

Preparing for Baptism

LifeChurch Auburn Hills

"Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Cor. 5:17)

Class Overview

- Session 1: What is baptism?
 - Session 2: What does it mean to follow Jesus?
 - Session 3: What comes after baptism?
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Intro Question

Have you ever seen a baptism? What was that like?

The book of Acts in the Bible tells the story of an amazing event – the first baptisms of a large group of people who put their faith in Jesus as the Lord and savior of the world. In response to hearing the good news that Jesus had been raised from the dead, a crowd asks the Apostle Peter: so what should we do about it?

“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.... Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” (Acts 2:38).

This short passage summarizes our convictions at LifeChurch Auburn Hills about baptism.

- Baptism celebrates the forgiveness we receive from God for our sins
- Baptism declares our commitment to follow Jesus
- Baptism reminds us of the promise of receiving the Holy Spirit

Why should we get baptized?

Baptism shows on the outside what's happening on the inside

At LCAH, we believe that baptism is one of the “sacraments” of Christian life. Sacrament is just a fancy word for certain rituals or practices that have a special status. Another example of a sacrament is communion, or the Lord’s Supper. Sacraments do not in and of themselves make us more holy or more “saved.” Rather, they are powerful “outward and physical sign of an inward and invisible grace.” In other words, baptism is a symbol that makes the invisible process of receiving God’s forgiveness, committing to follow Jesus, and receiving the Holy Spirit visible to us and others.

So how does the symbol work?

“Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- because anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (Romans 6:3-5)

Write it in your own words:

We're Family Now

But this is not just something that happens to us as individuals. Baptism is like a rite of passage into the family of believers. It reminds us that through faith in Jesus, we take on a new identity as part of Christ’s body on earth. This is a family not based on shared human DNA. But amazingly, it is a family that shares divine DNA because the very Spirit of God actually lives in us.

You are all sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26)

How does baptism happen at LCAH?

Baptism most often occurs during a Sunday morning service. If the person being baptized is old enough to articulate their story of coming to faith in Christ, they will share a short “salvation story” before baptism. Here are some guidelines for preparing this statement:

- Your salvation story should be about 3 minutes long (they are not a full life story or testimony)
- Statements should describe:
 - When/how you came to put your faith in Jesus
 - How Jesus has impacted your life
 - Other things to include time permitting could be a scripture that has meant a lot to you or expressing thanks to a particular person/group of people for the role they played in your faith journey.
- Write it out in advance -- you are welcome to read off a piece of paper or index card

After sharing your salvation story, you will climb into the baptismal tub. The pastor or person baptizing you will ask you this question, to which you will respond “yes.”

- Are you declaring that you’re all in on your decision to follow Jesus?

They will then say, "Because of your profession of faith in Jesus, we baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit", and then we will tip you over backwards until your head is submerged and then bring you back up.

Wrap-Up Questions

- After learning more about what baptism means, what questions do you still have?
 - Is there anything that would keep you from being baptized at this point?
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