

What is baptism?

Since the earliest days of the church, baptism has been the designated way for Christians to publicly acknowledge their faith to others and demonstrate their intent to follow him; the New Testament provides several examples for us to read and learn from (Acts 8:36-39). Jesus also gives it as an ordinance for the church to designate disciples (Matt. 28:18-20). Baptism is the public demonstration of a personal transformation. It is an outward display of a person's commitment to follow Christ.

How is baptism performed?

We practice baptism by full immersion. That is, a person being baptized is fully immersed under water and brought up again. Baptism, in its original language, means "to plunge, dip, or immerse" something into water. In Matthew 3, when Jesus was baptized it says that he "came up out of the water." This is also seen in other examples in the Bible.

Why should I be baptized?

- Jesus was baptized and declares it as a sign of a disciple
- The disciples and early followers were baptized
- It is a public profession of your faith
- It provides support and accountability from the Christian community

When should someone be baptized?

In all the instances in the Bible, Christians were baptized after they put their faith in Jesus Christ. For some, like the Ethiopian eunuch, this took place immediately after their faith commitment. When a person makes a sincere commitment, there isn't a "waiting period" or time that they need to prove they really are following Christ. So, after you make a faith commitment, we encourage you to take the step of showing it publicly through baptism. If you committed your life to Christ a while ago and just have never proclaimed it publicly through baptism, it's never too late! What is most important is that this happens *after* a person has come to faith in Jesus Christ.

What is the symbolism behind baptism?

First, it symbolizes *dying and rising with Christ*. In other words, when a person goes under the water it symbolizes their old life being buried...just as Christ's body was buried. Then when a person comes out of the water it symbolizes their new life in Christ because Christ was raised from the dead...and they also look forward to their resurrection with Christ. This symbolism is talked about by Paul in his letter to the Romans:

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Rom. 6:3-4).

It also symbolizes *being washed*. When we commit our lives to Christ and accept his forgiveness, we are forgiven of our sins. Many times this is expressed as being washed clean (1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:26).

Does someone need to be baptized by water to be "saved" or go to heaven?

No. Baptism is an outward symbol of something that has already taken place inwardly. It doesn't save someone from his/her sin; it is a profession of faith and alignment with the gospel—the good news that salvation comes by faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The prime example would be the person who is hanging on the cross next to Jesus. The man confesses his sin and turns his life to Christ just moments before his death. Jesus says to him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) This man did not get off his cross and get baptized, yet Jesus assures him of eternal life.

What is the process at Epikos for being baptized?

Our baptism process focuses helping ensure your readiness for baptism. Here's an overview of the process:

- **Register for Baptism Class:** Go online to baptism.epikos.org and register for the next class. The baptism is offered at each campus six weeks before the next baptism celebration.
- **Attend Baptism Class:** The 45-minute class focuses on helping you know when you're ready to get baptized. We cover the meaning of baptism and the faith that is being proclaimed by it. We ask those being baptized to sign our confession of faith and our church's statement of faith.
- **Setup a Next Steps Meeting:** At the baptism class, we'll setup a time for you to meet with someone from our Next Steps team to discuss your readiness to be baptized. The Next Steps meeting will last 45 minutes.
- **Next Steps Meeting:** During this one-on-one meeting, we'll discuss how you came to faith in Christ, your understanding of Jesus, and the gospel. If ready, we'll have you sign your confession of faith.
- **Register for Baptism:** Once a person has completed these steps, we'll register you for the next baptism service. Details for the service are provided at this step.

Who has the authority to baptize?

In the New Testament there wasn't necessarily official titles, degrees, or certifications for people performing baptisms. So really any believer has the authority to baptize another person. Most often a baptism is performed by a pastor or by someone who had a spiritual influence in the person's life. We always keep in mind that the important part of the baptism is what Jesus has accomplished in our life. It is important to do baptism in the context of a Christian community whenever possible, which usually is through the local church. Since baptism is a public profession of one's faith Christ, holding a 'private' baptism doesn't fit the Bible's description of baptism.

Why do some churches baptize infants?

Some traditions believe that water baptism actually saves a person or washes away sin as a means of grace. Thus, they baptize in order to ensure the child is saved. Other traditions practice infant baptism to demonstrate a sign of a covenant of faith between God and a family; babies are baptized to demonstrate the passing on of that covenant to the child, though it doesn't mark the child's salvation. Because we believe that salvation comes only by faith in Christ and because Scripture demonstrates baptism *after* a person's confession of faith, we don't baptize infants. At Epikos, we perform parent-child dedications, which celebrates the birth of a child and also serves as the parent's commitment to do what they can to raise the child in the ways of the Lord. For more information, email dedications@epikos.org.

If I was baptized as an infant should I be baptized by immersion?

Yes. As we shown above, the examples we see in Scripture demonstrate baptism coming *after* a person has declared his/her faith in Christ. The issue not one of mode, but rather chronology. We encourage those who were baptized as infants to take the step to publicly declare after having come to faith in Christ.

Can my elementary school aged child be baptized?

Yes! We love hearing about children who want to take this next step in their faith, and strive to partner with families and their children on this journey. We ask families to participate in the *We Believe* Class offered through HERO Central before beginning the baptism process. This class is offered one week prior to the baptism class at each campus in an effort to prepare children for this next step of faith. For more information and to register for the next class, please visit the [Hero Central](#) page on our website. After you and your child have attended the *We Believe* class, you will be invited to attend the baptism class.