

Group Leader Guide

Series: Ordinances – Week 1 December 4 - 10

Scripture: Acts 2:37 - 41

Leader Notes:

Be sure to sign up for the essential group leader training in January by clicking this [link](#).

WHAT AN AMAZING SUNDAY! We had a weekend marked by life change and people making public commitments to Christ. Be sure to celebrate all that God is doing in our church, and may we never take it for granted!



COMMUNITY

Open the group by caring for one another and allowing a moment for everyone to have a place to belong.

- Start the group by taking prayer requests, finding out about people's week, and praying for one another.
- Ice Breakers:
 1. If you've been baptized, think back on that event, why was it so impactful and important in your faith?
 2. If you have never been baptized, why have you never taken that next step?

SCRIPTURE

Take this time to study the Bible together. Remember, the goal is not just to convey information, but to help people in your group learn to read the Bible for themselves.

THE POINT: God ordained baptism to be the first step of obedience for every believer.

Acts 2:37-41

³⁷Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” ⁴⁰And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

[The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), [Ac 2:37–41](#).

Study Notes

Baptism is the most foundational ordinance that Christ commanded for his church to practice. Baptism serves as the initiation ritual by which people join the Christian community. Baptism serves as a gospel illustration to the watching world. Lastly, Baptism serves as a symbol of salvation and commitment for the Christian that is meant to be a line in the sand from which there is no turning back.

We must be very careful not to miss the importance of baptism. We should not miss the necessity of baptism, nor should we downplay its significance. Baptism is so important that Christ initiated his early ministry by being baptized personally. Baptism is so important that Christ commanded baptism with his last order to the church. Baptism is so important that it was a part of the very first Christian church service in Acts 2.

Keep a couple of things in mind as you lead the group.

1. Baptism is an external symbol of an internal reality.

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

When Christians are baptized the spiritual reality is greater than the physical reality. In spirit, we are buried with Christ. In spirit, we are resurrected in Christ. In spirit, we are raised to walk in a newness of life by the power of the Holy Spirit. We should never forget that as Christians are plunged beneath the water there is more going on than meets the eye.

2. Baptism is a public identification with Christ.

In the 21st century, it might be difficult to find moments to intentionally associate ourselves and identify ourselves with someone who was alive over 2,000 years ago. Yet, baptism affords Christians this opportunity. Baptism is the way that modern believers in Christ proclaim their loyalty and allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ though others cannot see him today. No one should count themselves a Christian who is not willing to tell the world, "I belong to Jesus."

Questions For Discussion

1. Why were the people "cut to the heart (v37)?"
2. What did Peter urge them to do in response to them "being cut to heart (v38)?"
3. What is the promise from God in v39? 3. Peter urges the crowd to "repent and be baptized" (v37). What significance does water baptism have for our lives as Christian?
4. What is the connection between baptism and repentance?
5. What hinders people from following through in baptism?

Commission

As your wrap group up, it is imperative that everyone knows we go into the world on mission for Jesus. Use this time to focus everyone as you leave.

How can you publicly identify with Jesus in ways other than baptism, so that you can be a witness to the watching world?

Do you need to take the next step of believers' baptism? You can sign up [here](#).

Who in your life needs to know Jesus?