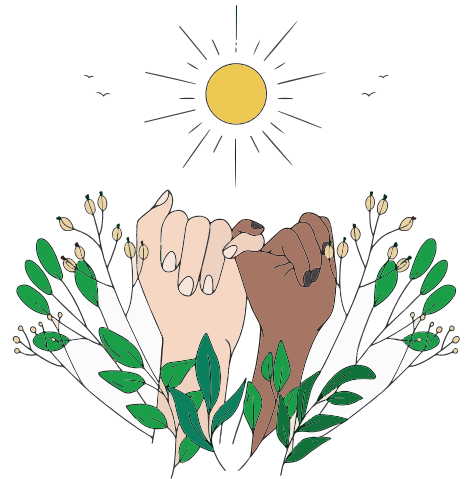


Session for young people on baptism



Outcomes

By the end of the session young people:

- will better understand PCI teaching and beliefs on baptism, of both children and adults;
- will have the opportunity to explore their questions around baptism;
- will consider their own personal response to baptism.

GAME: Signs

(Instructions – www.jubed.com/view/Signs)

Play this game to help the young people mix, relax and start to explore the theme for the evening.

Link: Baptism is not a sign I make, but a sign God makes to me.

ACTIVITY: Guess the logo

[Download and show some common signs, symbols and logos. Ask which products and companies they represent. Ask what message they communicate e.g. McDonalds – fast food; BMW – expensive car; Amazon – quick service direct to your home.]

Link: We live in a world of images. Signs, symbols and logos speak to us as well as words.

INTRO: God speaks in words and pictures

Alongside the message of the good news of the gospel written for us in the Bible, God has given us two pictures that illustrate what is written there – baptism and the Lord's Supper. In slightly different ways, both help us visualise that God has given the life of his Son, Jesus, to bring salvation to those who put their faith in him and commit to following his ways in their lives.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Use some of these questions to explore the young people's current understanding and experience of baptism. It might be helpful to write or draw their responses.

- *Where and when have you seen a baptism? Describe what was happening.*
- *What was the minister doing or saying?*
- *What did the parents/person being baptised/congregation do and say?*
- *How is this similar or different to other forms of baptism that you may have heard about?*

Write on a post-it, one or two questions that you have about baptism? (These should be referred back to as we work through the material.)

TRIGGER TALK: Washed clean

Being clean has become very important to us today. How many cleaning products can you name? (You could play this as a quick name game). Some examples are toothpaste, shampoo, shower gel, face cleansers, washing powder, shower cleaner, car cleaner, window cleaner, patio cleaner... there are lots!

One of the main pictures or signs that we find in the Bible is of God making us clean. Sin is pictured as something from which we need to be cleansed. Jesus is the one who can do that by his perfect life, offered up in our place on the cross to take the punishment our sin deserves. God tells us lots about this in the Bible, but he also gives us a really simple picture to remind us of his power to cleanse us from our sin. It's called baptism. Let's explore that further now.

>> **Show the 'Baptism' video clip**
vimeo.com/presbyterianireland/baptism-introduction

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- *What most caught your attention?*
- *Have you or anyone in your family been baptised?*
- *(If you were baptised as child) – why do you think your parents thought baptism was important?*
- *On a scale of 1-10, how important do you think baptism is?*
- *(Check in with reference to the post-its) Which questions have we explored so far?*

TRIGGER TALK 2: Washing before entering

In swimming pools we often pass through a shower before we enter the main pool. I'm sure we all appreciate why this is important – maybe for some more than others! Baptism is a bit like washing before entering. As we are baptised, God welcomes us into the family of his church.

If we have been baptised as a child, it is great to know, that from our earliest days, God has invited and included us in his family, the church. Being part of the church family in this way is something we often take for granted – but it is amazing!

- Our church family is something we grew up in;
- Its ways of worship became something we quickly understood because we were brought along week by week;
- In our church family we have been introduced to God as our heavenly Father, encouraged to love and trust Jesus as our Saviour, guided in living his way with the help of the Holy Spirit. Others our own age have been like brothers and sisters;
- Older Christians have gathered around, taken an interest in us and cheered us on as we have grown from being toddlers, to children, to young people;
- We know so much about God and have experienced his love in ways many of those the same age as us never have.

We won't remember our baptism, but every time we see a child being baptised, it is a reminder of how much we have to be thankful for that, from our earliest days, we grew up in his family of the church. Watch this clip in which Suzie talks about how being baptised as a child means so much to her.

>> **Show the 'My story of being baptised – Suzie's story' video clip**
vimeo.com/presbyterianireland/suziesstory

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- *What struck about Suzie's story?*
- *How is this similar or different from your story?*

If appropriate, encourage a youth leader or young person to briefly share the importance of baptism to them.

If we haven't been baptised as a child, then baptism marks our being brought into God's family at a later age. This too is amazing!

- God has sought us out to be his child;
- We have come to appreciate how he forgives, washes away our sin and gives us a new start in Jesus;
- Baptism confirms all this is true;
- It gives us a way of showing that we want to follow Jesus;
- We are welcomed into a great new family of people of all ages who also love Jesus and want to follow him.

Baptism also admits us to membership of the church. For adults coming to faith, it usually takes place in connection with becoming a communicant member and taking the Lord's Supper for the first time. Watch this clip in which Beth talks about how being baptised as an adult means so much to her.

>> Show the 'My story of being baptised as an adult – Beth's story' video clip vimeo.com/presbyterianireland/bethsstory

GROUP DISCUSSION:

- What struck you about Beth's story?
- Which of our questions have we now answered? Which are left?
(If you don't know the answer, chat to your minister.)

RESPOND:

Pick one or more options that best suit your group.

- Write down one thing that you want to take away from this session.
- Ask, after this session, on a scale of 1-10, how important do you think baptism is?
- Pray together – giving thanks for God's work in your life.
- Worship: sing a song reflecting on what Jesus has done for us.
- Take it home: ask your parents their thoughts on baptism.
- What next? If you haven't been baptised, why not speak to your youth leader or minister to get more information.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Moment of a lifetime

Whether you were baptised as a child or a young person, your baptism is a great moment, something to treasure and look back upon with thankfulness to God. It can be a source of strength and reassurance when troubles or doubts arise on your future journey of faith. God really has promised to be your God. Jesus really does forgive and wash away all your sins. The Holy Spirit really is in you to give you power to live God's way. God has not only said it in his word, he has drawn you into the big picture of what he has done in Jesus through being baptised. You are part of his family, the church. You have your own unique story to tell of how all this came true in your life.

Maybe you are a follower of Jesus but haven't been baptised and would like to find out more. If so, why not chat to one of your youth leaders who can ask your minister to provide more information and talk to you about it?

