

When is My Child Ready to Get Baptized?

When a child begins asking questions about following Jesus, it's an exciting time! Choosing a relationship with Jesus is the most important decision your child will ever make. As adults, it's our responsibility to help kids understand what it means to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior and then to make the choice to be baptized. Since all kids are different, this process looks different for each one. And while there is no "set age" that a child must be to begin a relationship with Jesus, there are some key indicators you can look for.

Does your child understand abstract concepts? Typically, a child can understand abstract concepts around the age of 7-8. The average four-year-old will think you mean a real bridge when you say Jesus is the bridge back to God. A child who understands abstract concepts will grasp this as an illustration and will connect it to spiritual truth.

Does your child understand what sin is and realize they have sinned? Your child must clearly understand that they have sinned and are in need of a Savior. Before you can be saved you must first understand you are lost without Christ. Some kids understand accountability at age 6 or even younger; others might not understand it until they are 9-10.

Does your child understand what Jesus did on the cross? Your child should have a clear understanding of why Jesus came and the price He paid on the cross for our sins. Your child should move beyond just "Jesus died on the cross for me" to understanding that Jesus died on the cross to pay the price of the sin bill WE owe.

Does your child understand how a person enters into a relationship with God? Your child should understand that we enter a relationship with God by asking Jesus to be our Lord and Savior. They should know we are saved by grace through faith and not by works.

Does your child understand what baptism is? Your child should understand that baptism is not salvific. That means that baptism itself isn't what saves us from sin; it's asking Jesus to be our Lord and Savior. Baptism is a way to tell the world that we have accepted Jesus and that we belong to Him, and that we have changed on the inside.

Want vs. Need. Do you sense your child "wants" to make a decision or "needs" to make a decision? "Wants to" can come from being influenced by the actions of others. "Needs to" comes from a sense of the Holy Spirit's drawing them close.

Is your child persistent? A good sign that God is working in your child's life is that he or she is initiating conversations about it, without being prompted.

The most important thing to remember is that *this is your child's decision*. If they decide they aren't ready yet, that's totally okay! We are going to celebrate when they are ready! We can't decide for them, just as it isn't our role to hold them back. Our job is to walk beside them and encourage them as the Holy Spirit draws them to Jesus.