

YOUTH BAPTISM FAQ

Why should my child be baptized?

The only biblical requirement for baptism is faith in Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness of sins and the fulfillment of all his promises including eternal life. However, College Park elders recommend that children wait until at least age 11 before considering baptism—not because we doubt that a young child can be truly born again but because of a larger discipleship strategy that we have for young people in the church. Please see [Reasons for Waiting](#) to learn more.

I have more than one child who wants to be baptized. What do you recommend?

If the children being baptized are ready and sufficiently prepared, it is certainly acceptable for more than one child in a family to be baptized at the same time. However, there are some reasons why parents should consider preparing their children one at a time. Since a significant part of the preparation process involves 1:1 sessions, many parents have appreciated being able to focus on one child at a time. Also, it is not uncommon for parents to discover during the preparation process that the candidate is not ready and should therefore wait to be baptized. Encouraging one child to wait becomes more difficult when another child in the family is ready. Parents in this situation often feel more pressure to proceed with the baptism of child who should otherwise be encouraged to wait.

My child was baptized when he/she was a baby. Should he/she be baptized again?

Yes. The Bible teaches that baptism is for those who are trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of their sins and for the fulfillment of all his promises including eternal life (Acts 2:41, 8:12, 10:47–48). Therefore, we recommend that children wait until sometime after age 11 when they are able to understand, and we are confident that they are whole-heartedly embracing the gospel and committed to passionately follow Jesus Christ.

After my child is baptized, is she automatically a member of the church?

Yes and no! Yes, because in Christ “*we are all baptized into one body...*” (1 Cor. 12:13). That “body” is the Church. College Park is a local expression of Christ’s Church which has “members” and a membership process which we encourage young people to pursue after baptism.

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Who decides if my child is ready to be baptized?

Ultimately, College Park elders are responsible for all things related to baptism at the church and thus final approval of all candidates for baptisms rests with the elders. However, we view this preparation as a partnership with parents. The process is designed to help parents be the first to discern if their child is ready or not.

I am a single parent. Is my former spouse expected to be involved?

The simple answer to this question is “let’s talk,” since the specific circumstances can vary from family to family. However, there are two priorities which can help to inform this decision. The first is for any parent who is involved must be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. The second is that the parent should have spiritual interest and influence in the young person’s life and faith. Please let us know if you would like to arrange for one our elders to understand your situation and explore possibilities with you.

If I attend the Parent Orientation for one child, do I need to attend it again for my second child?

Once you attend a Parent Orientation, you are not “required” to attend it again for a second child. However, we welcome parents to repeat the session if they would like to have a refresher before starting the process with another child. Also, the orientation provides an opportunity to connect with other parents at the church who are preparing their children at the same time.

How are parents involved in the Baptism Service?

This varies depending on the service and on the family situation. Once a year, we have a special Youth Baptism Service in which parents are more involved than they would be in a regular service. In most baptism services, parents are often standing with their children at the waters’ edge and are prepared to receive them with a towel after the baptism. Many times, a parent—especially a father—will be in the water to assist with the actual baptism.

Can anyone baptize my child?

Although there are exceptions, generally baptisms at College Park are officiated by a pastor or elder of the church.

Is it okay to plan a private baptism service for my child in a location other than the church?

Although there are exceptions, we encourage candidates to be baptized in one of the public services of the church. The Apostle Paul reminds us that “*we are all baptized into one body...*” (1 Cor. 12:13). That “body” is the Church, and College Park is the local expression of Christ’s Church. Therefore, it makes the most sense for people to be baptized in the context of their local church community.