

# BIG IDEA SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Small groups that focus on the Big Idea for the week can use this guide to apply the message to life and take action. Feel free to use whatever parts of this guide best fit your group personality and time frame. All verses, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version (NIV).

## 04.04/05.09 // WHY DO WE DO THAT? BAPTISM

**Big iDEA:** Jesus told us to be baptized, and made it the place where we express our faith in Him, and receive assurance of salvation.

### // Ice Breaker \_\_\_\_\_

**Option 1:** Do you have a family tradition that carries great meaning...that makes you feel part of the family?

**Option 2:** What is your favorite water activity?

### // Questions for Discussion \_\_\_\_\_

**Brett said in the message:** "Baptism can stir up a lot of emotions in people because it may have a lot to do with how you were raised, and your family identity, and denominational loyalty. But I want to ask you to set all that aside, and hear me out. Because lots of opinions people hold about baptism don't come from a careful study of Scripture. We're not going to be concerned today with what any church says, or what any priest or pastor says, or what anyone's parents or grandparents say. We're always going to ask, "What does God say in His Word?"  
That's what we want this to be: a study of God's Word.

#### 1 What is the prerequisite for baptism?

##### **Acts 2:42**

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

##### **Acts 8:12**

...When they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

#### 2 Some call baptism "an outward demonstration of an inward decision." Why should we consider baptism more than just a "sign" that we're already saved? What is taking place when we are baptized?

##### **Acts 2:38**

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

##### **Acts 22:16**

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

##### **1 Peter 3:21**

...Baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.... (NASB)

##### **Galatians 3:26-27**

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.... (NLT)

#### 3 Since Jesus had nothing to repent of, what was the point of his baptism?

##### **Mark 1:4-5**

And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

##### **Hebrews 4:15**

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

#### **John 1:29-31**

29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

#### **4 What message does your being baptized convey that words alone cannot?**

##### **Colossians 2:12**

...Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

#### **5 After you accepted Christ, how long did you wait before you were baptized? Why do you think most people wait to be baptized? Why is baptism something that should not be delayed?**

##### **Acts 2:41**

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

##### **Acts 22:16**

And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

##### **Paul & Lydia – Acts 16:13-15**

<sup>13</sup>On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. <sup>14</sup>One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. <sup>15</sup>When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home.

##### **Paul & the Philippian Jailer -- Acts 16:30-33**

<sup>30</sup>He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup>They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." <sup>32</sup>Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. <sup>33</sup>At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. Acts 16:30-33

#### **6 Some point to the thief on the cross next to Jesus getting into Paradise without baptism. Besides the fact that the thief did not have access to water, there was no baptism into Christ yet. Why not? What had not yet happened? Why hadn't the "terms" of the New Covenant [Last Will & Testament] of Christ been put into effect yet?**

##### **Acts 2:36-38**

<sup>36</sup>"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." <sup>37</sup>When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" <sup>38</sup>Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

##### **Hebrews 9:17**

...because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. <sup>18</sup>This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood.

#### **7 Why do you think the Lord chose water as the element used in baptism? What "liquid" are we "sprinkled with" in baptism?**

##### **Hebrews 10:22**

"...Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."

##### **Hebrews 9:13-14**

<sup>13</sup>The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. <sup>14</sup>How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

#### **8 How were you baptized, as an adult, child, or infant? Beyond the Greek meaning of the word "baptize" as "immerse," what other indications do we have that baptism is by immersion?**

**Acts 8:38**

And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

**Matthew 3:16**

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.

**Romans 6:4**

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

**9 Brett said: "Water doesn't save us. Jesus saves us. But he has appointed baptism as the place or the occasion for being saved." Faith is absolutely essential as the means for receiving salvation. We are saved by grace through faith in/at baptism. What is the difference between the "means" and the "occasion" or "place"? Why are each of these prepositions (by, through, in/at) so important?**

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

<sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast.

**10 Some reject the importance of baptism having anything to do with salvation because it is a something you "do." So they think that it must be a "good work". Why do you think baptism doesn't qualify as a human meritorious work that we do to earn salvation?**

**John 6:28-29**

Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

**Titus 3:5**

...He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit...."

**11 In the early church every Christian was an immersed believer. Today, many believers have not been immersed. We don't want to judge their salvation, but how can we approach them about the importance of salvation? If someone has already been living as a Christian without immersion, with the evidence of true conversion and "fruit" (Christlike character), what would you say to encourage them that immersion is still needed or important?**

**Mark 16:15-16**

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

**Ephesians 4:4-5**

There is...one Lord, one faith, one baptism....

**12 Whom would you like to see get baptized? What fears to you have with talking to a friend or family member about Christ?**

**Matthew 10:32**

"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven."

## // Application \_\_\_\_\_

**Read and commit to memory Mark 16:16**

*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

**What has this study meant to you in:**

- Has your view on baptism changed?
- Has it strengthened the truth of baptism for you?
- Has it encouraged you to take the step of baptism?
- Other?

## **// Prayer**\_\_\_\_\_

**Pray hard that you will have the boldness to invite several people to Southpoint.  
Pray for 5 people you would like to see accept Christ and be baptized.**