



Theological Considerations:

Baptism is a public (community) display of personal (individual) faith. Faith saves. Baptism doesn't. Baptism involves aspects that display a simple profession of faith in Jesus. But baptism also involves a lifelong commitment to Christ that is deeply serious. In part, this is why baptism is a one time event whereas communion is done repeatedly.

Practical Considerations:

While we have examples of baptism in the NT, we have limited data on how exactly a local church is to practice baptism. Beyond immersion and post-faith, there is no comment on how many present, age of those immersed, length of time between faith & immersion, etc. To make too strong of a case seems to press beyond what the NT specifies. Given the limited NT specific data on baptism, much of how a church practices baptism is steered through wisdom on what is best for that individual local church.

In our local context, we place a high value on baptism and use it to highlight individual stories of conversion and platform it in our largest public context of weekend worship.



Ministry Guidelines and Parental Help

Baptism comes after a clear profession of personal faith. In general, a more mature / adult expression of faith seems to most clearly serve the whole body. Generally, our encouragement toward personally baptizing starts Jr. High or older. By age:

- Adult (College and Above): Strong and evident
- High School: Encourage, but don't do baptism in an exclusively youth environment
- Middle School: Stress personal faith in Jesus. Allow, but don't strongly encourage
- Children: Stress story of scripture and personal faith in Jesus. Don't push baptism. Allow for a parental override if they are deeply convinced

Why?

As a university focused church, we are deeply aware of the need for a deepening faith. We want to affirm a five year olds simple trust in Jesus. But we want to highlight particularly the thoughtful faith of an adult in baptism. We have seen countless examples where a child who affirmed the faith of their family either personalized their faith in college or walked away.

Principle of Growing Faith: For children — the analogy of the seed in the soil — we want to see the FRUIT of repentant faith. Simply put, this is more easily observed in a more adult profession, and the reason why many others use tools like confirmation.

Principle of Lifelong Commitment: Baptism is a commitment ceremony. Why limit commitment ceremonies like marriage with “older age” requirements? Because making a commitment requires understanding a commitment.



Children & Baptism

CORNERSTONE POLICY & GUIDELINES

Summary

Our regular church practice is not a theological statement on the salvation of your individual child, but a guideline for our corporate expression that best communicates the meaning of repentant faith to the whole gathered body. This guideline exists to simply guide our regular practice of baptism at Cornerstone.