

Should My Child be Baptized?

This is a question we often hear at WCC. Actually, the question is not “Should my child be baptized?” but “When should my child be baptized?”

We take baptism very seriously here at WCC. Jesus’ final recorded words to His followers express the importance He placed on baptism: “. . . go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ that follows an individual’s acceptance of God’s gift of salvation. It is not required for salvation; however, if someone has truly committed him/herself to Christ and is trusting in Him alone for salvation, he or she will desire to show commitment through baptism.

Because of its great significance, WCC requires those being baptized to attend a Baptism Class and to demonstrate a clear understanding of the purpose and meaning of Baptism (i.e. to publicly announce they have placed their faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.) We believe some older children can fulfill these requirements and are ready for baptism; however, at times we feel it is best to delay baptism for a child. The age for baptism should be decided individually. It is wisdom we are after, not uniformity. We exercise caution in how we handle the precious little ones the Lord has entrusted to our care, neither discouraging them from believing in Christ nor giving them false assurance of their decision by speedily baptizing them.

We understand that this can present a challenge for parents whose children have seen the baptism of others and want to be baptized themselves, even when they are not ready for it. This is a natural desire on the children’s part. However, Scripture indicates baptism is not a decision made for a person by another individual, nor should someone be baptized because “everyone else” is doing it. It is vital that both the child and the parents have a clear understanding of the purpose and meaning of Baptism. This is why we require parents to attend the Baptism Class with their child.

This personal nature of baptism explains why we do not practice infant baptism at WCC. We also look at Jesus’ interactions with children for guidance in this area: the New Testament records times when parents brought their children to Jesus. He held them and prayed for them and told His disciples to welcome them. But He did not baptize them, and He did not tell anyone else to baptize them. Baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation.

We at WCC desire to come alongside you in determining when your child is ready for baptism and in equipping him/her with a full understanding of what this act of obedience means. If you would like to discuss this issue further, *please contact Marianne Watson by phone 574-268-0188 x241 or by email, mwatson@warsaw.cc*