**Why do you baptize babies?**

Four questions and how those might be answered

1. The Bible says that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” but how can a baby possibly have faith, repent of sins, or make a conscious decision for Christ?

* That depends what you mean by “faith”: loving trust or articulate rationality. In the sense of “loving trust,” an infant has daily faith in his or her parents.
* Several Scriptures support the possibility of infant faith:
  + "Yet Thou are He who didst bring me forth from the womb; Thou didst make me trust when upon my mother's breast" (Psalm 22:9).
  + "And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea" (Mark 9:42).
  + "For behold, when the sound of your [Mary’s] greeting reached my [Elizabeth’s] ears [Elizabeth], the baby [John the Baptist] leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:44).

1. But doesn’t infant baptism inoculate a person against true belief?

* The fear that someone who’s been baptized will then say, “I can live however I want; I don’t really need to be converted” is a valid fear. However, no churches that practice infant baptism teach this.
* Traditions that do not practice infant baptism face the same challenge: someone who’s prayed the sinner’s prayer at summer camp and then thinks, “Now I can live however I want.” So the issue is not infant baptism, but the importance of lifelong discipleship.

1. I don’t see a verse in the entire New Testament supporting it.

* True. But neither does the Bible give an example of a child raised in a Christian household and then baptized as an adult. We don’t have evidence either way.
* The Bible nowhere forbids baptizing children.

1. If the Bible doesn’t directly address the issue, why support baptizing children?

* Children were admitted into the Old Testament people of God by a formal ordinance.
* The baptism of households is mentioned in the New Testament: Lydia’s (Acts 16:15); the Philippian jailer’s (Acts 16:33); Stephanas’ (1 Cor. 1:16).
* Jesus’ behavior toward children (e.g. Mark 10:13-16), while not directly supporting infant baptism, suggests children are capable of receiving benefit from our Lord; and he was ready to bless them even though they were too young to understand.
* Infant baptism was uniformly practiced by the early Christians. This continued during and after the Reformation, with infant baptism upheld by Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, and on and on.

### Baptism & Christian Growth

2 ways Christians have approached it

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| **Infant baptized; older child or young adult confesses faith and asks for confirmation** | **Infant dedicated; older child or young adult confesses faith and asks for baptism** |
|  |  |
| Receiving | Understanding |
| Family of faith | Individual decision |
| God’s action | Our response |