NORTH COUNTRY
FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Understanding Baptism

North Country Fellowship Church, Carthage NY

Introduction

Thanks for taking the step of faith to consider baptism by immersion (getting totally dunked in water from head to toe!)



We realize that your decision is a step of faith based on obedience to God and His Word. It is our great desire that this experience will be meaningful for you now, as well as provide a starting point for even deeper levels of obedience in the future.

This booklet is designed to give you a biblical overview of baptism by immersion before you are baptized. We ask that you complete this workbook and pass it on to one of the elders for review. The booklet will be returned for you to keep.

Here are some guidelines if you are completing this with your child(ren):

> We are often asked by parents "when is my child old enough to be baptized?" Baptism is not based on a specific age, but on understanding and application of the Gospel. If your child understands the gospel of Jesus Christ and believes it for themselves, they are likely ready.
>
> If your child is capable of understanding that baptism is an outward expression of the inward work of God in their heart, they are probably very ready.
>
> If your child is walking in a way that is consistent with the standards of God's Word, confessing sin and growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus…they are definitely ready.

If you have questions about baptism or would like to talk about it more in person, please reach out to one of the elders of the church.

What is baptism?

Baptism is a symbol. In other words, being baptized is an outward way of showing people that something has happened to us on the inside! Let's look at what happens on the inside when we are saved.

THE DIRTY TRUTH

> Isaiah 64:6 || We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind. [NLT]
>
> Romans 3:23 || For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. [NLT]

Based on the verses you just read, how would you answer the following questions?

1. **Who is infected with sin?** ◯ No one ◯ Some people ◯ Everyone
2. **Who is able to live a perfect life?** ◯ No one ◯ Some people ◯ Everyone

Those verses tell us that all of us have sinned (disobeyed God) we are all infected, or dirty because of our sin. Unlike the dirt we get from working hard or playing outside, this kind of dirt does not wash off with soap and water. We are dirty on the inside, in our souls.

COMING CLEAN

> 1 John 1:9 || But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. [NLT]

Based on this verse, how would you answer these questions?

3. **Who can wash away our sin?** ◯ Me ◯ God ◯ No one
4. **What do I have to do to be cleansed?** ◯ Be really, really good ◯ Tell God I'm sorry

Confession is admitting that we have done something wrong and asking someone to forgive us. In this case, it is God to whom we must confess. When we "come clean" by confessing our sins to God and asking Him to forgive us, he does! That verse says he forgives us and washes us clean on the inside – the part we cannot clean on our own.

Confession is a wonderful gift from God that should be a part of our daily routine. Can you think of anything that you have done that would make God mad or sad? List some of them here and then ask God to forgive you:

_____

_____

_____

AN ICONIC EVENT

As we mentioned, baptism is a symbol. We are not forgiven by being baptized; we are baptized to symbolize that we have been forgiven. Baptism does not give us a new life with God, but because we have surrendered our lives to God we become baptized as a response to our new life with God. The following are some verses that talk about what baptism symbolizes:

> Colossians 2:12 || For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. [NLT]
>
> Romans 6:3–4 || Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. [NLT]

The word "baptize" means to immerse, or to get completely dunked. The verses you read compare baptism (being dunked under the water and then raised out of the water) to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Based on the verses you just read, how would finish the following statements?

5. **Going under the water symbolizes:** ◯ Death to sin ◯ New life
6. **Coming up out of the water symbolizes:** ◯ Death to sin ◯ New life
7. **The water symbolizes washing of:** ◯ My skin ◯ My sin

When you are baptized, it is a public ceremony, demonstrating to your family, friends and neighbors that: you know you have sinned, have asked God to wash away your sins, and that you desire to live your new life to make Him smile.

MORE THAN A GOOD IDEA

> Matthew 28:19–20 || Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." [NLT]
>
> Acts 2:38 || Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [NLT]

Based on these verses, how would you answer these statements?

8. **We should be baptized because our friends are.** ◯ True ◯ False
9. **God wants all people who believe in Jesus to be baptized.** ◯ True ◯ False
10. **Being baptized is part of being a disciple.** ◯ True ◯ False

Everyone who is a follower of Jesus should be baptized. Being baptized is so important, that even Jesus was baptized:

> Mark 1:9–11 || One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. As Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy." [NLT]

If we are Jesus-followers, we should certainly be willing to follow the example of Jesus by being baptized by immersion!

WHO CAN BE BAPTIZED?

Can anybody be baptized? Could a friend tag along with you to the baptism service and jump in the water with you? Let's see what scripture has to say:

> Acts 2:41 || Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. [NLT]
>
> Acts 8:35–36, 38 || So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. [NLT]
>
> Acts 18:8 || Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and everyone in his household believed in the Lord. Many others in Corinth also heard Paul, became believers, and were baptized. [NLT]
>
> Acts 8:12–13 || But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. [NLT]

There seems to be an order to what took place. Can you put these in their correct order?

_____ Be baptized in water

_____ Hear/understand the Good News about Jesus

_____ Believe in Jesus

According to the verses you just read, how would you answer these questions?

11. Anyone who believes in Jesus can be baptized.	◯ True	◯ False
12. Anyone who does good things for others can be baptized.	◯ True	◯ False
13. Babies can understand the Good News and be baptized.	◯ True	◯ False

Doing good things for other is wonderful, but not a reason to be baptized. Since baptism is a public profession of faith in Jesus, an infant would not understand their dirtiness from sin, nor how to ask God to forgive them for that sin. If baptism is for those that hear and believe in Jesus, then only those that are old enough to understand and confess their sins should be baptized.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Baptism is a personal commitment, so let's talk about you for a minute:

14. Do you believe that you are dirty with sin?	◯ Yes	◯ Not really
15. Do you believe that God can forgive your sin?	◯ Yes	◯ Not really
16. Do you believe Jesus died for your sins?	◯ Yes	◯ Not really
17. Have you asked God to forgive your sins?	◯ Yes	◯ Not yet
18. Do you want to live your life to please God?	◯ Yes	◯ Not sure
19. Is it your desire to be baptized?	◯ Yes	◯ Not sure

ⓘ STOP: *If you were not comfortable answering "Yes" to all those questions, or if you are not sure what they mean, please talk to one of the elders!*

YOUR STORY

As you have seen from the Bible verses, people heard the message of Jesus, accepted it, then were baptized. Every one of the thousands of people baptized in the early church had a story to tell. Their story included when and how they heard about Jesus; and their story told about changes in their life because of Jesus.

Write down your story of how you heard about Jesus. Tell when, where, and how you asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How has Jesus changed your life?

_____

_____

_____

_____

AFFIRMATION

> Romans 1:16a || For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes... [NLT]

I, _____ would like to be baptized. I am sorry for my sin. I believe Jesus died for my sins so that I can be cleansed from them. I have asked God to forgive me for my sins and I desire to follow His commands. It is my desire to spend the rest of my life learning how to love God and others and to share the good news of Jesus as often as God gives me the opportunity.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Parent(s) signature if for a minor: _____

NEXT STEPS

> Acts 2:41–42 || Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. [NLT]

The next step after baptism is to honor God by being committed to the things that make Him happy. In this passage, at least four things are mentioned that the early Jesus-followers committed to:

- Apostles' teaching (the bible)
- Fellowship (being a family with other Jesus-followers)
- Sharing meals (doing life together)
- Prayer (talking and listening to God)

How do you hope to make these four things a part of your life in the weeks to come?

_____

_____

_____

_____

** FOR ELDER USE **********

Received by: _____ [elder] Date: _____

Baptized by/location: _____ Date: _____