

Water Baptism Information Sheet

What is water baptism?

Water Baptism is one of the explicit instructions (sacraments) that Jesus gave to his followers. New life through Jesus consists of believing in Jesus, repenting of your sins, receiving the Holy Spirit, being baptised by water, and identifying with God's community. The idea of an un-baptised or 'lone ranger' Christian was not entertained by the early church. Baptism is a public initiation into God's community.

Why should I be baptised?

Only God's grace can save you, through your personal faith in Jesus. However, although water baptism does not "save" you, it has a significant role at the beginning of the Christian life. When you are baptised, it shows three important things about your beginning as a Christian:

1. **Obedience – “ If Jesus said so, I will do it.”**

Jesus specifically instructed that His followers be baptised after they had come into a saving relationship with Him. This is not merely a suggestion, but rather a command to be acted upon. In fact, beginning with the early church, the Christian church has practiced baptism throughout its history. At NLCC, we believe that baptism is an act of personal and community obedience that sets us on the right path for growth as followers of Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). Baptism indicates that we are serious about developing our relationship with Jesus, and following Him fully.

2. **Identification – “ I am a follower of Jesus Christ and a member of his community.”**

We identify with Jesus Christ and His people when we are baptised. When you are physically baptised, you outwardly express the inward reality that you have now died to your old life, and are now resurrected to new life in Christ (Romans 6:3-4). You identify with Jesus Christ and make a public statement that you are a true follower of His as you are baptised in His name.

3. **Declaration – “ I want others to know.”**

Not only do we privately acknowledge our belief in Christ, but we go public with our faith, and declare the fact that we have decided to become a follower of Christ. This public declaration is a very meaningful experience for us as it is a time of community celebration and can be a public witness to others who have not yet decided to follow Christ (Acts 2:41,47). It is also a powerful time for witnessing changed lives and for telling our stories.

When should I be baptised?

As soon as you can if you have made the decision to believe in Jesus Christ (Acts 8:36-39). After you have trusted in Christ as your Saviour and Lord, water baptism is your initiation into the Christian life and community. Hence, one of the first things you need to do as Christ's follower is to be baptised. Don't delay.

How should I be baptised?

1. Baptism by immersion illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. – 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

For when you were baptised, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ. – Colossians 2:12

2. Immersion illustrates my new life as a Christian.

Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. – Romans 6:4

Why be baptised by immersion?

1. Because Jesus was baptised that way.

As soon as Jesus was baptised, He went up out of the water. – Matthew 3:16

2. Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion (which best symbolises a burial and resurrection).

And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him. – Acts 8:38

3. The founders of denominations agree.
“I would have those who are to be baptised to be entirely immersed, as the work imports and the mystery signifies.” – Martin Luther
“Buried with Him, alludes to baptising by immersion according to the custom of the first church.” – John Wesley

Invite your family and friends to this joyful celebration of your new life

Since your baptism celebration happens only once in a lifetime, you may want to invite your friends and family to share your joy on that day. Prayerfully consider inviting your un-churched family and friends since this is a great opportunity to hear and witness the Good News.

Study for Baptism Preparation

What does the Bible say about baptism?

In this lesson you will look at some of the significant scriptures on baptism to find out why Jesus wants His followers to be baptised. You will also discover what the physical symbol of water baptism means for believers. To the best of your ability, write down your thoughts on the following questions. Please bring this sheet with you to the Water Baptism Class.

Please read the following and write down your thoughts on the questions.

1. Read Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16.
When Jesus commanded His disciples, what importance did He place on baptism?

2. Read Romans 6:3-4.
Water baptism is symbolic. According to the scripture, what do you think it symbolises?

3. Read Acts 8:26-40.
Write down a timeline of events in the Ethiopian’s life that ended with his water baptism.

4. Read Acts 16:25-34.
Write down a timeline of events in the life of the jailer, which ended in his water baptism.

