



Baptism

HANDBOOK FOR ADULTS

Park Cities
BAPTIST CHURCH

Thank you for your interest in baptism at Park Cities Baptist Church! With this guide, we hope to provide you with a clear understanding of PCBC's theological convictions regarding baptism, which are rooted in the Bible.

We recognize baptism, while important, is a secondary theological issue. This means people can hold different views on baptism, yet still be united as brothers and sisters in Christ. While there are different views of baptism held within evangelical Christianity, Park Cities Baptist Church practices believer's baptism by immersion. We believe that baptism is an outward and visible sign of our inward faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

IN THIS GUIDE, WE WILL ANSWER:

- What is baptism?
- When should I be baptized?
- How should I be baptized?
- Why do I need to be baptized to be a member?
- What should I expect during my baptism at PCBC?

What Is Baptism?

Baptism is one of the two ordinances (along with the Lord's Supper) Jesus Christ gave as visible signs of grace.

Baptism is a response to the person and work of Jesus Christ in a person's life. It is an outward sign of a person's inward faith. Baptism does not save a person, but rather, displays what someone already believes. It is our public proclamation that we have been saved by the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

One of the distinctives in PCBC's Statement of Faith is believer's baptism (baptism following a confession of faith). PCBC practices baptism by immersion because we believe that the New Testament teaches that people are baptized by water immersion following their confession of faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

In the Bible, baptism is a command from Jesus to obey, a symbol of our union with Christ, and a celebration of Jesus' saving grace in our own lives and within the life of our church family.

BAPTISM IS A COMMAND

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[a] 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." Matthew 28:18-20

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of you sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38

Baptism is a command given to those who have trusted in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Baptism is not optional for those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, but rather, baptism is something that should be done by believers as an act of obedience to the commands of Scripture.

BAPTISM IS A SYMBOL

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. Romans 6:3-5

Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:12

Baptism symbolizes three primary truths:

- The believer's union with Christ in his death and resurrection
- The believer's cleansing and the washing away of sin
- The new life in Christ the believer walks in

Our baptism puts the truth of the gospel on display for all to see. Baptism is a picture of dying, washing away sin, and being raised to new life in Jesus Christ.

BAPTISM IS A CELEBRATION

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free. 1 Corinthians 12:13

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:4-6

Baptism is an individual declaration and a communal celebration. When someone is baptized in a local church, that particular faith family is affirming the person's confession of faith. At PCBC, we celebrate baptism as a reflection of the grace of Jesus. Baptism tells the story of gospel transformation: someone who was dead in their sins, is now alive in Christ!

What Baptism Is Not

While we consider what baptism is (command, symbol, and celebration), we also want to acknowledge what baptism is not:

BAPTISM IS NOT SALVATION

Scripture is clear salvation is a gift of grace. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9).

BAPTISM IS NOT NECESSARY FOR SALVATION AND DOES NOT ADD ANYTHING TO SALVATION

While a believer should seek to be obedient to the command of Christ to be baptized as a response to the person and work of Jesus Christ in their life, baptism is not necessary for salvation and does not elevate someone's standing before God.

BAPTISM IS NOT FOR PERFECT PEOPLE

People do not need to clean themselves up or conquer all of their sin struggles in order to be baptized. As Christians, we are continually being formed into the image of Christ. The only prerequisite for baptism is trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Why Be Baptized?

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.” Matthew 28:18–20

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “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.” Acts 2:37–38

A PERSON SHOULD BE BAPTIZED FOR THREE PRIMARY REASONS:

- 1) To obey the commands of Christ in the New Testament
- 2) To follow Christ’s example in being baptized
- 3) To show a person is a disciple of Christ

Baptism is not merely a responsibility in the life of a believer, but a privilege. It is a privilege to publicly proclaim Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord, and King.

A person’s desire to be baptized should be motivated by his/her desire to glorify God through obedience to Jesus’ command and example. A person should not pursue baptism to please a friend or family member, or to feel better about their faith journey.

Who Should Be Baptized?

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:27

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. Acts 2:41

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:12

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Acts 8:35–38

At PCBC we practice believer’s baptism, not infant baptism. Believer’s baptism means getting baptized after trusting in Christ as Lord and Savior. We believe that in the New Testament, baptism takes place after a person repents from their sin and places their faith in Jesus. If someone believes in Jesus as Savior and Lord, that person should be baptized.

When Should Someone Be Baptized?

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. Acts 8:35–38

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name. Acts 22:16

As soon as someone trusts in Christ as Savior and Lord, that person can and should be baptized.

At PCBC, we offer multiple opportunities for baptism throughout the year. We believe baptism should take place within the context of a local church family, so we offer multiple opportunities to be baptized. As you interact with our staff regarding baptism, be sure to ask what opportunities are available for baptism.

Baptism and Membership at Park Cities Baptist Church

Believer’s baptism is a requirement for membership at Park Cities Baptist Church. PCBC practices believer’s baptism by immersion.

Believer’s baptism is required for membership at PCBC because part of the membership process is the church affirming someone’s faith in Christ. Baptism is someone’s public proclamation of his/her personal faith in Jesus. For PCBC to affirm someone’s profession of faith in Jesus, that person must have publicly made their own profession of faith in baptism first. Becoming

a member of PCBC is a process of the church affirming a person's belief in Jesus, personal testimony, and believer's baptism as a sign of a person's faith in Jesus.

