



Baptism Package





Dear Friend:

We are excited that you are interested in water baptism.

Some of the people who pick up this packet are committed to being baptized. Some, on the other hand, are trying to learn more about it. Whichever you are, we are delighted to be able to help you along on your journey to discover more about baptism.

This packet is intended to provide you with more information. Enclosed you will find the following:

1. Baptism Participant Information Form and Photography Permission Agreement – to be completed and returned at the Baptism Class
2. Answers to popular questions about baptism
3. Information about the Baptism Class
4. Insights on how to write out your Life Story
5. A description of the use of readers at your baptism along with some suggested verses that could be read.

Baptism Services are some of our favourite Sundays at Creekside! We love sharing in the experience of people declaring their love for Jesus and commitment to following him. They are often some of most highly attended services with many family and friends attending to witness these significant milestones in their loved-ones' lives. As such we have a few more logistics to take into consideration in order to ensure that baptism candidates, family and friends, and regular Creekside attenders are served well. There are a few simple requirements that we have listed on the following pages that will help us serve you and those who are attending our services.

Please take a moment to review this package of information and do not hesitate to contact the church office at 519.725.0265 if you have any questions.



Baptism Information

Please fill out this form and bring it with you to the Baptism Class.

Name & Address _____

Date of Birth _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Parent's Email (if candidate is under 16) _____

I would like help writing my testimony Yes No

Name of Baptizer _____

I would like _____ to read my promise verse(s) as follows:

Which translation: _____

Which Service do you prefer to be baptized in? _____

Due to time restrictions in our services we limit the number of spots available for each service to eight baptisms per service until such time as all spots are filled. After that time we'll open up additional and equal amounts of spots in the last two or three services. Spots are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Photography Permission Form

I hereby give permission to Creekside Church to take pictures of me at my baptism, and to use these pictures in Creekside brochures, computer presentations, video presentations or other similar media displays, at the discretion of Creekside Church.

I do not want Creekside Church to take any pictures of me.

(Baptism Candidate's Signature or Guardian if under 18)

Name (please print)

Date

POPULAR QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

WHAT is baptism?

Baptism is a personal, visual, symbolic declaration to ourselves and others that we are followers of Jesus Christ. It is a dramatic statement that we have...

1. Died to our selfish desires. Colossians 2:20, 3:3, I Peter 2:24
2. Been forgiven of our sin and stand clean before God. Titus 3:5-7
3. Come alive to Christ, his Spirit and his will for our lives. Romans 6:8-11, Ephesians 2:4-10

Baptism does not make a person a follower of Jesus Christ; rather, baptism is an ordinance (an order) given by Jesus Christ to all his followers. By being baptized a Christian declares and celebrates the salvation that he or she received through faith in Jesus Christ (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 16:30-31, 10:43-48; Romans 3:21-30; Ephesians 2:8-9). Genuine faith produces an obedient heart which will, in turn, lead to one's desire to be baptized.

WHO should be baptized?

Since baptism is a public dramatization of one's faith and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ then all those (and only those) who are believers in Jesus should be baptized. In fact, believers are commanded by Jesus himself to be baptized. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19

This necessitates that the one being baptized is of an age that allows for a willful, personal choice to be made.

WHEN should a believer be baptized?

In the Bible, every person was encouraged to be baptized immediately upon becoming a believer (Acts 2:41, 8:36-38, 16:33). While it is not "wrong" to allow time between a person's conversion and baptism - new believers should be ready and willing to joyfully respond to this command of Jesus as soon as possible.

HOW should believers be baptized?

At Creekside we baptize believers by total immersion in water. We follow this pattern because...

- In the Bible the Greek word for baptism is "baptizo" which generally means "to dip, to plunge under, to submerge."
- The usual meaning of "into" and "out of" (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Acts 8:38-39) and the fact that John only baptized where he had "much water" (John 3:23) seems to indicate baptism by immersion.
- Jewish proselyte baptism was always done by total immersion and this pattern seems to have influenced the practice followed by the early church. (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life & Times of Jesus, the Messiah*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953, 2:745-747)
- Immersion best pictures one's identification with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.
- Immersion was the universal practice of the early church and every New Testament instance either demands or permits it. (Charles Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1972, p.152)

WHERE should believers be baptized?

Wherever there is water! (What a silly question.)

WHY should believers be baptized?

Jesus, out of love for us, willingly chose to identify with us in his death, burial and resurrection, now he calls upon us to identify with him in the symbolism of baptism (Matthew 28:18-20). Baptism is a command given by Jesus to all his followers. "If you love me, you will obey what I command." (John 14:15)

THE BAPTISM CLASS

What is the baptism class?

The Baptism Class is an hour long meeting with all those who are being baptized or are curious about being baptized. It includes a teaching time, a small study guide, instructions on how things will unfold on the day of the baptism and an opportunity for questions and answers. The class is designed for people ages 13 and up. If you are younger than 13 and are interested in baptism, please contact Carolyn Burge, Kids Pastor at 519.725.0265 x230 to set up a time to meet.

When and where will the class be held?

Generally, it is held at the church campus about three weeks prior to the baptism. Just watch the Update or our website calendar for the exact time and place.

What if I can't be there on that date?

If you are unable to be at the class, contact Jeff Austen (519.725.0265 x 224). We will do our best to make other arrangements to meet with you and go over the booklet with you, either one-to-one or in a smaller group setting with others who may not have been able to attend the scheduled class.

Is there anything I need to do to get ready for the class?

