



# Urgency of the Call

“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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

**Matthew 28:19-20**



# a Family of Believers

## ► The McCullough Family

“Taking that step together was pretty amazing,” Chris McCullough (husband, father) said. “Providing a strong Christian foundation in the belief that your children will choose Christ as their Savior is the biggest responsibility you have as a parent. Watching them make that choice and seeing them willingly display that choice in public is absolutely one of the high points for us as parents.”



# Believer's Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This guide is designed to answer frequently asked questions concerning baptism and represents First Baptist Dallas' understanding of the biblical meaning of baptism.

### Why is it important for a believer to be baptized?

First, baptism is an act of loving obedience to the explicit command of our Lord. Christ commanded His disciples to be baptized.

Secondly, baptism is a public testimony of one’s faith in Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, when a person received Christ, the person gave public testimony to that fact through baptism.

Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 2:41; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33

### Why was Jesus baptized?

The Scriptures expressly state that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. Why did Jesus submit to being baptized by John?

Jesus was setting an example for His disciples to follow.

Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23; 2 Corinthians 5:21

### Who should be baptized?

Baptism is only for those who have made a personal declaration of faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. People who are genuine followers of Christ are to be baptized. This is what is meant by “believer’s baptism.”

Acts 2:41; 8:37-38; 10:43-48; John 10:27; 2 Corinthians 7:10

### What is the meaning of baptism?

First, baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. God’s great redemptive event of all history - the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ - is pictured and reenacted in the water baptism of every believer.

Secondly, baptism symbolizes the present death, burial, and resurrection of the believer. Through baptism the believer shows that he has died to sin, that his old life has been buried with Christ, and that he has been raised to walk in the newness of life.

Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 52

### How should a believer be baptized?

Immersion is considered the scriptural mode of baptism for several reasons:

First, the word translated “baptize” in the New Testament (Greek, baptizo) means “to dip, to plunge, to submerge, to immerse.”

Secondly, the two New Testament accounts of baptismal services clearly indicate that immersion was the mode of baptism employed (Jesus, Mark 1:9-10; Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8:38-39).

Thirdly, immersion is the only method of baptism that pictures a death, burial, and resurrection.

### Why do we baptize “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?”

First, Jesus instructed His disciples to baptize their converts in “the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

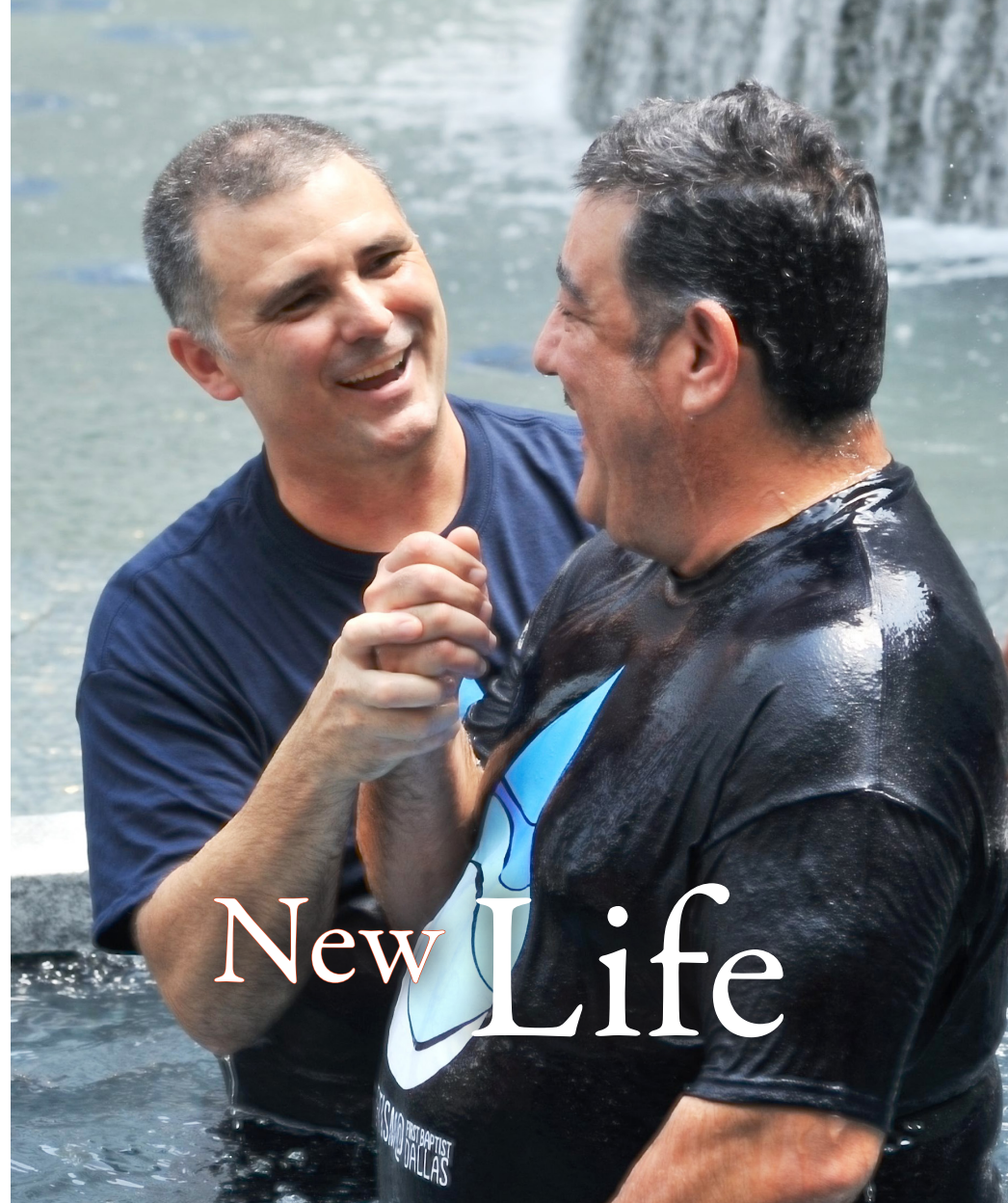
However, because of the alternate formulas found in the Book of Acts- “in the name of Jesus Christ” and “in the name of the Lord Jesus” - it is not mandatory that the Trinitarian formula be used.

