



Who Receives Baptism?

Baptism is administered to all those whom God calls. Since the initiative lies with God, and since, in any case, we need the Holy Spirit's help to respond to God's call, the key factor in Baptism is not the age or maturity of the person being baptized, but rather the church's corporate response in claiming the promises sealed in the sacrament. Both parents and the congregation are part of that corporate response.

In the case of those who have reached the "age of discretion," and are able to claim for themselves the promises of grace, Baptism is the seal of their discipleship and the sign of their entry into the covenant community. In the case of children or infants, who, of course, are unable to claim God's promises for themselves, their parents or guardians respond on their behalf.

Whether the person baptized is an adult or a child, the congregation also makes its promise to nurture the baptized person in the faith. The vow of the local congregation, which represents the church universal, is an important aspect of the Baptismal rite. Only in extraordinary circumstances shall the administration of Baptism occur apart from the worship of the whole congregation. (W-2.3011)

Modes of Baptism

Since there is only one Baptism, those baptized in the name of the Trinity in any Christian denomination are not re-baptized in our church. Although we usually administer the water by pouring, Presbyterians recognize – indeed practice – Baptism by sprinkling and by immersion. We do not, however, rank one mode of administering the water over another.