



GRACE CHURCH

MEDINA EAST CAMPUS

Baptism Packet – Kids and Students

Welcome to Baptism

First things first: we're excited that your child has taken this step to 'go public' with your faith! And we're tremendously honored that you would choose to have them celebrate their commitment to following Jesus and his way of living by connecting with the Medina East Campus of Grace Church. It's our commitment to help guide you through this process by informing you of the biblical foundations, unique practices and practical considerations of being baptized at Grace.

Above everything else, baptism is a command of Jesus that correlates with his agenda of discipleship. Matthew 28:19 actually links the two together, further highlighting the close relationships between them:

'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....'

Jesus asserts that the act of baptism is the natural 'next step' of someone who has made a commitment to follow Jesus, which is really the essence of the idea of discipleship in the first place. Discipleship itself is basically a student or learner determining to reproduce the life of the teacher in him/herself by intently studying and adopting that teacher's patterns of thinking and living.

Baptism symbolizes the intentionality of the disciple or learner—the follower 'dies' to the old ways of choosing to live life and 'rises' to a new and vibrant way of living, which is none other than the way taught and demonstrated by the teacher. And it's not only significant for you, it becomes a public confession to others that you've devoted yourself to transformation, dropping the patterns of the old life and increasingly adopting the patterns of the new.

If your child has made the commitment to follow Jesus in this way, baptism is their first act! As one Bible scholar has commented, baptism is to the new life in Christ as the first post birth breaths are to a newborn. There's lots of growing that still needs to happen to reach maturity but baptism states that your child is breathing the new air of salvation life! So as your child 'goes public' and engages in baptism, know that we are celebrating the reality of Jesus' work in them—and the wonderful work that he is going to continually do as they walk through the journey of life with him.

Discussion Questions to Process with Your Children

- Watch the three (3) minute video about baptism at medinaeast.gracechurches.org/childbaptism/
- Read Romans 6:1-7 together, preferably in the NIV, NLT or NRSV versions
- Based on what you saw in the video and what we just read in the Bible, what do you think God really wants us to know about baptism? What does it represent?

[Parents, look for signs that your child understands that baptism is what a follower of Jesus does to tell everyone they know that they have committed their life to Christ. Be sure that they understand that being baptized does not save them from their sins but is what a person does in obedience to Jesus.]

- Why do you think it's important to be baptized? What does a person say about their life when they get baptized?

[Parents, listen for responses that say something about being obedient to Jesus' desires and wanting to tell others that they have a relationship with him as telltale signs that they've grasped the importance of baptism. If your child can make the connection that their old life is gone (symbolized by going under the water) and that they are living a new life because of Jesus living in their heart (symbolized by coming back out of the water), you can be pretty sure they understand the heart of what baptism is all about!]

- If going under the water represents that you've died to sin and if coming back out represents living a new life following Jesus, what do you think it looks like to live out that new life every day? What are some things we should decide to do to help us continually participate in a relationship with Jesus?

[Parents, as you help your child sort through the implications of their decision to follow Jesus into the future, it may be good for you to steer them toward finding time each day to read a passage in the Bible (i.e. how we hear from God) and to pray (i.e. how we respond in conversation to him and know him even more deeply as he leads us). This may involve coming up with some kind of Bible reading plan and you personally taking

time to help your child better understand what they're reading and know how to pray! POWER Kids also has some resources available to you along these lines, so contact us at any point—we would love to help!]

- Who do you want to invite to see you get baptized? In other words, who in your life needs to know that you've made a commitment to follow Jesus?

[Parents, consider leading your child to think about people in their life who already know Jesus and can be an ongoing support for them in that journey, but also help them think about people in their life who do not know and follow Jesus—this can be an amazing opportunity for your child to share about Christ's love to them!]

