

Aurora First Assembly Baptismal Orientation Meetings Agenda

1. **WELCOME:** Welcome everyone and commend them on their choice to obey the Lord in baptism. Introduce yourself and the area of ministry you are involved in at Aurora First Assembly.
2. **TESTIMONY:** Go around table give testimony and reasons why they want baptized.
3. **TEACHING:** Go over the staff teaching notes entitled “why baptism”.
4. **LOGISTICS:** Go over logistics and what to wear and bring
 - What do I bring? Bring towel, dark colored clothing, hair dryer and any needed cosmetics.
 - When do I show up? Come at 5:00 and meet Sharon Webb or Myra Beals in church sanctuary. They will take you back to the baptismal area
 - How will the baptismal service start? The service will start with a few songs and then the Pastor baptizing you will enter the tank greet the church, give a brief explanation and introduce each person.
 - How will the baptismal service end? After you are baptized a person will help you exit the tank (so you do not slip. You can then go to the restrooms to change and rejoin the service.
5. **EXPECTATIONS:** Explain what they should expect
 - How you will hold them (your left arm around their back and your right arm pulling their forearm that is plugging their nose)
 - How you want them to stand
 - How they should plug their nose with their right hand and tighten the muscles in that arm allowing you to pull in it (to keep anyone from hurting their back)
 - How they should bend their knees towards the bottom corner of the tank.
 - How they will be lowered into the water and brought back out.
6. **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:** Ask if there are any questions.
7. **PRAYER:** Close the meeting in prayer.

Baptism says ...

1. "I have been united with Jesus".
2. "My sins have been washed away".
3. "I have decided to become a Christ-follower".
4. "I want others to know Christ's forgiveness".

Why Baptism?

Pastor Gene Roncone

Why did Jesus command his followers to be baptized and is it really important?

Baptism is to the believer what a wedding ring is to a married couple. It's an outward symbol of an inward commitment.

ILLUSTRATION WEDDING RING: To the best of our knowledge the Egyptians were the first to use the wedding ring.

- Because a circle doesn't have a beginning or an end, it was a popular symbol for eternity.
- The hole in the middle symbolized a doorway or passage to happiness. Over time the ring began to be associated with the never-ending love and commitment between two married people.
- It was worn on the forth finger of the left hand because it was believed that the vein in that finger was directly connected to a person's heart.

Over time the rings were made out of metal and began to be considered a legally binding commitment between a husband and a wife.

Today when a person wears a wedding ring they are doing two things. They are making a personal commitment to the one they love and making a public commitment that they belong to someone. That's what baptism is. It's a symbol of your personal commitment to follow Christ and a public commitment to others that you are not ashamed to be identified with Him. It's your way of saying that your love for Christ is not a fleeting emotion but come straight from the center of your heart.

4

minutes

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That's why Baptism was and is important to God and why Jesus instructed Christ followers to be baptized in Matthew 28:19-20 when he says,

"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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"

The practice and meaning of baptism is slowly losing its significance in our modern culture. On Wednesday, November 21 we are having a baptismal service in our family Thanksgiving service. Many of you have made decisions to follow Christ and are in the process of deciding when and if you should be baptized. That's why I want to teach on this important subject today.

So, what are you saying by wearing the ring of baptism? You are saying ...

1. I have been united with Jesus.

When you are baptized as a Christian, people understand that you are identifying yourself with Jesus.

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection." Romans 6:4-5

8

minutes

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Baptism is symbolic of your identification with Christ in His burial and in His resurrection.

- When the person is lowered under the water, it signifies their identification with Christ's dying for their sins.
- Coming up out of the water identifies with His resurrection to newness of life. That's what Paul is talking about when it says in

2. "My sins have been washed away"

The water used in baptism is a symbol of cleansing.

When Paul told others about the day he decided to become a Christian. He said the Lord spoke to him and said,

"Now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name." Acts 22:16

Baptism does not wash our sins away, it is a symbol of our sin's being washed away by God's forgiveness and grace. **That is why every instance in the Bible where a baptism takes place the person was immersed under the water.** The idea of sprinkling for baptism came about

- When groups of people needed to be baptized and it was faster to sprinkle large crowds than baptize each person individually.
- In later generations sprinkling and pouring were done to accommodate the infirm or baptize people inside public spaces.

However, every baptism in the Bible involved the person being immersed in water.

12

minutes

3. “I have decided to become a “Christ-follower”.

