

# **Remembering Our Baptism – Baptismal Celebration**

This lesson on baptism is geared to children in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade. It can be adapted to any age group by making modifications to the types of questions that are asked and the types of activities that are done. If this lesson is being taught to younger students, the “Family Discussion” worksheet should be addressed to the parents/guardians instead of the children.

## **Space Needs**

- Place to hold opening activities, which includes discussion on baptism.
- Sanctuary with Baptismal Font
- Place to hold Baptismal celebration party (can be same as first space)

## **Set Up and Prep**

- This activity works best when you have at least 90 minutes with the children. We held the activity on a Saturday afternoon. This allows the follow up lesson to occur the next day during Sunday school.
- Determine whether any of the children who will be attending the event have not been baptized or may soon be baptized. Discuss with your pastor how he/she would like the event to roll out for that child. In my case we did have a child who was new to the congregation, and we were able to include her in the activity. She along with the other children was very excited about her upcoming baptism at the conclusion of this activity.
- An invitation should be sent to each of the youth, inviting them to the Baptismal Celebration: Remembering Our Baptism party. A note should be included to the parents asking that the child bring their baptismal candle to the activity if they have it. Have an RSVP phone number available so that the child can call and respond, and you determine whether or not the child will be bringing their baptismal candle.
- Select the area that is most suitable for the first part of the lesson where you will begin the discussion about baptism. I chose to do this activity outside on the grass since the weather was nice.
- Prepare the area in the Sanctuary where the Baptismal Font is located. Make sure the Paschal Candle is available and bring the extra baptismal candles for those who do not have one.
- Determine where you will have the baptismal cake celebration. Prepare the area accordingly – I baked cupcakes and let the children ice them and decorate them before they ate them. They also decorated extra cupcakes for our coffee hour on Sunday morning. I decorated with balloons and special plates and napkins, streamers, etc.

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## **Opening Activity**

Gather the group together and have them play a quick “ice-breaker” game where they will say their name, school they attend and their favorite animal. Have the group stand in a circle arms length apart. You can start this off (use a ball) and when you are done, toss the ball to a child who will “go next”. Then that child will toss the ball to another child when done, and so on. The last child will pass the ball back to you. You should stand for this activity.

Then ask the group to hold hands and try to sit down on the ground together. Once seated, ask for a volunteer to open the group in prayer – asking that the Holy Spirit be present with them during their time together. Note: the child who starts the prayer should say - “The Lord be with you”, with the gesture of open hands and arms. Then all should respond back “And also with you” with the gesture of open hands and arms. Our kids love this and we do it whenever we pray together. They understand what it means to say these words and use the gesture.

## **Discussion on Baptism**

Say: **Today we are going to celebrate baptism by remembering our baptism. We are going to explore together what baptism means. Let’s see what we may know about baptism.** Note – include language if you have a child in the group who will be baptized in the future. The key here is inclusion – not exclusion.

Ask the following questions to start a discussion – always affirm the answers given guiding them to a more appropriate answer if needed.

### **Who can get baptized?**

(Anyone can be baptized.)

### **How old do you have to be?**

(There is no age requirement – you can be 1 day old or 150 years old.)

### **What does it mean when we are baptized?**

(It means that we are children of God. God is our Father and he loves us and forgives us our sins. He promises us that we will get to live with him forever. It is a very special day.)

### **Do you remember your baptism?**

(Answer will depend upon how old they were at the time of their baptism.)

### **Did you wear something special on your baptism?**

(I inserted this because I will show my baptismal gown. I will also show pictures of that special day. I will also let them know that you don’t have to wear special clothing when you get baptized.)

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## **Why do we get baptized?**

(Prior to asking this question – have one of the children read Matthew 28:19-20. Because Jesus commanded his disciples to go out and baptize.)

**Say – now for those of you who remember your baptism, I want you to think about what was happening and for those of you whom do not (because you were too young) I want you to think about a recent baptism we had here at church.**

## **What physical thing was used in your baptism? Or What did the Pastor use on your head when you were baptized?**

(Water)

## **Did the Pastor say something special when we were baptized or was he quiet when he poured the water on your head?**

(Said something special)

## **Do you think there is something magical about the water that makes you baptized?**

(No – Here you want to get them to say either yes or no because you want to explain to them that it is God's Word with the water and our trust in God's word. Let them know that they may or may not know the answer to this question because it may be something new to them. It is important that they not feel embarrassed by their answer. Judge your group on whether or not you think they may be embarrassed if they don't answer correctly and then change your approach. My group loves to think about these types of questions and talk it out before they give an answer. It is fun to listen as they talk through it together. They don't care if they get it wrong – they like to discuss and then find out the reason if their answer is not correct. You want to reinforce the following:

**It is God's word, (the words that the Pastor says) with the water and our Trust in God's word (the things that God tells us). Water by itself is just water – but with the Word of God it makes us new in Christ.**

## **Who is Christ?**

Christ is Jesus – God's son.

## **What is the baptismal font?**

It is the place where the water is kept and the sacrament of baptism is held. It is the water and God's Word together - not just the water.

## **How many times can you be baptized?**

You can only be baptized once – but you can reaffirm and remember your baptism often.

