

WE ARE THE FUTURE

Today in CityKids we talked about what it means to get baptized, and your child told us that they would like to participate in our upcoming baptism service, taking place on November 10th and 11th.

Because your child expressed an interest in baptism, we'd like to ask you, as their parent, to do four things:

1. Check for understanding
2. Sign your child up to get baptized
3. Write personal story and statement of faith
4. Attend a baptism class with your child

Easy enough, right? Take a quick look through this packet to find out more about each of those three things and how you can help make your child's baptism a meaningful and memorable experience for everyone involved.



STEP ONE:


Check for Understanding

Here in CityKids, we believe that parents are the primary spiritual authority in their child's life. That's a fancy way to say that we think you're in charge when it comes to spiritual things in your child's life. Because of that, we think it's important that you're the decision-maker when it comes to your child's baptism. You know your child best, so you know whether or not this is something they understand and are ready for. So let's start there:

How do I know if my child truly understands what salvation is and why they should get baptized?

ASK YOUR CHILD QUESTIONS LIKE:

- What do you think sin is? Why is it a big deal?
- Can you give me some examples of things that are sins?
- If someone asked you to describe who Jesus is, what would you say?
- What did Jesus do for us? Why was what Jesus did important?
- What does it mean to say that you believe in Jesus or that you are a Christian?
- What do you think it means to be baptized? What happens when you get baptized.



HINT: Encourage your child to express his or her own ideas and allow time for thinking and responding. It is not unusual for a child to take up to a minute or even longer to answer a question they have not had to think about previously. If some time has passed and you sense they are struggling to put their thoughts into words, rephrase your question and see if that helps. And remember, this shouldn't feel like an interrogation to your child. If possible, strike up a conversation with them while during a meal or during another activity—like while you're driving in the car or washing the dishes together.

Don't worry, this isn't a test that you should be worried about your child passing or failing. Rather, your child's answers to these questions will help you gauge whether or not baptism is something they're ready for at this point in their lives. They don't necessarily have to have perfect answers for every question—this may even be a good time for you to clear a few things up for them before they get baptized. If, at any point, you feel like they don't really understand the basics of salvation or baptism, this is a great opportunity for you to be able to explain those things more clearly to your child. And if, even after a good conversation with your child, you still don't feel like they quite grasp the basic concepts, that's OK. Let them know that you're proud of them for being interested in spiritual things, and that you think they still have a few things they need to learn and understand before they're ready to get baptized. It's OK to tell them no or that you're uncomfortable with them getting baptized—just be sure to do it in a way that encourages them to keep learning about what it really means to be saved.

If your child is struggling to understand what baptism really is, or what the difference is between baptism and salvation, here's a good way to explain it:

Show your child a professional sports jersey, hat or logo something that would be recognizable to them as a pro sports team. Then explain “Let’s say that you play (pro sport) for your school. You’re pretty good, too. Every time you walk out on the field, you can hear people chanting your name. You’re so good, in fact, that one day you get a phone call from (Professional Sports Team Name)! They want you to be on their team! You say yes, so they call a press conference and have you on live TV in front of the whole world. And you’ve got your new jersey on that shows you play for that team now, and you’re saying, ‘Hey world! Look at me! I’m playing for (Professional Sports Team Name) now. Isn’t that amazing?’”

If you hadn’t made that announcement, you’d still be playing for the team. But you did make that announcement so that everyone would know for sure what team you’re playing for and that you’re proud of being on that team. That’s what I think baptism is like. It’s standing up in front of your family, friends, church leaders and the world and saying ‘Hey! Look at me! I belong to Jesus and I’m living for him now! And he’s amazing!’ If you didn’t get baptized, you could still follow Jesus and you’re still a Christian. But you get baptized to show people that you follow Jesus and that you’re proud to be on his team.”

If you have any additional questions or are still unsure about how to talk with your child about baptism, feel free to talk with one of our CityKids staff or volunteers. We’d love to help you confidently talk with your child about one of the most exciting decisions they’ll ever make.

If you feel that your child is ready to get baptized, it’s time to move on to steps two and three!

STEP TWO:

Sign Your Child Up To Get Baptized

Once you're confident that your child is ready to get baptized and understands what they're doing, it's time to sign them up.

You can sign your child up for baptism at beachcities.org/baptism. You'll simply need to provide some basic info, select your preferred weekend service for your child's baptism, and select a date to attend a baptism class with your child.

Prior to attending baptism class, please complete step three with your child.

STEP THREE:

Check for Understanding

1. Personal Story

Help your child write down, in their own words, their story of how they became a Christian. This story can be as long as OR short as they'd like, but should answer the following questions:

1. How did you first hear about Jesus and what he did for you?
2. When did you pray to ask Jesus to be your savior?
3. Who helps you learn more about knowing, loving and obeying God now that you're a Christian.

Your child can use the space at the end of this packet to write down their personal story. You'll be bringing it to baptism class with you and use it during class, but you won't be turning it in. This will be yours to keep to help your child remember how they came to faith in Christ.

2. Personal Statement of Faith

Your child's personal statement of faith should be no longer than approximately 140 characters and should answer the question: Why do you want to follow Jesus? This statement of faith will be displayed as your child is baptized during the baptism service.


STEP FOUR:

Attend A Baptism Class With Your Child

If your child is 5th grade or younger, one or both parents should plan to attend baptism class with them. Our CityKids baptism class is meant to do two things:

1. Help kids get a better understanding of what it means to know, love and obey God.
2. Facilitate even more conversation between kids and parents, further establishing you as the primary spiritual authority in your child's life.

If for some reason, neither parent is able to attend baptism class with your child, consider sending a trusted friend or relative who is already a positive spiritual influence in your child's life.



That's it. You're all set to go and your child is ready to get baptized. You'll get more information on exactly what to expect at the baptism service and how to help your child be prepared when you attend their baptism class with them.

If you have any questions or need any additional assistance preparing for your child's baptism, please contact our CityKids K-5 Coordinator, Muna Bohn, at muna.bohn@beachcities.org.