

A decorative blue floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns surrounds the central text.

**Baptism of the
Children of
Believers: Form**

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Baptism of the Children of Believers: Form 2

The institution

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us hear our Lord's command concerning the sacrament of holy baptism. After he had risen victorious from the grave, Jesus said to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."¹ In obedience to this command the church baptises believers and their children.

The promises

Let us hear the promises of God which are confirmed in baptism.

The Lord made this great promise to Abraham: "I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you."²

In later years, though Israel was unfaithful, God renewed his promise through the prophet: "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord: I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people ... for I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."³

In the fullness of time God came in Jesus Christ to give pardon and peace through his blood shed on the cross, the "blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."⁴

After Jesus had risen from the dead, the apostles proclaimed: "Repent and be baptised, 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.

The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”⁵

Anticipating the fulfilment of God’s promises, Paul assures us, “If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him.”⁶

These are the unfailing promises of our Lord.

The instruction

Let us also recall the teaching of Scripture concerning the sacrament of baptism.

The water of baptism signifies the washing away of our sin by the blood of Christ and the renewal of our lives by the Holy Spirit.⁷ It also signifies that we are buried with Christ.⁸ From this we learn that our sin has been condemned by God, and that we are to hate it and consider ourselves as having died to it. Moreover, the water of baptism signifies that we are raised with Christ.⁹ From this we learn that we are to walk with Christ in newness of life. All this tells us that God has adopted us as his children, “and if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.”¹⁰

God graciously includes our children in his covenant, with its promises and obligations.¹¹ Jesus himself embraced little children, and blessed them;¹² and the apostle Paul said that children of believers are holy.¹³ So, just as the children of the old covenant received the sign of circumcision, our children are given the sign of baptism. We are therefore always to teach our little ones that they have been set apart to God and are to live for him.

Thus in baptism God seals the promises he gave when he made his covenant with us, calling us and our children to put our trust for life and death in Christ our Saviour, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him in obedience and love. If however we turn away from God we become covenant breakers and our baptism will testify against us.

Prayer of preparation

Father in heaven, we pray that you will never destroy us in our sin as you did with the flood, but save us as you did believing Noah and his family. Spare us as you did the Israelites who walked safely through the sea.

May Christ, who died for our sins and was raised again as the Lord of life, always keep us and our little ones in the grip of his hand.

Holy Father, may your Spirit separate us from sin and openly mark us with a faith that can stand the light of day, and endure the dark of night.

Prepare us now, O Lord, to respond with glad hope to your promises so that we, and all entrusted to our care, may drink deeply from the well of living water.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Vows

The minister addresses the parents:

Since you have presented your child for holy baptism, you are asked to answer the following questions before God and his people:

First: Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, accept the promises of God, and affirm the truth of the Christian faith which is taught in the Bible and confessed in this church of Christ?

Second: Do you believe that your child, though sinful by nature, is received by God in Christ as a member of his covenant and his church, and therefore ought to be baptised?

Third: Do you promise, in reliance on the Holy Spirit and with the help of the Christian community, to do all in your power to instruct this child in the truth of the Christian faith and to lead _____ *him/her* by your example to follow Jesus Christ?

The parents respond: We do, God helping us.

The minister addresses the congregation:

Do you, the people of the Lord,
promise to receive _____ *name*

Or: I charge you, people of God,
receive _____ *name* in love;

in love; and as the Lord gives you opportunity pray for _____ *him/her*, help care for _____ *his/her* instruction in the faith, and encourage and sustain _____ *him/her* in the fellowship of believers?

and as the Lord gives you opportunity pray for _____ *him/her*, help care for _____ *his/her* instruction in the faith, and encourage and sustain _____ *him/her* in the fellowship of believers.

The sacrament

The minister may say:

Our Lord said: “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”¹⁴

In administering the sacrament the minister shall say:

_____ *name*, I baptise you into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

A triumphant hymn

Baptismal prayer

Lord our God, you are forever faithful to your promise. Thank you for assuring us again that you will forgive us and receive us as your children in Christ.

Grant wisdom and love to these parents as they carry out the vows they have just made.

We pray for this child and all our children. Enable them to respond in faith to the gospel. Fill them with your Spirit and make their lives fruitful. Uphold them in their hour of trial, and when Christ returns let them celebrate with all the people of God your greatness and goodness forever in the joy of your new creation. Amen.

¹ Matthew 28:18–20.

² Genesis 17:7.

³ Jeremiah 31:33, 34.

⁴ Matthew 26:28.

⁵ Acts 2:38, 39.

⁶ 2 Timothy 2:11, 12.

⁷ Titus 3:5.

⁸ Romans 6:4.

⁹ Colossians 2:12.

¹⁰ Romans 8:17.

¹¹ Genesis 17:7; Acts 2:39.

¹² Mark 10:16.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 7:14.

¹⁴ Mark 10:14.