



## **Baptism Packet**

## Welcome to Baptism

First things first: we're excited that you've taken this step to 'go public' with your faith by being baptized! And we're tremendously honored that you would choose to celebrate your 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 plan of discipleship. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus himself links the discipleship and baptism together, further highlighting the close relationship 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 'first step' for someone who has made a commitment to **follow him**, 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 to pattern their life after Christ—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 Jesus, the teacher. And it's not only significant for you, it becomes a public confession to others that you've devoted yourself to the life transformation he offers to you.

If you've made the commitment to follow Jesus, baptism is your 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 mature in your relationship with Jesus, but baptism demonstrates publicly that you're breathing the new air of salvation life!

So, as you 'go public' and engage in baptism, know that we are celebrating the reality of Jesus' work in you—and the wonderful work that he is going to continually do as you walk through the journey of life with him.

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## Meaning and Significance

### Preliminary Considerations

Before touching base on the meaning of baptism in the New Testament as demonstrated by Jesus himself (Matt. 3.13-17; Mark 1.9-11; Luke 3.21-22) and explained in various ways by both Paul (Rom. 6.1-11) and Peter (1 Pet. 3.21-22), there are some helpful Old Testament portraits that are worthwhile to briefly explore. Much of the teaching of the New Testament (NT) is better grasped when some of the main themes of the Old Testament (OT) are recognized, largely because the NT writers frequently leveraged OT concepts to explain the significance of the life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus for their readers (and, by extension, for us!). So, in this regard, the purpose is straightforward: recognize the main themes of the OT stories so we can be 'on the lookout' for how these purposes find fulfillment in baptism. As we are often found saying at the Medina East Campus, if the OT is an arrow pointing to Jesus, then it's helpful to be led by the arrow so we can find our destination!

### *The Flood*

Overall, the baptismal idea of being plunged in **water** is anticipated in the Flood Narrative of Genesis 6-8. In Genesis 3, which serves as an important backdrop to the Flood story, we find that the good world God created in the first chapters of Genesis has already been fractured by the rebellion and disobedience of the first human beings, Adam and Eve. Beyond this, at the beginning of Chapter 6 we find that sin is making matters increasingly worse:

*The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart **was only evil continually** (v. 5)*

In response to these conditions, God unfolds a plan to wipe out the presence of wickedness in the world through a worldwide flood. Unfortunately, this means the eradication of human life as well, considering they are the ones who carry the wickedness of sin in themselves. **But in a radical twist of mercy and generosity, God also determines to spare a remnant of humanity in Noah and his family—God would, in**

**effect, “start over” not by creating a completely different world but by bringing Noah *through* the waters of death and into a new *kind* of life.**

In a sense, the story of Noah and the flood is about death and resurrection: death of the old state of sin-filled brokenness and emergence of a new, living relationship with God.

### ***The Exodus***

The Exodus Story (told in the Book of Exodus) begins with the people of Israel subjected to the hard labor of slavery in the land of Egypt. Although the people are the descendants of Abraham and thus share the common bond of being inheritors of God’s blessing and provision, the Bible reveals that they are incapable of experiencing these benefits because of the ruthless tyrant, pharaoh.

In a great and mighty act, God frees the people of Israel by taking them out of the land of their slavery (Egypt) and into their rightful inheritance as Abraham’s children—this inheritance being the land of Canaan, or what we know today as Palestine. The pivotal event in this story is the crossing of the Red Sea. In strangely familiar territory to those who know the story of Noah and the flood, **God brings the people of Israel through the waters of death and into a new kind of life—their former way of life as slaves has passed away, which brings them into the new possibility of obtaining their promised inheritance.**

Interestingly, although Israel experiences new life as a nation as a result of the Red Sea process (“new birth”), **they must still learn the habits of their new status as God’s people while they wander in the wilderness before actually reaching the Promised Land** (“maturity”). In effect, they underwent a death and resurrection at the Red Sea but must learn now to continually follow God’s leadership as they progress toward the goal.

We would not be too far off to claim that the exodus is a central image used by NT authors as they explain why baptism is so important. Besides the Flood and the Exodus, other Old Testament stories foreshadow the meaning of baptism as well:

- 1) In Genesis, the Spirit of God is “hovering over the waters” prior to God taking what is “formless and void” and giving it light and life (1.1-2, 26-31). The land on which human beings can live and flourish emerges out of the chaotic and threatening **waters**.
- 2) There is also the “Red Sea replay” where Israel crosses the Jordan River in Joshua 3. There, God again **parts waters** by the hand of Joshua, so that the people might **leave their old life of disobedience behind** and enter into the blessing of God in the Promised Land.

