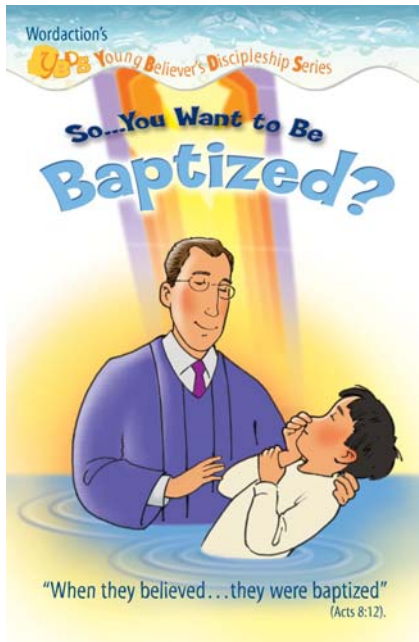


So...You Want to Be Baptized? Leader's Guide

YBDS Young Believer's Discipleship Series



So...You Want to Be Baptized? Leaders' Guide

Scripture: "When they believed...they were baptized" (Acts 8:12).

Purpose: The purpose of this *Leader's Guide* is to provide you with the basic resources to conduct a class in preparation for baptism.

Resource List

So...You Want to Be Baptized?
Student Booklet

So...You Want to Be Baptized?
Leader's Guide

The Bible

Church of the Nazarene
Manual. Be sure it is current.

Staples, Rob. *Outward Sign*
and Inward Grace. Beacon Hill
Press: Kansas City, 1991.

What Is a Sacrament?

Sacraments are very important to the life of the Church. They are a means of grace. John Wesley said, "By 'means of grace' I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace" (*The Means of Grace*. http://wesley.nnu.edu/john_wesley/sermons/016.htm).

This means a sacrament is an outward action that represents God's giving His grace on the inside. They are God's channels for supplying His grace to human beings.

The historical Church has recognized many different means of grace through the centuries. Of the means of grace,

How to use this guide:

Prepare by reading the suggested materials and the introductory information. This will help prepare you for questions that may arise during the class session.

Create an open environment. Allow the children to ask any questions they may have.

If the pastor is not teaching the class, invite him or her to participate. Have the pastor explain his or her role during the baptism and some of the logistics of the baptism.

Make sure you understand the position of the Church of the Nazarene concerning baptism. The Church of the Nazarene allows for different forms of baptism (immersion, sprinkling, and pouring). They also allow for infant baptism.

Have fun. You are part of an important spiritual event in the lives of the children in your class.

the church defines some as sacraments. The Catholic Church recognizes seven sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Confession, Last Rites, Ordination, and Marriage). The Protestant Church typically recognizes two sacraments (Baptism and Communion). Some churches do not acknowledge any official means of grace, and some churches and theologians say the number is infinite.

Though the sacraments acknowledged and the number of sacraments differ, most Christian denominations recognize that God works through ordinary, physical means to give His grace to His followers. Though not considered sacraments, Christians recognize the grace-giving quality of prayer, Scripture reading, fasting, service, worship, and other disciplines of the Christian life in addition to those listed previously. The Protestant Church may not recognize marriage, ordination, and others as sacraments, but they certainly recognize the grace-filled nature of these actions.

The question for many, focuses on the role of the sacraments in the Christian's life. With an emphasis on the freedom of the Holy Spirit and an inward transformation, many consider the sacraments of little or no value. Protestantism shifted the focus of the worship service from the sacramental to the preaching of the Word. This shift caused the sacraments to become of peripheral importance. This is unfortunate because an added emphasis on preaching does not mean the sacraments have any less value to the Christian life. (For a more in depth discussion of this dilemma and the theological concerns involved read Dr. Rob L. Staples book *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*. Available at www.NPH.com.)

