Preparation for Baptism for Youth & Children [1]

The Gospel is a glorious message, and so simple that a child may truly believe and become a new creation. Jesus himself has commanded that we evidence our saving response to this good news by being baptized [2]. Baptism in no way adds to or completes our salvation, but it is an important symbol of our union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.[3]

Parents and elders are responsible to discern the genuineness of faith in children desiring baptism. We desire to honor true faith, while also desiring to protect our children from pre-mature assurance of faith. This takes wisdom. The elders are here to help you. With that in mind we offer the following to parents to assist in the care of the soul of your child.

1. Can your child articulate the message of the Gospel without prompting from you? How do they understand God, judgment, sin, the suffering of Jesus on the cross, and the saving response of repentance and faith? Review the Gospel with them.

2. Is there evidence of grace in their lives? (i.e., do you see signs of spiritual life in them attributable to conversion? We do not look for perfection here – but we look for fruit. Is there a love for others, a quickness to ask forgiveness when they wrong others, etc?

3. Do they incline themselves toward the Word of God and are they obedient to it? Do they confess sin to you and to God?

4. Do they demonstrate age appropriate affection for Jesus? Are they bold or embarrassed to let people know they are in Christ?

5. Is their desire to be baptized rooted in conviction from Scripture? Or is it a desire to conform to parental wishes or to fit in with peers? You should look for a desire to please God in this act of obedience. It is more than pleasing Mom and Dad.

6. Have you reviewed with them the key passages on baptism and its meaning (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:41; 8:36-38; 9:18; 10:47; 16:15, 33; Romans 6:1-11)? Can they explain what they are doing?

Take some time to review these with your children**. If you've done the above and believe your child should be baptized, please contact one of the elders**. We will likely want to have a conversation with you and your child to confirm the decision to baptize at this time.

While baptism is commanded, it is wiser to be patient in leading our children to baptism than to create a pre-mature profession of faith. At the same time, if they desire baptism because they are convinced Jesus wants them to be baptized, then we certainly want to honor their conscience. Regardless, we encourage you to celebrate any spiritual interest your child is showing and continue to walk with them in these vitally important matters.

---

1 This helpful document was created by Mark Lauterbach, and we have gladly adapted it for our use.

2 Matthew 28.18-20

3 Romans 6.1-11