The common theme in all these **water** narratives is simply this: God takes people from a state of brokenness, sin and death and transforms both their situation *and* their condition to one of wholeness, vibrancy and life.

## Baptism According to the New Testament

### *Working Definitions*

While the backdrop of the Old Testament is one important context when understanding baptism, there is also another context that is deeply influential. That is the context of our own present time that includes both the assumptions of our surrounding culture and our own, personal presuppositions. Our context is very different from that of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, where the symbol and practice of baptism was adopted by the early church as a part of their response to the command of Jesus to proclaim his story in this way. Before we think about the common conceptions of that 1<sup>st</sup> century society and how they would have understood the practice of baptism, here are several modern definitions of baptism that are important to consider. These will help us expose the differences between our preconceived understanding and the meaning baptism held for the 1<sup>st</sup> century audience of the Bible:

- “Baptism is a ceremonial immersion in water, or application of water, as an initiatory rite or sacrament of the Christian church.” –*Dictionary.com*
- “Baptism is the ritual act, with the use of water, by which one is admitted as a full member of the Christian Church and, in view of some, as a member of the particular Church in which the baptism is administered.” -*Wikipedia*
- “In the New Testament, baptism is the immediate public expression of one’s conversion to Christ and is spoken of as the point at which one becomes united to Christ.” -*Robert Mohrlang*
- Baptism is my outward expression of being in Christ.” -*Anonymous*

### *Scriptural Basis*

All of what we have already touched upon should help guide us as we offer three (3) New Testament passages that will serve to explain how the early church understood baptism. This will help us in the task of drawing out its real significance for us as we pursue obedience to Jesus in this way:

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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**, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28.18-20)*

*...[A]ll of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.... We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might*

*walk in newness of life. **For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.... So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 6.3-8, 11)*

*...God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.*

***Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (1 Pet. 3.20b-22)***

### ***Meaning and Significance***

So, what are a few of the important things to point out from these verses, aside from the elements we already noted in our brief Old Testament survey? We might offer them in this way:

- **An Act of Expression: Baptism is an “outward expression of inward truth.”**
  - Just as Christ was crucified and buried in death, so we symbolize our own death to sin as we are immersed in the water. Likewise, as Christ was raised from the dead, so we demonstrate the reality of our own new birth by being brought out of the water. (Romans 6.3-4)
  - “Christian baptism, then, signifies both the death of our old life in sin and the experience of new life in Christ that replaces it.” –Robert Mohrlang
- **An Act of Identification: Baptism is a way to identify oneself with God and his community.**
  - Often, the Bible speaks of the importance of a Christ-follower being “in Christ.” What does this mean? Essentially, to be “in Christ” is to be united in heart and purpose with him. Romans 6:1-4 tells us that this union occurs when a person places their faith in Jesus and it results in a relationship with him that can be understood a lot like a marriage, particularly with how the governing authorities view that marriage. Prior to being married, each person has certain assets and resources that were theirs exclusively. But, once married, these things become fully and freely shared with one another. Now, the governing authorities can view them as

a single, legal entity—they are one (think of a married couple filing jointly on their tax return)! Likewise, Romans 6:5 tells us that God **counts** Jesus' death to sin as our death to sin. And, amazingly, God also **counts** Jesus' new life as our new life.

- “In many ways, baptism is like a wedding ring: an outward symbol of an inward commitment [and unity].” –Pastor Tony Livigni
  
- **An Act of Obedience: Baptism is commanded by Jesus and a process of discipleship (following Jesus and what he desires).**
  - In Matthew 28:18-19, Jesus commands his followers to make disciples and implies that the “initiation” into this process of discipleship is baptism. Thus, baptism and disciple-making go hand-in-hand—baptism is the acknowledgment that a person has been birthed into a new life. Going forward, the Christ-follower must still look to Jesus's leadership as they adopt new attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with their new identity in Christ!
  - “[The] incorporation of the believer into the Messiah [symbolized in baptism] is the context within which we can understand [the] exhortation to *imitate* him...not a matter of a surface-level ‘imitation,’ with people simply attempting to copy Jesus and so make themselves better people. It is a matter...of them allowing [the] shared and transformed [mind of Christ] to work out into actual patterns of thought and then behavior.” –N.T. Wright
  
