

YOUTH INSTRUCTION CLASS LESSON 7: WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Review

What are the *means of grace*?

In your own words, describe baptism as you understand it.

Luther's Explanation

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water. It is water used by God's command and connected with God's Word.

What is that Word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

- To whom was Jesus speaking in Matthew 28:18-19? (945)
- Who are Jesus' disciples? John 8:31 (842)

Baptism Is Not a Human Custom

There are lots of traditions and customs that we follow in our churches. (Putting up a Christmas tree, lighting candles on the altar, etc.) Customs made up by people can sometimes be changed or ignored altogether. Baptism is *not* just a tradition or custom made up by people. It is something that Jesus Himself asked us to do.

Applying the Water

In Christian baptism, the water does not have to be applied in any particular way. The word *baptize* simply means "to apply water." See Mark 7:4 (947).

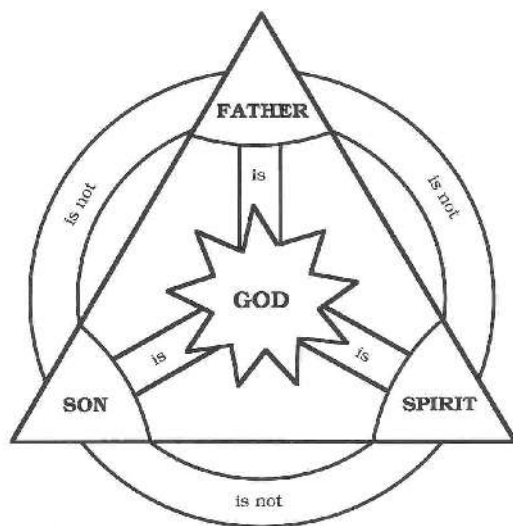
- What are some of the ways the water of baptism could be applied?

Baptism and the Word Of God

- Read Martin Luther's brief explanation of baptism again.
- Not just any use of water is considered a Christian baptism. In order to have Christian baptism, *we must use the water in connection with God's word.*
- What is the word of God that is part of baptism?

The word of God in baptism tells us that we are baptized *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Who Is the *Triune* God?



The Bible teaches that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of these statements are true:

- There is only one God.
- The Father is fully God.
- The Son (Jesus) is fully God.
- The Holy Spirit is fully God.
- There are not three gods, but one God.

This is a mystery. We don't understand how God can be one and three at the same time, but the Bible tells us that this is true.

Baptized In God's Name

In baptism, the word of God tells us that we are baptized *in God's name* (in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). What does it mean to be baptized into God's name?

- Galatians 3:26-27 (951)
- Ephesians 2:19

Baptism Makes You a Member Of God's Family

- What blessings and privileges do you have as a member of your earthly family?

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

- What blessings and privileges do you have as a member of God's family?

- ☐ _____
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Carrying Out Baptism

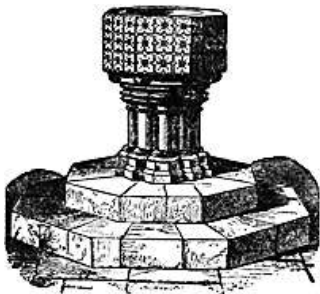
- Who does Jesus want baptized?

Matthew 28:19 (953)

Acts 2:38-39 (954)

- Who can perform a Christian baptism? [Hint: Think about what baptism is according to Luther's explanation. See also Question 229 in the catechism.]
- In church, the pastor generally baptizes people. Why do you think that is? (964)

Special Cases For Baptism



A believer could face a situation where it would be good to administer baptism, but the pastor cannot be present. This might happen when a baby just born is in danger of dying. The important thing in baptism is not who does it, but rather that it is done in the way Jesus commanded us, namely by using water connected with God's word. In an emergency, we can simply take water and pour, sprinkle, or wash the child saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." If there is time, the baptism may also be preceded or followed by a Scripture reading such as Luke 18:15-17, a prayer, and the Lord's Prayer.

- See the last page of the *Lutheran Hymnal* for a service of emergency baptism.

Sponsors and Witnesses

A **sponsor** is someone who agrees to help watch over a child's (or adult's) spiritual well-being after baptism. Having sponsors is not commanded by God, so it is not a necessary part of baptism. It is a custom which our churches use because of the special things a sponsor can do.



- The sponsor can remind the child of its baptism and the meaning of baptism.
- The sponsor can assure the child it was baptized if this is ever in doubt.
- The sponsor can pray for the child and encourage the child to study God's Word faithfully.
- The sponsor might also help keep the child in the true faith should the parents die.

Since we ask sponsors to share our concern for someone's spiritual well-being, it is important that a sponsor have the same Christian confession as the child's parents. That is why we ask only members of our congregation or church body to be sponsors.

A **witness** is different than a sponsor. If we ask someone to serve as a witness to a child's baptism, we are asking that person only to be a witness to the fact that the child was baptized. Anyone can witness a baptism.



Memory Passage

Martin Luther's explanation to the first part of baptism (the box on page one of this lesson).

Assignment

- Learn the memory passage.
- Follow your Daily Bible Readings.