

BAPTISM PREPARATION GUIDELINES

(Please see below for guidelines regarding your personal testimony and what to expect during the baptism process)

YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY:

Your personal testimony is a natural introduction into sharing the Gospel of Christ. Use the following guidelines to help you develop your own story of what God has done in your life. Write your story out on page 2 of your **Baptism Worksheet**.

1. You have a story to tell, so tell it! People will marvel when you share how much Jesus has done for you (Mk 5:20).
2. Ask God to give you insights into how He has worked in your life.
3. You do not need to be an experienced speaker. Simply share from your heart about how you have experienced the love and grace of Christ, and how you now want to share that good news with others.
4. To help you as you prepare, read Acts 22, 23, and 26. Note Paul's **before**, **how**, and **after**. Guide your testimony around these three areas. Be sure to use your own words. Below are some thoughts to get you started for each part of your story.

a. BEFORE I received Christ, I lived and thought this way...

- Spend a brief time on the **before**. This is not a biography from childhood. It is best to start at a time in life which relates to your experience with Christ.
- If you became a Christian as a child, be thankful for the blessings that came with your salvation, including God's protection.
- If you didn't meet Christ until later in life, you can mention your struggles with sin, but do not dwell on it or glorify it.

b. HOW I received Christ through faith and repentance...

- Focus on expressing your **faith and repentance** in this part of your testimony. Be as specific as possible, but don't make the circumstances of your conversion the focus. Your salvation is based on God's work of grace in your life and the promises He's made, not your experiences or feelings. Tell of how you came to *believe* in Jesus and put *your* faith in Him, and that you *repented* of your sins.
 - When you speak of your faith in Christ, use words and phrases that accurately communicate your experience, such as: "I placed my trust in Christ to forgive me of my sins," or "I saw my need for a relationship with Christ and received Him as my Lord and Savior."
 - Using your own words, mention repentance (how you turned from living for self and sin), and chose that which is better (an abundant life in Christ).

c. NOW with Christ in my life, I live and think this way...

- Explain some of the most significant ways that Christ changed your life, and how He is still changing your life today as your Lord and Savior. Don't create the illusion that all things are perfect, but rather that He's doing a work in you and you continue to trust in Him.
- Some areas where you may have seen changes are:
 - Relationships
 - Atmosphere in the home
 - Bad habits
 - Inner peace and new attitudes
 - Changing your priorities and goals, forsaking idols
 - Surrendering to God vs. being in control
- Some areas where you are applying God's Word to your life might be:
 - Love and forgiveness
 - Fulfillment and peace of mind
 - A new perspective on life
 - Assurance from fear
 - Assurance of eternal life
 - A new purpose for living
 - Fellowship and a sense of belonging
 - Inner strength and witnessing
 - Being understanding of others
 - Surrendering to God vs. being in control

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WHAT TO EXPECT:

- 1. A Few Days Prior:** One of our pastor staff will contact you a few days before your baptism to answer any questions, review your testimony, and inform you of any remaining details
 - 2. Pre-Baptism Meeting:** The Pre-Baptism Meeting is held an hour before the baptism service begins, and covers details for the service. We recommend coming to the meeting already wearing the clothes that you will be baptized in during the service. We will provide you with your own special baptism shirt that you'll receive during the meeting.
 - 3. What to Bring:**
 - Dark shorts work best (*come wearing these*)
 - A change of clothes
 - Two large towels
 - A plastic bag for your wet clothes
 - Socks to wear in the water (*optional*)
 - Flip flops (*optional*)
 - Hair drying (*optional*)
 - 4. Your Personal Testimony:** While it will be helpful to have your testimony written out completely as you prepare, please be ready during your baptism to be able to share your story from heart. Your baptizer will know your story well enough to help guide you along if needed.
 - 5. Be in Prayer:** Pray that God will use your baptism in a special way—in your own life, and as a testimony to others of His amazing grace!
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If you have further questions or concerns regarding your baptism, please contact the Church Office at (505) 600-1745, or by emailing info@verticalchurchabq.org.