Secondly, we baptize “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” as a way of affirming the biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; 10:48; 8:16; 19:5

### How old should a child be before they are baptized?

Many parents struggle with this question. Perhaps Wayne Grudem gives the most appropriate answer - “they should be old enough to make a believable profession of faith. It is impossible to set a precise age that will apply to every child, but when parents see convincing evidence of genuine spiritual life, and also some degree of understanding regarding the meaning of trusting in Christ, then baptism is appropriate” (Systematic Theology, 982). First Baptist Dallas offers a class, *One Way*, once a month to help parents and children understand salvation, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and the basics of becoming a Christian.



### What is meant by “first step of obedience?”

The Scriptures do not teach that baptism is essential to salvation. Baptism is one of the first steps of obedience for the new Christian. The Scriptures do teach that baptism is essential to obedience. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”

John 14:15

### What if a person is genuinely saved after his baptism?

If a person realizes that his salvation actually came after his baptism, he should be re-immersed, for his first immersion was not really a baptism. Only when a person has already been saved is immersion genuinely New Testament baptism.

### Why is baptism called an ordinance?

Baptists have consistently used the term *ordinance* rather than *sacrament* because the latter term conveys the idea that baptism has saving power residing in the very act itself. Baptism, however, is never to be regarded as a means of salvation.

The English word *ordinance* is derived from the Latin “ordinaire,” which means “to set in order” in the sense of something being authoritatively ordered or decreed. Thus, baptism is a sacred and symbolic act divinely ordered and commanded by the Lord.

Matthew 28:19-20

### What if a person was baptized in another denomination?

A person can be received into membership at First Baptist Dallas by statement if the following conditions are met:

1. The person has trusted in Jesus Christ as his/her personal Savior
2. The person has experienced New Testament baptism by immersion

### When is re-immersion inappropriate for a believer?

Baptism serves as the outward symbol of the beginning of the Christian life, i.e., it is the outward sign of an inward regeneration. Thus, for a person who has already been saved and scripturally baptized, to be re-immersed gives the wrong meaning to baptism. To make baptism signify a fresh “filling of the Spirit” or a recommitment of a believer’s life to Christ is making baptism say something that it is not designed to say. Consequently, unscriptural re-immersion can confuse people as to the true meaning of the ordinance of baptism.

Acts 2:41; Galatians 3:27

Pastoral Care encourages new believers and believers who have not yet participated in adult baptism to be baptized by immersion as an obedient response to the love and grace of God.

If you would like to be baptized at First Baptist Dallas, or to receive additional information, call us at 214.969.2435 or email [pastoralcare@firstdallas.org](mailto:pastoralcare@firstdallas.org). You can also visit [firstdallas.org/baptism](http://firstdallas.org/baptism).



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