WHY WE PRACTICE BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

We believe that believer's baptism is the pattern of baptism seen throughout the New Testament. In the ministry of Jesus and the early church, baptism takes place after a person's repentance of sin and confession of faith in Jesus. See Acts 2:36–41; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:35–38; Acts 9:18–19; Acts 10:47–48; Acts 16:15; Acts 16:29–34; Acts 19:4–5.

For more information on believer's baptism vs. infant baptism, please refer to the FAQ on page 13

Baptism Process at Park Cities Baptist Church

◆ STEP 1: TELL US YOU WANT TO BE BAPTIZED

There are a number of ways to let us know you feel God leading you to be baptized.

You can:

1) Come to a Next Steps area after the worship service and tell a minister or volunteer about your desire to be baptized.



Baptism Application

2) You can complete the application for baptism online.

3) Periodically throughout the year, we will offer a baptism class. You can find out when on pcbc.org/events, and you can let a minister know at the end of the class that you desire to move forward with baptism.

4) You can email, call, or text a member of our staff. You can find our contacts at pcbc.org/about/staff.

◆ STEP 2: FILL OUT A BAPTISM APPLICATION

After Step 1, we ask baptism candidates to fill out the baptism application. This application gives us the opportunity to hear more about you, how you came to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, and why you want to be baptized. This will be sent to you via email after completing Step 1.

◆ STEP 3: MEET WITH A BAPTISM COACH

After attending a class and submitting your baptism application, we will pair you with a baptism coach. A baptism coach is a PCBC staff member who will set up a meeting with you to go through your application.

✦ **STEP 4: GET BAPTIZED**

Please arrive to the correct place and time as communicated throughout the process.

Don't worry about any questions or concerns you may have. We'll be with you every step of the way, communicating with you about what you need to do next.

FOR FURTHER BIBLICAL STUDY ON BAPTISM:

- Matthew 3, 21, 28
- Mark 1, 6–7, 10–11, 16
- Luke 3, 7, 11–12, 20
- John 1, 3–4, 10
- Acts 1–2, 8–11, 13, 16, 18–19, 22
- Romans 6
- 1 Corinthians 1, 10, 12, 15
- Galatians 3
- Ephesians 4
- Colossians 2
- Hebrews 6, 9
- 1 Peter 3

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ABOUT BAPTISM:

- www.desiringgod.org/topics/baptism-membership
- www.9marks.org/tag/baptism/
- www.thegospelcoalition.org/topics/baptism/
- *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, edited by Thomas Schreiner and Shawn Wright
- *Understanding Baptism (Church Basics)*, by Bobby Jamieson
- *Baptism: Three Views*, edited by David Wright

FAQ: Believer's Baptism and Infant Baptism

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BAPTISM PRACTICED IN CHURCHES TODAY?

1) **Believer's baptism** (credobaptism)

Believer's baptism is an outward profession of an inward confession of faith in Jesus.

2) **Infant baptism** (paedobaptism)

Different churches practice infant baptism in varied ways and for varied reasons:

- **Belief in baptismal regeneration**

In this case, baptism is the means of salvation for an infant. An infant is saved (regenerated) by being baptized. Infant baptism is viewed as a means of saving grace.

- o We do not follow this practice because we believe the Bible teaches salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

- **Keeping church tradition**

In this case, baptism of infants is considered the New Covenant equivalent to Old Testament circumcision of infants. Infants are baptized to show their participation in the church.

- o PCBC believes the Old Covenant practice of circumcision expired with the coming of Jesus and the New Covenant. Therefore, we do not practice this form of baptism.

- **Expression of faith in God's promises**

In this case, an infant's baptism is an opportunity for parents and the local church to confess their faith in God to save the child.

- o PCBC practices parent commissioning and child dedication, which is the church's way of affirming parents are the child's primary spiritual influence. As a faith family, we commit to come alongside parents to encourage, equip, and empower them in their God-given ministry with their children.

WHY DOES PARK CITIES BAPTIST CHURCH PRACTICE BELIEVER'S BAPTISM?

We believe that believer's baptism is the pattern of baptism seen throughout the New Testament. In the ministry of Jesus and the early church, baptism takes place after a person's repentance of sin and confession of faith in Jesus.

See Acts 2:36–41; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:35–38; Acts 9:18–19; Acts 10:47–48; Acts 16:15; Acts 16:29–34; Acts 19:4–5.

IF SOMEONE HAS BEEN BAPTIZED BEFORE, SHOULD THAT PERSON BE BAPTIZED AGAIN?

If someone is baptized prior to placing their faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, that person should be baptized again. In other words, if someone was baptized as an infant, or at any other age when that person's baptism was not a response to their own saving faith in Jesus, then it was not an instance of believer's baptism, and we encourage that person to be baptized for the first time as a believer.

As believers we all continue to grow in our relationship with Christ and in our formation into the image of Christ. We all have seasons of growth and seasons of struggle, but we should only be baptized as a believer in response

to the person and work of Jesus Christ once in our lives. In other words, even during seasons of suffering and struggling with sin, a person's baptism is still true and valid if the person was baptized as a believer. There is no need to be baptized again to show a recommitment to Christ, or to prove a personal growth in one's relationship with Christ.



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