

BLACK ROCK CHURCH
KIDS BAPTISM POLICY EXPLANATION

We celebrate any child's decision to follow Jesus, and their interest in baptism! This is a wonderful desire, and we encourage children to continue to take strides in their faith. Since baptism is a significant sacred milestone in the life of a Christ-follower, we believe it's important for those who are baptized to:

1. **Have a basic understanding of what it means to be saved by faith in Jesus, and be able to explain how someone becomes saved by faith in their own words.**
2. **Demonstrate a desire to obey Jesus after becoming a follower of him.**
3. **Be fully capable of and allowed to make the decision to be baptized by their own choice.**
4. **Be old enough to remember the event clearly as a milestone moment in their life.**

Among churches that practice believers' baptism, rather than infant baptism, there are various approaches around minimum age requirements and gospel understanding necessary for baptism, which can cause confusion. At Black Rock, we affirm that many young children genuinely trust Jesus as their Savior, and we love helping kids foster their faith through our Kids Ministry! However, to better ascertain a child's understanding of the factors listed above, **our policy is to only baptize children once they are in grade 6 or higher. Despite any child's ability to meet the criteria above, we appreciate parents' support for the spiritual authority of the pastoral staff in this policy.**

We often hear testimonials from adults who were baptized as children and recognize years later that they didn't understand its significance at the time, or hadn't made a true commitment to follow Jesus by faith. Since baptism does not give us salvation and is meant to be a one-time event, we try to prevent this misunderstanding. Guarding against the danger of potential false assurance of salvation based solely on a childhood baptism is another concern.

We hope the discipleship heart behind this policy is clear. We want children to fully appreciate the significance of their baptism, protect against misunderstanding around its meaning, and guard against potential false assurance of salvation. By waiting, together we can better discern your child's personal understanding of what it means to follow Jesus and intentionally disciple them through our Student Ministry program into young adulthood.

Even before your child is old enough for baptism, there are several ways you can encourage them to step out in their faith now!

- Encourage them to tell a friend about Jesus or invite them to church.
- Prioritize weekly participation on Sunday mornings and midweek programs.
- Help your child start the habit of personal daily devotions. You can find suggested age-appropriate materials at our Resource Center. Depending on your child's age, we highly recommend the devotionals, *Old Story New*, *Long Story Short*, or *Exploring the Bible*.
- If you have additional questions or would like more ideas about how to help your child, contact us at baptism@blackrock.org.