

Prepare for baptism and tell your story.

This handbook belongs to

_____

My church

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A PRAYER AS YOU START THIS JOURNEY

Merciful God,
we thank you for this person
whom you have sought after in many ways.

You have called them today
from darkness to light
from error to truth
from death to life
and they have answered you.

Grant grace to them and bless them.
Raise them by your Spirit.
Revive them by your Word.
Form them by your hand.

Bring them to the water of life
that with all your people
they may bear witness to your grace
and praise you forever
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



CHAPTER 1

Made New: What Is Baptism?

Welcome to baptism!

This guide will help you prepare for one of the most meaningful steps in your life with Jesus. Baptism is a public celebration of what God is already doing in you.

At the beginning of his earthly ministry, Jesus came to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. As Jesus emerged from the water, the Spirit of God descended upon him, and the Father declared him to be his beloved Son. Jesus' baptism revealed his identity and marked the beginning of his public ministry, as he began to proclaim and embody the good news of God's kingdom.

Jesus' death and resurrection would ultimately open the way for new life and new creation. Jesus commanded his followers to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19–20). From the beginning, the church has baptized those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Baptism is for a person who has received God's gracious offer of forgiveness and the opportunity to become a new creation in Jesus Christ. Long before we respond to God, his grace is already at work, drawing us to himself and inviting us to become a child of God. Baptism is the public sign of that saving grace and the new birth he has worked in a believer. It does not save us. Jesus does. Baptism is the outward sign of what God has done on the inside.

Wesleyans believe baptism is a **means of grace**. When we respond in faith to his grace, God meets us in it, strengthening and confirming our faith. It is the first public step in a life of following Jesus and joins you to God's family and your local church.

Together we will look at the biblical meaning of baptism, help you prepare your story and walk through what will happen on your baptism day.

God uses baptism services as public testimony to his grace and strengthens other's faith as well. God can use your baptism and story to lead others into a relationship with him. Some of these people may be your friends, family, and neighbors. Let's start praying for them.

> **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:**
> **The old has gone, the new is here!** – 2 Corinthians 5:17

Baptism: What Is It?

Read the following Scriptures as you prepare for baptism.

A Reason for Baptism

- Matthew 28:19-20
- Matthew 3:13-17

According to these Scriptures, what is your understanding of why someone is baptized?

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What We Affirm

- Acts 2:36-38

Before baptism, your pastor or youth leader will talk with you about what you believe. Take time to think about these four statements in your own words.

1. I believe in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe Jesus died for my sins, rose again, ascended to the Father, and will return to judge the living and the dead.
2. I believe the Bible is God's inspired Word.
3. I believe by God's grace I can choose between right and wrong, and when I turn from sin and trust Christ, I am forgiven, made right with God by faith.
4. I want to tell others that I am a Christian and intend to follow Christ faithfully.

Which of these statements is clearest to you? Which one do you have questions about?

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The Symbolism in Baptism

- Romans 6:3-4
- Colossians 2:12
- Titus 3:5

According to these Scriptures, what is your understanding of what baptism points to?

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Five Signs of Being Made New

Here is a recap of what baptism shows. No matter how the water is used — by immersion, pouring or sprinkling — the meaning is the same.

Made New	What it shows	Scripture
Put off the old	Entering the water: we leave the old life of sin and turn toward Christ.	Ephesians 4:22-24
Washed and renewed	The water is a sign of God's cleansing and renewal.	Titus 3:5
Buried with Christ	In immersion, going under the water shows that we share in Jesus' death and are buried with him, as he was in the tomb. Pouring and sprinkling point to the same truth.	Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12
Made new	Just as Christ was raised, we are raised to a new life.	2 Corinthians 5:17
Walking in newness of life	Leaving the water, we begin a new life with Christ, growing in love for God and for our neighbor.	Romans 6:4



CHAPTER 2

Why We Baptize

The Importance of the Public Statement

As Jesus said in Matthew 10:32, we are to tell others about our Savior. Before your baptism, you will most likely be asked a question like, "**Why do you want to be baptized?**" This is your opportunity to share about God's free grace, forgiveness in your life, and what your new life with Christ is like.

One Baptism

Wesleyans receive one baptism. God's work in us does not need to be repeated, so baptism is not done a second time. If you were baptized as an infant/child and now want to profess your faith for yourself, talk with your pastor about how your church can affirm and remember your baptism publicly to celebrate your faith. Your church may also include a time on Baptism Sunday for everyone to remember their baptism.

Baptism or Dedication for Children

Wesleyans receive baptism in more than one way. Believers who trust Christ for themselves are baptized as a public profession of faith. Parents who want to affirm God's grace at work in their children may present them for baptism. Parents who see baptism as a personal act of faith may present their children for dedication instead. In either case, we pray that each child will grow into a faith of their own.

Parents are called to raise their children with love, showing them who Christ is, and teaching and modeling the ways of God. Dedication is a way for parents to publicly acknowledge their responsibility with church community support. It is more about the parents' commitment than the child's decision, because we hope to see each child come to follow Christ on their own one day.

A person who asks to be baptized for themselves should be old enough to make that decision on their own, and that age varies. Some children as young as seven understand the message of Jesus well, while others may not until they are 13 or 14. It is important for a young person to make their faith their own. Baptism is God's promise, and it is something a person can look back on for the rest of their life.

Baptism and the Church

Baptism joins you to God’s family and connects you to a local church. Along with the Lord's Supper, it is one of the two sacraments Christ gave his church. In both, God meets us by grace and strengthens our faith. Talk with your pastor about your next steps toward church membership.

