

BAPTISM AT FAIRVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

Apex, North Carolina

"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

The Purpose of this document is to merely serve a tool for ministry leaders as they lead perspective church members through the ordinance of baptism. This tool will need to be adapted based on the individual that is being counseled on baptism and by the leading of the Spirit. A brief word on the content of this document. It is intended to spur helpful conversation and encourage interaction between the ministry leader, and perspective church member. Our hope as a church should be that perspective church members should be able to articulate the gospel, their testimony, and the importance of baptism. Adapt as needed but hold tight to God's Word.

WHAT FAIRVIEW BELIEVES ABOUT THE GOSPEL

What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?

The Creation: In the beginning, God created everything to be perfect. There was no sickness, disease, or sadness. Everything lived in harmony.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1

"Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity, you are God." Psalm 90:2

"For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and by him all things hold together." Colossians 1:16-17

The Fall: Man rebelled against a loving God and believed Satan's lie. Sin entered into the world and into every human heart. Everything is now distorted and broken. Everyone is guilty before God.

"As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one." Romans 3:10

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are subject to the law, so that every mouth may be shut and the whole world may become subject to God's judgment." Romans 3:19

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
Romans 6:23

The Rescue: Jesus, who is God, came to rescue people by His life, death, and resurrection. By faith alone in Him, anyone can have their sins forgiven and enjoy eternal life with Him.

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.” Luke 19:10

“For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit” 1 Peter 3:18

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift— not from works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
Romans 5:8

The Restoration: God will restore everything to the way that it was supposed to be, and those who trust in Jesus will get to enjoy eternity with God in the new heaven and new earth.

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.” Revelation 21:1-4

The Response: Faith is simple trust in Jesus Christ alone to save you. It means instead of believing you can rescue yourself from the consequences of sin, you transfer your trust to the rescue He purchased for you but His death. Your allegiance is now to Jesus, the King. To do this,

- Admit your need for God.
- Ask Him to forgive you and help you turn from sin.
- Trust in Jesus Christ alone to rescue you.
- Follow Jesus Christ, the King of your life, in faith from this day forward

“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame... For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Romans 10:9-11, 13

Salvation by grace alone, not by baptism

“For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift— not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.” Ephesians 2:8-10

The good news of the gospel is that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. Salvation is made available solely by God’s grace applied to us by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Because of this, there is nothing that we can do to save ourselves and subsequently, is not the result of our works or our own efforts. To be clear, our participating in the act of baptism does not save. In the book of Acts, Cornelius and his friends are described as receiving the Spirit before baptism (Acts 10:44-48), pointing to the reality that they were saved before baptism (1 Peter 3:21). Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 1:14-17 that baptism must be understood in light of the gospel, which has the power to save (Romans 1:16).

It is important to note that while faith is possible without baptism (salvation does not depend on one’s being baptized), baptism is a natural complement and the next step of faith. We are called to do good works and obey the commands of Jesus Christ, baptism being one of those commands. We participate in the act of baptism, not in order to be saved, but because we are saved. It is our initial sign of obedience and a public proclamation of the faith we already have. It logically follows that belief and the ability to respond in personal obedience, necessitate that the subject must be of responsible age. Baptism can be likened to the wearing of wedding ring. The ring is merely an outward symbol of an inward commitment that has already occurred. While baptism does not offer the salvation made possible only by the gospel of Jesus, it pleases God when we proclaim through baptism the saving work He has accomplished in us.

Reflective Questions

1. *In your own words, what is the gospel of Jesus Christ?*
2. *Share your testimony of how God called you to faith through His gospel?*
3. *Why is the good news of Jesus worthy of sharing with the world and in what ways can new believers of Jesus proclaim this good news?*

WHAT FAIRVIEW BELIEVES ABOUT BAPTISM

What is baptism?