It's an expression of your obedience and willingness to follow Christ as the leader and master of your present and future.

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

This point alone helps us address some of the most common questions about baptism.

A. Does Highpoint Church Baptize children or infants?

There are two primary reasons why we do not baptize infants.

- **Lack of Biblical teaching or example:** Nowhere in God's word (Old or New Testaments) do we find one example of children being baptized. We find examples of children being dedicated to the Lord by their parents, but not baptism.
- **Baptism is a reflection of one's conscious decision:** We do not baptize infants because we feel that baptism first requires a person to have made a conscious decision to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Infants are not capable of making that kind of decision. We rely upon the judgment of parents in deciding when a child should be baptized. If the parent feels the child has made a commitment and understands what it means to know Christ, and they understand what baptism is, then we gladly offer baptism to them. We do not have a set age for children to be baptized.

16

minutes

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B. What if I have been baptized before? Many people who may have drifted in their faith and reach a point of recommitment desire to be baptized again as a testimony to their renewed commitment. Although the Bible only requires one baptism, it does not restrict a person from being baptized more than once.

C. Does baptism assure me that I will go to heaven?
No, it does not.

D. Does baptism require church membership or make me a church member? You do not have to become a member of our church in order to be baptized, and you will not become a member once you are baptized. Baptism is a step of obedience to the teachings of Jesus. Membership is a commitment of community you make to others.

Scripture indicates that the only requirement for baptism is that a person becomes a believer, or, that a person has accepted Jesus Christ into their life and has an ongoing spiritual relationship with Him.

4. "I want others to know Christ's forgiveness."

ILLUSTRATION: It's common for people in our culture to make public announcements about important things.

- One of signs of old age, is when you start posing pictures of your food on Facebook. You want everyone else to know what you ate.
- People put political signs in their yard to let others know how they are voting.

20

minutes

- We put bumper stickers on our cars to let everyone know our kids were on the honor role.
 - Young couples make birth announcement and gender reveals.
 - Some post pictures of their new car on Facebook.
- Baptisms is another form of a “good news” announcement we communicate with others. It is a symbolic message of our priorities and life-change.

When someone was baptized in the times of Christ it was at the local river and witnessed by family, friends and members of their local community. As a matter of fact, there is not one private baptism recorded in the New Testament. That does not mean that private baptisms are less legitimate or authentic, but that water baptism for the early church was a public commitment of faith.

“The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.”
Mark 1:5

Today, it’s still common for family and friends to support a person by attending their baptism. Even through they may not have personally made a commitment to follow Christ, they are able to be encouraged by your own decision.

ILLUSTRATION & CONCLUSION

On June 10th, 1987 I married Rhonda. We gave vows to each other and we exchanged rings as a symbol of our love and commitment to each other.

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24

minutes

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Can you imagine if I took that ring off my finger and did not wear it in public? Rhonda would wonder why the symbol she purchased and gave was not important to me. She might wonder ...

- **If I was ashamed of her**
- **If I was unwilling to be publicly associated with her.**
- **If I wanted other women to think I was single**
- **Why I did not think her commitment important**
- **If I had another love of my life.**

Say yes to the ring. Get baptized. Join the wave **(show pic)**

That is why we want to take a survey of the state of baptism at Highpoint Church. I would like each and every one of you to fill out the card on your seat in the next few minutes and place it in one of the baskets on each side of the door on your way out. If you would like to get baptized with others in two weeks please indicate that on the card.

WATER BAPTISM

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST
DURING OUR FAMILY THANKSGIVING SERVICE AT 7PM**

First and Last Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

We will email you more details about what to bring and what time to come.

PLEASE FILL IN THE CIRCLE THAT APPLIES TO YOU

- ☐ I have been baptized. When? _____
- ☐ I have not been baptized but am ready to go public with my faith.
- ☐ I have not been baptized and I am not ready yet.

Why not? _____

- ☐ I would like to be baptized again to return to the Lord after falling away.

www.highpointchurch.us/baptism

28

minutes

Aurora First Assembly

Water Baptism Informational Meeting

What?

Have you wondered what water baptism is all about? From the first pages of the New Testament, we find that baptism is a very important part of the process in growing as a Christian. The Bible teaches that baptism is an outward symbol of a spiritual transformation that has taken place in a person's heart and life.

Who?

The only biblical requirement for baptism is that a person become a believer or that a person has accepted Jesus Christ into their life and has an ongoing spiritual relationship with Him.

