

A dynamic splash of clear blue water with numerous bubbles and droplets, moving from left to right across the middle of the page. The water is in sharp focus, with some droplets appearing to be in motion.

# Baptism

celebration

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## celebration



At Hope Church, we believe that baptism is an outward symbol of an inward decision to follow Christ. For someone to be baptized, regardless of the age, it is necessary that they have an understanding of what following Christ means. Children need to understand the decision they have made and be able to explain this decision to others. If the child is able to do this, then baptism is an appropriate step of faith.

### **Can baptism save my child?**

Baptism does not save anyone. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, *“By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works so that no one can boast.”* It is clear from this passage of Scripture that faith in Christ is the only thing that saves and faith itself is a gift from God. Again, baptism is an outward symbol of an inward decision to follow Christ.

### **Then why be baptized?**

According to Scripture, there are two main reasons to be baptized. Let’s take a look at both of them.

1. To Obey: God tells us in His Word to be baptized. Jesus was commanding the disciples to go out and baptize believers. Therefore, to OBEY God, we get baptized. Matthew 28:19-20.
2. To Show: The Bible says that Christ died for our sins, was buried and then raised again on the third day. That is what baptism symbolizes. When you stand in the water it is a symbol of Christ dying on the cross. When you go under the water it is a symbol of Christ being buried in the tomb. When you come up out of the water it is a symbol of Christ being raised from the dead. All of this is done in front of people so you can SHOW them that you have made a commitment to follow Christ! Colossians 2:12.

### **At what age should children be baptized?**

The Bible does not give us a precise age at which we should baptize children. For that reason we do not have an age requirement. However, the Bible is clear that children must be able to give a credible profession of their faith—one that is genuine and rooted in a biblical understanding of salvation—in order to be baptized. This does not mean that children should be able to rattle off all the “right” answers before they are ready for baptism. It does mean that children should show that they have genuine faith based on a right understanding of God, sin, and salvation through Jesus alone. Likewise, a child must possess a simple understanding of what baptism is and why baptism is important.

## Why wait?

We encourage parents to wait until their child is mentally and spiritually ready for baptism. There is no rush. We want baptism to be a very meaningful experience for children and one that a child remembers. The older a child is, the more likely the child is to have a good understanding of salvation and baptism and is the more likely he or she will look back on his or her experience with the confidence that it reflected a sincere desire to follow the Lord.

## How can I practically prepare my child for baptism?

The most important thing you can do is to keep talking with them about the gospel each day. Help them to understand that God is their Creator and King who deserves to be treated with honor and love. Help them to understand that we have not treated God as we should. We have all sinned and deserve to be separated from God. Help them to understand that God loved us so much that He sent his Son Jesus to die on a cross to take our punishment so that we could be forgiven of our sins. And help them to understand that Jesus rose again and now offers us two ways to live. We can try to be our own king by doing what we want to do, or we can turn from our sin and trust in Jesus as our King, and do what He wants us to do.

When sharing the gospel with your children, I encourage you to keep asking them questions to get them to verbalize their faith in Jesus in their own words. It's important that children understand that they are individually accountable to God. No other person can respond to God for them. We want children to be able to articulate their faith in their own words even if they use very simple terms.

## What do I do if I feel like my child is ready to be baptized?

If you believe your child is ready to be baptized, then we invite you to complete the following steps.

**STEP 1) REGISTER ONLINE.** This is an important first step in the process because we want to know of your child's interest in being baptized. See "Baptism" under the Kids' Ministry web page ([www.hopemason.org](http://www.hopemason.org))

**STEP 2) THE CHILD MEETS WITH MRS. MASON.** I would love to hear your child's story! This is an informal time where I will sit down with your child and ask him some questions about why he wants to be baptized and what it means to have Jesus in his heart. Afterwards I will talk with the parents and discuss the readiness of their child to be baptized. Call 513-459-0800, ext. 707 , or email Sharon Mason at the church office ([kids@hopemason.org](mailto:kids@hopemason.org)) to schedule a time to meet.

Dates: Any Sunday prior to the baptism. Time: During first or second service. I will pull your child out of his class and we will go to my office to talk.

**STEP 3) ATTEND THE BAPTISM CLASS.** Kids who want to be baptized need to attend this class to learn about baptism, and to prepare for the event. A parent must also attend with their child. Bring the information form with you to class.

**STEP 4) BE BAPTIZED!** Come that morning and proclaim your faith in Christ by being baptized! Invite family and friends to come celebrate with you. See the "Baptism" page of the Kids' Ministry web page if you want more details about the logistics of baptism at Hope Church.

I want you to know that wherever you are at in this process with your child, we are here to help you. God has given parents the primary role in nurturing the faith of their children, but we are here to partner with you and encourage you in any way we can. Baptism is a great experience, and a chance for kids to express the decision they have made to have Christ be their Lord and Savior. When your child is ready, know that I will be there celebrating with you!

Partnering with you,

*Sharon Mason*

Kids' Ministry Director

# Baptism

## celebration



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date met/will meet with staff member \_\_\_\_\_

(Pastor Steve Griebing – adults, Pastor Jim Tinsley – students, Sharon Mason – kids)

Parent(s) Name \_\_\_\_\_

(For those in Student or Kids' Ministry)

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Who would you like to baptize you? \_\_\_\_\_

(The person baptizing you is to be an adult who is a follower of Jesus Christ and is either a pastor or someone that has been instrumental in your faith journey)

In order to reserve room in the front pews for you and your guests, please indicate the approximate number of people you anticipate attending the celebration. \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Pastor Steve Griebing, 459-0800 ext. 341, [sgriebing@hopemason.org](mailto:sgriebing@hopemason.org)

Pastor Jim Tinsley, 459-0800 ext. 370, [jtinsley@hopemason.org](mailto:jtinsley@hopemason.org)

Sharon Mason, 459-0800 ext. 707, [smason@hopemason.org](mailto:smason@hopemason.org)