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. (*Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; Acts 16:30-33; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12*)¹

Every time a person enters into a new life with Jesus Christ, the Bible tells us that all of heaven rejoices (Luke 15:10). Baptism is an outward proclamation of an inward reality that God has created new life within that person. Baptism is the new believer's testimony to the public of his belonging to Jesus. As he is immersed beneath the waters, he is proclaiming that his old self, enslaved to unbelief and sin, has died. And as the believer is raised up out of the waters, he is proclaiming that his new self, freed from sin and death, has been raised in the resurrection of Jesus. He is proclaiming that he now belongs to Jesus. (Romans 6:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

When a believer is baptized the gospel of Jesus Christ is depicted symbolically through,

- The visual depiction of Christ's death and resurrection and our participation in His death and resurrection through union to Him in faith. As we enter into the waters or watch another do so, we are reminded that Christ was crucified and raised from the dead and that we, too, have died to the old self in order to live for Christ.
- New believers' identification with Christ (Romans 6:3-4, Colossians 2:12). This picture is made explicitly clear in the book of Acts, as Christians are baptized (on, in, into) "the name of Jesus", indicating a transference of allegiance.
- New believers' incorporation into the church. Being identified with Christ means being identified with his body, the church. This is described in Acts 2:41, where those who were baptized were added to the church. Throughout church history baptism has been referenced as a profession of faith, and the initiatory rite into the local church.

Why should a person be baptized?

1. **To Publicly Confess Your Commitment to Christ.** When we are baptized, we declare to the world that we are followers of Jesus. We have the opportunity to evidence our trust in and love for our King through obedience in this ordinance. It should be our joy, and we should eagerly anticipate our participation in the ordinance. The desire to be baptized should be motivated by a desire to glorify God in faithful obedience.
2. **Because Christ Did It.** If we are committed to living our life as Christ did, then baptism is a clear decision to make. After all, Mark 1:9 states, "At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in

¹ Article VII, Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” Christ did it to identify with us...we do it to identify with Him.

3. **To Grow with Christ in His Death and Resurrection.** Romans 6 states, “Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also, we might walk in newness of life. For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection.” Baptism is our opportunity to die symbolically to self and be resurrected as a loving and compassionate follower of Jesus.
4. **To Celebrate the Forgiveness of Sin.** As Peter stated in Acts 2:38, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” We are forgiven for our sins through repentance, and this cleansing is best illustrated through the symbolism of baptism. The picture in baptism is that our sins and our old life are left in the water, and we come out new, cleansed, and completely renewed in the identification with Christ in His glorious resurrection.
5. **Because Christ Commands It.** Jesus commands that every Christian be baptized. Matthew 28:18-20 reads, “Jesus said, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” These are the three things the church is commanded to do: Make disciples — help people come to know Christ, baptize them, and assist them to grow.

Reflective Questions

1. *In your own words, what is baptism?*
2. *Why do you want to get baptized?*
3. *What do you want your baptism to say to others?*

Who should be baptized?

As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, “Look, there’s water. What would keep me from being baptized?” So, he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Acts 8:36-38

In short, every person who has believed in Christ (Acts 2:41; 8:12-13) Because baptism is an outward proclamation of faith, it is therefore only for believers who have received the saving benefit of Christ’s atoning work and are His disciples. In the New Testament, those who evangelize are only commanded to baptize those who repent and believe. (Matthew 28:18-20, John 4:1-2) Moreover, the recorded subjects of baptism in the book of Acts are individuals who have repented and believed. (Acts 2:37-41; 8:12-13, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16) Additionally, Paul’s letters demonstrate the twin assumptions that those who have believed have

been baptized, and those who have been baptized first believed. (Romans 6:1-5; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:11-12)

When it comes to the issue of infant baptism, there is no conclusive evidence that infants, or those not of responsible age, were actually baptized in New Testament times. Many biblical scholars would argue that infant baptism was not a common practice until the 4th or 5th centuries. Most likely, the baptism of infants had something to do with a pastoral and parental concern for babies dying in infancy and the acceptance of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire. Moreover, the New Testament evidence for believer's baptism is strong. Doctrinally, since baptism symbolizes a believer's union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, baptism is only for believers. As such, here at Fairview, we encourage all believers that were baptized as infants or before they believed in the saving work of Jesus Christ, then be rebaptized.