- **An Act of Cleansing: Baptism is an acknowledgement of a fundamental and radical “paradigm shift” in the mind**
  - According to 1 Peter 3:20b-22, baptism has little to do with washing the body. Instead, it focuses on the **cleansing of the conscience**. This means that baptism serves as an outward marker of an inward, spiritual reality. Because of Jesus' death, our minds have been cleansed—we are now actually capable of thinking in ways that please and honor God (whether we feel this to be true or not)! This capability is a symbol of a deep “paradigm shift” that accompanies belief in Jesus Christ, one which Christ himself empowers through the Holy Spirit.
  - “Bluntly stated, to serve God well, we must think straight, as crooked thinking — intentional or not — always favors evil. By contrast, to take the ‘information’ of Scripture into a mind thinking straight, under the direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, is to place our feet solidly on the high road of spiritual formation under God.” –Dallas Willard

Each of these four (4) points drawn from the baptism passages could be explored in greater detail, but as we consider once more our own decisions to be baptized, the drawing together of all elements offered thus far, both Old Testament and New, lead us directly and inevitably to Jesus. It is through his death and resurrection that his followers, by way of faith in him, participate in the real exodus, the real flood, the real and new creation, etc.:

*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1.13-14)*

**Baptism, then, is the conscious decision of obedience that flows from making the story of Jesus our own story—"I have been crucified with Christ...it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2.20)! Because of Jesus' work, we have died to sin and can live the life God wants for us. Baptism is a bold demonstration of commitment to both live and give away the gospel; a tangible declaration of your radical sin, God's radical grace and a radical love for the world!**

*[You were] buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Col. 2.12)*

## **The Practice of Baptism**

### ***Immersion***

Grace Church practices baptism by 'immersion.' By immersion we mean that the **whole person** is plunged into the water (symbolizing the death of the old self) and brought back out again (representing the commitment to living a new life). This method is in contrast to other forms of baptizing that have been accepted in some Christian circles in the past.

Why, specifically, do we think it's important to baptize by full immersion? In other words, is there anything significant about doing it this way as opposed to sprinkling or partial submersion? Here are a few points to consider as we think about the actual practice of baptism itself:

- The word 'baptize' in the original language of the New Testament (Greek) is *baptizo*, which literally means "to fully immerse or dip something completely under water."
- Jesus himself was baptized by John in the Jordan River this way (Matt. 3:16)



- The examples of baptism in the Bible were by immersion in a body of water
- The post-New Testament church prescribed immersion. It introduced the practice of “sprinkling” with water as an alternative when conditions were limited:

*...[B]aptize this way...in living [running] water. But if you have no living [running] water, baptize into other water; and if you cannot do so in cold water, do so in warm. But if you have neither, pour out water three times upon the head. – Didache 7*

The concept of sprinkling has some biblical imagery behind it. Sprinkling was associated with the practice of the cleansing or purifying of priests as they performed their sacred duties in the Old Testament (Num. 8:7). There is also some indication that sprinkling of blood in certain circumstances pronounced lepers as healed—or “cleansed” to use the language of Scripture (Lev. 14:7). However, the concept of ‘cleansing’ seems to be a secondary metaphor for baptism; the primary idea of dying and rising is at the forefront of passages which most clearly communicate the significance of baptism (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:12).

### ***Triune Baptism***

Simply put “Triune Baptism” means that a person is immersed or “dunked” three times (usually forward) in the name of the Father (1x), the Son (2x), and the Holy Spirit (3x), giving clear emphasis to the work of the Trinity on the candidate’s behalf. This manner of baptism is also called “Trinitarian,” in that it is done in each of the names of the persons of the Trinity. The other common type of baptism involves being immersed once (usually backward) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. While there is no real difference concerning heart change or commitment when considering these methods, there are a few specific reasons for *Grace Church – Medina East Campus* electing to perform its baptisms in a Trinitarian manner, reasons that are documented in the *Commonly Asked Questions* section at the end of this packet.

