

## What to Ask Before Your Child is Baptized



Parents and grandparents at CCC ask all the time when the right time for their child is to be baptized. There's no question that knowing your kids will be with you in heaven is one of the greatest joys in life. So leading them to Christ is a great privilege. However, in your enthusiasm you must be careful not to rush the decision. If you believe in the Biblical teaching that we all must choose to follow Jesus for ourselves, that means there is a period in a child's life when they simply aren't ready. But you also don't want to discourage your kids from making a decision for Christ if they're ready. No one except God has all the answers, but how do you to the best of your ability determine if a child is ready to be baptized?

### Questions to ask before your child is baptized:

- 1. Have they studied baptism?** A simple study of Acts 2:38 or Romans 6 or looking at all of the baptisms from the book of Acts is a good way to study baptism. You can listen to Pastor Roger's latest sermon on baptism at <http://chandlercc.org/sermons/>. At CCC we have a baptism study book called "Take the Plunge!" and offer a class called Connecting Point 4 Kids that can help both child and parent to learn about baptism.
- 2. Do they feel guilt from sin and the love of God?** Jesus tells us that kids are already part of His kingdom (Mark 10:14). So they don't need to be saved until they reach an age of accountability. Once they reach this age, God will start to work on their heart and convict them of their sin. One way to know if this is happening is to get to the bottom of *why* they want to be baptized. Kids may want to please their parents, or just saw their friends get baptized or maybe they just really want to take communion. Obviously, these are not the right motives. The Bible teaches that the true motive for baptism is because we want to get right with God. Your child needs to know that they are a sinner in need of God's grace. If they don't understand that their sin has separated them from God then they don't know they need a Savior quite yet.
- 3. Are they persistent?** Time will test your child's sincerity. When your child asks about baptism, instead of jumping on the opportunity, try to put it off knowing that if God was truly working on their heart to be baptized, they won't settle for anything less than doing it now! If your child is more persistent about having a cookie than getting baptized, chances are they aren't ready.
- 4. Are they mature enough to really understand?** A certain level of abstract reasoning is needed to understand the message of salvation. While each child is different, this ability usually begins to develop between 3rd and 5th grade. Parents need to discern when this ability has developed enough to proceed. A five year old can love God and understand some things, but simply is not capable of a sincere, lifelong commitment to Christ. If they were baptized this week, fifteen years from now, they will probably deeply doubt their decision. Your child may even grow up to be a bit resentful of their parents who encouraged/allowed them to do something that they were not ready to do. (Note, if your child has grown up in church, he/she will be able to give all the right answers long before they develop enough mature thinking to make this commitment.)
- 5. Have you listened to advice from Godly leaders?** Ultimately, parents are the spiritual leaders in their home, but it's unwise to not seek prayer and wisdom from those who may have helpful and experienced input.



Parenting decisions are not always black and white. God promises to give us wisdom when we need it, so we can lean on Him to guide us in this decision too.

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