When should a person be baptized?

"And now, why are you delaying? Get up and be baptized...." Acts 22:16a

As soon as a person trusts Christ, he or she should be baptized. The Scriptures do not speak of a delayed baptism in which a regenerate believer refrains from obedience to the ordinance. In all the accounts in the Scriptures, baptism is rather immediate. This pattern of somewhat immediate baptism should be emulated unless there are convincing reasons to delay baptism. For example, it is appropriate to delay baptism of children until they are a responsible age, in order for their parents and the church to better discern their understanding of the gospel.

How should a person be baptized?

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. ¹⁰ As soon as he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased." Mark 1:9-11

At Fairview, we believe the most appropriate mode to baptize is by immersion into water. There are several reasons that support this method.

First, the biblical language conveys this particular mode of baptism. The Greek words baptizo (verb) and baptisma (noun) are generally understood as meaning, "to plunge, dip, immerse" or literally "surround" something in water. This is the commonly recognized and standard meaning of the term in ancient Greek literature both inside and outside of the Bible. While the case for immersion should not be based on linguistic data alone, "to immerse" is the most straightforward meaning of the Greek verb meaning "to baptize."

Second, the New Testament descriptions of baptism reflect this mode of baptism. Baptism by immersion seems consistent with biblical passages such as; Mark 1:5, where John was baptizing people in the River Jordan. In Mark 1:10, Jesus is described as "coming up out of the water" in his baptism. John 3:23 argues that John baptized "where there was much water." Lastly, in Acts 8:36-39 when Phillip baptizes the Ethiopian they go "down into" and "come up out of the water."

Third, baptism by immersion is a powerful outward symbol of an inward reality. Immersion symbolically depicts the truth that is being witnessed to (Romans 6:3-4, Colossians 2:12). In other words, baptism by immersion dramatically displays the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ like no other mode of baptism. The powerful symbolism of immersion representing the gospel is striking, and not unimportant. Immersion suitably proclaims the content of the gospel message.

For clarity it must be added that water baptism does not create the reality of saving grace or faith in the person being baptized. Rather it testifies to the presence of such grace and faith in the baptism candidate. Again, baptism is a public profession of God's saving work in the life of the believer.

Reflective Questions

1. *Why do you think you are a good candidate for baptism?*
2. *How does baptism by immersion point to the gospel of Jesus Christ?*
3. *What other question do you have about the ordinance of baptism?*

PREPARING FOR BAPTISM

What should I bring? Please bring a pair of shorts and a white t-shirt to wear underneath the baptism robe that will be provided. Also, bring whatever toiletries that will be needed. Items such as, towels and a hair dryer are available for use at Fairview.

What time should I arrive? Please arrive no later than thirty minutes prior to the service. During that time, you will be introduced to a member of our baptism team. Along with the baptism team, a member of the pastoral staff will show you to the changing room and the baptistry. They will also walk through the baptism process, step-by-step, and pray with you.

NEXT STEPS AFTER BAPTISM

Our desire is to see every person that attends our church move through the "Next Steps" process. We have intentionally laid that process out in three movements: from Connected, to Committed, to Commissioned.

CONNECTED

- Attending Fairview Baptist Church
- Connecting with a Life Group or Fairview Ministry
- Attending Starting Point Luncheon

COMMITTED

- Joining Fairview Baptist Church
- Participating in a Fairview Ministry of Life Group

- Contributing and volunteering regularly

COMMISSIONED

- Helping multiply Life Groups to connect the unconnected
- Serving on or leading a Ministry Team.
- Living on mission – locally, nationally, internationally
- Investing in the mission of Fairview Baptist Church

An “active member” of Fairview is someone who attends worship and a Life Group repeatedly, serves regularly, and gives to the church routinely. The process begins with personal faith in Christ as Savior and Lord, is publicly expressed in water baptism, and culminates in formal church membership.