Proclaiming the Word of God can and should take two distinct forms of proclamation. First, proclamation should be verbal. "Verbal" means to use words. It is the responsibility

Ideas for Baptism:

- Send invitations to friends and family inviting them to the baptismal service.
- Distribute the names of those being baptized to your prayer teams or congregation in preparation for the baptismal service.
- The early church gave eggs to those baptized to symbolize new birth. Fill a hollow, plastic egg with symbols of Christ's life (a nail, purple cloth, a thorn, etc.) to remind those being baptized of Christ's sacrifice for them.

of the Church to verbally proclaim the Word of God and His desire for our salvation and growth. We do this by preaching, teaching, and sharing our faith. Second, proclamation should be an action. Christians must use actions to proclaim the Word of God and His desire for people's salvation and growth. The sacraments are one means to fulfill the active proclamation of the gospel. They are visible and physical. They help us see that, "God may accomplish spiritual ends through material means" (Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*, p. 62).

The sacraments, in this regard, are mysterious. In some mysterious way God uses physical things to bring about spiritual changes and give His grace. These physical means are not the only ways God gives His grace, nor is God limited to only these means. However, God has chosen to give grace through our participation in them.

The sacraments are mysterious because no one knows how God gives grace through these physical means, or why He chose to use these particular means to give His grace. Why would God choose water as a grace-giving symbol of our participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Why would God choose unleavened bread and a sip from a cup to symbolize the new covenant and give His sustaining grace to His followers? No one knows how or why, but, through the centuries, they have confirmed its reality.

God gives His grace through ordinary, physical means. As you teach the children about baptism, help them understand that it is more than just showing others what God has done. Baptism is a sacrament where God gives grace in the midst of the action. Baptism is God's means to give us grace to follow Him.

Baptism in the Bible

Here are some Scripture passages to help you as you study the sacrament of Baptism:

Matthew 3:5-8, 11, 13-17

Matthew 28:19

Mark 1:4-11

Mark 16:16

John 3:5, 22

John 4:1-2

Luke 3:7-18, 21-22

John 1:26-27, 29-34

Acts 2:38, 41

Acts 8:12-13

Acts 8:36-38

Acts 9:17-19

Acts 10:46b-48

Acts 16:14-15

Acts 16:33

Acts 18:8

Acts 19:4-5

Romans 6:1-4

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Galatians 3:26-29

Ephesians 4:1-6

Colossians 2:9-12

1 Peter 3:13-22

What Is Baptism?

Baptism is a sacrament of initiation. It serves as an entry point into the Christian faith. Dr. Staples says it serves five distinct purposes:

1. “It is the mark of our inclusion in the new covenant that Christ established.
2. “It is the symbol of our identification with the death of Christ.
3. “It is the symbol of our participation in the resurrected life of Christ.
4. “It is the symbol of our reception of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Christ.
5. “It is the action through which we are made part of Christ’s Body, the Church”

(Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*, p. 122).

The Church of the Nazarene takes a non-confrontational approach to baptism. Many would argue over the form baptism should take and the time it should be administered. Recognizing these differences, the Church of the Nazarene focuses on the essentials. This decision to focus on the essentials led early leaders to recognize the importance of baptism, but to leave the form and time to personal decision.

Those being baptized may choose whether to be sprinkled, poured, or immersed. Parents, too, may choose to have their infants baptized rather than dedicated. When infants are baptized, the church should be careful later on to follow-up with a confirmation of the child’s baptism. Because immersion is most common, it will be assumed in this leader’s guide. If you will be using a different form you will

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need to adjust the language and instruction as appropriate.

The Lesson

Introduction

Say, **You have made a great decision to be baptized. Baptism is very important for those who decide to follow Jesus. It is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Today we are going to look at some of the basics of baptism—what it means, and what to expect when you are baptized.**

Locate the Baptism Registration Form at the end of this Leader's Guide. Then reproduce the needed quantity. Distribute a form to each child. Have the child fill it out. Then collect it for the child's record.

The Basics

Pages 2-3 in *So... You Want to Be Baptized?*

If you have not done so before the class, distribute copies of *So... You Want to Be Baptized?* to each student.