Practical Logistics

Beyond the resources our team has made available to you via the medinaeast.gracechurches.org/childbaptism/ page, our team will be reaching out to you to confirm the date and service of your baptism. Once this is established, you may want to jot down that information in the space provided here:

- Date of Baptism: ____/____/____
- Service (circle one): Saturday 6:00pm
Sunday 9:15am Sunday 11:15am

Here is a brief outline of what you'll need to prepare yourself for baptism:

- Access the *POWER Kids Baptism* resource page on our website – medinaeast.gracechurches.org/childbaptism/ Here, you'll find the following to get you ready to go:
 - Watch the 3-minute *POWER Kids Baptism Educational Video* to help grasp a deeper understanding of the meaning and significance of baptism in the Bible.
 - Download the *Baptism Packet* (this document) if you have not done so already or if you'd like another copy.
 - Read the *One-Minute Version* instruction guide.
- Prepare your child to film the 'One Minute Version' of your story. Someone on staff will reach out to you and schedule a time for filming your child's story.

Here is a brief outline of what you can expect during the day of baptism:

- *Gathering*: Be ready to convene in the MEC Library 30 minutes before your assigned service begins for final instructions and direction. There you will also fill out the *Application for Baptism* if you haven't done so beforehand. A copy of this document can be found at the end of this

packet, so if you'd like to fill it out before arrival and bring it with you to the service, you may elect to do so. We will have copies of this application on arrival.

We'll give details on the order of baptism in the service, answer any last-minute questions you have, pray together and prepare our hearts for the service.

- *Clothing:* Prior to this pre-convene, your child should already be wearing their 'baptism clothes.' It is recommended that you consider the following with regards to attire:

- Wear darker pieces of clothing that are not thin or see-through.
- Bring a towel and take it with you when you are called up to be baptized.
- Bring a change of clothing for the conclusion of the service.

- *Service Flow:*

- A pastor, Life Group Leader who is overseeing the flow of the service will open with a greeting and a high-level overview of the importance/significance of making a commitment to be baptized. We might do this 'live' or accomplish this step via an explanatory video that helps those who are observing to understand the reason for baptism
- As you are called up for baptism, the previously filmed version of your salvation story will be playing. Your child will step into the tank while the story is playing and get prepared to be baptized
- The leader or the individual you want to baptize you will address your child by asking them three questions and then, saying, "Because of your profession of faith in Jesus Christ and your commitment to follow him in discipleship, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," and immerse your child headfirst three times, once after each reference to the persons of the Godhead.

- When your child is done, you'll be escorted to an area of the auditorium where you can stay in the service for the remaining people to be baptized. You'll then be dismissed to head to the restrooms to change clothes.

- *Who to Invite:* In a nutshell, baptism is an outward sign of an inward change or work that has been performed by the Holy Spirit when you believed in Jesus and resolved to follow him. So, it's not only a token of the interaction of God's grace and your faith, it is also a marker or emblem for the purposes of others knowing the decision you made. Because of this, you're encouraged to invite anyone you know, love or care about. Other Christ-followers, your Life Group and immediate family are good starting points, but you may want to strongly consider friends who don't follow Jesus and relationships in your life where the gospel has yet to take root.

Essentially, it's an opportunity to celebrate with other believers and demonstrate your commitment with those who are still investigating Jesus—even those who really want nothing to do with Jesus! It's not necessary to make the 'ask' controversial or divisive—if someone says 'no,' that's completely okay. But certainly don't allow your perception of how they might respond be the deciding factor.

So know who you'd like to invite and pray through who God might want you to invite!

Sharing Your Story

Use the space provided below to write a succinct account of your conversion experience. Think 1-3 paragraphs. This will provide a helpful outline as you film your personal story encountering God's grace and commitment to follow Jesus. You can even read your story as you film it, should you so desire.

Commonly Asked Questions

1. Does it matter how many times someone is dunked?

- The Bible does not give much insight into the procedure of baptism. Some churches baptize by single immersion (one dunk). Grace Church practices triune immersion (three dunks).
- Ultimately, the Bible isn't clear how many times a person should be dunked. Therefore, the important thing is not how many times a person is immersed, but that they are being immersed in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit in obedience to Matt. 28:19-20.