OUR MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ according to the will of the Father, and having been baptized as believers in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we desire to be obedient to God’s Word, and therefore, with the gracious aid of God, commit to:

GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION

- Pray for and seek the salvation of others through the proclamation of the gospel;
- Fight against sin in the pursuit of sanctification through personal and group discipleship;
- Confess, believe, and defend biblical doctrine as summarized in our statement of faith;
- Speak the truth in love to one another in a way that is edifying and receive admonishment as occasion may require; and
- Be slow to take offense and always ready to reconcile and to offer forgiveness freely to one another.

LOVING COMMUNITY

- Pray for the church as a whole, for her members, and for our mission partners;
- Participate in worship gatherings, the ordinances, Life Groups, and members’ meetings regularly and faithfully;
- Pursue our church’s mission in a spirit of loving cooperation, submitting to the leaders who have been granted authority by the congregation;
- Protect the unity of the church by walking together in Christian love; and
- Serve one another as members of one body, using our spiritual gifts, natural abilities, and resources.

MISSIONAL LIVING

- Pray for boldness and opportunities to share the gospel with gentleness and respect, always ready to give the reason for the hope that is within us;
- Be zealous in our efforts to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ, submitting our preferences and comforts to the mission of making disciples;
- Commit to equip, send, and support one another for international, national, and local missions efforts;
- Give of our finances generously, sacrificially, and regularly in support of the ministries of the church and our mission partners; and

- Be faithful kingdom witnesses in all areas of life by walking in the fruit of the Spirit and aiding those in need.

Now to Him who is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forevermore. Amen.

PREPARING ONE'S HEART FOR BAPTISM

What follows is a short devotion designed to help you prepare your heart for baptism. Spend some time reading through, examining, applying, and praying through the following passages and see what God's word has to say about your identity in Christ, and why baptism is such a powerful message to the world. Along with each passage, there are questions to consider.

Romans 6:1-14

1. How are Christians joined with Christ?
2. Why are Christians joined with Christ?
3. By what power was Christ raised from the dead?
4. What does this passage say about Christ's life after death?
5. What did you learn about your identity in Christ?
6. What did you learn about baptism in this passage?

Colossians 2:9-15

1. What does this passage say about the Christian's relation to sin?
2. What does this passage say about faith?
3. What did Christ accomplish?
4. What does it mean for Christians?
5. What are the two parts of baptism?
6. What do they represent?

Reflective Questions

1. What questions do you have about the logistics of your baptism?
2. In your own words, why is it important to follow baptism with covenant membership?
3. Do you have any anxieties about covenant church membership?

APPENDIX A: WHAT ABOUT BAPTIZING CHILDREN?

Talking to children about baptism.

As children grow and mature and are around followers of Christ, they are likely to start asking many questions about baptism and what it means. Here are some simple ways to talk about baptism with children. It is important for children to understand that baptism is a picture of what it

means to believe in Jesus Christ, who died and rose again. It is something that is supposed to remind us of what Jesus has done for us. It represents something that has already happened in our hearts as we believed the gospel, placed our trust in Jesus for our salvation, and were brought spiritually from death to life.

Here is some language that may be helpful as a guide as you talk with your child about baptism:

- Baptism happens one time in a person's life, when we first put our trust in Jesus. However, we get to rejoice and celebrate with others for the rest of our lives as we see people get baptized.
- When someone gets baptized, he or she is dipped under the water and then immediately raised back up. This is an outward picture of what Christ has done in our hearts.
- When one is dipped completely under the water, it is a picture of someone so close to Jesus that Jesus' death on the cross has now become their death. That is why you will often hear someone say, "Buried with Christ."
- When a person is baptized, he or she does not stay under water for long. They immediately come back up. This help remind us that just as Christ was raised from the dead, we are raised from the dead with Him. We have been given a new life because Jesus paid for our sin. When He rose from the dead, He showed us that He completely dealt with sin.