Children may be apprehensive about baptism. Often, their fears center on the water and the basics of what they will need to do or say. For this part of the lesson help the children understand the practical elements of what will happen when they are baptized.

Say, **To begin with, we are going to discuss some things you will need to know about Baptism. We will talk about what to wear, what will happen, and what you should be prepared to say during your baptism.**

Place the following in your own words:

1. Wear dark clothes (shirt and pants) or a robe.

It is very important for those being baptized to wear dark clothing when being baptized. You should not be able to see through the clothing when it is wet.

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2. Bring a change of clothes for after the baptism.
Because the clothes you wear will be wet, you will need a change of clothes to wear home.
3. Don't forget your towel and comb.
You will need a towel to dry off with and a comb or brush for your hair. Don't forget to bring any other toiletries you feel you need.
4. Hold your nose.
Pinch your nose with your right hand, and hold the right wrist with your left hand. The pastor will place one hand in the middle of your back and the other hand over your hand.
5. Relax when you are placed under the water.
Leaning back can be frightening. You must relax and trust the pastor to place you under the water and bring you back up. You may bend your knees as you tip back, and then straighten your knees to help you stand.
6. Focus your thoughts on why you are being baptized.
It is easy to focus on the water, the people who are attending, or what you are going to say, but remember, you are being baptized. God is present with you as you are baptized. This is a special time between you and God.
7. Be ready to tell people why you want to be baptized.
Baptism is a special time between you and God. We don't get baptized because our friends are doing it, or because we feel expected to be baptized. We are baptized because we have a relationship with God, and we want others to know about our faith in Jesus Christ. As part of the baptism service, you will be asked to tell others why you want to be baptized. We will have a section later in this session that will help you with this.

Give them any additional information they may need to know: time, place (if other than your church), and additional expectations. Then say, **These are some of the basic things you need to know about baptism. But baptism is about more than just these basic things. Let's look at a few stories about baptism from the Bible and discuss what baptism means.**

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Stories About Baptism

Page 4 in *So... You Want to Be Baptized?*

Have someone volunteer to read Mark 1:4-5. Then ask, **According to verse 4, what kind of baptism did John preach?** Give your students a few moments to answer. Then have the children write their answers in the blank in their workbooks.

Answer: repentance. John called people to repent for their sins. Repentance means we change our minds. We stop going in the wrong direction, and start following God's way. Through repentance, We are forgiven for our sins.

Ask, **Before they were baptized, what did the people do?** Give your students a few moments to answer. Then have them write their answers in the blank in their workbooks.

Answer: confess their sins. Before we ask for forgiveness for our sins, we must realize we have done something wrong. Confessing our sins means we have admitted to God that what we have done was wrong. We realized we need God's forgiveness.

Have a volunteer read Acts 16:30-33. Then ask, **According to Paul, what did the jailer do to be saved?** Give your students a few moments to answer. Then have them write their answer in the blank in their workbooks.

Answer: he believed in the Lord Jesus. To believe in something means more than just thinking it is true. It is more than just a mental activity. Believing requires us to act on our belief. If someone says, "I believe that chair will hold me," but they never sit on the chair then they don't really believe it. Belief requires that a person sits in the chair. The jailer believed in Jesus Christ which means he trusted God to save him, and not his good deeds or obedience to the Law of Moses.

Give your students time to complete the review section on page 4 of *So... You Want to Be Baptized?* Review their answers with them to make sure they understand.

Say, **Baptism tells others you have placed your faith in**

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Jesus Christ to save you, and you have decided to follow Him. This is a very important part of Baptism. If you feel it necessary, use this time to present the gospel. You may want to show the evangelism video, "Did You Know?" To order this video on DVD, E-mail Children's Ministries at childmin@nazarene.org, or call toll free 1-866-644-4510.

God at Work

Page 5 in So...You Want to Be Baptized?

