

What is Bethlehem's *Infant and Child Policy*?

1. **Pickup *one* baptism information packet** – see our brochure rack.
2. **Read the enclosed resources:**
 - a. Baptism (Meaning and Power)
 - b. What about Holy Baptism
 - c. Why Baptize Infants? (*see the enclosed Scripture references*)
3. **Choose a sponsor / godparent** (one or more) – *It is important that he/she:*
 - a. Is a *professing, practicing, Bible-believing* Christian.
 - b. Confesses the faith expressed in the Apostles' Creed and taught in the Small Catechism (*see the enclosed catechism*).
Note: *Godparents promise to have a strong Christian influence upon the child!*

Give the sponsor a baptism packet!
4. **Complete the Baptism Study:**
 - a. The parents and sponsors / godparents should do so.
 - b. Look up the Bible references (*need a Bible, let us know*).
 - c. Fill in the answers.
5. **Meet with Pastor** – at least one parent and the sponsor(s):
 - a. Call to schedule a meeting.
 - b. Bring the completed Baptism study – *both parent(s) and sponsor(s)* – which will be discussed at the meeting.

What is Bethlehem's *Youth and Adult Policy*?

1. **Pickup *one* baptism packet.**
2. **Read *these* enclosed resources:**
 - a. Baptism (Meaning and Power)
 - b. What about Holy Baptism
3. **Complete the Baptism Study:**
 - a. Look up the Bible references (*need a Bible, let us know*).
 - b. Fill in the answers.
4. **Meet with Pastor:**
 - a. Call to schedule a meeting.
 - b. Bring the completed study.
Note: In most cases, *youth and adults* will complete our Lutheran Basics course before they are baptized.

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Baptism

Importance and Procedure

For Infants & Children



For Youth & Adults



Introduction

Dear Friends,

We are glad you are interested in Baptism! GOD works through baptism to begin a saving relationship between people and Jesus → He is God's own Son who lived and died for your sins and for mine!

Baptism – What is its



From Us to God or God to Us!

If baptism were something that we did toward God, it would have no extraordinary power. However, *we believe that GOD is at work through baptism to unite people to Jesus – thus from GOD to us!*

Even though baptism appears to be very ordinary (*words and water*), the Bible says it is truly extraordinary – *God’s loving, powerful, saving action!* Since all people have inherited sin from their parents, everyone needs GOD to take action to make them alive! *For youth and adults*, GOD takes action through His Word (James 1:18) to unite them to Jesus. However, *for infants and children*, GOD takes action through baptism!

- † ^{NIV} Galatians 3:27 “...for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Baptism – Should I Let My Child Decide for Himself?

Some say “Yes,” *but there is a problem with that answer!* The Bible says that all people – *apart from God’s powerful action* – are spiritually blind (2 Corinthians 2:14), spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1), and spiritual enemies (Romans 8:7) of God! Therefore, GOD works through His chosen means – *Baptism and His Word* – to unite people to Jesus!



What is a Sacrament?

Is it ordinary or *extraordinary*, powerless or *powerful*? Please understand that *SACRAMENTS* are *MYSTERIES*. That reality is brought to light when we consider the *source* of the English words “sacrament” and “mystery.”

- Each word came from the previous word:
μυστήριον → sacramentum → sacrament
(Greek) (Latin) (English)
- Furthermore, the *second word* came from the *first word*:
μυστήριον → mystery
(Greek) (English)

Therefore, a *SACRAMENT* is really a *MYSTERY* – “**Something that is impossible to understand.**”



Nevertheless, *through our complete confidence in God’s Holy Word*, we know that baptism is *powerful unto salvation!* God tells us in His Word:

- † “**Baptism now saves you**” (1 Peter 3:21 NAS)
- † “[**God**] saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.**” (Titus 3:5 NAS)



Is Baptism for All Ages?

Since baptism is something GOD does for sinners – *and since all people are sinners from the time of conception* (Psalm 51:5), God wants to work through baptism to unite all people to Jesus – *the Savior!* The Bible says:

- † “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. **The promise is for you and your children** and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:38-39 NIV)
- † “Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations** [Jesus did not exclude any person of any age], **baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit** [which is one of God’s ways through which He works to make disciples of all the nations], ²⁰ **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you** [so once they have been baptized, they should be taught everything]...” (Mat 28:19-20 NAS)

Is Baptism Different for Children and Adults?

Yes! For children, God unites them to Jesus through baptism. For adults, God unites them to Jesus through His Word. Therefore, **infants and children** are baptized first and taught second; however, **youth and adults** are taught first and baptized second.

Baptized first, taught second is found in Matthew 28 (noted above). *Taught first and baptized second* is found in Acts 8:26-39.