Why?

Jesus taught His followers that believers should be baptized: "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.'" (Matthew 28:18-20, NIV)

How?

Baptism is accomplished by immersion in water. It symbolizes a person's identification with Christ in His burial and resurrection. Being lowered under the water symbolizes identifying with Christ's dying for their sins; coming up out of the water identifies with His resurrection to newness of life, just as a believer has a new life in Christ. At Aurora First, baptisms typically take place during an evening service, and if three or four people were being baptized, the whole celebration would take about ten minutes.

When?

If you would like to explore the possibility of being baptized or want to learn more about this important step, you can attend a short informational meeting to be held at the church on the date listed below. To sign up for the meeting, fill out the form below and place it in the offering plate on Sunday morning or turn it into the church office. You may also call the church office at 303-366-2603.

Water Baptism Informational Meeting

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

(wk. phone) _____ (hm. phone) _____

E-mail _____

When and where did you accept Jesus Christ into your life and begin your spiritual relationship with Him?

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Highpoint Church

Teaching Notes - Water Baptism Orientation

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

Congratulations on reaching this point in your Christian walk. Baptism is as old as Christianity itself. From the first pages of the New Testament, we see that baptism is a very important part of the process in growing as a Christian. We believe that as we answer the following questions, your understanding of baptism and of your Christian faith will grow even more.

What is Baptism?

Baptism is an important act of obedience and statement to the world that a person has experienced spiritual rebirth. It is accomplished by immersion in water. Baptism is symbolic of your identification with Christ in His burial and in His resurrection. When the person is lowered under the water, it signifies their identification with Christ's dying for their sins. Coming up out of the water identifies with His resurrection to newness of life. The Bible mentions this in several verses.

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. (Romans 6:4-5)

12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

Why Do We Believe in Immersion?

In every instance in the Bible where a baptism takes place, there was a lot of water, the person was immersed under the water, and they also "came up" out of the water. The idea of sprinkling for baptism came about when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine. Entire communities needed baptism under his edict and it was simpler and faster to sprinkle large crowds at one time.

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." (Acts 2:38)

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. (Acts 8:36-38).

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Who can be baptized? What is the qualification?

Scripture indicates that the only requirement for baptism is that a person becomes a believer, or, that a person has accepted Jesus Christ into their life and has an ongoing spiritual relationship with Him. Baptism is the outward symbol of a spiritual act that has taken place in an individual's life.

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- 2. Baptism is a reflection of one's conscious decision:** We do not baptize infants because we feel that baptism first requires a person to have made a conscious decision to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Infants are not capable of making that kind of decision. We do have dedication ceremonies for infants. We rely upon the judgment of parents in deciding when a child should be baptized. If the parent feels the child has made a commitment and understands what it means to know Christ, and they understand what baptism is, then we gladly offer baptism to them. We do not have a set age for children to be baptized.

What if I was sprinkled as a child, or have been baptized before?

Some people who were baptized as a child realize that their early baptisms may have been decisions that were made for them, or they did not fully understand the implications of what they were doing. Many people reach a point of recommitment in their lives and desire to make the baptism a more meaningful event in their spiritual walk, a point of starting over. Although the Bible only requires one baptism, it does not restrict a person from being baptized more than once. It was common for the Jews in the Bible to be baptized several times as they crossed meaningful moments in their lives. That is why we try to encourage people to clearly understand what baptism is, so it will be a lasting and meaningful event in their life.

Does baptism assure me that I will go to heaven?

No, it does not.

Does baptism require church membership or make me a church member?

You do not have to become a member of our church in order to be baptized, and you will not become a member once you are baptized. Baptism is an act that should follow immediately after a person has made a decision to accept Christ. Membership in our church does require baptism but being baptized does not make one a member. The Pre-membership Information Class is the best way to find out about

church membership. Baptism however, is much like participating in a communion service. It is available to anyone who is a Christian and does not require membership.

Concluding statements

We realize that this has not been a comprehensive study on the topic of baptism, but we hope it has answered some of the basic questions that you might have on the subject. We hope this will only encourage you to study more, and to be excited about the prospect of following our Lord's example in water baptism. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions. Please call the church office at 303-366-2603 to receive dates, be put on the list for water baptism and to receive further instructions.

Highpoint Church
P.O. Box 462620
Aurora, Colorado 80046
303-366-2603