

What do we believe about Baptism?

The essence of baptism


Baptism is a mark of joining and belonging, a visible sign of entry to the life of the Church. It involves water, although there is no need to immerse the person into a baptismal pool or even in the sea (immersion), or have a little water dripped or smeared on their forehead (sprinkling), or something in-between (pouring).

Baptism always implies a commitment on the part of the person being baptised. But the act of baptism is done to us: someone immerses or sprinkles us, in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That's a sign of grace. While we bring our readiness to live the Christian life, the power and efficacy

There is no baptism on the part of the person baptising. It is God who baptises through the water and the Word. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1272)

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(Luke 3:17). Baptism is a kind of washing away of the dust,
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its way into view.

Second, baptism meant Ø ä ã / Û Ú ã Ø Ú. When Jesus was baptised,
the Holy Spirit touched his life in a new way. From then on, he
knew more deeply and truly
that God was beside him



Baptism in the Church

bring life and hope to other people. Baptism is assurance. It is also calling, task and demand.

Baptism in the Church

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they baptised people in his name. One reason for doing so was that Jesus himself had been baptised, another is that he commanded them to go into the world making disciples of all nations and baptising in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). In the church, baptism became a way of saying that a person's life was focused on Jesus. But it was not long – within a generation or so of Jesus' own time – that Christians were also

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thinking of baptism in terms of the link between the believer's life and the death and resurrection of Jesus. 'We were buried with him in his death, so as he was raised, we too might live a new life' (Romans 6:4).

» and our living becomes his. There is a transition; an old pattern of life no longer claims us, and a new one begins.

'all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:27-28)

Baptism, then, created community. Baptism brought people together, with no sense of rank or status. The world liked to

think in categories. Christians knew better. They were 'all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:27-28). Baptism was a great leveller, not because it cut people down, but because it raised them up, to share the life of Jesus together. It still does.



This is one in a series of booklets about the United Reformed Church. The booklets can be read and downloaded at www.urc.org.uk/believe