Avenue Christian FAMILY

STUDY AND CELEBRATION GUIDE: BAPTISM

INTRODUCTION:

The family is the most important place for your child to learn about faith in Christ. The church ministries can help in the process, but it is the parent's privilege and blessing to play the most crucial role. God calls parents to *"bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* **(Ephesians 6:4)**

Baptism and Communion are milestones for our kids. We all want to say, *"My child has experienced these two outward representations of their maturing inward faith walk."*

Often parents ask what age is appropriate for their child to be baptized. As you will see, a child's spiritual condition is far more important than his/her age in determining if they are ready for baptism. We want this outward sign to accurately reflect an inward reality that they are indeed followers of Christ.

INCLUDED:

- Our "Faith at Home" Discipleship Model
- A Study for Parents (Household Adults)
- A Study of Baptism for Families
  - *Study 1: Why Be Baptized?*
  - *Study 2: What Does It Mean?*
  - *Study 3: Who Should Be Baptized?*
- Testimony Preparation

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

Set aside 15-20 minutes to work through each session together. For younger children, do it together as a family. Older children or teens can do the study on their own and then later review it with you as parents and pray together afterward.

- **Prayer:** Taking time to pray together is essential. Follow the prayer instructions in each session.

- **God's Word:** The Bible teaches us what God wants us to know. Use a reader-friendly Bible translation like the NLT or Bible of your choice to help your child easily understand the truths.

- **Answering:** Allowing for questions will help students understand what the Bible teaches about baptism. They may need help understanding the symbolism, but it will be great to see how much they can gain from their study.

- **Talk together:** Spend some time talking about what you have learned. The parent-child relationship is so significant. Allow this time to help you grow closer together as you help your student learn and grow in their faith.

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FAITH AT HOME
FAMILY RESOURCES

We believe that parents are the primary, life-long faith influencers in a child's life and the best disciple-making takes place when students' parents or guardians take the lead. We also know how challenging it can be to disciple your child when we're still growing in our own faith. That's why we've created this discipleship activity for you to use at home. It's based on our Discipleship Model and is designed to help you feel confident as you share your faith with your child.