Regardless of mode, your baptism is valid because it is the outward expression of your belief in and identification with Jesus Christ, as well as your commitment to his mission. Nothing can take away from that joyful experience. At Grace, we ask all who believe in Jesus to publicly proclaim their faith at our church through Triune baptism. If you have already been baptized at another church via single immersion, you need not question the validity of your baptism, nor does Grace Church do so. We must remember that, fundamentally, baptism expresses a salvation that only God can give you (Eph. 2:8-10)! Our present charter merely states that those who are baptized at Grace Church will be baptized by Triune baptism.

## ***The ‘Baptizer’***

Though it is common nowadays for a licensed minister or pastor to be considered as the ‘qualified’ individual to perform baptism, the practice of the churches in the New Testament period varied. As we can see in the example of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, a standard practice of the early church was to have the individual who led a person to Christ baptize them.

*And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.*

Thus, while it is acceptable for someone in pastoral leadership to baptize you, it is also completely acceptable (and actually encouraged) to have the person who led you to make the commitment to follow Jesus perform the immersion. You could also have a person who is discipling you, investing in your spiritual growth or is a key figure of influence (parents or other family) perform your baptism. Should you want or need to have someone in leadership baptize you, you’re encouraged to have your Life Group Leader participate in this way or one of our campus’ pastoral leaders could also assist. As you walk through the process of being baptized at Grace Church – Medina East Campus, our staff can assist you as you determine who will be baptizing you, should you be unsure at first.

You can also check out the section in this packet labeled *Commonly Asked Questions* for further direction, or feel free to arrange a conversation with someone on our leadership team.

## Baptism Pathway at Grace Church and Practical Logistics

As you prepare for your baptism, following is a brief outline of the steps in our process:

1. Let us know of your interest in *Going Public* in baptism:
  - a. In Person: Mark the “I want more information about *Going Public* with baptism” box on the *Connect Card* at weekend services
  - b. Through Email: Send a short message of your interest to [mec.baptism@graceohio.org](mailto:mec.baptism@graceohio.org)
  - c. By Phone: Call our church offices at 330.239.2600
  - d. Via Text: Text “I want to *Go Public*” to [mec.baptism@graceohio.org](mailto:mec.baptism@graceohio.org)
  
2. Follow up with our staff as they reach out to you with information which includes the following: (All this information is on the MEC Baptism webpage – <http://medinaeast.graceohio.org/know-it/baptism>)
  - a. Watch the **Baptism Educational Video** (11 minutes)
  - b. Read through the **Baptism Packet**
  - c. Click **HERE** to fill out the **Request for Baptism** to set a date for your baptism.
  - d. Write out the “**One Minute Version**” of your story (see page 13) to be read at your baptism and submit it to [mec.baptism@graceohio.org](mailto:mec.baptism@graceohio.org) **at least 2 weeks** prior to your baptism.
  
3. Arrive **with the person baptizing you** 30 minutes prior to the start time of the service in the MEC Auditorium (near the baptismal pool). You will meet with an MEC staff person for prayer and a walk-through of the way we will incorporate your baptism into that service.
  - a. Wear the appropriate clothes (darker clothing that is not thin or see-through is preferred), towel and printed out copy of your story unless your story was filmed.
  - b. Invite your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and others who are in your natural path of life.
  
4. Get baptized!

Here is some information on what to expect during the service of your baptism:

- The weekend service “host” will open with a greeting and a high-level overview of the significance of baptism. We might do this ‘live’ or accomplish this step via an explanatory video that helps those who are observing better understand the reason for baptism. If you are the first or only person being baptized in that service, the MEC staff person will give you and the person baptizing you the “cue” to walk on stage together.
- Once the high-level overview of the meaning of baptism is given, your MEC staff person will give you the “green light” for you to introduce yourself (“Hi, my name is [x] and I’m excited to be baptized today...”). Then you, your baptizer or our staff person will read the *One-Minute Version* of your story. Reading your story “live” before your baptism is the preferred method, but another option is for you to have your story filmed 2 weeks prior to your baptism and shown before your baptism.
- You can then step into the baptismal pool where you will be asked the following questions by the person who is baptizing you (these questions will be provided to them on a laminated card during your pre-service meeting):
  - *Do you acknowledge that you have come into a real relationship with Jesus Christ completely by God’s grace and not by your own effort or goodness?*
  - *Have you put your complete trust in Jesus to save you from sin and give you a new life that is empowered by the Holy Spirit?*
  - *Do you recognize that the life you now live is not your own—that it is dedicated to the mission of Christ—and you are willing to make Jesus the Lord of your life and follow him wherever he leads you in obedience?*
- When you have responded “yes” to these questions, the person baptizing you will address you, 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.” As they state this, you will be immersed head-first three times, once after each reference to the persons of the Trinity.
  - When you are done, we celebrate with you! You can exit off the stage and the staff person or the person baptizing can pray with you. Feel free to stay if there are other people to be baptized. You can then be dismissed to the restrooms to change clothes.