Why does Grace Church practice triune immersion? During the Byzantine period (330-1453 AD), some Christians rejected the doctrine of the Trinity (the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Because of this, they would be baptized in the name of Jesus, but not the Holy Spirit.

The reaction of the Church was to have people immersed three times: once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son, and once in the name of the Holy Spirit, thus symbolizing agreement with the doctrine of the Trinity.

2. Does it matter if you get dunked forward or backward?

- Those who baptize “backward” do so to represent the posture of a dead person, or buried facing upward.
- Those who baptize forward do so because Romans 6 mentions being baptized into the likeness of Christ. This is coupled with John 19:30, which indicates that Jesus, “bowed his head (*forward*) and gave up His spirit” at the crucifixion.

3. What about infant baptism (Paedobaptism)?

- Biblically, baptism follows our faith in Christ and repentance of sin and thus is always an informed and conscious decision. It is because of this that Grace Church does not perform infant baptism. However, we do have parent commissioning services as a way for parents to commit to raise their children in a God-honoring way.

4. If I have been baptized in the past, how do I know if my baptism is genuine?

- Your baptism is genuine if you did it as a conscious choice as a sincere believer and follower of Jesus.

5. If I've been baptized in the past, should I be baptized again at Grace Church?

- At Grace Church, we practice triune immersion as a requirement of membership for those who have not yet been baptized. However, our bylaws

indicate that if a person has already been baptized via single immersion (one dunk) into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Grace Church will consider that baptism as valid in terms of consideration for membership.

6. Does it matter if you sprinkle or immerse?

- Biblically, baptism is always done by way of immersion.
- The Greek word for “baptize” (*baptizo*) means “to immerse completely” or “to plunge under.”

7. Who can baptize me?

- The Bible does not say that a pastor or leader must baptize you. The pattern of the New Testament is that the person who leads another to Christ does the baptizing.
- At Grace, it is common for children to be baptized by believing fathers who have already been baptized. Life Group Leaders baptize people in their groups as well.

8. What should I expect during a baptism service?

- We ask that you bring a towel, shorts, and a dark colored t-shirt.
- The Pastor leading the service will call you to the baptism pool. A video will play explaining baptism in general and then your child’s story will be shared via video.
- After these videos, the person baptizing your child will ask the three questions and then dunk your child three times forward, pausing in between each dunk.
- Finally, the person baptizing your child will pray for them at the end.

Many people are afraid to be baptized because it requires them to be in front of a group of people. In the early church, people were baptized naked! If you are feeling anxiety about baptism, be comforted.

9. Should I invite friends and family to my child’s baptism?

- Absolutely! Baptism is an outward expression to the world that you want to be identified with Christ.

We are excited that you have decided to pursue baptism here at Grace Church, Medina East Campus! Please complete this application and submit to the church office so we can be aware of your desire. Thank you for expressing interest in Baptism.

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please select your baptism preference:

1. During Grace Church service

During weekend services at:

- 6:00pm
- 9:15am
- 11:15am

2. Life Group (LG)

- I desire to be baptized in my LG.
LG leader name _____

I watched the Baptism Educational film on the Medina East website on:

_____.
Date

I wish to be baptized on

date

by:

Pastor _____

LG Leader _____

Other (Name) _____

Some Questions for You

1. Briefly describe the circumstances through which you became a “follower of Christ”:

2. How has God been working in your life recently?

3. Why do you desire to be baptized?

The undersigned acknowledges that this testimony is the property of Grace Church and may be printed and distributed to the Grace Church family.

Name

Date

Return this form:

- at the Welcome Center
- to your LG Leader
- via scan/email to the church office at medinaeast@graceohio.org

If you have any questions, please call the church office at 330-239-2600 or email medinaeast@graceohio.org.

We will contact you with next steps once we receive this form.