Additional Scriptures to Study

- Matthew 3:7-8; 20:22-23; 21:25
- Mark 1:4; 10:38-39; 11:30
- Luke 3:3; 7:29; 12:50; 20:4
- Acts 1:22; 10:37; 13:24; 18:25; 19:3-4
- Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21; Hebrews 6:2



CHAPTER 3

How It Is Done

Your Choice

You may choose to be baptized by immersion, pouring or sprinkling. Talk with your pastor about these options. The meaning is the same and your pastor will help you plan.

Clothing

Details about what to wear and bring are on the *Details for Your Church* page at the end of this chapter. Plan to bring a complete change of dry clothes, a towel and a plastic bag for your wet clothes.

Procedure

Before the worship gathering, you will meet a member of the church team at the place named on your details page. A team member will show you where to change your clothes and where to wait.

When it is time, you will come to the water. If you are being immersed, keep your body rigid, bend your knees and lean back.

Before the baptism, you, your pastor or a spiritual leader who has walked with you may share a brief story of how you have come to this point in your journey with Christ.

Your pastor will then say a few personal words and conclude by saying:

"I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

If you are being immersed, you will be lowered back until you are fully under the water, then brought back up. If you have chosen pouring or sprinkling, the water will be applied as those same words above are spoken. In response to God's grace and your baptism, the church will then celebrate!

Invitations

Inviting key people in your life to your baptism is a great opportunity to let God work through your story. Invite friends, family and others close to you who have not yet entered God's story or crossed the line of faith in Jesus Christ to your baptism. They will likely be honored that you thought of them. Pray they will accept your invitation, that God will speak to them during the service that and they will respond to him.

Certificates

You will receive a Certificate of Baptism on your baptism day.

Details for Your Church

Your church will fill in this page or otherwise provide the information.

Baptism date and time	
Where to arrive	
Who will meet you	
What to wear in the water	
Method (sprinkling, pouring, or immersion)	
What to bring	
Where to change	
Adult supervision for children and youth	
Who to contact with questions	
What you take home	



CHAPTER 4

My Story

Four Movements

Your story is a gift to others. A good story has four movements.

1. **Before:** Life before you trusted Christ, and where God was already at work.
2. **How:** The path you took in responding to Jesus.
3. **Made New:** What God has done and changed in you.
4. **Going On:** How you are growing in love for God and your neighbor.

Tips for Telling Your Story

- **Be real.** The struggles you have had help others who face the same things relate to you. Include both the good and the hard parts of your life. The good might be your desire to excel, concern for others, being a hard worker or growing up in a good home. The hard parts might be being selfish or greedy, having a bad temper or rebelling against the ways of God.
- **Keep it conversational.** Use everyday words.
- **Share, don't preach.** Use "I" and "we," not "you."
- **Keep it simple.** Avoid wordiness and get directly to the point.
- **Name the people** who were part of your decision.
- **Use word pictures** so listeners can see the moment.
- **Point to Jesus.** Speak more about how Christ has changed your life than about the church environment. Avoid being overly dramatic about the past.
- **Mind the length.** Aim for about 400 to 500 words, which takes three to four minutes to read aloud.

Before: My attitudes, needs and problems before I trusted Christ

My life revolved around, and I found happiness and security in ... Use an example from your own life. Did your security come from money, relationships or something else? Write your thoughts here.

How did this disappoint me? How was it unfulfilling? How did I come to realize this? What was I struggling with, if anything, just before I trusted Christ?

Where was God already at work? Think about people, moments, questions or experiences that pointed me toward Jesus before I said yes.

How: How I responded to Jesus

This is the turning point of your story, where God's work begins to show in you. Follow the same tips as before. Tell how you realized you needed Jesus' forgiveness and how you invited God into your life.

When and how did I first hear about Jesus?

What helped me finally say yes to him?

What happened when I trusted Christ? How did my attitude begin to change? Why?

Made New: What God has Changed

When people give a testimony, many spend most of their time on the sin they had before. An effective testimony focuses not on our sin but on the work of the Holy Spirit in us, so that Jesus takes center stage. This is where your story should begin to shine.

What happened after I trusted Christ?

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How has my life changed? When did I notice that change?

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How am I motivated differently now?

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Going On: Growing in holiness

Being made new is the beginning. God wants to keep changing us so that we love him with all our hearts and love our neighbors as ourselves. Think about the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.

How am I learning to love God and the people around me?

Where do I need God's help to keep growing?

Who is walking with me?

Review Your Work

Go through what you have written and make sure all sentences and phrases flow properly. When you review it, ask yourself these questions:

- ☐ Does this read like a story?
- ☐ Is it disjointed? Does it make sense?
- ☐ Can I read this out loud in three to four minutes?
- ☐ Have I exaggerated?
- ☐ Did I give the Lord enough credit for the change in my life?

Once you finish your edits, take time to review and memorize your story. Begin sharing it with others. Consider writing down a few key words to help you remember what you want to say so you can share your story without reading this handbook.

Now write out your entire story as you would speak it to a friend. Doing this will help you clarify your thoughts even further. Use the next two pages to record your story.

My Story



CHAPTER 5

Points to Remember

- Baptism is a gift of God's grace. We do not earn it.
- It is a public sign of the new life God has begun in you.
- Wesleyans receive one baptism and it is not repeated.
- You may choose immersion, pouring or sprinkling.
- Your story is a gift. Keep it simple, honest and centered on Jesus.
- Baptism joins you to God’s family and connects you to a local church.
- Invite and pray for the people God has put in your life.
- Talk with your pastor or youth leader any time you have questions.

Next Steps After Baptism

- Read Scripture and pray daily.
- Worship with your church and receive the Lord's Supper.
- Find someone who will walk with you as you grow.
- Ask your pastor about church membership.
- Keep telling your story.

May the God who has made you new keep you walking in newness of life. Amen.