- Your baptism will be part of the service and “livestreamed” for anyone to watch who is unable to attend in person.
- If you’d like a video recording of your baptism, we would be happy to provide that to you. You can reach out to us with this request at [mec.baptism@graceohio.org](mailto:mec.baptism@graceohio.org).

Here are some considerations as to who you might invite to your baptism:

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, while this is a symbol of a personal relationship established between you and God, it is also an outward sign to others that such a relationship is available to them as well! Because of this, you’re encouraged to invite anyone you know, love or care about to your baptism. 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 make an impact.

Essentially, your baptism is an opportunity to celebrate with other believers and demonstrate your commitment with those who are still investigating Jesus—even those who may 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 don’t allow your perception of how they might respond be the deciding factor!

So, know who you would like to invite and pray through who God might want you to invite!

## Crafting the ‘One Minute Version’ of Your Story

The story of how you responded to God’s grace in your life by saying “yes” to Jesus is an important part of your baptism. As you’ve seen with the educational resources we’ve asked you to look at baptism is first and foremost a declaration that your life story is now being authored by God—your life is now his to direct for his purposes!

At Grace Church, we like to think of the gospel—the ‘good news’ about Jesus—as best summarized in three (3) acts:

1. **Radical Sin** – Radical sin means that we, as human beings, have all “missed the mark” of what God intended us to be. Rather than serve and love God with everything we have, the gospel tells us that we have rejected him and that this has resulted in us becoming slaves to sin and death.
2. **Radical Grace** – ‘Grace’ is defined as God’s unearned favor toward us displayed in his intense desire to heal our sin and brokenness. In that grace, he offered to take the punishment for our sin on himself through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. He exercised this grace so that we might come into a relationship with him and live as he intended.
3. **Radical Love** – Jesus promised his followers that he would live in our hearts through the ministry and presence of the Holy Spirit within us. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to genuinely love and serve others because he constantly reminds us of the way the Father loved and served us by sending Jesus.

*Radical Sin, Radical Grace and Radical Love* is one of the best ways to think through your own story. As you begin to write your story down, **start by writing your name**. Then consider writing about the following areas, each of which correspond to the three (3) acts of the gospel we talked about above:

1. **Who You Were (Radical Sin)** – Write 2-3 sentences about what life was like before you said “yes” to Jesus. What caused you to look at the story of Jesus as something that needed to be a part of your life?
2. **The Moment of Conversion (Radical Grace)**– Write 2-3 sentences that describe the moment you said “yes” to Christ. What was that moment like? What did you think/feel/do?
3. **What Will Change (Radical Love)** - Write 2-3 sentences that share your excitement about following Jesus. How do you anticipate Jesus will change your perspective toward loving him and others going forward?

Keep in mind that these thoughts are simply recommendations to help you get started.

**The most important thing is that you share the story of how you came to know Jesus and how that has already changed your life.** Remember, baptism is simply sharing your Jesus story to all who are present. Your story is yours and no one else's, and we believe it will honor God and celebrate his amazing grace in your life because of Jesus Christ.

So, write down your story! Once you've done so, you can send it to us at least **two weeks** prior to your baptism date via email ([mec.baptism@graceohio.org](mailto:mec.baptism@graceohio.org)). Don't forget to complete the **Request for Baptism** form (click [HERE](#) for the form) so we know when you would like to get baptized. We're excited to partner with you to share with others the truth about what Christ has done and is doing in your life.

# 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 perform baby/child dedication services called Parent Commissioning 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, wear shorts and a dark colored t-shirt.
- The person leading the service will call you to the baptism pool. You will then have the opportunity read the One Minute Version of Your Story (or have a designated person read it for you).

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.

- After your story is read, the person baptizing you will dunk you three times forward, pausing in between each dunk.
- Finally, the person baptizing you will pray for you at the end.

## 9. Should I invite friends and family to my baptism?

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

