

Baptism – Teacher’s Guide

1) What is baptism?

- A) Baptism is the act of **immersing** a person in water and **raising** them back up again. It is typically done in church baptisteries, but can be done anywhere where there is enough water (pools, rivers, lakes, etc.). The normal method is immersion, but **pouring** or **sprinkling** can be used if this is not possible (e.g. when a person is ill, disabled, elderly, confined, etc.).

2) Why must we be baptized?

- A) Water baptism is **commanded** by Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18–20).
- B) Jesus, our example, was Himself **baptized** (Matthew 3:13–17).
- C) Jesus and His disciples **baptized** those who believed and repented (John 3:22–26; 4:1–2).
- D) New disciples in the early church were **always** baptized (Acts 2:38–41; 8:26–38; 16:31–34).

3) What are the prerequisites for baptism?

- A) Being **born** again (see the lesson “Salvation”).
- B) Understanding the **spiritual** significance of the act of baptism.

4) What does baptism signify?

- A) Our **union** with Christ. Baptism is **symbolic** of being saved. It is an outward **physical** sign of our inward **spiritual** union with Jesus Christ.
- (1) Being immersed in water is symbolic of our **death** and **burial** with Christ (Romans 6:3–4). When we’re saved, we die with Christ, that is, we die, spiritually speaking, to **sin** and our old way of life. “Dying to sin” means that our **relationship** with sin is ended. Its power over us is **broken**, and we are no longer its **slave** (Romans 6:7).
- (2) Being raised up from the water is symbolic of our **resurrection** with Christ (Romans 6:5). When we’re saved, we’re made **alive** with Christ, that is, we become alive, spiritually speaking, to God. Becoming “alive” to God means that we have begun a **relationship** with Him (John 17:3). God places His Spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1:21–22; Ephesians 1:12–14), and we are born again (John 3:1–8).
- B) Our commitment to **discipleship**. When we’re baptized, we are publicly declaring our **faith** in Jesus Christ and our intention to become His **disciple** (Matthew 5:14–16). Our goal as a disciple of Jesus is to be **like** Him.

5) Does getting baptized save us?

- A) The act of baptism does **not** save us. The Bible is clear that we are saved by **grace** through **faith** in Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9; Romans 4:1–11; cf. Luke 19:8–10; 23:39–43). Baptism is simply the first and **necessary** step of **obedience** as we begin our relationship with God.

6) When should we be baptized?

- A) In the early church, baptism took place very **soon** after conversion (Acts 2:41; 9:17–18). Because of this, baptism should be requested as soon as possible after being saved. Generally, a pastor will arrange this, and he can answer any questions about the process.

7) Who can baptize?

- A) Anyone who is a **Christian** and who understands the **nature** and **significance** of baptism can baptize another believer. Scripture gives no other requirements. The reason baptisms are typically done by pastors is because of denominational restrictions and the desire to ensure that people are truly saved before they are baptized.