



# BAPTISM

for Babies and  
Children



## **Welcome to our church family!**

Baptism is a precious gift in our church community and I'm excited that God is leading you on this journey in bringing your child to receive the gift baptism.

So wherever you are on this journey, if you've decided on or still thinking about baptism, this booklet will hopefully answer some of your questions and start a conversation about what it means to raise a child to know and trust in Jesus Christ.

The Lord be with you as you embark on this exciting journey!

In Christ,

Pastor Jason Sander

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# What Is Baptism?

Baptism is a gift from God to his Church. Baptism gives us the assurance of faith. This means it is something we can hold tight on to and know without a doubt that we are a beloved child of God.

In baptism God creates a new identity. We are declared children of God and adopted into his family. Our heavenly Father sees us with the same love as he looks upon his son Jesus. Just stop and think about that for a moment!

Baptism is a holy moment in which someone is welcomed into St Peter's congregation and the worldwide Christian church. It is a time when the Holy Spirit does something special. The ancient word "*baptidzo*" means "wash". The water reminds us of the new life that comes from Christ's death and resurrection. Although some churches vary the method of baptism, it is the same gift in all churches that believe in Jesus Christ. So it's not about being "Lutheran", it is about joining the 'Body Of Christ'.

## **What does it mean?**

Baptism is a very simple act. To baptise means to apply water to a person.

The water used in baptism is ordinary water, and it makes no difference how the water is applied whether by sprinkling, washing, pouring, or immersing.

The main thing is that the water is used with God's Word.

Parents bring their child to the service, and a Pastor of the Church performs the ceremony. But God's work is the main thing.

## **Baptism is:**

- 1. to Belong**
- 2. to be Loved and Forgiven**
- 3. to be Renewed**
- 4. to be Nurtured**

These aspects of life are what Baptism is all about for daily life.

Too often we think about Baptism as an event that happened years ago when we were babies and we can't even recall anything about it.

However, Baptism is linked to each day of our lives.

# 1. We Belong

## Why do we need to be baptised?

Baptism is God's gift to the church to share with all people. Jesus commanded the church to baptise with these words:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

- We belong to Christ as we live in His Kingdom, this world.
- We belong to God as he places his own name on the child – "Father, Son and Holy Spirit".
- We belong to God's family, the Church, the fellowship of believers and the communion of saints.
- We belong to one another. We are responsible for one another.

What does it mean for you to 'belong'?

## 2. We are Loved and Forgiven

Love and Forgiveness are the roots of belonging and are the gifts that baptism gives to each of us. There is a daily emphasis to baptism as we are joined once again to Christ in that forgiveness and grace.

In our 'natural' condition (the way people are at birth) we're a real mess! The Bible says:

"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me"  
Psalm 51:5

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23.

No one is born innocent or perfect; it has the sin and guilt of the human race, passed on through its parents.

We inherit a sinful nature in which:

- Rebellion against God comes naturally
- We may even take pleasure in doing wrong
- Our natural tendency is to have nothing to do with God.

As a child grows, this inherited sin soon shows itself; the child will naturally do what is wrong rather than do what is right.

But the time will soon come. For example, you won't have to teach your child to be selfish or greedy. Those attitudes will appear soon enough.

Sin causes us to make a mess of our human relationships. It also destroys our relationship with God. Sin is like a wall between God and us.

In Baptism God washes us clean from all the guilt we were born with, and from all the sins we have committed or will commit.

In Baptism God gives us the benefits of what Jesus has done. Jesus broke down the wall that separated people from God.

When Jesus died on the cross, all our sin, guilt, and rebellion – everything that separates us from God – was placed on Him. Jesus was punished for us. Taking our place, he died the death we deserved. Therefore, we are forgiven.

Why do you think Jesus choose water to welcome people to him?

### 3. We are Renewed

#### Baptism Means The Past Is Wiped – Finished!

Our church teaches in the Small Catechism of the Lutheran Church:

##### ***What does Baptism mean for daily living?***

It means that our sinful self, with all of its evil deeds and desires, should be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self should arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever.

In Baptism God joins to Jesus Christ those who were separated from him.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:3,4

What in here is meaningful to you?

It's like in baptism our old life is washed away – it's dead and we are free from the past.

In Baptism God makes us new people.

A new life and relationship with God begins. We are 'born again' as his children to live a new life. We become members of his family.

Jesus said, “no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.” John 3:5,6

Martin Luther reminds us that our lives are made new each day “as the old person dies and a new person comes forth to live”.

Renewal is the involvement of all of us in a continued growth in Christ. As parents, children, teachers and members of the Church, everyone is very important in the renewal process.