It is important to make sure that children understand that being baptized does not save them. It is just a picture of an inward spiritual change that has already occurred. People get baptized because Jesus told us to so in order that we could show the world our commitment to Christ.

Discerning a child's heart

Discerning a child's heart in order to determine their readiness for baptism can be difficult. This is especially true if children grow up in Christian homes, where they regularly heard the gospel. When trying to discern a child's heart:

- Be sure the child understands the gospel. Even though they will not understand all the implications of the gospel, be sure they understand that Jesus is the only way they can be saved – not good works, not by going to church, not by behaving well.
- Also, it is wise to ask parents if there is evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in their child's life. Do they see any fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)? The younger a child is, the greater the need to discern whether the child is merely exhibiting religious obedience for approval.
- If you are not sure about the sincerity of a child's faith, it is okay to wait. Remember, baptism does not save a child. Rather, it is an outward expression of the eternal work that God has already done. Some prefer to wait until they see more fruit in a child's life. Some

want to wait until a child is old enough to remember their baptism. Waiting also allows for the child to embrace and understand the commitments they are making on their own.

Preparing a Child for Baptism

First, walk the child through the gospel in language that is appropriate for their age.

For younger children, using the *Gospel: God's Plan for Me* tract can be helpful. Start by asking the child if they have ever heard the word "gospel." Clarify that the word gospel means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. The following guide is intended to help share the gospel with younger children:

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. For older children, ask them to read Genesis 1:1 aloud from the Bible, followed by either Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17, and have them explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell the child that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. Ask older children to read and explain Romans 3:23.

God provided. Tell the child that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Ask older children to read and explain John 3:16.

Jesus gives. Tell the child that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Ask older children to read and explain Romans 5:8.

We respond. Tell the child the appropriate way to respond to the gospel of Jesus. Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus. Ask older children to read and explain Romans 10:9-10, 13.



It is appropriate to ask a child to repeat the gospel, helping them along the way. Perhaps ask, "One of your friends comes up to you and says, "What is a Christian? What makes a person a Christian" How do you answer those questions?"

Second, share with the child about baptism in language that is appropriate for their age.

The younger a child is, the less they will understand about the symbolism of baptism because they are still growing in their understanding of abstract facts. Because of this, it might be helpful to offer a simplified explanation of baptism. Start by reading Matthew 3:13-17.

Using very simple language, explain that Jesus was baptized to give us an example of what we should do. Baptism shows that a person has turned away from the way he or she used to live, has asked Jesus into his or her life, and wants to follow Jesus every day. Becoming a Christian comes first – baptism does not make a person a Christian. Also, explain that when a person is baptized, he or she is put under water completely. When we do this, it is a symbol. A symbol is something that represents something else. Baptism is a symbol of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. When you see someone placed under water, you remember that Jesus died. When you see someone raised up out of the water, you remember that Jesus was raised from the dead. Tell them that their baptism will show people that you have confessed Jesus as King and that the sinful life you had before you became a Christian is no longer alive. You now have Jesus as Savior and want to live for Him.

It is appropriate to ask a child, "What does baptism show others?"

Third, share with the child about church membership in language that is appropriate for their age.

A good place to start is by talking about the first church in Acts 2. It might be best to summarize this in your own words for the child. For example, in Acts 2, we read the believers were all together, and God sent the Holy Spirit to them. A great crowd gathered around the believers, wondering what was going on. Peter stood up and told the crowd about Jesus. Peter preached about Jesus being God's Son, the Messiah. People in the crowd realized they needed to believe and trust in Jesus. They asked Peter, "What should we do?" Peter told them to repent and be baptized. Three thousand people trusted Jesus that day, were baptized, and joined the believers to make the first church. Then the believers began to sell their possessions and share the money with anyone who had need. They also devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, spending time together, eating together, and prayer. The first church and the church today are made up of people who have trusted Jesus as Savior and have been baptized.

