

# THE MOODY CHURCH

## Baptism Preparation Packet

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Dear Friend,

You are about to take one of the most important steps in your life and we here at The Moody Church rejoice and celebrate with you.

This packet will give you the details you need about the baptism process, and will help you begin to prepare for this very significant step in your life. We have also provided a FAQ to answer some commonly-asked questions about baptism.

The *My Spiritual Journey* Application for Baptism provides a way for us to become acquainted with you and your spiritual walk. Please complete the Application, found at [moodychurch.org/baptism](http://moodychurch.org/baptism), prior to the Baptism Preparation Class. You can also print and complete the Application found at the back of this packet.

We look forward to walking with you on this journey.

In His service,

Pastor Kirk Baker  
Pastor for Baptism

## ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

Please study this sheet carefully to prepare your heart and mind for your own baptism.

1. *What does the word “baptize” mean?*

It means “to plunge or to immerse.” At The Moody Church, we baptize by immersion; that is, the entire body is immersed in water. We realize that other groups baptize by “pouring” or “sprinkling,” but we do not. Every church—including those who baptize other ways—will recognize baptism by immersion.

2. *Who should be baptized?*

While we understand that there are different positions on baptism depending upon the faith tradition from which one comes, we at The Moody Church believe in and perform what is called “believer’s baptism.” Believer’s baptism means that only those who are able to articulate an authentic profession of faith should be baptized. In other words, only those who have placed their faith in Christ and received him to be their Lord and Savior are to be baptized.

The reason for this is that baptism is a visual representation of the transforming power of the gospel. It is a visible, outward symbol of an inner spiritual reality; is an outward expression of one’s decision to publicly identify with Christ.

3. *Why should a believer be baptized?*

Because it is a commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .” (Matthew 28:19, ESV). If a new Christian disobeys this simple command of Christ at the beginning of his Christian life, he is not likely to be obedient to His other commands.

4. *What does baptism actually picture?*

Since the believer is totally immersed in water, the action becomes a picture of death, burial, and resurrection. When our Lord Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, He said, “...for in this way it is fitting for us [the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit] to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). Christ’s baptism in water was a picture of His “baptism of suffering” on the cross where He died for our sins (Luke 12:50). Our baptism in water is a picture of inner spiritual experience: we have had the old life buried with Christ, and we are raised to live in resurrection power (Colossians 2:12–15).

In Romans 6:3–4, Paul says “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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.” In light of this passage, baptism is the perfect symbol of one’s conversion. As we go down into the water, we are identifying with Christ in His death and burial; as we come up out of the water, we are identifying with Christ in His resurrection and desire to walk in newness of life.

5. *Does baptism have anything to do with salvation?*

In the Book of Acts, no one was baptized in order to be saved, but all were baptized because they had been saved. 1 Peter 3:20–22 makes it clear that baptism does not save us by washing away our sins, for only the blood of Christ can do that. Obedience in baptism does save us from a guilty conscience, because we know we have obeyed Christ’s command.

6. *Aren’t there verses in the Bible that connect baptism with salvation?*

There are verses which state “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?” (Romans 6:3) and “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

Here we must distinguish between water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When you accept Christ as your Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit enters your body to make it a temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). No amount of water applied externally can bring a person “into Jesus Christ.” Only the Holy Spirit can do this. The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” occurs the instant you are saved through faith in Christ, and it is this baptism which makes you a part of His Body.

7. *Do I have to be baptized to be a member? Or Can I be baptized even if I haven't joined The Moody Church?*

At The Moody Church, baptism is not a requirement for membership, nor is it limited to those who are members, although one must be a regular attendee in order to be baptized. We encourage baptism for all believers because it is the Lord's command, and we want to be obedient to Christ. Our constitution reads:

The Lord Jesus Christ instituted the ordinances of baptism and communion, which tangibly and symbolically express the Gospel. Although these ordinances are not the means of salvation and do not confer special grace, when they are celebrated by the church in genuine faith, they do confirm and nourish the church, the body of Christ. (Matthew 26:26–29; 28:18–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26)

In obedience to Christ's command, we urge every believer upon profession of faith to joyfully follow our Lord's instructions and be baptized "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). We encourage those who were baptized as infants to follow in believer's baptism as a testimony of their own personal faith in Christ. We desire to follow the pattern of the New Testament in which conversion was followed by baptism by immersion. (Article 2, Section A.6)

8. *I was baptized as an infant; do I need to be baptized again? Or What if I was baptized before I was saved?*

Because infants are not able to enter into a relationship with Christ, their "baptism" is not a sign of spiritual rebirth. In fact, it can be said that baptized infants are really only dipped in water. Similarly, those adults who are baptized before they are saved are not indicating a new life. Baptism takes on new meaning for the believer because he or she knows this was done in obedience to God's command. We encourage those who were baptized as infants to follow in believer's baptism as a testimony of their own personal faith in Christ.

