

**Aim:** To look at the meaning of baptism

The Israelites must have been very excited to cross the Jordan River. They were finally going to enter the Promised Land; no more wandering around in the desert; this was the start of their new lives. It must have been a very special day for them.

**Can you think of some special days that we have today?** (Births, marriages, graduations etc)

**Many of these ceremonies happen when big changes take place in a person's life, what has changed?** (Birth = another baby, married = was single, now a couple, graduation = was going to school, now finished etc.)

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Baptism is another ceremony which stands for a change in a person's life.

**What do you think baptism means?**

Baptism is a bit like a wedding, it is a public ceremony to tell everyone that that person has chosen to follow Jesus.

Here are some things that baptism teaches us:

- When the person goes under the water it is like they are being buried. We say that they are dying to their "old self" – that means that they won't just be living to please themselves anymore. It means they want to give up their old bad habits.
- When they come out of the water we say they are being "born again" or "resurrected." They want to have a new life – living for Jesus.
- The Bible compares Jesus removing our sins to washing. When a person is baptised, the water washes all of them, reminding them that Jesus has removed all their sins. Foot washing reminds us of the same thing, but as Jesus said in John 13:10, if a person has had a bath they don't need another one, they just need to wash their feet. So if we have been baptised, we don't need to be baptised again, but we do do the foot washing.

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**Have you ever wondered why our Church doesn't baptise babies?**

- **Can a baby get married?** A baby doesn't know what it means. A baby is born as part of a family but when they grow up they have to decide for themselves if they will have anything to do with their family or not.
- Jesus came to earth to show us how to live, and Jesus was baptised as an adult. In fact John the Baptist didn't want to baptise Jesus. **What did he say? Read Matthew 3:14, 15**

In our Church we "Dedicate" babies – this is when the parents of the baby stand in front of the Church with the pastor to tell everyone that they want to raise their baby the way that Jesus would want them to and they want to teach their baby to love and obey Jesus.

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**What if someone who is married decides they don't want to be in that relationship anymore?**

**What if someone who is married is so busy they never see their family?** They won't be a real family any more. If Christians aren't careful to spend time every day with Jesus, they can lose their relationship with Him. A Christian needs to plan to spend time in prayer, Bible study and going to church, just like families need to spend time together.

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Here are some things that baptism does not do:

- Being baptised does not mean things will be easy for you. – In fact they may seem harder sometimes because Satan doesn't want you to follow God and he will do everything he can think of to stop you.
- Being baptised does not mean you'll suddenly stop sinning
- Being baptised does not mean you'll be happy all the time
- A new Christian is like a new baby; they must learn and grow
- Automatically mean you are going to heaven; people who have asked Jesus to take their sins but not been baptised yet will be in heaven, and sadly, there will be people who were baptised but later forgot their choice to follow Jesus, who won't be in heaven.

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I hope that you all will choose to follow Jesus every day, and that one day you will want to stand up and be baptised to show everyone that that is what you have chosen.