

THE WATERS OF BAPTISM

Water is an important symbol in Baptism because water is an important symbol in Scripture and in the story of God's saving grace throughout history.

God created the world out of the waters of chaos.

God saved Noah from the waters of the great flood and made a covenant through him to the world.

God parted the waters of the Red Sea and saved the people from their enslavers.

God provided water for the people during their wanderings in the wilderness.

God parted the waters of the Jordan River so that the people could enter the Promised Land.

God said through the prophets:

“Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

Dear Parents:

I am delighted that you are taking the time to consider having your child baptized in our Chapel. Baptism marks that all-important, first step on the journey of the Christian life. We would be honored to share that first step with you.

If you would like to know more about Baptism, contact a Chaplain or an Army religious educator to arrange for training.

Your Chaplain



CHILDREN & BAPTISM PARENT'S GUIDE



A RESOURCE FOR PROTESTANT FAMILIES

U.S. ARMY CHAPLAINCY—FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

COME TO THE WATERS!

WHY BAPTISM

Baptism is an act of worship, deeply rooted in Scripture with a number of rich and symbolic meanings.

ROOTED IN SCRIPTURE

The most recognized Christian call to Baptism comes from the end of the Gospel According to Matthew. The resurrected Jesus is about to ascend to heaven when he says to his gathered disciples,

“Go therefore 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 that I have commanded you.”

Early in the Acts of the Apostles (8:26-40), Andrew meets a traveler from Ethiopia who wants to know more about the Scriptures he is reading. Andrew explains the Scriptures and introduces him to the good news about Jesus. The traveler responds with joy and asks to be baptized in a nearby pool of water.

***“Look, here is water!
What is to prevent me from being baptized!”***

Soon after this event in Acts (10:48), Peter is called to the home of a Roman centurion. The centurion has gathered together his family and close friends to hear more about Jesus. As Peter is speaking, the Holy Spirit falls on the gathering. In response to this amazing event, Cornelius and his entire household are baptized.

“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

In response to Jesus’ call to his disciples, and to the witness of stories like those found in Acts, Christians have been sharing the good news about Jesus and baptizing ever since. When to baptize your child is an important decision that you can discuss with family, friends, and your Chaplain.

WHY BAPTISM

RICH IN MEANING

Baptism is an outward sign of an inward reality or experience. Signs point to meanings; and because the meanings of baptism are so rich and varied, each faith community tends to emphasize different aspects of this profound act of worship. Some of the meanings of the act of Baptism include:

- **Participating in what God has already done through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**
- **Dying with Christ and being raised to new life through the waters of Baptism.**
- **Being washed clean from sin.**
- **Welcoming into the community of faith, the Church.**

REMEMBERING BAPTISM

Any child’s Baptism day is a great joy, for the child, the family, and the whole faith community. Therefore, you will want to celebrate the day. Invite friends and family to a special meal. Prepare gifts such as a framed Baptism certificate, an embossed Bible, or something unique and handmade. After your child’s Baptism day you will want to help them remember it and its meaning. Ideas that some families have used to keep the promises of Baptism fresh in the minds of children include:

- Take pictures throughout the Baptism day (not during the actual service), from dawn until night. Collect those pictures into an album. Pull out that album once a year to remember.
- Every year on the day hold a Baptism party complete with cake and a time for remembering.
- Write a letter to your child on their Baptism day that talks about your hopes and dreams for their life and growth in faith. Read that letter aloud once a year as a reminder of your family’s faith commitments.