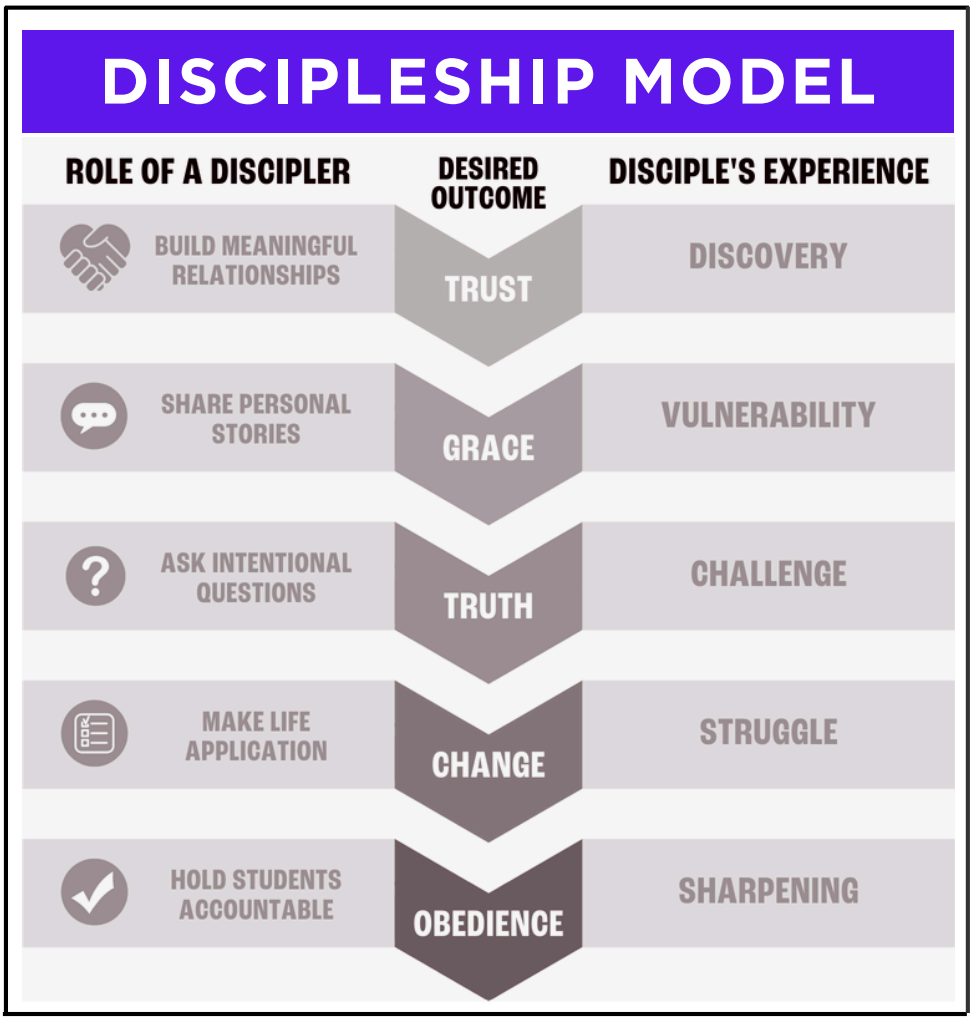
OUR DISCIPLESHIP MODEL

Discipleship is the process of multiplication through relationship, and discipleship takes place when mature believers shape newer believers into committed followers of Jesus Christ. Our Discipleship Model articulates the process of discipleship by outlining the:

ROLE OF A DISCIPLER
Practical steps for you—the disciple maker—to follow.

DISCIPLE'S EXPERIENCE
Emotions & responses these steps might inspire in your child.

DESIRED OUTCOME
Goals for long-term growth in your child's life.



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STUDY AND CELEBRATION GUIDE:

A STUDY FOR PARENTS

(HOUSEHOLD ADULTS: GRANDPARENTS, AUNTS, UNCLES, & OTHERS)

PRAYER:

- Pray for your child through this process.
- Pray that God would work in his or her heart to save them if they have not already made that decision.
- Pray that He would open his/her understanding of Him, their personal faith, and their decision to follow Christ for a lifetime.
- Pray also that God would give you discernment to instruct your child concerning their life in Christ.

READ AND CONSIDER:

- **Read:** Romans 6:1-11
- **Consider:** This passage is a picturesque description of what has happened to believers at conversion and will happen in the future. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward spiritual reality. When instructing your child about baptism, it is wise to only encourage them to be baptized after the spiritual, inward reality is measurable.

- **Read:** Galatians 5:16-26
- **Consider:** Once again, age is less important than the spiritual maturity and understanding of those seeking baptism. Some students are ready sooner than others, even inside a family, and this is OK. A child/student should be able to articulate the basics of their faith—who Jesus is, what He has done for them, and how they trust in what Jesus did to provide a way for them to know God. We should see the evidence of God's Spirit working in our children to create a new life in Christ over time. The new life should have evidence that there has been a change. The Bible calls the *"Fruit of the Spirit"* in Galatians 5. Baptism is an important event, and your desire should be for your child/student to be baptized only once. Consider waiting to baptize your child if these things are not clear.

THINK AND DISCUSS:

Use Back of Sheet to Answer

- Do you feel your child is a true believer and follower of Christ? (*"I don't know" is a valid answer. Doing this study together may help to clarify this.)*
- Can you see ways in which the Spirit of God is gaining control of his/her life? What can you see in your child's attitudes and behavior that lead you to believe they genuinely belong to Christ?
- How have you seen your child grow in his/her relationship with God?
- What signs do you see that make you question if they are indeed believers and growing followers of Christ?
- Being honest, who desires them to be baptized more—you as their parent, or does your child truly desire to be baptized?
- What motivations can you see behind your child's desire? Is it to please you? Are they genuinely concerned about obeying Christ? Do they want to testify of their commitment to Christ?

PRAYER:

- Spend time praying that God will make these things clear to you and your child. Genuinely ask God to give you evidence of where your child is in their faith. Ask God to provide them with a deep desire to understand and obey His word. Also, ask God for help as you guide your child to grow up in his/her faith.

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STUDY OF BAPTISM FOR FAMILIES #1

WHY BE BAPTIZED?

PRAYER:

- Together, pray and ask God to help you learn and understand God's plan for being baptized.

THINK AND DISCUSS

- **Have you ever wondered?** Have you ever wondered why people get baptized? Circle the reasons below that you think are good reasons to be baptized. You may choose to circle NONE of them...

TO IMPRESS MY PASTOR

TO PLEASE MY PARENTS

TO GO SWIMMING

TO SHOW OFF

TO IMPRESS MY FRIENDS

TO CLEAN MY BODY

TO HAVE FUN IN A WATER

Correct Answer: **None** of These

READ AND TALK

- **Read** Matthew 28:19-20.

- **Talk:** Jesus instructed His disciples to remind them what they should do. When someone is in charge, and they tell you exactly what to do, it is which one?

