

FAMILY BAPTISM GUIDE

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NORTHSIDE FAMILY BAPTISM GUIDE

There is no greater privilege as a parent than to help your children come to know and love Jesus. Northside wants to help. This guide uses three tools: Talk Together, Transition, and Next Steps to equip and guide you through talking with your child about the gospel, salvation, and baptism. This guide is designed to help you discern where your child is in their walk with Jesus and when it is right for them to move forward with baptism.

TALK TOGETHER

The heart of this guide is to provide you with some clear steps for talking with your child. The questions and points in the “Talk Together” section can facilitate your conversation. They are not exhaustive, nor are they a script. But, we do hope they will help you gauge understanding and remember some critical points.

TRANSITION

After talking with your child about the gospel, salvation, and baptism, transition these topics into questions to understand where your child is in their understanding of these truths. Learn what your child might need to hear more about or might have fully grasped. We hope this will help you determine Next Steps for you and your child.

NEXT STEPS

Conversations like these must result in action, so we have included a number of questions and suggestions to help you process your conversation and figure out what might be next for your child. When your conversation is over, use the questions to record your thoughts and write out next steps for you and your child.

BAPTISM PROCESS

1. TELL US YOU'RE INTERESTED

Any Northside elder or KidSide leader would be thrilled to hear of your commitment to Jesus and desire to follow him in baptism. Just let one of them know, and they will help you take the next step. For more information about baptism at Northside, go to gonorthside.com/baptism.

2. CONTINUE DISCIPLESHIP

Parents are encouraged to work through the material in this guide with their child. We hope this guide will help parents have the kinds of conversations necessary to discern a child's readiness to continue to move toward baptism or wait.

3. MEET WITH A LEADER

After both the child and their parents indicate the child's readiness, the child should meet with an elder to confirm their profession of faith and an age-appropriate understanding of the Gospel and baptism. This conversation is informal and in an open, comfortable setting.

4. BAPTISM SERVICE

When all people involved agree the child is ready to move forward, the baptism will be scheduled. We encourage the child and family to invite family and friends to witness this important moment in support of their decision, and as an opportunity to share what Christ has done in their life.

TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR CHILD

No one knows your child better than you, right? We get it. But, we also know these conversations can be challenging, even intimidating. So here are a few reminders we hope will help you communicate more clearly with your child.

1. REPETITION IS YOUR FRIEND

Children learn by repetition. Do not be afraid to say the same thing more than once, come back to the same question repeatedly, and circle back to the same concepts in different ways.

2. ASK FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

When a child asks a question, get clarification before deciding how to answer a question. For example, you might say, "tell me about what you are thinking" or "what made you ask that question?" Avoid asking questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no."

3. SPEAK IN CLEAR, SIMPLE TERMS

Children are concrete thinkers, so avoid analogies that may distract your child or derail the discussion. For example, rather than saying "you need a relationship with Jesus," a phrase loaded with significance for Christians - maybe say, "God wants you to know and love Him." When a child asks a question, only answer what the child is asking. If a child asks for more information, be specific.

CONVERSATION #1: THE GOSPEL

TALK TOGETHER

- Tell a story about a time you experienced pain, sickness, or loss; a time you did something wrong; or a time you know your child did something wrong.
- Brainstorm the effects of this sin and brokenness around you. Use this conversation to talk about sin, both generally and personally.

TRANSITION

- Did God intend for the world to be broken in these ways? No. In fact, when God created the world, he called all he made "very good" (Genesis 1:31). God made all of creation to show us how great He is (Romans 1:20). Talk about how the world -- and our own hearts -- became broken.
- Ask follow up questions like:
 - What does the word "gospel" mean to you?
 - What is your understanding of sin and its consequences?
 - Why did Jesus have to die and what does His resurrection prove to us?
 - What must we do to be saved?
- Use the Three Circles or other resources to talk your child through the key concepts of the Gospel. Be sure to let your child's understanding set your pace. Listen and be patient, these are simple yet profound concepts.

