

Dive In

What does baptism do?

ANNOUNCEMENT: Remind them of **1 Night 2 Unite** on Sunday, August 19th and of the Baptism on Friday, August 24th. Come as a Small Group to both of those events. Make each of those events an opportunity to connect as a small group outside of your normal meeting night.

ICEBREAKER: Take some time to allow those who want share their baptism story. Only have half of the group share as next week the other half can share. Let those who feel led to do the sharing.

DISCUSSION: If anyone in your group hasn't been baptized, create a safe place where they can talk about why they have not yet chosen to be baptized. Ask them questions like, "What has kept you from being baptized?" Maybe they were christened (sprinkled) as a child. If so, ask them what that experience has meant to them. Don't try to convince them of being baptized through full emersion right now. That time will come. If their answer is as simple as they are just waiting for our next church baptism, make sure that they sign up at the Info Shack to be baptized on the 24th.

1. Baptism separates:

"(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)" Luke 7:29-30 NIV

"They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan — the one you testified about — well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." John 3:26 NIV

"Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.)" 1Corinthians 1:13-16 NIV

a. Control-freaks from Servants

*“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” Matthew 3:7-10
ESV*

DISCUSSION: In what areas of your life are you still trying to have major control instead of simply looking to be a servant? What is your fear when you hold onto control in a certain area instead of releasing it and trusting God?

b. Need-seekers from God-seekers

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” Matthew 3:11 NIV

DISCUSSION: In what areas of your life are you still looking for your own needs to be fulfilled through your relationship with Christ? Explain. In what areas are you simply looking to be with Jesus? Where in your life is Jesus enough? Explain.

c. Dilettantes from the Devoted

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” Acts 2:41 NIV

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Acts 8:12 NIV

Dilettante means: dabbler, amateur, and pretender.

DISCUSSION: Which of the three words in the meaning of dilettante do you most identify with? Why? What will it take to get you to be more devoted?

d. Professions from Denials

“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38 NIV

Baptism is the public profession of faith in the New Testament

DISCUSSION: If baptism is our public profession of faith that separates us from those who have chosen to not follow Christ, how is your life a testimony to that separation? In what areas do you still need to have separation?

2. Baptism unites:

a. We become equal

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:27-28 ESV

b. We become one

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” Ephesians 4:4-6 ESV

Baptism separates the true Body of Christ from the rest of the world and unites Jesus’ followers by making them both equal and one.

PRAYER PROJECT: Take 5-7 minutes and sit alone with God. Ask Him to show you where in your life you need to be united with others in the body of Christ. Ask Him to show you the area(s) of your life where there still isn’t an equality and/or oneness. Next, take another 5-7 minutes and ask Him to show you what He would like you to do about it. Discuss that with your group.