Christians believe that by grace, God accepts them because Jesus died on the cross for them. So, even though they are not perfect, they are sure of God's love for them, sure of his forgiveness.

We call this certainty faith.

What is does it mean for you to be 'renewed'?

# ***What Is Faith?***

To be "right with God" we simply need to "call out to God to be saved".

Three pictures from Martin Luther can help us to have faith:

- 1.** Faith is like the beggar's hands - open to receive and relying on the giver.
- 2.** Faith is knowing that you can't do it on your own – and trusting.
- 3.** Faith is a life of regular rebirth - we return to Christ every day (we return to the newness of baptism) and start brand new.





## 4. We are Nurtured

To be Nurtured means to be fed, nourished, fostered, educated, trained and cared for.

To be Nurtured means to grow.

As Luther says, *"to grow in grace each day."* No one can grow anything without water – it gives life. So it is with the water of baptism.

To be Nurtured means to be cared about and cared for.

As parents and teachers of your child you have a special responsibility because of our baptism promises to nurture and enable growth.

As parents presenting your child to God in baptism you are making the commitment to raise your child in the Christian faith. This means you will seek to:

- to be in community with your child among God's faithful people,
- bring your child to worship to hear the word of God
- teach your child God's word
- nurture your child in faith and prayer, so that they may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace.

St Peter's Church Community also makes the promise to provide a place for you to support and resource you as you pass on the faith.

God parents are your supporters and faith champions for your child. Their primary role is to pray for their god child and help them navigate their faith.

We take this response seriously.

This is the role of you as parents, godparents, and the congregation.

To be nurtured places us in the family, the Church, and a congregation, to grow and service at a certain "place" in God's Kingdom.

# Passing on the Faith

As parents, we pass on things to our children every day. They're watching us, learning from us and emulating us. I'm proud to have taught my kids how to ride a bike, swing a hammer and obey house rules. But I'm not so proud that I've taught them how to get frustrated with slow drivers and red lights! The question is not *are* we passing things on to our children, but *what* are we passing on to our children.

While teachers and coaches play a significant role in teaching our kids how to read, write, have good manners, participate in sports and play musical instruments, any teacher or coach will tell you that parents play the primary role in reinforcing that instruction in the home.

The same goes with passing on the faith.

At St Peter's, we believe that LIFE starts with our relationship and faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, we believe that we can only have LIFE in Jesus Christ. This LIFE is nurtured and developed by reading and sharing God's Word found in the Bible. We pass on the faith to the children in several ways: we worship Jesus, we share in daily devotions, we learn about Biblical stories, and we share our faith through words and actions.

We would like to reinforce this by inviting you to join us in passing on the faith with your children.

At St Peter's we encourage families to use the FAITH 5

# What is the FAITH 5?

There is a simple faith practice called the FAITH 5, or Faith Acts In The Home, that connects faith to life, and parents to kids in a powerful way.

The five steps of the FAITH 5 are:



**Share**

**Step 1: Share** highs and lows.

Talk about a good thing that happened during the day, and something not so good. (This opens up communication and lets you in on what's happening in the lives of your loved ones.)



**Read**

**Step 2: Read** a verse from your Bible.

You can use a verse from Church, devotional, or some other verse of your choice.



**Talk**

**Step 3: Talk** about how the verse relates to your highs and lows.

You might want to use a devotion or some other tool that talks about the verse.



**Pray**

**Step 4: Pray** for one another's highs and lows



**Bless**

**Step 5: Bless** one another.

A good place to start with a baby is by blessing them each night. Make the sign of the cross on their forehead and say: "The Lord Jesus bless you." As they get older let them bless you.

# How to Nurture and Grow Faith

## Have a Caring Conversation

Who did you talk to as a child or teenager?

Can you remember someone who really gave you an ear?

What do the follow Bible verse tell you about caring conversations?

"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."  
Proverbs 12:18

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, so that it may benefit those who listen."  
Ephesians 4:29

In essence, "caring conversation" involves weaving faith into our daily interactions. Great times for caring conversation include mealtimes, on the way to and from school, bath-times and bedtimes, before and after church, and during leisure activities.

### **Caring conversation" takes place in everyday life when we:**

- We give the gift of focused undivided attention.
- We accept and accommodate the 'level' of the person we are listening to.
- We talk about our relationship with God in our everyday lives.
- We appropriately and honestly share our emotions.
- We "say sorry" (repent) for wrongdoing and "forgive" each other.
- We affirm and encourage (both verbally and non-verbally).

