



Wondering with Children

About

Baptism and Salvation

By Mickie O'Donnell, DDiv

A PARENT'S TALKING POINT GUIDE

WHEN YOUR CHILD ASKS ABOUT BAPTISM* AND/OR SALVATION

It is important for children to be a part of the Covenant Community's Worship experience so that this is something that becomes familiar and normal to them. As children attend Worship with their family, they will be present at various liturgical experiences that take place throughout the church year. Infant baptisms, Confirmation, adult baptisms, Communion, Commissioning of Elders and Deacons, Testimonies, along with a times of praise, giving of our tithes and offerings, and hearing the Word proclaimed. Therefore, it will only be natural that children will wonder about these things and eventually ask questions about what they mean and how they can be more fully a member of the Family of God.

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY:

When I was five years old, I began to be prompted by the Holy Spirit. I watched the transformation of my father when he professed faith in Christ and was miraculously healed of alcoholism and our family life moved from chaos to peace. I remember being aware of my own disobedience and a strong desire to have that same peace in my own heart. Somewhere between the age of five and six, I knelt at my bedside while my 13-year-old cousin prayed with me and I asked Jesus to forgive me and make me a new person. Did I know fully what I was doing? As fully as any six-year-old could.

The moment I stood back up and went back into bed that night, I knew something about me had changed. The next morning, I told my mom and dad that I was a Christian and then I went to my friend's house and told her she needed Jesus too! I remember my mother telling me that my passion for sharing my joy was called evangelism; an indication of the Holy Spirit at work in my life. I next knew that I wanted to be baptized. Since I had not had been baptized anywhere as an infant, I experienced "Believer's Baptism." One might smile at the simplicity of this young testimony, but it was real. As a result of my authentic conversion, I felt called to ministry and eventually have spent 42 years of church ministry working with children, teens, and their families, helping people of all ages become disciples of Christ in the US, Scotland, and India.

WHEN YOUR CHILD ASKS ABOUT BAPTISM

One of the questions I have often been asked over the years from parents is "How do I explain baptism to my child?" The following are the things that were explained to me about what being baptized meant. Adapt these talking points to fit your child's age and understanding. This is written for those children who were not baptized as infants, but rather are older children (younger than Confirmation age) who profess faith in Christ.

If your inquiring child was already baptized as an infant, you can still explain all these same things to them relating them to the promise and commitment that you made for them at that time. Let them know that they are already a child of the promise (Covenant) and if they are now at a point of wanting to publicly profess their personal faith in Christ speak with your Pastor for an opportunity for your child to confirm their baptism. If the Holy Spirit is prompting them, there is no need to wait for enrollment in the Confirmation Class to make this public profession.

First of all, remember to keep it simple, but that doesn't mean you take your child's desire to be baptized as trivial. The Holy Spirit's promptings are just as meaningful for a child as they are for an adult. There is no such person of the Trinity as a "junior" Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit prompts both adults and children and these promptings are real. Let your child/ren asks questions as you talk. Answer their questions as best as you can, and don't be afraid to say "what do you think?" This will help you see what level of understanding they have.

Baptism is about Belonging. A person who admits he/she not perfect and needs Jesus' forgiveness says "I believe that Jesus is God, the Son, who died for my sins." This person wants other people to know that he/she now belongs to God and being baptized is a way to show others that he/she can now belong to The Family of God.

Baptism is a Sign or Symbol. Being baptized is an outward picture of a spiritual truth. We use symbols all the time. For example: A red light is the sign/symbol for STOP. And the green light is a sign for GO. So when we see someone being baptized it is sign that shows he/she is a part of God's family and believe in Jesus. It's like wanting everyone to see! You are now a walking sign of belonging to God.

Baptism is a picture of our Death. When Jesus died on the cross, he took all of our sins on him and died. When we decide to be baptized we are telling everyone that we agree that our sins, were on that cross and we should realize that in a way, we died with Jesus when he died. All the sins were ever did and all the things we will do wrong in the future were already taken care of when Jesus died.

