

## DISCOVER

Each topic will provide a scriptural foundation, the concepts underling the topic, and questions for the students to demonstrate their understanding of the topic. It is anticipated that these will be taught in a small group setting and take approximately 45-50 minutes. You are free to modify the concepts taught into your own words, but actual scriptural references should be included. There is a student handout for each teaching module which also includes student assignments.

## DEMONSTRATE

In preparation for this topic, think of examples of how God's Grace has impacted you own live and how it could be incorporated into your group's walk with the Lord.

## DEVELOP

Each module will contain questions for the students to answer that should give you an opportunity to determine if the Key Considerations are understood.

## DEEPER

Be sure to leave time at the start of each meeting to allow the students to share their answers/responses to their previous assignments.

## DISCERNMENT

The Disciple has a good understanding of the subject.  
The Disciple has expressed ownership of the concepts.  
The Disciple is integrating the concepts into his/her personal walk with Christ.

## DAILY LIVING

A memory verse is provided at the end as a suggestion for them to practice and pray through each day.

## LEADER OVERVIEW

*This is an introductory session on the topic of Baptism.*

*This session is designed to familiarize new Believers with the Biblical concept of Baptism and is not intended to take the place of the BVG Baptism class.*

## BAPTISM

Our lives change significantly when we come to know Christ, though sometimes we don't see or recognize the full extent of that change in ourselves until months or years later. Baptism is an important picture of just how much our lives are changed—we died to sin and have been made alive in Christ. It's a big step, but it's also a simple step.

Christian baptism is a ceremony commanded by Jesus, by which Christians make a public confession that they have repented of their sins and committed themselves in faith to Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

*Matthew 28:19 / Acts 2:38,41; 9:18; 10:47-48 / Roman 10:9*

The Bible speaks of people going into the water to be baptized, but it gives no detailed description of the act of baptism.

*Acts 8:38 / Matthew 3:13-17*

The original meaning of 'baptize' was 'dip' or 'immerse', suggesting that believers were immersed in water.

## Pre-Christian Baptism

Although it had great significance in the birth and growth of the church as recorded in Acts, baptism was practiced before this. Jews baptized Gentile converts as part of their introduction into the Jewish religion. John the Baptist also practiced baptism, demanding it of those who responded to his preaching and repented of their sins.

*Luke 3:3 / John 3:22-23 / Acts 13:24*

John pointed out that the baptism he practiced, though it may have pictured cleansing, could not in itself bring cleansing or give people the power to live pure lives. His baptism prepared the way for Jesus Christ, who would bring the blessings that John's baptism symbolized.

Those who accepted Jesus as the Savior-Messiah would enter the kingdom of God and through Jesus' gift of the Holy Spirit, receive an inner power to live righteously.

*Matthew 3:11 / John 1:26-28,31,33 / Acts 1:5*

## The Baptism of Jesus

Even Jesus was baptized, though he had no sins to repent of. For this reason, John at first did not want to baptize him, but Jesus insisted. He wanted to show his oneness with the faithful in Israel who, by their baptism, declared themselves on the side of God and His righteousness.

Jesus' baptism has always proved to be a bit of a puzzle for the church just as it did for John. The sinless Jesus had no sin from which to turn. Why, therefore, did He desire baptism? Jesus didn't need to repent; He

## DISCUSSION

*When you became a Christ follower, what changed?*

*Where you surprised by John the Baptist's reaction to Jesus request to be baptized in Matthew 14?*

*Why was Jesus baptized if He didn't need to repent of His sins?*

is repenting for others. This is His mission. He came to do what we cannot do for ourselves. Since we cannot atone for our sins, Jesus does it for us. We have the whole gospel in the opening moments of Jesus public life.

As the Messiah, he was the representative chosen by God for a people needing deliverance, which in this case meant man's deliverance from sin. Jesus' baptism in water prefigured a far greater "baptism" that was yet to come; for he, as man's representative, would suffer God's judgment on man's sin through his death on the cross.

*Luke 12:50 / Mark 10:38*

Having shown his intentions openly, Jesus then received openly the Father's gift of the Spirit's unlimited power to enable him to carry out his messianic work.

*Matthew 3:16 / John 3:34 / Acts 10:37-38*

The Father's expression of full satisfaction with his Son consisted of combined quotations from the Old Testament relating to God's messiah-king and God's submissive servant. In both cases the God-appointed tasks could be carried out only in the power of the Spirit

*Matthew 3:17 / Psalm 2:7 / Isaiah 11:1-2; 42:1-4*

## Christian Baptism

*"As Jesus preached the message of the kingdom, those who accepted his message and entered the kingdom showed the genuineness of their faith and repentance by being baptized. The disciples of Jesus, rather than Jesus himself, did the baptizing" (see John 3:22; 4:1-2).*

*"Just before he returned to his heavenly Father, the risen Christ told his disciples to spread the good news of his kingdom worldwide and to baptize those who believed" (Matthew 28:19).*

The book of Acts shows how the early Christians carried out his command: *Acts 2:38,41; 8:12,35-39; 10:47-48; 16:13-15,31-33; 18:8*

Baptism was so readily acknowledged as the natural and immediate consequences of faith that the New Testament links the two inseparably. The object of saving faith is Jesus Christ and what he has done through his death and resurrection. Paul, the great interpreter of Christian belief and practice, saw baptism as more than just a declaration of faith; he saw it as having meaning that is tied up with the unique union that believers have with Jesus Christ.

*Romans 6:3 / Galatians 3:27*

According to Paul's teaching, baptism is an expression of union with Christ in dying to sin and being raised with Christ to new life. When Christ died and rose again, believers died and rose again in baptism. They demonstrate this in their baptism, but they must also make it true in practice.

## DISCUSSION

*Why should baptism come after we have received salvation?*

Baptism is also a witness, or testimony. It declares that believers are cleansed from sin, given the Holy Spirit, and introduced into the body of Christ, the church.

*Acts 22:16 / Acts 10:47 / 1 Corinthians 12:13  
Galatians 3:26-28*

Peter, like Paul, interprets Christian baptism in relation to the death and resurrection of Christ. He sees judgment and salvation pictured in baptism, as they were pictured in the flood of Noah's time. Christ died to bear God's judgment on sin, but he rose from death to new life. Through him believers are cleansed from sin and made sharers in a new and victorious life (see 1 Peter 3:20-4:1).

The community that believers enter through their conversion is not a man-made club, but the kingdom of God.

## PRAY

Thank God for Jesus' example in being baptized and beginning His public ministry. Pray that we would understand Jesus' role as a bridge between us and God, and that we would faithfully follow Him. Pray for those who need to take the next step of obeying God through baptism.

## DISCUSSION

*How can you demonstrate your salvation in practice?*