### **Caring Conversation Ideas...**

- Use the FAITH 5 and focus on sharing the "highs" and "lows" of your day or week.
- Encourage & affirm each day.
- Turn off the TV and make time to give focused and undivided attention!
- Make a point of talking about what happened in church, Sunday school, youth.
- Share stories of how God has worked in your life.

# Utilise Family Rituals and Traditions

What were some of your most cherished childhood experiences?

Family mealtimes, holiday get-togethers and nightly bedtime routine are examples of rituals and traditions that make deep and lasting impressions on children.

- They give rhythm, shape and order to our lives.
- They connect us with others, giving us a sense of who we are and how we belong.
- They reflect and enact values, reminding us of what is important.

**Daily and Weekly Faith Traditions:** saying grace together before meals; bedtime prayers and blessings; learning a bible verse each week as a family; and inviting a person from outside the family to share a meal with you each week.

**Church-Year Related Traditions:** Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost.

**Community-Related:** Mother's & Father's Day, Australia Day, Anzac Day and New Year.

**Annual Family Rituals and Traditions:** birthdays, wedding anniversaries, repeated holiday experiences. The challenge is to "tweak" these by adding a faith component. For example, a birthday celebration might include the "gifting" of a bible verse to the family member and a prayer of thanksgiving for them.

**Occasional Family Rituals and Traditions:** graduations, next steps in life, drivers licenses, weddings, house movings etc. Each of these times give opportunity to name God's presence and activity in our lives and bring his Word into our growth.

## **Ritual and Tradition Evaluation:**

Make a list of rituals and traditions that are already part of your home or family life. Think about how you might use these to include God. Then make a list of possible new rituals and traditions, and plan for one or more in the coming year.

## **Rituals and Traditions To Help Form Faith With Those You Love:**

- Eat meals together... and without the TV or radio on.
- Develop a Saturday night ritual to prepare for Sunday worship.
- Birthdays, baptismal anniversaries, wedding anniversaries... a prayer of thanks.
- Observe special church seasons at home e.g. Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Pentecost.
- Celebrate community events from a faith perspective e.g. Australia Day, ANZAC Day.

# Family Devotional Practices

Devotional practices are repeated activities through which the word of Christ can “completely fill our lives”. When “devotional practices” are mentioned, most Christians think of formal gatherings around the meal table with bible, songbooks and perhaps a written devotional resource. But it’s more than that – it’s a way of life!

What does the follow Bible passage teach you about devotional practices?

“Let the word of Christ completely fill your lives, while you use all your wisdom to teach and instruct each other. With thankful hearts, sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God” Colossians 3:16

## **Have you ever seen a ‘devotional practice’ that interested you?**

To practice “devotion” is to show love or affection toward someone. When two people are in love, they express “devotion” through all sorts of routine actions and through spontaneous deeds. The same is true as we experience God’s love for us. The first step in developing a rich devotional life is to cultivate ways of listening to God – especially God’s Word.

## **Devotional Practice Ideas:**

- Select your own or a whole family bible verse for each week.
- Families set devotional times to pray together (often before bed).
- A bible story at bedtime?
- Develop a “sacred space” in your home as a sign of God’s presence.
- Play Christ-centred music in your car and at home (or at least avoid the bad stuff!).
- Decorate with Christ-centred artwork – or do it yourself!
- Have a bible on display somewhere - a reminder that God is with us.
- After church discuss how God spoke to you through the service.
- Say “grace” at mealtimes – your own way.
- Set up a “prayer board” at home with photos of people to pray for.
- In our home we “act out” Bible stories in all sorts of silly and fun ways!

Some Christians like to use Luther’s Small Catechism as devotional resource. The Small catechism is a basic summary of the Christian faith. You could read little bits together and simply discuss. It contains the 10 commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, Baptism, Holy Communion and explains Forgiveness. They are available for free from the church. The catechism includes excellent morning and evening prayers too.

# Service Projects

Did you ever get to 'help' mum or dad as a child? When? What was it like?

What does the following Bible passage teach you about serving?

"It is more blessed to give than to receive"  
Acts 20:35

Service puts "wheels on faith". It shows how faith makes a difference in the world and bears Christ into the hurts, hopes and struggles of day to day existence. I can remember vividly early childhood experiences of service which functioned as "real life sermons". In fact, being involved in helping others has more impact on maturity than child/youth participation in Sunday school, bible study or even worship services.

Why serve together?

- It grows as a lifelong virtue and discipline
- It helps us discover who we are in Christ
- Service turns us from "consumers" into "givers".
- Families that serve together experience it as quality time!
- Working together to a common goal bonds families and grows relationships.