Baptism is a picture of our New Life (Resurrection). Being baptized is a picture of Jesus raising from the dead and we get to have a new life too with Christ. We get to have the privileges of being fully forgiven and we get to live with the power of God's Grace in our life. It also reminds us that someday we will get to be with Jesus in heaven and live there forever.

When talking with older children about baptism, explain that it is like standing in front of their church family, and others who they want to invite, to witness what they are doing. It will be like acting out the story of Easter as if they were there because spiritually they were.

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WHEN YOUR CHILD ASKS ABOUT SALVATION

Another of the questions I have been asked as a Children's Pastor is "What do I say when my child wants to be sure he/she is a Christian?" I have used this very simple four step explanation of how to talk about what it means to become of believer in both mind and heart. Becoming a Christian is as simple as A. B. C. D and telling a story.

- A. ADMIT - admit that you are not perfect. Admit that you have sinned. Admit that you need to confess your need for forgiveness and help.
- B. BELIEVE - believe that Jesus, God the Son, died on the cross for your sin, taking your punishment, defeating death with his resurrection and ascension
- C. CONSIDER - Consider the Cost. Realize that putting your trust in Christ, identifying with him as your Lord and savior will cost you your life. It is a commitment for life.
- D. DECIDE - Decide to put your trust in Jesus. Decide to give him your life. Decide to become a disciple. Decide to study God's Word and live by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Use the story on the following page to share the overview of the Gospel message easily. Or watch the telling of this story at this link [An Overview of the Gospel Story](#)

Let your child pray in his/her own words about deciding to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, do not lead with your words, but rather assure your child that God loves her/him. If they were baptized as an infant reassure that he/she is "confirming" the promise that you had made at that time. If they were not baptized previously talk about this possibility and then speak to your Pastor.

*Excerpt on Baptism from **ECO Confessional Standard** page 80

Of Baptism

1. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world.
2. The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called thereunto.
3. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary, but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.
4. Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.
5. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.
6. The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.
7. The sacrament of Baptism is but once to be administered to any person.

The WHOLE Story in a Flash!

In the beginning God created the heaven's and earth and God created people. God loved the people and began to have a relationship with them, but the people disobeyed. They sinned. Because God is perfect, God cannot be in a relationship with that which is sinful. So, the relationship was destroyed, broken.

All through the OT God tried to help the chosen people of Israel by giving them rules and guidelines that would restore that relationship and to help them be successful and prosperous. God sent them leaders who would challenge them when they did the wrong things and guide them to do the right things but every time they would turn their backs on God.

Finally, God, came personally. We celebrate this historic event at Christmas, it is the birth of Jesus, God the Son. The reason Jesus came to earth was so that when he was an adult he could show us what having a relationship with God is like and what it will be like in God's Kingdom.

- There will be no disease - He healed the lame, the blind, the sick.
- There will be no hunger – he feed the 4,000 and the 5,000.
- There will be no danger from the environment – the wind and the waves obeyed him
- There will be no death – he raised Lazarus from the dead.

Then, to make this perfect relationship with God possible, Jesus had to take away the power that sin had over people. Since Jesus was perfect, he traded his perfection for our sin by dying on the cross in our place to allow us to have a restored relationship with God. Because Jesus rose from the dead and returned to heaven, that relationship can be a forever relationship for any and all who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Now when God looks at us, our sin isn't what is seen anymore, instead God sees the perfection of Jesus so we can have that relationship with God again.

God the Holy Spirit came to be with believers, giving them the power to understand God's Word and to help believers share the Good news of Jesus with others.

We can read in the NT the wonderful stories of miracles that the men and women who were followers of Jesus performed by the power of the Holy Spirit as they told the truth of what God had done for the world through Jesus. We even have a glimpse of what is yet to come. It's like knowing the end of a great adventure story. God created and loved and rescued us so we could have a forever relationship with God and each other.