



IS MY CHILD
READY FOR

BAPTISM?



If your child has been around church long at all, chances are they have seen someone get baptized. They may even have expressed an interest in doing that themselves. So, how do we as parents navigate this very important milestone in the life of a young believer? How can you know if this is the right time for your child to take this step of obedience?

First, we want to help our kids understand what baptism is and what it is not. We want them to realize what must take place before baptism.

We believe that salvation is by grace through faith and that it is the free gift of God. We believe that man is saved by faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and that a person must repent of his sin and trust in the person of Jesus Christ as Lord in order to be saved. We also believe that all who have been truly saved (born again) will be saved forever and cannot lose their salvation. We believe that being saved is the most important experience in every individual's life.

Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 10:9, 10, 13, Heb. 9:22; Matt. 16:26

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

We believe that baptism by immersion is the only scriptural mode. We believe that baptism does not save, but that it is an act of obedience to the command of Christ and a testimony to the world of your faith in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 6:1-5, Matt. 28:19-20)

To help assess if your child is ready, here are some things to look for:

- Has your child committed their life to following Jesus?
- Is there evidence of a changed heart towards their life in Jesus and the things of God? (2 Cor. 5:17)
- Are we able to identify the motive for baptism as being pure? One that is the will and desire of the child? One that is based on a desire to obey and do those things we know God wants us to?

We need to be cautious of motives that might be initiated by the child's approval of parents. ("I want to do this because mommy and daddy want me to.") The desire not to be left out in some way. This is usually seen shortly after a friend or relative is baptized.

- Does the child have an understanding of the gospel and the meaning of baptism? (Titus 3:3-7)
- Could they in their own words explain their need for salvation and the work of Christ?
- Can they articulate their salvation story? (to help them understand this, tell them the story of how you accepted Jesus as your Savior.) You may encourage them to ask to hear the salvation stories of other known believers. (Acts 22:2-16, The Apostle Paul's Story)
- Do they know that baptism is a symbol of their belief, that it identifies them as one who has put their faith in Jesus?
- Do they know that baptism cannot save you, that in no way does it "wash away sins" but only the saving power of Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection paid the price for our sins. (Eph. 2:8-9)

GENERALLY SPEAKING, it is our older children that are most ready to take their step of obedience. The recognition of our need for salvation and the understanding of baptism and its symbolism may be hard for younger children to fully grasp. But, we believe in the work of the Holy Spirit and we are all dependent upon that work for wisdom and understanding. So, we welcome children as young as six years old to have conversations with us about these subjects.

If your child has expressed interest in being baptized on their own initiative, here are a few questions you might ask to help clarify their readiness:

- Why do you want to be baptized?
- What must we do before baptism? (Acts 20:21)
- What do we need to be saved from? (Rom. 3:23)
- What did God do to rescue us? (Rom. 5:8)
- What does baptism do?
- Does it save us? Why or why not?
- How do you know that you will go to Heaven? (Eph. 1:13-14)
- How would you tell your salvation story?

NOTE: You should avoid “yes” or “no” questions and/or leading questions. (i.e. Do you believe baptism is a symbolic display of your faith in Jesus? Do you believe you are a sinner and that Jesus died on the cross for you?)



SO, I THINK MY CHILD MIGHT BE READY, WHAT DOES THE PROCESS LOOK LIKE AT OAKWOOD?

We know how exciting the decision to be baptized can be. That is why our team gets excited too. We want to partner with you in confirming your child's readiness. We would like the opportunity to schedule a convenient time to meet with them for continued discussion about salvation and baptism.

To schedule a meeting, please contact the Children's Ministry office today.

- **Pastor Jody Burkhalter**, *Children's Pastor* | **E:** jody.burkhalter@oakwoodnb.com
- **Patrick Simpson**, *Children's Director* | **E:** patrick.simpson@oakwoodnb.com
- **Rhonda Donigan**, *Administrative Assistant* | **E:** rhonda.donigan@oakwoodnb.com

First, there will be an initial interview with your child and two of our leaders. We prefer this to be done without parents being present so that we can gain insights into the child's personal thoughts and beliefs. Following the initial interview, we will bring parents into the conversation. We believe this is an important step and want you to be better equipped to continue the spiritual conversations at home. We will also let you know if we would encourage your child to be baptized.

We also have a one day event following our Pre-teen Camp and VBS called First Steps in which we talk with kids and parents in a large group setting about baptism and you can sign up for pastor interviews. This class is purely supplemental. It does not exempt you from meeting individually with a pastor, nor is it mandatory for kids to attend.

Ultimately, the date and time of when your child is baptized is up to you as the spiritual leaders of your home and of the children God has entrusted to you. Our prayer is that God would give you discernment about all of this as you and your family navigate the topic of salvation and baptism.

PLEASE REACH OUT TO OUR TEAM AND LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN HELP YOU.