



Sermon-Based Group Discussion Guide

Next Step

Family Baptism Service
Discussion Guide by Carolyn Taketa
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This Sunday, we had the joy of witnessing people take their next step of faith through baptism, some even choosing to be baptized spontaneously during the service. Baptism is an outward act to demonstrate an inner transformation – belief in Jesus Christ as our savior and Lord. Baptism is a symbol representing that we are “dead to sin” (as we go into the water) and now, through Christ’s resurrection, we are “alive in Christ” (as we rise from the water). Baptism is an important step in the life of a Christ follower and we want to make sure we understand its purpose and significance.

Read together the scriptures below regarding baptism and share your own baptism experiences. For many of you who have already been baptized, discuss what might be “next steps” of faith for each person in the group.

I. We become baptized to follow Jesus’ example, His command, and the early church’s practice.

Matthew 3:13-17 (NLT) “Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John didn’t want to baptize him. ‘I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,’ he said, ‘so why are you coming to me?’ But Jesus said, ‘It must be done, because we must do everything that is right.’ So then John baptized him. After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘this is my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with him.’”

Matt 28:18-20 (NLT) “Then Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. 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.’”

Acts 2:37-38 (NLT) “Peter’s words convicted them deeply, and they said to him and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers what should we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.’”

Acts 8:12-13 (NLT) “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.”

1. Imagine yourself by the Jordan River witnessing Jesus’ baptism. What might be going through your mind? Why did Jesus choose to be baptized?

2. Why is baptism a next step for someone who has chosen to put his or her faith in Christ?

3. For those of you who have been baptized, share your baptism experience by answering the following questions:

- a. **When were you baptized? How old were you?**
- b. **What events in your life led to your decision to be baptized?**
- c. **What was the most memorable part of your baptism experience?**
- d. **How did baptism impact your life afterwards?**

II. What is Your Next Step?

Pastor Shawn pointed out that the spiritual life of a believer consists of a series of next steps of faith. God meets us in each step, calls us to keep moving forward on our journey to become more like Jesus.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV) "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

- 1. Share a next step you have recently taken (perhaps a New Year's Resolution) and how you are meeting God in the process.**
- 2. What can you do now to more fully live out the commitment that you made on your baptism day?**
- 3. Look at the list of "Next Step" suggestions from the Bulletin insert. Choose something from that list or consider what might be a next step for you. Share with the group and give each other permission to ask about your progress in the coming weeks.**

III. Leader Notes re: Baptism

If you have people in your group who have not been baptized, take them aside one-on-one after the meeting or later during the week and gently ask them the following questions.

1. What questions or concerns do you have about being baptized?
2. What's holding you back from making this public declaration of faith?
3. Would you pray about taking this next step in obedience to Christ?

Also, if anyone in your group would like to be baptized or have any further questions about baptism in general, please let us know and we will connect them with the baptism ministry for their next step.