Make sure to explain that the church is more than a building. It is a group of baptized believers. Share that 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 says that the church is like a body. The way is a way of describing the church. Our church functions kind of like our bodies. No part of our body is more important of the other. That is why it takes everyone working together at church to be able to reach neighborhoods for Christ. No one person is more important than another person.

Concluded by explaining what the church does. A good way to do this is by reading Matthew 28:18-20. You can ask the child what Jesus wants them to do. (Go, teach, and baptize) Reinforce that preparing to get baptized is sort of like preparing to tell other people about Jesus.

Finally, share with the child about their testimony in language that is appropriate for their age. For a young child, you have already covered a lot, so it might be appropriate to have them work on their testimony at home with their parents.

Start by reminding the child that we are to share about Jesus to other people. Tell them that one of the best ways to do this is through stories because they are important to people. When we share with people about our story about how we became a Christian, it is called a testimony. This would be a good opportunity to share your testimony in a simple way. Also, remind them that the gospel and their testimony is not the same. Finally, help the child write their own testimony. This can be difficult for younger children, since they don't have many memories of their personal life experiences. The worksheet below might be a useful tool in this case. This is a tool that can easily be given to parents to work on with their children.

MY GOD STORY

WHAT HAS GOD DONE FOR YOU? He has been more wonderful to you than you will ever know. He helped you realize that you need Jesus! This page will help you think of the steps you took to trust Jesus to be your Savior. You can tell the story of how Jesus is in your life. Fill in the blanks with your story. Then tell your God story with friends. If you see that you have never told Jesus that you want Him to be your Savior, talk to an adult.

1. BEFORE JESUS

Before I met Jesus, I did what I wanted. I sinned by _____

(List general attitudes and actions such as ignoring parents' rules, lying, and getting mad easily — no embarrassing details).

I thought I was making myself happy, but I sometimes felt bad. I see now that I sinned and did not follow God.

2. WHEN I MET JESUS

One day, I realized I had a problem with sin. _____


(List who helped you learn about Jesus: parents, Sunday School teacher, friend) helped me to meet Jesus. They showed me Jesus by _____

(List what they said and how they helped you to understand about Jesus, such as: invited me to a concert, camp, or church). I learned that God had a plan to forgive my sins. God wanted me to know Him and trust Jesus as my Savior. God's Word showed me the way to go.

Nothing I did on my own could erase the selfish problems in my life. Even though I did some good things like _____

(List nice things you did or gave), those things were not enough.

I learned that the only thing that could help me is Jesus. Jesus died on a cross and rose again. He could erase my sin and make my attitude all new. I remember the special moment I trusted Jesus to become my Savior. I was _____


 *(Describe where you were or the people you were with when you trusted Jesus as Savior).*

3. AFTER MY DECISION

My life is changed. He forgave my sin. Jesus created me to worship Him and do His work. Jesus helps me _____

(List how you have changed, what you have learned, how sin does not make you happy anymore). I know He has given me talents and abilities that I want to use for Him, like _____

(List ways you make a difference). I know I have value and purpose in Jesus. I am thankful Jesus is in my life, and I am following Him every day.



APPENDIX B: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

What if someone was sprinkled, do they need to be baptized?

While we would affirm that the sprinkling experience was very significant in one's journey of faith, Baptist congregations practice believer's baptism by immersion for the reasons stated above. Therefore, in most Baptist churches, anyone who desires to join that local body of believers must act in accordance with these beliefs regarding baptism and the Bible. Generally speaking, if someone was sprinkled as an infant it was a decision their parents made regarding their covenant with God to raise them in a family of faith. Simply stated, sprinkling is different when compared to a believers baptism by immersion.

Should someone be re-baptized?

