

BAPTIZING A BABY

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Have you ever seen a baby baptized before? It's a sign that the baby will be part of the New Church and will learn to love and obey the Lord. The Lord said we should be baptized.

Did you know that you were baptized? Can you feel it?

What do we need for baptism? Water.

The first baptisms were done in a river. People got all wet.

We use just a little water—from a bowl. The minister dips his fingers into the bowl of water, then wets the baby's forehead.

The minister touches the baby's forehead with water and draws a little cross with it as he baptizes the baby in the name of the Lord. Then he puts his hand on the baby's head and gives a blessing. Sometimes, the baby cries. Not

because it hurts, but because the baby wants to be back in his Mommy's or Daddy's arms.

Part of the service is the minister asking questions. Can the baby answer?

Who should answer? The parents. They make promises to the Lord that they will teach the baby about Him and guide the baby to obey His commandments. This is to be done while the baby is growing up.

Babies are born on earth, not in heaven, and the Lord wants them all to become angels someday. After baptism, the minister says the baby is now part of the New Church. To the angels who are near baptism is the sign that this baby is to be part of the New Church. The Lord assigns some of them to watch

over the baby while he or she is growing up. Did you know that angels are always around babies, and they are around you, too? You don't see them, but they are there.

But who takes care of babies here? Their parents. The baptism reminds them that it is their job to teach all of their children about the Lord and heaven.

Let's listen to some things the Lord has taught us:

[T]hey brought young children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples scolded those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God..." And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them (Mark 10:13-16).

[I]nfants are introduced by baptism into the Christian heaven, and angels are there assigned them by the Lord to take care of them (True Christian Religion 677:4).

"Go therefore, and teach all people, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Some of the things parents are reminded of in the baptism ceremony is to teach their children the Lord's Prayer so they can learn about worship; to teach them the Ten Commandments so they can learn to shun evils against the Lord and the neighbor; and to teach them other truths from the Word so they can learn to live a heavenly life. In this way, the parents promote their children's happiness in this life as well as their happiness in heaven forever. Baptism is a happy event both on earth and in heaven!

