

Baptismal Remembrance

SUPPLIES: Handful or so of smooth stones, marker, bowl of water, napkin or towel, paper, pen.

INTRO: While we continue to gather as the church and worship our Lord together weekly there are certain things we are missing out on because we are not physically together as church. We are missing community, corporate worship, fellowship, and receiving the Lord's Supper together. These are not small things. While we are able to bridge the gap over the internet with some, the Lord's Supper is not one of them. Perhaps some of you are hungering and thirsting for the precious gifts of Jesus body and blood (I hope you are). While we eagerly anticipate the church gathering and receiving these gifts together again this is a perfect time to be reminded of the other life giving sacrament that our Lord has given us; Baptism! May this devotional and activity remind you of what God has given to you in your baptism.

PRAYER: Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. You drowned hardhearted Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, foreshadowing this washing of Your Holy Baptism. Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood and a lavish washing away of sin. We pray that You would behold us all according to Your boundless mercy and bless us with true faith by the Holy Spirit, that through this saving flood all sin in us, which has been inherited from Adam and which we ourselves have committed since, would be drowned and die. Grant that we be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all believers in Your promise, we would be declared worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

STUDY: Look up the verses below and consider what each verse says about baptism. What are some of the things God has promised us and does through the waters of baptism? Make a list...

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 2:38; 22:16

Romans 6:1-4

1 Corinthians 6:11

Galatians 3:26-29

Colossians 2:9-14

Titus 3:3-7

1 Peter 2:18-22

(Isaiah 1:18 while not specifically about baptism this verse certainly is reflective of its work)

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ACTIVITY: After you have created your list. Take the stones that you have collected and the marker and write on them these promises and gifts of God that unfold at ones baptism. (ex. Write “forgiven” on a stone, “renewed” on another. Feel free to write many words on one stone or just one thing per stone. When you have filled up your stones place them in the bowl of water.

As you look into the plain old tap water in the bowl you also see the words you wrote on the stones. This is to remind us that the power of our baptism is not found in the water but, the Word of God joined with the water. Martin Luther writes in the Small Catechism, “*How can water do such great things? Certainly not just water, but the Word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this Word of God in the water. For without God’s Word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit.*”

BAPTISMAL REMEMBRANCE: Below is part of a baptismal liturgy sometimes used in our church body. I invite you to slowly read the questions and then respond **aloud** to the questions with the words in bold. If there is more than one of you, you can do a responsive reading back and forth and then switch.

Do you renounce the devil?

Yes, I renounce him

Do you renounce all His works?

Yes, I renounce them

Do you renounce all his ways?

Yes, I renounce them

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son?

Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

Yes, I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

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Do you believe that Your baptism was God's gift to you and that through it He has washed all Your sin away?

Yes, I believe.

At this time I invite you to dip your fingers in the water and make the sign of the cross on your head. If there is someone else with you, you may do this to each other.

*** (Let me be clear this **IS NOT** a rebaptism, it **IS** a reminder of your baptism. God's Word spoken over you at your first baptism remains true and powerful today even if you strayed from the faith for a time. God's Word does what He says it will do. Isaiah 55:11.)

REFLECTION: (Feel free to talk about these with those you are with or with someone over the phone or just spend some time reflecting yourself)

1. Have you ever had to go a period of time when you were dirty, stinky, and unable to shower? How did that feel? How good did it feel finally to rinse off/clean up?
 2. How does baptism compare and contrast with "rinsing off/cleaning up?"
 3. Why should our baptism give us assurance of God's forgiveness?
 4. Why do you think it is so valuable to remember our baptism as often as we can?
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PRAYER: Dear Lord, as we long to receive Your Holy Supper again we are reminded today that all the promises of life and forgiveness have been given to us at our baptisms! Your powerful Word along with the water has washed us, forgiven us, renewed us, raised us, saved us, and so much more. We thank You for this tangible, precious gift that You have given to us. May we remember our baptisms often. In your name, Amen

If you have any questions concerning baptism don't hesitate to reach out. That is why I am here. If you have not been baptized, let's talk more about this gift and God's desire for you to receive it. Email me at pastor.molc@gmail.com.