Some Christians ask to be re-baptized after they experience a deep renewal of their faith, perhaps in conjunction with a re-dedication of their lives. However, the Bible indicates there is no need to be baptized several times. There is only one baptism meant to symbolize God's work in one's conversion (Ephesians 4:5; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-28). Furthermore, some people look back on their baptism in the past and wonder if they were truly saved and thus want to be re-baptized. However, we must be cautious here because every Christian grows in their understanding of grace over time, and so we should not quickly jump to the conclusion that we were not a believer in their initial stages of faith. It is possible and even common for a person to become a Christian and then turn away for a time before the loving discipline of the Father brings them back into a life of repentance and faith. Thus, if a person has been baptized after a profession of faith as someone who was capable of making a meaningful decision, they should not be re-baptized at a later time. Nevertheless, it is possible to have been through the act of baptism with no connection to a genuine repentance of sin and profession of faith in Jesus Christ. In these cases, they were not initially baptized in the biblical sense. Baptism should only follow the genuine reality of gospel faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 19:1-5).

Is the act of baptism an ordinance or a sacrament?

Throughout church history the term used most often to describe these two events has been sacrament, which comes from a Latin word used to describe the oath of loyalty a Roman soldier would make to his commander. Typically, Baptists do not use the word sacrament because of its use by other denominations that have different understandings of baptism and the Lord's Supper. For example, some of these denominations understand baptism and the Lord's Supper as the vehicles through which God's saving grace is applied to each individual, thus making these ordinances into works contributing to one's salvation. Baptists practice baptism and the Lord's Supper without the idea that these acts automatically convey God's saving grace. Baptists believe that God gives grace through faith in Christ alone. In other words, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not the active agents that achieve forgiveness in Christ. Technically speaking there is no biblical warrant to choose between the word's ordinance or sacrament. Because of the connotations carried with the word sacrament, many Baptists have long opted to use the word ordinance. The term ordinance simply signifies that baptism and the Lord's Supper are acts ordained by Christ for the observance of the church.

APPENDIX C: ONLINE BAPTISM REQUEST FORM

THE GOSPEL AND ME

Please complete the following fields and submit.

Name:

Email:

Date of Birth:

THE GOSPEL

- 1. The Character of God** (Romans 1:18-20, 2:1-16, 3:22-24, Isaiah 43:6-7)
Biblical Truth: God is the just and gracious Creator of all things.
Write this truth in your own words:
- 2. The Sinfulness of Man** (Romans 1:21-25, 3:9-20, 3:23, 6:23)
Biblical Truth: We are each created by God, but we are all corrupted by sin.
Write this truth in your own words:
- 3. The Sufficiency of Christ** (Romans 3:21-26, 4:25, 5:18, 8:1-4)
Biblical Truth: Jesus Christ alone is able to remove our sin and reconcile us to God through His death and resurrection. He alone satisfies the wrath of God for our sins.
Write this truth in your own words:
- 4. The Necessity of Faith** (Romans 1:17, 3:20-31, 4:22-25, 6:11-14, 8:10-11, 10:9-13)
Biblical Truth: We are reconciled to God only through faith in Jesus. There is nothing we can do to become right with God.
Write this truth in your own words:
- 5. The Urgency of Eternity** (Romans 6:23)
Biblical Truth: Our eternal destiny is dependent on our response to Jesus.
Write this truth in your own words:

Write out God's gospel story in 100 words or less using the descriptions you just expressed in your own words above. Be prepared to share the gospel story with others in 60 seconds.

MY STORY

Reflecting upon your own understanding of and experience with the gospel, use the following prompts to write testimony.

I was awakened to my need for a Savior by (people, circumstances, books, etc.):

I realized that God is:

I realized that I was separated from God because:

I came to understand that Christ:

I responded to the good news of Christ's death and resurrection by:

Using highlights from above, write out your story in 100 words or less. Be prepared to share your testimony with others in 60 seconds.