

# If You Don't Want to Wait

Depending on when you are reading this, the next Kensington baptism event may be a few days or few months away. Either way, we'd love to see you there and baptize you then. But if you don't want to wait, we created this document so you can plan a perfect baptism event for either yourself or a loved one.

## Biblical Basis

In the Bible people were often baptized the very same day they placed their faith in Jesus Christ. For example, here is what it says in Acts 8:35-38: So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

## Things You'll Need for Your Baptism

- A body of water that is large enough for you to be fully immersed, so your whole body can go completely under the water. It could be a backyard pool, a jacuzzi tub, a local lake, etc.
- A friend or family member or small group leader to baptize you. They don't need to be ordained clergy or seminary trained, just someone who is an active follower of Jesus. Friends and family and your small group to witness it.

## How to Perform the Ceremony

There is no blueprint in the Bible for how someone got baptized. But here are some ideas you may want to include.

Step 1. Invite people to the location you choose and throw a party! Grill burgers. Play music. Have fun.

Step 2. When you're ready, gather everyone around the body of water where you'll be baptized.

Step 3. Take a few minutes and share your story, why you have decided to get baptized at this point on your spiritual journey.

Step 4. Invite friends and family to share some of their thoughts about your life and spiritual growth. You may want one or more of them to have written a letter beforehand and read it out loud.

Step 5. Gather in a circle and pray together.

Step 6. Go into the water with the person(s) who is baptizing you.

Step 7. Get baptized.

Step 8. Celebrate!

## The Letter

This is often the highlight of the entire ceremony (see Step 4 above). Invite the person who will be baptizing you or another friend or family member or small group leader to write a letter to you. This letter should bring glory to God and honor the teachings found in the Bible. To help them write this letter, here are some thought starters. They do not need to include every one of these points in their letter. By the way, don't feel weird in asking someone to do this. They will be honored to!

- What have been some spiritual milestones you have seen of the person getting baptized?
  - How have you seen them grow spiritually and as a person?
  - What spiritual gifts or talents have you seen in this person?
  - Which of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) do they exhibit in their life?
  - What obstacles, trials, hardships, struggles, or addictions have they overcome in life?
  - How would you like to encourage them?
  - What role did their small group play on their spiritual journey?
  - What role did you play in helping them begin to investigate Jesus or cross the line of faith or choose to get baptized?
  - As a more mature follower of Jesus, what pitfalls do you want them to avoid on their spiritual journey?
  - What does this baptism day mean to you personally?
- Is there a special Bible verse (known as a "life verse") that you have chosen for them, that you want to be representative of the type of person you want them to become?

*Note: the length of your letter can range from one paragraph to a page or more.*

## How to Baptize Someone

The Bible simply says people were baptized but does not give detailed step-by-step instructions how it occurred. Here is the way we do it at Kensington and the way you may want to do it as well.

Step 1. When you're in the water with the person getting baptized, ask them a couple of questions:

The first question establishes that they have placed their faith in Jesus. Here are some examples:

- "Do you love Jesus?"
  - "Is Jesus the Lord of your life?"
  - "Have you made a decision to repent of your sins and follow Jesus?"
  - "Do you believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins?"
  - "Have you received Jesus Christ into your life as your personal Lord and Savior?"
- The second question is about their desire to follow Jesus for the rest of their life. Here are some examples:
- "Are you willing to serve God wherever he asks you to?"
  - "Do you want to be used by God to make his kingdom come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven?"
  - "Is it your desire to follow Jesus all the days of your life?"

*Note: just ask one question from each set, not all of them!*

Step 2. Have them place their arms in front of them, bending their elbows so their hands are by their chest. Ask them to make a fist with one hand and hold the fist with the other hand. As you're standing right next to them, take one of your hands and place it around their hands and then place your other hand on their back.

Step 3. When you're in position, and when they are ready, say something like this, "Based on your profession of faith in Jesus, I now baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Step 4. Then have them lean back into the water until they go totally under. Push them down if they need help fully immerse them. Then help them back up out of the water. (Make sure they bend their knees as they lean back into the water and make sure you lift them up using your legs instead of your back).

Step 5. Hug. Cry. Celebrate.

## Your Story

Before you start inviting people to your baptism event, take time to think through and maybe even write out your story, why you have decided to get baptized at this point on your spiritual journey. We ask you to do this for a couple reasons. First, by thinking back to the time before you began following Jesus, we hope you will be able to feel anew, just what a difference Jesus has made in your life. This is another way for you to cement, in your mind and heart, the significance of YOUR baptism event. Second, as you invite people to see you get baptized, they are bound to ask, "So, why are you getting baptized?" This is one of the most important questions you can ever answer because it puts you center stage as a witness for Christ. What would you want to share with someone who asked you why you're getting baptized? Here are some idea starters to get you going:

- Before I became a Christian, I was. . .
- I became a Christian when . . .
- Now that I'm a Christian . . .
- I want to get baptized because . . .

## Things to Think About

- Be strategic in who you invite to your baptism. We hope you'll invite friends, family, neighbors, co-workers and even that one person in your life that never took you up on the offer to go to church together. These folks will probably say "Yes" to your invitation because they want to support you. Give them a few weeks notice so they can get it on their calendar.
- Wear dark-colored, modest clothing over your bathing suit when you are getting baptized.
- Bring a change of clothes, a towel, a hair dryer, etc.
- Don't forget your camera and video camera.

## We'd Love to Hear About It

If you get baptized, we'd love to hear about it. Please e-mail us and tell us all the details at [groups@kensingtonchurch.org](mailto:groups@kensingtonchurch.org)