

**TSC  
YTH.**



**TALKING TO YOUR  
TEEN ABOUT  
SPIRITUAL DECISIONS**

# SALVATION

What an exciting moment when your student accepts Christ as personal Lord and Savior! As he or she begins asking questions to which you may or may not know the answers, we want to come alongside you and provide this helpful guide. While it won't answer all of your student's questions, hopefully it will answer some of yours. It's totally fine not to know all the answers.

**First**, we encourage you to have a conversation with your student about his or her decision. Students should explain it in their own words. This will be a moment when you will want to jump in and help them understand the significance, but it's important to allow them to verbalize their decision.

**Second**, we encourage you to think about the next steps for your student and yourself (as parents):

- What should I do as a parent?
  - » Pray for your student in his or her new life and walk with the Lord.
  - » Invest into his or her decision by buying a Bible, a devotional, a journal, etc.
  - » Celebrate that decision by going out to dinner, getting a cake and party streamers inviting his/her friends over and having a party, etc.
  - » Remember that decision every year and make it a big deal. This is the best decision your student will ever make! Tip: Put it in your calendar so you don't forget each year.
- What's next for my student?
  - » There are two things we would encourage you to begin talking about with your student that come straight from Matthew 28:19-20:
  - » 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
  - » Baptism ("baptizing them") – The outward expression of an inward decision to follow Christ comes only after we have accepted Christ. We have an additional Parent Guide that is focused specifically on baptism.
  - » Discipleship ("teaching them") – An older student or adult teaches a younger student what it means to observe all that Jesus commanded of us. This discipling could come from you, a LifeGroup leader, a TSC YTH staff member, a coach, a family friend, a relative, etc. who is strong in their faith.

**Lastly**, reach out to TSC YTH and let us know how we can help you navigate this as a parent and as a family. We desire to partner with you at all points in your student's spiritual life including this one.

# BAPTISM

What an exciting moment when your student decides to take this step of obedience. What is baptism? Why do we baptize the way we do? What's the difference in "dunking" and "sprinkling"? Why do we use water instead of orange juice? We are sure you will want to understand this topic before you talk with your student.

We want this guide to be a helpful start to answer some of these questions for your student but, more importantly, to give you a tool to have a great conversation about it. Below you will find answers to many of your (and your student's) questions.

## What Is Baptism?

- Baptism is the act of a believing Christian to publicly confess a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. It is the symbolic washing away of one's old, sinful past and the rising again to live a life God's way. The act of baptism can be defined as an outward expression of an inward decision.

## What Does Baptism Mean?

- Baptism illustrates Jesus' burial and Resurrection.
  - » Christ died for our sins.... He was buried ... he was raised from the dead. —1 Corinthians 15:3-4
  - » For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. —Colossians 2:12
- Baptism illustrates new life as a Christian.
  - » For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. —Romans 6:4

## Is Baptism Necessary to Be Saved?

- Baptism doesn't make you a Christian – it shows that you already are one. Baptism does not "save" you; only your faith in Christ does that.
  - » Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." —John 14:6
- Think of baptism as a wedding ring – it's the outward symbol of the commitment you make in your heart.

## **Why Are We Baptized?**

- To follow the example set by Jesus:
  - » One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized....  
—Luke 3:21
- Jesus commanded it:
  - » Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. —Matthew 28:19

## **When Should You Be Baptized?**

- As soon as you believe! There is no reason to delay! You should be baptized as soon as you have put your faith in Jesus' work on the Cross for you. (See Acts 2:41; 8:35–38; 9:17–18.)

## **How Do We Baptize at Thompson Station Church?**

- We baptize by immersion, which means to be placed completely under water. We baptize by immersion for two reasons:
  - » Jesus was baptized that way.
  - » As Jesus was coming up out of the water.... —Mark 1:10
  - » Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion.
  - » He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water.... —Acts 8:38–39

## **I Was Baptized as a Baby ... What Do I Do?**

- That is a great question! Since baptism is meant for those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, we want everyone to be baptized as a follower of Jesus. Depending on your upbringing, this can be a tough topic, but a great one to discuss with those who were baptized as an infant. Please give us a call and allow one of our staff members to discuss this with you.

## **My Student Wants to Be Baptized.**

- If you have any questions, please call the Thompson Station Church office at 615-791-8319 to talk to Pastor Dane, Pastor DeMaria or Ashley Loera. You can also reach out to your student's Life Group Leader and talk with him or her.

