

IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR BAPTISM?

"Daddy, when can I get baptized?" Several of my daughter's friends and peers had been baptized at church that night, and she wanted to follow their lead. I remember the rush of conflicting thoughts and feelings when my then eight year old daughter asked me that question. Part of me was excited and proud, but another part of me was suspicious about her motivations. Sure, I WANT her to get baptized, but I want her to be baptized for the right reasons. How can I know she is ready? Does she want to take the next step in her relationship with Jesus, or does she want to be baptized because everybody else is doing it? How can I know? I quizzed my daughter about baptism, and it seemed like her theology was roughly in the right place but... was that enough? Is understanding WHY we get baptized reason enough to get baptized?

This guide has been created to help parents decide when their child is ready for baptism. This short guide is not a replacement for bible study and teaching. If you would like to learn more about baptism go to victorylifechurch.com where you can find great messages on baptism (and just about anything else you might want to know).

FIVE QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU DECIDE IF YOUR CHILD IS READY TO BE BAPTIZED:

1. DOES MY CHILD UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL?

The first test of a profession of faith is knowledge ([Romans 10:14](#)). If your child is saved, (recognizing Jesus as Lord and Savior and following Him), then they should know the basics of the gospel. If they cannot explain what Jesus did for them, why he did it, and how, they have not yet accepted Jesus as Lord of their life. While it would be unreasonable to expect an in-depth and detailed explanation of the gospel, we should expect them to have a basic understanding before baptism.

2. DOES MY CHILD CLAIM JESUS AS THEIR SAVIOR?

Children who are saved will claim to follow Jesus. They will say things like, "Jesus is my savior; He saved me, I asked him to come into my heart, or I want to be like Jesus." A kid who loves Jesus will identify with Him before Baptism.

3. HAS THEIR LIFE CHANGED?

We read in [2 Corinthians 5](#) that people become new creations at conversion. Kids are no different. The same Holy Spirit who redeems adults redeems kids. As with adults, a saved child will be on the path of righteousness. This doesn't mean they're perfect, but you should see a gradual change in the right direction. They may be quicker to apologize, less hateful towards siblings, or have a *desire* to do the right thing even if they fail to follow through every time. Even as adults, our reaction to a bad driver on the highway can quickly remind us that subduing our flesh is an ongoing process.

4. WHY DOES MY CHILD WANT TO BE BAPTIZED?

There are many reasons a child might want to be baptized. Perhaps they are eager to follow Christ's command to be baptized, and they are looking forward to making a public confession of their faith. Maybe they want to be like their friends, or they think baptism saves, it looks like fun or they like the attention. Before you allow your child to be baptized, make sure they understand the purpose of baptism. If they are saved but do not understand baptism, a great way to learn would be to listen to Pastor Duane's message on baptism together, pause often throughout, and discuss what they are hearing. You can find it at victorylifechurch.com

5. IS YOUR CHILD PERSISTENT ABOUT BEING BAPTIZED?

When most children want something, they will not let you forget. They are very persistent. If your child is persistent about being baptized, that can be a good sign that they really want it. If, however, the only time they bring it up is at baptism service, their motives *might* be wrong.

In the end I decided to wait until my daughter turned 10. I believe she was saved when she asked the first time and she had a reasonably complete understanding of baptism, but it just didn't feel like the right time to me. I just had this nagging feeling that while she understood baptism, she really wanted to do it because her friends were. She had received Christ at such a young age that I doubted if she would be able to remember the experience as an adult. I felt like the best thing to do was wait a while. Being baptized at 10 was an experience she would be able to remember and cherish for a lifetime. A few years later my daughter and I were talking about her baptism experience and she admitted to me that when she first asked to be baptized it really was because her friends were doing it. In our case waiting was the right thing to do.

Hopefully these five questions will help you in your decision. If you are still unsure and would like to speak to someone, I would encourage you to discuss it with your life group. Our local kid's pastors are also available to you. If you would like to speak with a kids or youth leader you can email us at students@vl.church

Yours in Christ,

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