## Family Service Ideas:

- "Adopt" an elderly member of the congregation to visit and to have to your home.
- Together as a family, buy groceries for a food pantry supporting the needy.
- Plan "hospitality nights" when you can have people around for dinner.
- Go on a walk to collect stray rubbish in your neighbourhood.
- Sponsor a child through Compassion or a similar organisation.
- Make get-well cards to send to sick people in the congregation or community.
- Volunteer to help take care of an elderly person's garden.
- Make a food, clothing, or toy hamper for a family in need.
- Volunteer at or contribute prepared meals to a food bank.
- Visit a seniors home and sing songs to the residents.
- Make welcome cards to be presented to each person baptized in their congregation.
- Adopt and clean up a park or a busy roadside.

# Praying for Others to Receive Jesus

"My Dad was adopted as a baby. In fact, he has six brothers and sisters, some of whom grew up with their mum, and some of them were adopted out because his mum was very sick. Because of Dad's adoption growing up was not easy for him, but as a young adult, he came to believe in Jesus and follow him.

About 10 years ago, Dad got discovered he had brothers and sisters, and so there followed a whole beautiful process as gradually Dad met brothers and sisters from all over Australia, who had grown up in many different situations and backgrounds. Now here's the miracle: Dad was amazed to find out that every one of his brothers and sisters... Is a passionate person of FAITH! One is a Baptist pastor, one is dedicated to their Uniting church, another is a Salvation Army Corp Officer, one is a leader in her Catholic Church, another is a Uniting pastor. Growing up in different families, different backgrounds, different situations. but somehow they all found peace with God! They believe the answer is their mother. Because she was sick she couldn't keep them all, but she could pray for them – and she did. She prayed faithfully for them all her life, and she never got to actually see the fruit of her prayers in this life.

I can't explain exactly how it works. But I know that God gives us a "slice of the action" through prayer. You can do it for your family too."

From a sermon by Matt.

## Simply Pray For Those You Want To Share Faith With:

- Pray for their protection from evil and the influences of the world.
- Pray for them to choose to surround themselves with Christian friends.
- Pray for God's power to help them take a stand for their faith.
- Pray for them to develop the special gifts God has given them
- Pray for them to always love God and His Son.

What does the following Bible passage teach you about prayer?

"What we have heard and known, what our parents have told us: We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power and the wonders he has done."

Psalms 78:3-4



# The Baptism Service

## TEACHING ON BAPTISM

### JESUS SPEAKS

One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

### OUR FAITH

My friends, today is the beginning of (Child's name) faith journey, and to commence this journey we speak our faith in community, proclaiming who God is and placing our trust in him:

**We believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth. We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty, from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### WE BAPTISE

(Child's name) I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### LAYING ON OF HANDS

May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you new birth by water and the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with his Spirit, so that you receive eternal life. Amen.

### OUR COMMITMENT

At St Peter's, the faith development of children who come to be baptised in our church is important to us.

As parents of (Child's name) you play a pivotal role in his/her faith development. We ask you to pass on the faith by modelling faith practices in the home, worshipping Jesus in a church community and providing opportunities to grow in faith. Your church family is here to support you as you nurture the faith of (child's name).

St Peter's church community receive this child as a brother/sister in Christ; pray for and support this family as they nurture the faith of their child

Let's pray:

**Lord God, heavenly Father, thank you for the gift this child and receiving him/her into your family today. Bless the (N) family and help them to raise this child to know you, worship you, and bless others in your name. Keep this family in your fellowship and love, so that they may live together in peace as members of your family. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray:**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.  
Amen.**

### **WE RECEIVE THE CHILD**

Disciples and friends of St Peter's Lutheran Church you have witnessed a wonderful event today in the life of (Child's name). This is a kingdom of God celebration! So, let us welcome this child into God's family.

### **CANDLE PRESENTATION** (by a member of St Peter's)

*You are the light of the world. Let your light shine to the glory of God the Father.*

### **BLESSING**

May our Lord Jesus bless you, watch over you and grow you in love for him.

# **FAQ**

## **When in the worship service will the baptism be?**

The baptism is normally towards the beginning of the service. When there is a baptism our worship service typically goes for about an hour and fifteen minutes, followed by morning tea. You are invited to join us for morning tea too because we want to celebrate and congratulate you!

## **What time should I arrive?**

We encourage you to arrive about 10 minutes before the worship service starts. This gives enough time to settle in and chat with the pastor beforehand to answer any other questions.

## **What do I wear?**

There are no laws about what to wear to worship. Please just dress comfortably, neat and casual. You are welcome exactly as you normally are.