This section focuses on the meaning of baptism, and emphasizes God's role in baptism. Baptism is more than a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ. Baptism is both a recognition of a personal decision to follow Christ and God's gift of grace in the sacrament.

Say, **When you are baptized, God is doing something very special. He is right there with you.**

Have a volunteer read the first section on page 5 of the *So...You Want to Be Baptized?* student booklet. Then say, **Baptism is a symbol. A symbol means a sign or action that helps you understand or know about something. When you are baptized, you tell others God is doing something very special inside you. God is changing you on the inside.**

Have a volunteer read the second section on page 5 of the *So...You Want to Be Baptized?* student booklet. Have another volunteer read Psalm 51:1-2. Then say, **We take a shower or a bath to wash the dirt off our bodies. Baptism reminds us Jesus washes our sins away. He forgives our sins, and gives us a relationship with God. The Holy Spirit, too, dwells inside us; helping us obey God.**

Have a volunteer read the third section on page 5 of the *So...You Want to Be Baptized?* student booklet. Then ask, **What does it mean to "die to sin"?** Allow the children time to respond. Then say, **When someone "dies to sin" they are no longer controlled by sin. The Apostle Paul said, baptism symbolizes our dying with Jesus, but also we are "alive in Christ." This means sin doesn't control us, and the Holy Spirit is working in our lives to help us obey God.**

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Baptism Shows...

Page 6 in *So...You Want to Be Baptized?*

Say, **Baptism shows other people three important things. Let's take a look at them.**

Have a volunteer read the first section on page 6 of the *So...You Want to Be Baptized?* student booklet. Have another volunteer read John 1:12.

Then say, **First, baptism let's us know we are part of the family of God. Baptism shows God has adopted us. This means God has made us part of His family—the Church. Being part of the church is just like being part of a family. Each person has value, and each member has a responsibility to serve the others.**

Have a volunteer read the second section on page 6 of the *So...You Want to Be Baptized?* student booklet. Have another volunteer read 2 Corinthians 5:15, 17.

Then say, **Second, when we belong to God, we have a new life as well as a new family. God transforms us on the inside. He gives us a new purpose in life. Instead of living life for ourselves, we live to please God.**

Say, **Pleasing God is not something we can do on our own, though. We need the Holy Spirit to help us obey God and fulfill His purpose in the world.**

Have a volunteer read the third section on page 6 of the *So...You Want to Be Baptized?* student booklet. Have another volunteer read John 16:13a.

Then say, **Third, God gives us the Holy Spirit to help us. He assures us that God has accepted us through Jesus Christ. He helps us obey God. The Holy Spirit will speak to our hearts and teach us from the Bible. He will lead us in the way we should go.**

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My Story

Pages 7 and 8 in So...You Want to Be Baptized?

This section will help your students reflect on the decision to be baptized and clarify what they will say during the baptismal.

Say, During the baptismal service, you will be asked to explain why you want to be baptized. The “My Story” section of your workbook is designed to help you think through what you want to say. Part of what you write will your testimony. That means telling other about what God is doing in your life.

Give your students time to work on pages 7 and 8.

When they are finished, ask for volunteers to read their responses to the various questions. Say, **I am glad you have decided to be baptized. You will never forget this moment. The bottom of the back page of your workbook is for the pastor to fill out for you. This will help you remember the details of your baptism.**

Close with prayer. Express thankfulness for the work God is doing in the children’s lives and will continue to do. Invite His presence to be near them as they prepare for their baptism, and for the Holy Spirit’s assurance of God’s love for them. You may also wish to pray for each child individually.

Baptism Registration Form

Today's date: _____ Date to be baptized: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone (Home): _____ (Cell): _____

E-mail Address: _____

Age (if 16 years old or under): _____

Were you baptized as an infant? _____

How do you want to be baptized (immersion, sprinkling, or pouring)? _____

Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior? _____

Tell us how you came to believe in Jesus?

Why do you want to be baptized?

Are you in a small group or Sunday School class? _____

If "Yes," who is your leader or teacher? _____