

Baptism

Why Get Baptized?

- Obedience to God – Mat: 28 18-20
- Jesus did it – Mar: 3:13-17
- It is a symbol of:
 - Death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-4, 1Peter 3:21)
 - What God has accomplished in the life of a believer (Romans 6:3-11; Col 2:9-14)
 - Washing and cleansing of sin (Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16)
 - Your public declaration of Faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:12–13; 12:1; Acts 2:38, 41)
- Baptism does NOT cause your salvation

Sharing Your Testimony

In Acts 26 the Apostle Paul gives his testimony. We can read this for an example of what to include.

Who introduced you to Christ? When did you become a Christian?

When did Christianity become real to you?

What does being a Christian mean to you? How has God impacted/protected or used you in the past?

How is God working in your life today? How do you KNOW that Christ is in your life? What comfort do you take from knowing God? Do you have any favorite scriptures? Why is it your favorite?

How do you want God to work in your life in the future?

What is Baptism?

- 1) **Baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord's command and follows His example.**
 - a) **Matthew 28:18–20**
 - b) **The Bible seems to know of no unbaptized Christians. Acts is full of references to baptizing those who had confessed faith in Christ. Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12–13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:37, 47–48; 11:16; 13:24; 16:15, 33; 18:8, 25; 19:3–5; 22:16.**
 - c) **Matthew 3:13–17, "...permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness..." Jesus submitted Himself to baptism.**
- 2) **Baptism is a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Romans 6:3–4; 1 Peter 3:21.**
- 3) **Baptism is a symbol of what God has accomplished in the life of the believer. Romans 6:3–11; Colossians 2:9–14; 1 Peter 3:21.**
- 4) **Baptism is a symbol of washing/cleansing from sin.**
 - a) **Titus 3:5**
 - b) **Acts 22:16, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."**
- 5) **Baptism is a symbol of our entrance into the Body of Christ, the Church. 1 Corinthians 12:12–13**
- 6) **Baptism is a public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.**
 - a) **In baptism we express, with our whole body, our heart's acceptance of Christ's Lordship. Becoming a Christian involves the body as well as the heart. In conversion, the heart is freed from sin to be enslaved to God. Since the Lordship of Christ lays claim to our whole body, it is fitting for us to express our surrender to His Lordship with our whole body "from head to toe."**
 - b) **Romans 6:12–13; 12:1; Acts 2:38, 41.**

Preparing your Testimony

Read [Acts 26](#).

Here the Apostle Paul gives his testimony

Start at a time in life which relates to your experience with Christ. Remember that this is not a biography from childhood.

If you became a Christian as a child, but cannot remember making a specific decision to accept Christ, concentrate on describing your life before it began to change and use that material as the "before" portion.

People do not like to identify themselves as sinners. Therefore, emphasizing your depth of sin as a non-Christian probably will not relate best to your audience. Rather, point to your outward "goodness" (e.g. church attendance, morality, generosity, etc.), as well as to your inward inadequacies. An example would be to say, "Even though my life looked all together, I knew something was lacking."

Don't be discouraged or intimidated by other testimonies you may have heard involving dramatic conversions and radical lifestyle changes. Vonette Bright and Barbara Ball, in their book *The Joy of Hospitality* write:

"A personal testimony is not simply a story of how God rescued someone from a life of horrible sin. It is an account of how God transforms lives—no matter where the person comes from or what circumstances the person has experienced. Many people are encouraged by the testimony of someone who was introduced to the Lord at an early age and who then avoided many pitfalls of growing up. God uses each of us as we are, created in His image and transformed by His power." {2}

How you received Christ

1. When did you first hear the message of Christ and what was your reaction?
2. When did you first begin to feel positive toward the gospel and why?
3. Why did you make the decision to trust Christ and how did you specifically do that?

Some tips . . .

In answering these questions you are seeking to identify specifically the process that brought you to the point of receiving Christ. This is the climax of your testimony.

It is important to emphasize that this is a decision that one makes as an act of his/her will. If you came to Christ as a child, your "decision" may have been more of a process. For you, the "when" is not as important as the assurance that Christ is now in your life.

In this "How" portion, attempt to present the basics of the gospel clearly and concisely. This may be the only opportunity for a person to know how to become a Christian.

After you received Christ

1. How did Christ specifically satisfy the basic need you stated in the before section?
2. What changes have occurred in your life as a result?
3. How do you *know* Christ is in your life?

Some tips . . .

Be practical in describing the changes in your life since you became a Christian. Describe how God is helping you learn how to trust Him more. Give examples of ways you have changed or principles you have discovered in God's Word and how you have applied them in your daily life.

Be sure to mention that you are not perfect now! You still have many problems every day, but Christ enables you to face them realistically and to solve them God's way. You are not perfect, but you are forgiven and progressing.

Practical areas that Christ has changed might include relationships, goals and priorities, good or bad habits, attitudes, the atmosphere in your home, etc.

Before: This section covers what your life was like before you accepted Christ. The following questions may help you think through what you want to convey:

1. What were the unmet needs in your life? Some possibilities include: loneliness, lack of significance, lack of purpose, a sense of emptiness, fear of death, aimlessness, lack of peace etc.
2. How did you attempt to have these needs met? Some possibilities include: accomplishments, accumulation of wealth or things, drugs, alcohol, sex, finding fulfillment in work, education, athletics, etc.

B. How: This section describes the circumstances and events that caused you to consider Christ and the steps you took to become a Christian. Included in this section is a brief but clear presentation of the Gospel.

C. After: This section explains the changes that have occurred in your life since receiving Christ. This should rel

The Meaning and Practice of Baptism

- 1) ***Baptism is immersion into water:*** this is the basic meaning of the word “baptism.”
- 2) ***Baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord's command and follows His example.***
 - a) Matthew 28:18–20
 - b) The Bible seems to know of no unbaptized Christians. Acts is full of references to baptizing those who had confessed faith in Christ. Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12–13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:37, 47–48; 11:16; 13:24; 16:15, 33; 18:8, 25; 19:3–5; 22:16.
 - c) Matthew 3:13–17, “...permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness...” Jesus submitted Himself to baptism.
- 3) ***Baptism is a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus.***
Romans 6:3–4; 1 Peter 3:21.
- 4) ***Baptism is a symbol of what God has accomplished in the life of the believer.*** Romans 6:3–11; Colossians 2:9–14; 1 Peter 3:21.
- 5) ***Baptism is a symbol of washing/cleansing from sin.***
 - a) Titus 3:5
 - b) Acts 22:16, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.”
- 6) ***Baptism is a symbol of our entrance into the Body of Christ, the Church.***
1 Corinthians 12:12–13
- 7) ***Baptism is a public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.***
 - a) In baptism we express, with our whole body, our heart's acceptance of Christ's Lordship. Becoming a Christian involves the body as well as the heart. In conversion, the heart is freed from sin to be enslaved to God. Since the Lordship of Christ lays claim to our whole body, it is fitting for us to express our surrender to His Lordship with our whole body “from head to toe.”

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