

Discussion Questions

Lesson One: Baptism is FOR Adults

Baptism In Community - Why does the church teach that baptism is something done within the community?

Your Own Baptism - If you've been baptized, were you baptized as a child or as an adult? What are your thoughts?

The Catechumenate - Why do you think the church requires a period of instruction before adult baptism?

Lesson Two: What Am I Doing? The Baptismal Rite

The Rite Of Baptism - What strikes you most about the service of baptism as discussed in this lesson?

Supported By All - Why do you think the congregation takes such an active part in the rite? How does this show support? How might you support someone in their life in Christ?

Invitation To Eucharist- Why does it matter that baptism is immediately followed by Eucharist?

Lesson Three: What Happens Next? Living The Baptismal Covenant

Your Own Baptismal Covenant - When was the last time you reflected on the promises made in the Baptismal Covenant? Take another look at them and jot down your immediate thoughts.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T - Anne reminds us that to "respect" means to look at closely. How might that change your understanding of the word or of the promise to respect all humankind?

Daily Reflection - How might you incorporate reflection on your baptismal covenant into your everyday spiritual practices?

Lesson Four: Remembering Your Baptism

A Mystery - How might you incorporate reflection on your baptismal covenant into your everyday spiritual practices?

Regular Worship - Why do you think regular attendance at worship is important? How does the congregation benefit from your being present, and vice versa?

Your Gifts - Do you feel like you know what your particular gifts for ministry and service are? If so, are you offering them up? If not, how might you discover your gifts?

The Takeaway

Baptism is FOR Adults- Though we usually see infants being baptized, the theology of the Episcopal Church and the liturgy show a preference for adult baptism as normative. In the early church, those first baptisms were on adults, who had had an encounter with Jesus Christ or the early disciples and wanted to choose this new life and faith; they were thus converted through baptism. In Scripture we have examples of entire households being baptized. In the Episcopal Church the term is catechumen (from the Greek for "one who is being instructed"); the period of instruction is often called the catechumenate. This period of instruction can last months and takes place within the Christian community. Baptism too happens in the midst of the congregation, most often on Sunday morning during the regular Eucharist. Because we are baptized into the Body of Christ, it makes sense that other members of the Body would be there; the community is there to support us as we live out our life in Christ. The baptismal rite itself, the service, begins with an opening acclamation that references Ephesians – there is one body and one Spirit, one hope in God's call to us, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Thus the stage is set.

What Am I Doing? The Baptismal Rite - You begin by making some pretty big promises in the Presentation and Examination. You are presented by sponsors who have been part of your faith journey. Candidates are asked, "Do you desire to be baptized?" This is a moment of public affirmation and commitment. The promises that follow are in the form of Renunciations and Affirmations- saying no to Satan, but we also say yes, to Jesus' love, to new life. So we follow with 3 promises to turn to Jesus Christ and accept him; to put our trust in his grace and love; to follow and obey him. Immediately you are supported by the congregation who promises to uphold you in your new life and then renews their own baptismal covenant. This is followed by Prayers over the Candidates so that even before they are baptized they are being upheld by the congregation in prayer. Then comes the baptism itself. Thanksgiving over the water; blessing of the water; the candidate is immersed or has water poured over them, then the ancient words of the baptism, then using chrism blessed by a bishop. Immediately the newly baptized are prayed over and invited to Eucharist.

What Happens Next? Living the Baptismal Covenant The Baptismal Covenant is an everyday guide to living as a Christian. All baptized people are ministers, and our mission is to bring the reconciling love of Christ into the world. The Baptismal Covenant is also about love, encompasses our relationship with God, and shows us how to share that love with world. The baptized life is one of action and promises show us how to live out a life of faith. It can provide daily reminders and challenges of how to deepen our life in Christ. Baptism doesn't prevent us from sinning but how might repentance and returning to the Lord become a daily practice for us, at home and at church and even in our communities? We should seek out people to serve. To "respect" means to look at closely. What would it be like to respect the dignity of the people you most want to avoid? Look at the promises daily: which speak most to you today? Which is easiest? Most challenging?

Remembering Your Baptism Baptism happens at a particular place and time, but the baptized life is a continuous, developing relationship with Jesus Christ. To re-member your baptism means to put it back together again and again as you continue to understand it more and more. Part of the "road map" is found in the Baptismal Covenant but there are many other tools to help you: reading Scripture, taking an online course, attending Bible study, participating in Christian community. You are called to worship and to participation in the Eucharist. Both you and the congregation gain something from your presence. You are also called to ministry and service. What are your particular service and ministry gifts? Learn more about them and offer them. Strengthen your faith through daily spiritual practices like prayer, meditation, seasonal fasting, following the Church liturgical year. Be intentional about renewing and deepening your faith. Remember that baptism is a mystery; give yourself over to this mystery. Remembering your baptism is being willing to live into the mystery, in good times and bad times.

Share Your Learning

We believe the Holy Spirit joined you in this class and would not be surprised if you learned a couple of things that inspired you and may inspire others.

So here's the assignment: Simply write down something that touched you in a sentence or two. Here are some examples: Clare from Texas took the course "Introducing Christian Stewardship with Kristine Miller" and writes, "*God doesn't want our money, God just wants us to want it less.*" Robert from North Carolina took "Introducing the Book of Common Prayer with Roger Ferlo" and writes, "*I learned that 70% of the Book of Common Prayer is directly quoted or paraphrased from the Bible, no wonder I like it so much!*"

If you want to add an image, that works too. Now simply post it to your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, or Google+ account with the hashtag: #churchnext

Not only will you inspire your friends, but your post will show up on the **churchnext.tv** home page for the whole community to see. Thanks for sharing your learning!

Notes

Adult Baptism in the Episcopal Church

with

Anne Kitch

Participant's Guide

Welcome!

It is arguably the most important day of your life: your baptism.

What does it mean and what will it mean? Canon Anne E. Kitch has some great answers. She's a liturgist, author, and priest who gives us a helpful overview of what it means to be baptized in the Episcopal Church. Anne's lectures include:

- Baptism if FOR Adults
- What Baptism Means
- Living the Baptismal Covenant
- Remembering Your Baptism

This course is ideal for use in a blended learning curriculum for clergy and parishes preparing candidates for baptism. It is also helpful for those who are curious about what baptism means. This course will take an average student about 45 minutes to complete.

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