

child what it means to know Christ, follow Him, and what baptism represents.

***If I was baptized as an infant in another church, should I get baptized again?***

Your infant baptism was certainly a very special moment for your family. But at Northside, infant baptism is similar to what we call “baby dedication.” Once you personally come to an age where you can decide for yourself to follow Christ, believer’s baptism is the next step. Don’t be afraid to be re-baptized as an act of worship and obedience to Christ.

***Does the water wash away my sins?***

Whether it is water in a lake or water in a tub, there’s nothing special about the water that is used for baptism. The Bible is clear that we are saved by God’s grace, not by baptism and not by our own works. Baptism is not salvation; Christ’s blood on the cross is really what washes away sins and pays our debt. It is better to think of it like this: baptism is to salvation as a wedding ceremony is to a marriage. It is an external declaration of an internal event.

***Do you have to be baptized to be a Christian?***

It is clearly established in the Bible that you become a Christian by accepting God’s free gift of grace. For example, the thief who hung on the cross beside Jesus was saved the moment he believed on the cross and was never baptized. While baptism is not what saves us, baptism is necessary in that Christ commands it. All genuine believers should want to obey Jesus by doing what He said and by doing what He did. Even Jesus, the perfect Son of God, showed us the importance of baptism by being baptized Himself.

***What if I still believe it is a technicality?***

If you are resisting being baptized because you feel it is unnecessary, take some time to examine your motives, and pray for God to help you grasp His heart on the subject of baptism. Ask yourself, “Why is it that I don’t want to be baptized? Am I willfully disobeying?” If you are waiting for God to directly prompt you to be baptized, you need not wait any longer. He already makes that challenge to each believer in His Word, the Bible.

***If You Feel Led...***

Northside Calvary Church schedules baptismal services as they are needed. If you are interested in being baptized or if you have more questions, please contact our church office to set up an appointment with our pastor.

**Northside Calvary Church**

*Equipping Individuals to Know Him and Live in His Power*

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Calvary  
Church***

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## Baptism

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**Picture it: the early church. It's A.D. 30 or so, and Peter is out preaching to a huge crowd. More than 3,000 people there believed in Christ, turned from their sins, and were baptized. All in the same day!**

Baptism was virtually the first thing a new disciple willfully did after responding in faith to the good news of Jesus. In fact, baptism is an act of obedience Christ expects of every believer. In the early days, one would be hard-pressed to find an unbaptized Christian anywhere.

Jesus instructed, "Believe and be baptized" (Mt. 28), and that's what those who chose to align themselves with Jesus did. Jesus' words are a command for us to go public with our new faith. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward conversion experience—and it is a celebration into a new life.

According to Romans 6:4, baptism identifies us with Christ's death (as we go under the water) and with His resurrection (as we come up). At baptism, the believer symbolically dies to the old man to become a brand new person who puts Christ in charge of his or her life.

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*Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV) And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

*Romans 6:4 (ESV) We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

## Big Questions

While it seems pretty straightforward, many people have questions about baptism. Should I be dipped, dunked, or dry-cleaned? Is baptism for babies, or people old enough to make that choice? Is it necessary for my salvation?

If you're struggling with the question of whether to be baptized, look closely at the meaning behind it. Honestly ask yourself, "Is this just a man-made religious boundary marker or a biblical truth that God is asking me to live by?" To help you determine the answer, consider these common questions:

### ***How should I be baptized?***

While some churches sprinkle, baptism by immersion was the undisputed church practice for the first 1,200 years of church history. In fact, no early denominational church leaders argued that point. The very word "baptism" means "to immerse" and that's what the Bible records, so Northside believes that if you're physically able, you should be completely immersed. Sprinkling began later in church history due to water shortages and also became the mode of baptizing infants.

### ***Should we baptize infants or people mature enough to make the faith decision?***

Some churches baptize infants and some don't. While Christians can debate this, we should never divide over it. Many current Northside attendees were baptized as babies. At Northside, we don't baptize infants because every baptism recorded in the Bible occurred when someone was old enough to make a faith decision. Jesus blessed children, but He didn't baptize them.

### ***But what if an unbaptized child dies?***

Infant baptism didn't become widely practiced until about 400 years after the birth of the Christian church, when Augustine developed the theology of "original sin." In a nutshell, this idea means that when children are born, they are not only sinners, but God holds them accountable for their sins. So if an infant died, Augustine believed that God would hold that child separate from the Lord for all of eternity unless the child was saved (through the sacrament of Holy Baptism). Given that the infant mortality rate was high in those days, the practice of infant baptism caught on fast. Northside holds to implied Bible teaching that there is an age of understanding when individuals are mature enough to grasp a faith decision for themselves. Only God knows that age, and it may differ for each child. If a child passes away before that time, we believe he or she is taken to heaven.

### ***What does Northside offer for parents who want to rear Christian children?***

While infants cannot choose baptism, we do give parents an option for guiding their children toward personally choosing a relationship with Christ. Our annual baby dedication is a time of public and personal commitment where parents promise to parent their children with godly principles, so that one day when they are ready and understand, they may trust in Christ. To learn more about our baby dedication, contact the church office.

### ***What if an elementary-aged student makes the decision to follow Christ?***

If a child of elementary school age has said "yes" to Jesus and has expressed an interest in being baptized, an appointment can be set up with our pastor so that he can discuss with the