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## Move into the Sanctuary

Say: **Let's go into the sanctuary and reaffirm our baptism.**

**Today we gather around this baptismal font, remembering our own baptism. This font is not a place for us to play, or to wash our hands, but it is a place where we can remember our baptism by placing 1 or 2 fingers in the water and making the sign of the cross. (Show them the ways to make the sign of the cross). You can do this whenever you enter or leave the sanctuary. It helps you remember that you are a child of God. This will make you feel good and know that you are not alone and that Jesus will always be with you and that if you ask forgiveness for your sins – you will be forgiven. It also lets you know that when you die, you will go to be with God.**

Light the Paschal candle and explain what the candle is.

Mark the sign of the cross on each child's head and say:

**[Name of Child], child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.**

Give each child a candle or have the child use the baptismal candle brought. Help the child light the candle from the Paschal Candle. When the candle is lit, have the child say:

**My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a child of God.**

Say: **This candle represents God's light in your life. Let your light shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Blow out candles.**

Ask:

**What does it mean when we say make your light shine?**

(It means that you should be good and kind and love others just like Jesus loves you.)

**Tell me how you make your light shine?**

(Here you will want them to give specifics - help mom set the table for dinner, hug my friend when she is feeling sad, share my toys with my sister, etc.)

**In what ways do we sometimes not let our light shine?**

(Here, you want them to be specific - when we are mean to our friends (say hurtful things), when we are selfish and won't share our things, when we tell lies, etc.)

**What do you do to make your light shine again?**

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(Encourage them to say some specific things. I talk to Jesus and ask him to forgive me and to give me the strength to not do it again.)

Have the children sing this popular bible camp song. If they don't know the song, select one that they do know that pertains to the Light of Christ. Let them dance, clap and sing loudly!! This is their chance to move around the sanctuary.

*Refrain:*

**This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine hey hey hey  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine hey hey hey  
This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine\_  
Let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.**

**Hide it under a bushel? No!  
I'm gonna let it shine hey hey hey  
Hide it under a bushel? No!  
I'm gonna let it shine\_hey hey hey  
Hide it under a bushel? No!  
I'm gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.**

*Back to Refrain*

**Won't let Satan blow it out, No!  
I'm gonna let it shine hey hey hey  
Don't let Satan blow it out, No!  
I'm gonna let it shine hey hey hey  
Don't let Satan blow it out, No!  
I'm gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.**

*Back to Refrain*

**Ask – When else can you remember your baptism:**

(When you are washing your face, taking a bath or taking a shower. When you are swimming – in a pool or at the beach. When you are hiking and see a river or stream.)

Let them select a song they would like to sing. It can be a baptismal song, or any song they have heard at bible camp, or one that they find in the hymnal. I usually let them pick a song from the hymnal so that they become familiar with using the hymnal and finding their favorite hymns.

Ask if someone would like to say a prayer before leaving the Sanctuary. Again – my group is quick to volunteer to say a prayer. If your group is not then you should say a quick and easy prayer.

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## Move to Party Space

Let the children know that it is now time to celebrate our baptismal remembrance with food, and bring them to the party space you have prepared. This is the time that I will use a third space, which is our Social Hall.

Say: **Each year on the anniversary of your baptism, you and your family should light your baptismal candle, recite the words “I am a baptized child of God”, and celebrate with a cake or cupcakes. Today, we are going to celebrate our baptismal remembrance by decorating and eating cupcakes. We will also make extra cupcakes that we can share with everyone tomorrow (Sunday) during coffee hour so they can also celebrate the remembrance of their baptism.**

At this point, the children usually engage in conversation among themselves or you could ask them if they do anything special on their baptismal anniversary. I will also let them pick 1 or 2 games that they like to play. They have their favorites. It is a chance for them to release some energy.

## Closing Prayer

When the parents come to pick up the kids, have the entire group form a circle, holding hands. Let the group know that they will have the chance to thank God for something in their life and start the group out by thanking God for the time spent together in remembrance of their baptism and for God claiming me as God’s child. Then squeeze the hand of the person next to you to signify that you have concluded your prayer of thanks and the person can begin to speak. This should continue until the squeeze comes back to you, at which time you will conclude the prayer of thanks.

The last item you want to hand to the children as they leave (and their parents are present) is **the Family Discussion “My Baptism” Worksheet**. Let them know that they should discuss this as a family and bring it back complete and ready to discuss on Sunday. Have them bring pictures and anything they may have from that special day.

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## Family Discussion Worksheet “My Baptism”

Today you had a chance to learn more about Baptism and Jesus’ love for you. You received a baptismal candle that you should bring home and show to your family. You should put this candle in a special place in your room so that you can remember that you are a child of God and that He loves you very much. The candle also will remind you that Jesus wants us to let our light shine! Don’t light the candle – just keep it in your room so that you can see it. On the anniversary of your Baptism, gather with your family and light the candle to remember your baptism. And I think you should get a cake to celebrate this very special day.

Now it is time for you to learn more about your baptism (if you were too young to remember). Ask your family the following questions to help you learn more about that special day.

When was I Baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

How old was I when I was Baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

Where was I Baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was the Pastor that Baptized me? \_\_\_\_\_

Did I have sponsors and if so who were my sponsors?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who came to my Baptism? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did I act – did I cry, laugh, spit up? \_\_\_\_\_

Did I wear a special outfit for that day? \_\_\_\_\_

What was one special thing that your family remembers about the day you were Baptized?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We can’t wait to talk to you about what you learned about your Baptism.