# A CALL TO MINISTRY

What an exciting moment when your student hears God's call into full-time ministry! For many of you, this will be a scary thought. Will my student be able to provide for a family? Will he give up his dreams of playing professional baseball? Will she live across the ocean in a completely foreign land?

All of these questions are valid thoughts; however, they aren't necessary quite yet. Below is a guide for how to respond when your student tells you this news.

## PAUSE, BREATHE & ASK

First, take a moment to pause and breathe! Don't say anything. Many times, when we respond in the moment as parents, we say things we don't mean or react with body language that is very negative. In this moment, your student needs support and love – so pause, breathe, and listen. Then ask the following questions (if your student hasn't already answered them) so you can hear the whole story:

- “Tell me the story of what happened and how God was moving in your life to this decision.”
- “Do you know what area of ministry you think you are being called to?”
- “As your parent, how can I help you pursue this calling?”

## ENCOURAGE

Second, continue to foster this decision by encouraging your student to figure out what calling God may have. There are a few ways to do this:

1. Connect your student with a Thompson Station Church Youth staff member. Email Ashley Loera at [aloera@tsclife.org](mailto:aloera@tsclife.org).
2. If your student isn't already in discipleship, encourage that step in joining a D group made up of people their grade/gender. Sign them up at [TSCLife.org/Youth](https://TSCLife.org/Youth).
3. Ask him or her about applying for Influence Team. This is the leadership team of our ministry where students own and run their ministry. With several different teams and interests, this is a great way to begin figuring out what your student's calling is.

## INVEST

Lastly, constantly pour into your student's spiritual life and calling by having conversations, showing love, and pushing him or her to prayerfully work through what God is doing in his or her life. Students need to know that you, their parents, believe in them and love them. We can't stand in the way of God when He is moving in the hearts and lives of our students!

Resources:

- Dangerous Calling by Paul Tripp
- LEAD by Paul Tripp
- The Call to Ministry by Robert Mohler, Donald Whitney, Daniel Dumas

# REDEDICATION

“Wait, I thought you already accepted Christ?” “Didn’t you do that when you were 6 years old?” “I’m confused!” These are common thoughts that run through a parent’s mind when a student comes home and says they accepted Christ into their hearts again. One of the biggest problems is understanding what rededication is. There are two common scenarios in which people rededicate their lives:

1. When students or adults who accepted Christ at a young age realize their own faith is stagnant and off course. They may be living in sin or they may have accepted Christ but never grew spiritually. At LifeGroups or an event, they come to the realization that despite being a Christian already, they want a stronger relationship with Christ. They rededicate their life and essentially restart their spiritual growth.
2. When students who thought they accepted Christ at an earlier time but didn’t understand all that this new relationship with God required. They may have been to church many times, but are just now understanding the true nature of salvation. Technically, this is a first-time conversion, but they might not understand that.

## **As a Parent, What Do I Do?**

The best thing you can do is ask your student questions. Figuring out which category above your student fits into is crucial: One means they know Christ, and the other means they don’t, so eternity is in the balance. Use the following questions to help you determine which category they fit:

- “Tell me when you accepted Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.”
- “What led to your wanting to rededicate your life to Christ?”
- “What does ‘rededicating your life to Christ’ mean to you?”
- “How do you want your life to change now that you have made this decision?”

The second-best thing you can do is encourage your student in these ways:

How can your student continue to build this relationship with Jesus? What should he or she do?

1. Communicate with God – Talk to Him as if talking to a close friend or a parent.
  - This communication can be in the shower, through journaling, out in nature, through art, while on the bus or a bike, or while driving.
  - There is not a formal way to speak to God or anything to prep for before talking with Him.
2. Discuss with friends, Life Group Leaders, Youth Pastors or you about what God is teaching him or her.
  - Share struggles, hopes, and the way God is asking him or her to move forward in his/her faith.
  - Join a Life Group or get back into his/her own Life Group.
  - Journal the words and ideas that God is giving.
3. Proclaim the promises and words of God over his or her life!
  - Speak the values and truths learned from previous readings of the Bible to the ones being read now.
  - Speak out loud these promises of God and claim them through prayer and discussion.
4. Commit to stay plugged in to a Christian community by regularly attending TSC YTH Sunday morning Life Group's, MDWK services and Thompson Station Church worship. A good way to stay plugged in is by communicating with and hanging out with good friends from church.  
Parents, keep up to date with all that we are doing at TSC YTH. Join our mailing list at [TSClife.org/Youth](https://TSClife.org/Youth). Join our TSC Youth Facebook page that is specifically for parents.
5. Get involved in a discipleship relationship with someone who is spiritually mature influence on his or her life.