



Faith Chest (Birth)
Discussion Guide Session Three

Baptism—Presbyterian Perspective

Warm-Up

(video segment 1:16 minutes/discussion time ____ minutes)

Discuss in your small group: Since last session, what have you done to deepen the spiritual atmosphere in your home? For example, did you have prayer or devotions with your spouse? What were the challenges you faced and what were the successes?



Legacy Point 1

What is Baptism?

(video segment 9:02 minutes)

Baptism is a sign and a seal:

- A sign of God's grace given to us through Jesus Christ...inclusion in God's family...forgiveness of sin...walking in newness of life.
- A seal that marks us as God's own adopted children.

Matthew 28:19-20, *"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."*

Galatians 3:26-27, *"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."*

Baptism marks us as God's children affirming that faith, or as we bring our children in faith, that we belong to that covenant community of the church. God gave the promise that those who live in faith with God will be his people forever...even though we already were a race fallen in sin and separated from him.

Jesus Christ fulfilled the covenant promise for blessing so that all the families of earth can be blessed. By faith in him, we might belong to this covenant community of God's grace given to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Baptism is the sign that we believe in Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:3-4, "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Baptism is the act that seals us into the action that Jesus Christ has done for us.

Acts 2:36-38, "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call'"

God invites the entire family into this covenant of grace...this includes children...all who God calls.

Through baptism, God lays hold of our lives even before we know how to lay hold of him.



Let's Talk About It:
(discussion time ____ minutes)

- ❖ **What do you think about when you witness a baptism? What part touches your heart?**



What Does a Child Need Spiritually?

(video segment 9:02 minutes)

How does baptism help with spiritual nurture? The family promises to raise the child in the life and environment of the church and to be the main spiritual influence in that child's life.

The congregation makes the promise to do their part in helping the parents. A child not yet able to profess his/her own faith, is included in the covenant community where the word and Spirit of God are at work which best enables a child to come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

The atmosphere of building trust provides for the spiritual nurture of children...singing Bible songs and hymns...reading Bible stories...talking about Jesus and that he loves us...

Mom and Dad provide for the first church that a child ever knows. They are the first ministers of God's grace and love that a child will ever experience.

Making disciples include both baptism and teaching. For a baby, baptism, the seal of God's grace in the covenant community, comes first and then teaching. An older person coming to faith would have teaching first and then be baptized as a sign and seal of the covenant. Both are present.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9, *“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”*

Continually pressing in will make an “impression” of faith on the child so that they may one day make their own profession of faith.

Sponsors gathered around the parents are people who likewise take a vow to be active in the child's life in nurturing them spiritually...praying with ...reading scripture...and talking time to talk about the Lord together...



Let's Talk About It:

(discussion time ____ minutes)

- ❖ What would you like to do to help your child grow spiritually as they get older?



Legacy Point 3

The Baptism Ceremony

(video segment 4:18 minutes)

- The parents come forward, bringing their child to the baptismal font and are asked if they want to present the child in baptism. Sponsors and/or other family members also come forward.
- Parents make a promise to God, the child, and the congregation. Then sponsors and congregation are also asked to make a promise to God and the child.
- Prayer is offered and baptism performed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The pastor announces that the child has been included in the covenant community where God's word and Spirit are at work bringing grace.

How should parents prepare for the ceremony of baptism...

The Faith Chest is a symbol of investing treasure into the life of the child, and the greatest treasure in which one can ever invest is faith in Jesus Christ.

Articles of spiritual significance throughout the life of the child can be stored in the Faith Chest.

The Faith Chest is also represents the parents' promise to raise the child in faith.

A parent(s) can also speak a blessing over their child in the Blessing Event.



Let's Talk About It:

(discussion time ____ minutes)

❖ **What words of blessing do you want to speak over your child?**

(See Appendix 1: Create a Blessing for Your Child and Appendix 2: Blessing Script)



Wrap-Up

(video segment 0:43 minutes)

Closing Prayer: *(Form small groups again and encourage each person to pray for the following.)*

Give thanks to God for your experience together. Ask God to bless your family's spirituality and your role in leading it.

Assignment:

Plan a blessing event...a time to build your child's faith chest and meet together to celebrate this new beginning in your child's spiritual life.

Where do you go from here?

You have seen how beneficial it is to be in conversation and prayer with other adults in a similar life stage. This might be a good time to start or join a small group.