NEXT STEPS

- Use the questions below to record your thoughts and determine next steps.
- What evidence did you see that your child understands:
 - The significance of sin and the holiness of God?
 - The significance of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?
 - The brokenness of their sin and has a desire to follow Jesus?
- What one next step does your child need to take to move forward?
- What one next step do you need to take to help your child?

CONVERSATION #2: SALVATION

Understanding the Gospel is one thing but surrendering your life to Jesus is a step further. In this conversation, we want to turn from helping your child understand the key concepts of the Gospel to discerning their response to Jesus.

TALK TOGETHER

- Tell your child about a habit you once had to break. What was bad about that habit? How hard was it to stop? What did you have to do to stop?
- Ask your child if they have any bad habits. Have they ever tried to break a bad habit? Do they ever slip back into their bad habits?

TRANSITION

- Even a small bad habit over and over again can be very harmful. Make two columns on a piece of paper and brainstorm some similarities and differences between bad habits and sin. (Similarities: Both are hard to stop, part of our nature, and can hurt other people and ourselves. Differences: Sin is more serious because it has eternal consequences.)
- Ask follow up questions like:
 - What does it mean that God is holy?
 - What is sin? What are some sins you've done?
 - Would you say that you are sinful? What does it mean to repent?
 - How can you have a relationship with Jesus and how can you follow Him?
- Emphasize that there are two responses to the gospel - repentance and trust.
- Repentance - Illustrate this by walking one way and then turning around and walking the other way. You can't follow sin and God at the same time. When Jesus died on the cross, he took all your sin and died so you wouldn't have to. There's nothing you can do to earn God's forgiveness, Jesus alone can save you. Don't assume your child's readiness to repent and follow Jesus can be known in one conversation. Over time, observe God working in your child's heart.
- Trust - Along with repenting, you choose to trust that when Jesus died on the cross, he took all your sin and died so you wouldn't have to.

NEXT STEPS

- Use the questions below to record your thoughts and determine next steps.
- What evidence did you see that your child understands:
 - their own sinfulness and separation from God?
 - repentance and what it means to follow Jesus?
- What one next step does your child need to take to move forward?
- What one next step do you need to take to help your child?

CONVERSATION #3: BAPTISM

Baptism is the outward act that symbolizes the inward change of a person who understands the gospel, confesses their sin, puts their trust in Jesus, and follows after him. In this conversation, we want to move from discerning your child's response to Jesus to sharing the meaning behind Baptism.

TALK TOGETHER

Think of a symbol to talk about with your child. A wedding ring is a great example. Married couples wear wedding rings as a symbol of the commitment they made to each other. Putting a wedding band on does not make us married, and taking it off does not mean we are no longer married. It is a symbol of our commitment, but it is not our commitment itself.

TRANSITION

- Baptism is similar to a wedding band in that it is a symbol of an important commitment we are making.
- Ask follow up questions like:
 - What is baptism and what does it mean?
 - Who do you think should be baptized?
 - Why do you want to be baptized?
 - What does being baptized do?
- Baptism shows how those who have trusted in Jesus have joined him in dying to their sins and have been raised again in the newness of Christ (Romans 6:3).
- Baptism is a public display of the internal change that has already taken place in someone's life.
- But, baptism is not the commitment itself. Clarify that baptism does not save a person, and baptism is not a necessary part of salvation. Rather, it is a step of obedience and joy for those who are already saved.

NEXT STEPS

- Use the questions below to record your thoughts and determine next steps.
 - What evidence did you see that your child understands:
 - What baptism signifies and why it is important?
 - Why a person would choose to be baptized even though they are already saved?
 - What one next step does your child need to take to move forward?
 - What one next step do you need to take to help your child?
- For more about what Northside Church believes about baptism, visit gonorthside.com/webelieve



NORTHSIDE CHURCH

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