  - ___**A Suggestion:** *Maybe I should do it sometime?*
  - ___**A Command:** *I must obey and do it?*
  - ___**An Idea:** *Something I could do but don't have to?*

- **Read:** Acts 2:38
  - In this verse, who was commanding the new believers to be baptized?

_____

_____

_____

- **Talk:** Whom would you like to invite to see you be baptized? Why would they be someone you would invite?

PRAYER:

- Pray and ask God to help you live to obey and follow Him so your friends see that you love God and are his follower.

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STUDY OF BAPTISM FOR FAMILIES #2

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

PRAYER:

- Talk to God in prayer and ask Him to help you understand this lesson about symbols. He always hears, and He has answers for you in His word, the Bible.

DRAW THE SYMBOL

- **Definition:** A symbol is something that people can see that tells about something else that they can't see.
- **Draw:** Under each word draw a symbol that normally would represent or symoblize each.

RECYLCLING **MUSIC** **HANDICAP ACCESS** **BATHROOM** **DANGER**

- **Discuss:** If you saw one of these symbols hanging on a door outside of a room, what would it tell you about what is happening inside that room?

READ AND TALK

- **Read Romans 6:3-5**
  - Baptism is a symbol or a "sign" ...a spiritual one! We are not asked to wear a symbol or sign walking around. Instead of wearing a sign, we do something else so that others can see what has happened inside us.
  - Look at verse 3; how is baptism explained?
  - Look at verse 4; it says that we are buried with Jesus and raised with Jesus for a reason. What is the reason?
  - Verse 6-7 says we are free; what are we free from?

ANSWER THESE QUESTION FOR YOUR PARENTS/AN ADULT

- Do I really believe that Jesus died for me, and that's the only way I can be forgiven?
- Part of having a "new life" is being serious about obeying God and learning to stop sin. Does my life look like a new life? What sin should I work on getting rid of?

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to help you be strong and serious about living for Him.

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STUDY OF BAPTISM FOR FAMILIES #3

SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

PRAYER:

- Pray for a family member who doesn't know Jesus today. Pray that God would help them to realize that they need Jesus too.

READ AND TALK

- **Read Acts 16:25-34**
    - In this story, Paul taught the jailer and his family about Jesus and how to believe and follow Him after the earthquake.
    - What did the people do first before they were baptized?
    - Who was baptized in the jailer's house?
    - Why did all the people in his house get baptized?
    - What is the most important thing for someone to be able to explain for themselves before they are baptized?

PREPARATION AND TESTIMONY

- **Talk with your parent/an adult in your family.**
    - Ask them to share their baptism experience if they have been baptized.
    - Ask them, do you think I am ready to be baptized?
    - When I get baptized, I will need to say something about how I became a believer and follower of Jesus. Can you help me think and plan what I should say?

- Begin planning your testimony by thinking about the answers to these questions.
    - What is the story of you accepting Christ as the Savior of your life?
    - How have you seen your personal life change?
    - What are the ways you have seen evidence of God in your life?
    - Why do you want to be baptized?
    - How has your family helped you get to know Jesus and choose to be baptized?

CELEBRATION AND PLANNING

- What family member would you like to have present at your baptism? Why?
- What would you like to do as a family to celebrate your baptism?

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to allow your testimony and baptism to be an opportunity for your family to celebrate with you and also people who don’t know Christ to be challenged to consider Him through your special day!

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STUDY OF BAPTISM FOR FAMILIES #4

PREPARING A TESTIMONY

PRAYER:

- Pray that God would give you the words to say to share your faith story and your testimony with your family, friends and church.

GETTING STARTED

- "Testimony" is a fancy word that means "To tell what you know or believe."
- In the spaces below, write out how you became a believer in Jesus and how you want to follow Him.
- Your parents or an adult in your family can help you write, but these should be your thoughts and words.

WRITING YOUR TESTIMONY

- **In your testimony,** be sure to answer the first five questions. If you want to share more, you can answer the other questions or say something you love about Jesus or have learned about following Him.
- **Some starter questions for you to answer in your testimony:**
  - *What is your name/Age?*
  - *Tell us the story of when and how you were saved.*
  - *What led you to realize you were a sinner and needed a savior?*
  - *Did anyone teach you? Did anyone pray with you?*
  - *Why do you want to be baptized?*
  - What do you know about who Jesus is and what he did for you?
  - Is there something sinful that Jesus is helping you to overcome?
  - Do you have a favorite Bible verse or Bible story? *(You can quote your favorite verse or tell us about your favorite Bible story)* Why is this your favorite?
  - Do you feel like God wants you to do or be something special when you get older?
- **Write your testimony** below, on the back of this page, or on a separate piece of paper.
  - Parents, older siblings, and other family members are welcome to help you!