

Water Baptism for Kids

Should Your Child be Water Baptized? Here are a few things to consider...

#1 – Those who make a credible profession of faith are to be baptized.

Without exception, the New Testament pattern for baptism is that it follows a credible profession of faith (see Acts 8:12, Acts 9:36, Acts 16:29-34). What makes a profession of faith credible? Look for credibility to be displayed in knowledge and maturity.

Knowledge. For a person's profession of faith to be credible, he must display at least a basic knowledge of the gospel and of the meaning of baptism. Baptism is not a rite performed upon a person, but an ordinance in which he is a full participant. Therefore the one who is baptized must have knowledge of what is being done and why.

Maturity. The mature person is autonomous in that he has the ability to make independent decisions.

#2 – Children may, and often do, become believers at a young age.

We must be careful never to communicate to children that they are too young to understand the gospel or respond to it. Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me." God calls us to share the gospel with our children and to call them to repentance and faith. God graciously allows many children to come to a saving faith, even at a very young age.

How to Facilitate a Conversation About Water Baptism with Your Child.

Kids are concrete thinkers, so understanding baptism as a symbol of Jesus' death and resurrection is difficult to grasp. Be clear when you talk about your own salvation experience. Explain that your heart was changed first, and then you were baptized to symbolize (show) what happened in your heart. *Idea:* Use the example of married couples wearing wedding rings. The ring doesn't make them married. Anyone can put a ring on their left hand ring finger, but it is a symbol their marriage and shows everyone else that they are married.

If your child has already decided to follow Jesus, explain what baptism is and what it means. Here are some suggestions and places to point to in their Bible:

(Mark 16:16) Now that you've decided to follow Jesus, you can let others know by getting baptized.

(Romans 6:4) Baptism is a picture of what Jesus did when He took the punishment for your sins. When you go under the water, it shows people that you believe Jesus died for you. When you come out of the water, you show others that you believe God brought Jesus back to life.

(1 Peter 3:18) Getting saved & baptized doesn't mean your life will be perfect. There will be times where you will still make wrong choices. Ask Jesus to forgive you. Even though you will sin again, you don't need to be saved or baptized again.

(Psalm 1:2) Continue following Jesus day by day by reading the Bible, and talking to Him every day.

If your child has expressed interest in baptism on their own initiative, here are some questions you can ask to clarify their readiness:

- Why do you want to be baptized?
- What do we need to be saved from? What did God do to save you?
- Explain to me how someone could know for sure that they are going to heaven.
- How do you feel about standing up in front of people to share your faith?

Facilitate but don't dominate the conversation. Kids are naturally curious. Commit to answering every question, no matter how silly, and let them ask lots of questions.

Avoid "yes or no" questions and/or leading questions. (ex; "Do you believe that baptism is a public display of your faith in Jesus?")

Walking with Jesus is not a race. Baptism is the next step after salvation, but it's possible your child might not be ready. And that's OK! It's always better to wait than to pressure children to take a step they don't understand.

*As parents, we often want to make things happen for our kids.
Our hearts are in the right place. We want what is best for our kids.
But baptism is about their faith, not ours.
What WE choose and they do might last for a while,
but what THEY choose and do will last forever.*

Sources:

<https://centrikid.com/2012/11/12/kids-and-baptism-dont-muddy-the-waters;>

<https://newspring.cc/articles/talking-to-kids-about-baptism;>

<https://www.challies.com/articles/when-should-my-children-be-baptized/>