If you have decided to be baptized then it would be great if you could do two things before coming to the class. First, write up your spiritual life story (see "Life Story Guide") and bring it with you to the class. We publish all the baptism candidates' stories on the Sunday of your baptism. Please email your testimony to wmartin@creeksidechurch.ca. If you don't have access to email you can bring a hard copy to the church office. If you are having trouble writing out your journey to God let us know and we will be happy to help you. Please understand that we will edit your story if appropriate and with your permission.

The second thing we would ask you to do is bring this information with you:

- The name of your baptizer (any believer can baptize you)
- The name of your Reader (see Readers at the Baptism, below)
- The verse that your Reader will be reading.

Can I meet with someone after the class if I have more questions?

Absolutely! Contact Jeff Austen at the office, 519.725.0265 x224.

READERS AT THE BAPTISM

At every baptism we ask the candidates to have a person read a verse or verses to them from the Bible. The verses are promises that God gives to all who are His followers. You are asked to identify a person to read a promise to you. The verses below are suggestions that you may chose from. It is also your prerogative to identify a verse or two that you would prefer to have read other than those on the list.

While friends and family may wish to share some extra thoughts before you're baptised we ask that they save them for a private conversation as we are limited in the time available in each service and want to ensure everyone has time to share a verse and their testimony.

We would ask your reader to come to the microphone located in the aisle when you are about to be baptized. The lead pastor will ask your reader to read when the time is appropriate. The reader should then say something like, "____(name)____ I have a special promise for you from the Bible. It is found in ____ (verse) ____." The reader would then read the passage and then return to his or her seat. An order of baptism will be distributed to the readers prior to the baptism so that they will know when the candidates are being baptized.

SAMPLE VERSES FOR READERS AT BAPTISM SERVICES

Ephesians 1:17

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.

Romans 8:28 & 38-39

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose ... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.

I Thessalonians 5:23-24

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it.

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

II Thessalonians 1:11-12

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 46:1-2 & 7

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ... The Lord almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Jude 24

To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“LIFE STORY” GUIDE

Here is a suggested outline for detailing your spiritual life story. Be sure to include each of the 3 phases.

Due to time restrictions in our services and to ensure each person gets to share, each baptism candidate is limited to 300 words or less (2 minutes) for their Life Story. Copy and paste this link (Explorer will not work - use Firefox or Chrome) - <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PXPSV7V> - and write out your testimony. Someone on our staff will review the testimony and get back to you with any questions or if something needs to be clarified. Testimonies submitted with more than 300 words will be edited by a member of our staff and returned to you for your approval.

The “3 Phases”

1. Phase One – My Life Before I Became a Christian.

Take a few lines to write about your life before you became a Christian. If you became a Christian at an early age, briefly describe your home/church environment as a young child.

Example (These examples are short. Please feel free to expand on each of these phases!)

I grew up going to church, but I didn't understand until my teen years what it meant to have a personal relationship with God. I pretty much did my own thing in high school. Sometimes I went to church, but only when my parents forced me. I struggled a lot with my own sense of worth and purpose of life. My main concern as a teen was my own best interest.

2. Phase Two – How I became a Christian.

Please answer the following questions to describe specifically how you came to put your faith in Christ.

When did you first realize that your sin separated you from God and you needed a Saviour?

How did your understanding that Jesus died on the cross for you impact your decision?

What did you do to indicate your decision to follow Jesus? For example, did you pray a prayer asking God to come into your life?

Who in your life influenced your decision to follow Jesus?

What Scripture verses helped to guide your understanding of your need for a Saviour? (Examples - John 1:12, Acts 4:12, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9-10)

Example

When I was nineteen I attended a church service where the pastor talked about the importance of receiving God's forgiveness for all our sin. He said we were helpless to come to God on our own, but Jesus had made it possible for us to be forgiven because he died in our place. I realized that I had been living for myself to that point, so I confessed to God the sin in my life and asked him for his forgiveness. I also asked God to lead my life.

3. Phase Three – My life since becoming a Christian

Describe what God has been doing in your life since becoming a follower of Jesus. How has God helped you grow?

Try to tie this in with any struggles you mentioned in phase one of the testimony. If you've been a Christian for a long time, what has God been doing in your life recently?

Example

Since becoming a Christian God has really helped me understand that I am his child, and that he loves me regardless of my imperfections, and that he gives me purpose in life. Recently I've been challenged to serve other people at church through working in the nursery. God has been teaching me what a blessing it is to love other people in practical ways. I thank God for continually teaching me and making me more like his Son, Jesus.

SOME HELPFUL HINTS:

Here are some words that could make this part of your story even clearer for people to understand how to follow Jesus:

“I made a decision to follow Jesus as my life leader and sin forgiver”.

“I finally understood that Jesus died on the cross for me.”.

“I prayed and asked Jesus to lead my life and to forgive me for my sins”.

These phrases can be especially powerful when we tie them to the Scriptures”.

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”. Romans 10: 9

“But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God”. John 1: 12

SOME MORE HELPFUL HINTS:

1. Emphasize the positive.
2. If you came to Christ as a young child be sure to spend more time on points two and three.
3. Stay on track. Don't go all over the place. You are sharing your relationship with Jesus Christ not deep theology or future things.
4. One page is often enough.
5. Keep Christ as the central focus.
6. Don't exaggerate your experience beyond what it is. Be honest.
7. Don't run down another person or organization. Avoid even using the name of a church or religion.
8. Share, don't preach.
9. Don't tell all the gory details of your past. This is designed to be uplifting.
10. Use humour constructively, sparingly and never in relationship to the gospel or as a means of sarcasm.