**3 Ways Christians Have Understood Baptism**

**Instrument of Regeneration**

When baptism is conferred properly, new spiritual life is begun.

*Held by*

Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, high-church Anglicans

*Big idea*

God imparts new life through baptism

*Anglican take*

Accepted. “… the baptized person is brought into a new relation to Christ and His Body. The response of continual faith is needed for this new relation to grow. Nonetheless, Baptism is the divine act creating the new relationship.” (Michael Ramsey)

**Rite of Initiation**

Baptism does not regenerate. But (where faith is present), it conveys spiritual blessings.

*Held by*

Reformed, low-church Anglicans, Methodists, Congregationalists

*Big idea*

Baptism does not regenerate, but confirms faith, increases grace, and grafts you into the church [analogy to OT circumcision]

*Anglican take*

Accepted. “God’s way always has been to build the church by families. Younger members are given welcome until they disqualify themselves.” (J. I. Packer)

**Symbol of Decision**

A public sign of your faith and

commitment

*Held by*

Baptists, Anabaptists, Pentecostals, nondenominational

*Big idea*

New life is already there. Baptism is public statement of what has happened within

*Anglican take*

Not taught, but pastorally accommodated at Savior: we bless children at Eucharist who have not been baptized; and we offer “Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child” rite for parents who prefer not to baptize their child yet