts the biblical practice of baptism by “dipping the whole body of the party in the water” with the practice of sprinkling or pouring, which the catechism calls “the tradition of men.” There are whole books written on the words we translate as “baptize” and “baptism” in the English, but in summary, the verb *baptizo* means to dip, submerge, or immerse. The same word was used in the first century to refer to a boat that has sunk, or a piece of cloth that is dipped in dye, or someone who is overcome with fear. There is no evidence that the word *baptizo* was used to indicate sprinkling or pouring. In fact, Josephus, a first century historian differentiates between the Greek words *raino* (to sprinkle) and *baptizo* (to immerse) when discussing dipping ashes in water, then sprinkling them. If *baptizo* means “to sprinkle” then it would be nonsensical for Josephus to distinguish between baptizing and sprinkling.

Discussion Questions

- Share your thoughts on how the practice of sprinkling or pouring may have been introduced to the church.
- Why is it important that we practice baptism by immersion versus sprinkling?

Day 2 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

One of the most amazing things to consider about our Lord’s earthly ministry is that he was baptized. Jesus had no reason to repent for sins, but in order to identify with sinners, he undertook the rite of baptism. Matthew 3:16 *And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him.* We should certainly be moved by this, but we should also observe the mode by which Christ was baptized. It says he “went up from the water,” indicating that Jesus was immersed in water, in order that he might come up from it. This passage describes how Jesus was baptized and is for us an example of proper baptism. The plain reading here is that Christ was baptized by immersion. As the Lord is about ascend into heaven, he gave final instructions to his apostles. Matthew 28:19–20 *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* Jesus here prescribes the formula with which the apostles were to conduct baptism, they are to baptize disciples of Christ *“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*

Discussion Questions

- Why is it important that we observe the same kind of baptism that Christ undertook?
- What is the significance of a Trinitarian baptism?

Day 3 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

Not only do we have the example of Christ’s baptism and his instructions on how to baptize from gospels, but there are also several other scriptures that give us a uniform description of the biblical practice of baptism, including evidence from the ministry of John the Baptist. *John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized.* John 3:23. Here we have a description of the area in which John was conducting baptisms. The place for the baptisms, Aenon, means “springs.” The reason the gospel writer gives for the location, was that there was “plentiful water,” indicating that people were being immersed in the water. If John the Baptist was sprinkling, then any place with a flask of water nearby would have been adequate! Also, in John 4 we read that the disciples of Jesus were baptizing at the same time John. Finally, have a description of a baptism by immersion from the book of Acts. Phillip is told by an angel to go to the desert, he meets the Ethiopian eunuch, who is then converted. *And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.* Acts 8:38. Once again we have a clear picture of the apostolic practice of baptism by immersion. Though Phillip himself was not an apostle, he was a deacon at Jerusalem and ministered in coordination with the Apostles (see Acts 8).

Discussion Questions

- What clues do we have about baptism from the apostles and from John the Baptist?
- Do you think that Phillip used the formula prescribed by Christ regarding a Trinitarian baptism? Why or why not?

Day 4 – Review Q&A and recite memory verse

One of the most compelling reasons for holding baptism by immersion is rich biblical symbolism. Not only does biblical imagery solidify our understanding of baptism, it also underscores the importance of the correct practice of baptism. Baptism is a sign for the believer of our mystical union with the Living One, who died, and who lives forevermore. Romans 6:4 *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.* Here Paul speaks of the connection between the believer and Christ: we are united with him in his death and resurrection. When we are submerged under the water, we undergo a sort of death. And when we come up out of the water, we are experiencing the new, resurrected life we now have in Christ. Paul uses a similar picture in Colossians 2:12, *having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.* Just as Christ