9. *How many times should a person be baptized?*

Only once. We meet at the Lord's Supper repeatedly to remember His broken body and shed blood, but we are baptized only once, since we are saved only once. If a Christian gets out of fellowship with the Lord because of sin, he can confess his sins and be forgiven (1 John 1:5–10), but it is not necessary to be baptized again. Water baptism is a once-for-all-time public testimony of a believer's identification with Christ in His in death, burial, and resurrection. It is not a religious ceremony that washes away our sins.

10. *Can I have my infant baptized?*

No. The Moody Church does not practice infant baptism, as we believe that only those who are able to articulate an authentic profession of faith—which infants are obviously unable to do— should be baptized.

11. *Can my older child be baptized?*

We treat the baptism of children with special care. When a child makes the choice to follow Jesus, he or she has the opportunity to declare his/her commitment to Jesus through baptism. Children being baptized at The Moody Church must understand what baptism means and must be able to declare their intention to follow the way of Jesus. If a child expresses a desire to be baptized, we ask that the child attend a baptism class with a parent, and that the family schedule an interview with the Pastor of Baptism and the Director of Children's Discipleship.

If you have any further questions about baptism, we will be happy to answer them for you. Bring your questions to the Baptism Preparation Class, or contact us in the church office at 312.327.8600 or [info@moodychurch.org](mailto:info@moodychurch.org).

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR BAPTISM CANDIDATES

### 1. Scheduling of Baptisms

- A. Baptism services are held throughout the year as people express interest. Our Lake Michigan baptism is held in late summer on a Sunday morning prior to the morning service; all other baptisms are done in the Sanctuary as part of a Sunday morning service.
- B. Prior to each baptism service, participation in a Baptism Preparation Class is mandatory. The schedule of classes will be published in the bulletin.

### 2. For baptisms held in the Sunday Morning service

- A. What to wear
  1. Come to church in your regular clothes. Baptismal robes and changing rooms will be provided.
  2. Please plan to wear shorts and a t-shirt underneath your robe for modesty.
  3. You may wear socks during the baptism if you choose to do so.
- B. What to bring with you
  1. A large bath towel.
  2. Necessary toiletries, grooming utensils, etc.
  3. If you prefer, you can also bring a white handkerchief to cover your nose and mouth during the baptism.
- C. When & where to arrive

Please be in the office area behind the baptistry at 9:15am. You'll need to go up the stairs closest to the organ, in the 1625 N LaSalle entranceway. Members of our baptism team will be there to show you to a changing room and help you prepare.
- C. What you will say
  1. You may be asked to answer the question "What drew you to Jesus?" Please write out a brief (2-3 sentence) response and bring it with you to read.
  2. If you are unable to prepare an answer to the first question (i.e., English is your second language), we will ask you to select a meaningful Scripture verse to quote to the church before you are immersed. Again you may bring the verse written out to read.
  3. If time is tight, you will instead be asked for your favorite verse. Again, you can write it out and bring it with you to read.

### 3. For baptisms held in Lake Michigan

- A. What to wear
  1. We will provide dark-colored t-shirts for everyone being baptized, and suggest dark shorts (obviously something you don't mind getting wet) be worn with them. Robes are not provided for the Lake Baptism.
  2. For women, we recommend that a one-piece swimsuit be worn underneath for modesty.
  3. Water-appropriate shoes (e.g. athletic sandals) can be worn for traction.
  4. After the baptism, you will be able to change into your normal clothes in the North Avenue Beach House restrooms, or you may return to the church building to change and get ready for the church service. The third-floor restrooms will be reserved for this purpose.
- B. What to bring with you to the Lake
  1. A large bath towel.
  2. A change of clothes if you choose to utilize the North Avenue beach house restrooms.
  3. If you prefer, you can also bring a handkerchief to cover your nose and mouth during the baptism.
- C. Due to number of people that participate in the Lake baptism, most participants will not have the opportunity to share verses or testimonies while being baptized.
- D. In the event of inclement weather, the Lake Baptism will be cancelled. In that event, an alert will be posted on the website no later than 6:30am. We will schedule baptisms during a church service to accommodate all candidates.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Baptism \_\_\_\_\_

**MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**  
**Application for Baptism**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print exactly as you would like it to  
appear on your certificate)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

Legal Name (if different from certificate name): \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

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1. What church or religious backgrounds have influenced your life—positively, negatively, or both?

2. Explain how you came to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

3. Explain the gospel of Jesus Christ. How is a person made right with God?

4. What Scriptures did God use that were instrumental in your coming to Christ?

5. How has your life changed since you put your faith in Christ?

6. Why do you want to be baptized?

7. In your own words, explain the purpose of baptism.