

Baptism of Our Lord

The young son of a Baptist minister was in church one morning when he saw for the first-time baptism by immersion. He was greatly interested in it, and the next morning proceeded to baptize... you guessed it.. his three cats... in the bathtub. The youngest kitten bore it very well, and so did the younger cat, but the old family tom cat rebelled. The old feline struggled with the boy, clawed and tore his skin, and finally got away. With considerable effort the boy caught the old tom again and proceeded with the "ceremony." But the cat acted worse than ever, clawing and spitting, and scratching the boy's face. Finally, after barely getting the cat splattered with water, he dropped him on the floor in disgust and said: "Fine, be a Methodist if you want to!"

This morning we are celebrating both the Sacrament of Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Baptism. Since I recently preached on Baptism the first Sunday of November with the baptism of Amelia Grace Mick, a different format was chosen for this morning. For today, rather than our basic sermon presentation, we will instead play a game of Trivial Pursuit based mostly on Baptism questions with a few general United Methodist questions. This is, in no way, an exercise in your intelligence, it is more a test of the teaching ability of your pastor! Just think of it as the SOL's of the church! On second thought that might not be the best analogy for me to make.

Baptism has been part of the Christian Church since Jesus was Baptized in the Jordan River. However, Baptism was not new to the Jewish faith. It was generally practiced when bringing new converts to the Jewish faith and it was also a form of ritual cleansing. By the time Jesus came along, baptisms were quite common in specially designated water sources, but the New Testament also describes baptisms taking place not only in rivers, but in any available body of water. In Acts 8, we read of a visiting pilgrim from Ethiopia, who came to believe in Jesus as he read Isaiah on the way home: *"As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" (verse 36).* By this point baptism had come to signify a decision to accept Jesus as Messiah and Lord.

Let us move into the Trivial Pursuit portion of today's message. Team 1 is on my left; Team 2 on my right. Each team will get a chance to answer a question. If they cannot answer it will go to the other team. The questions are a mix of True & False, multiple choice, and fill in the blanks.

1. What are the two sacraments of the United Methodist Church?
2. Who is the founder of Methodism?
 - a. Susanna Wesley
 - b. Charles Wesley
 - c. John Wesley
3. Jesus was baptized in the
 - a. Sea of Galilee

- b. River Jordan
 - c. Dead Sea
4. Who Baptized Jesus?
 - a. The Apostle Peter
 - b. Simeon
 - c. His Cousin, John the Baptist
 5. How Old was Jesus When He was Baptized?
 - a. 12 years old
 - b. 3 months old
 - c. 30 years old
 6. True or False? In the United Methodist Church, we only baptize babies.
 7. True or False? When babies are baptized in the UMC, it marks the beginning of their faith journey in the church.
 8. True or False? Baptizing a baby makes him or her a Christian.
 9. In the United Methodist Church we perform Baptisms by...
 - a. Sprinkling
 - b. Pouring
 - c. Immersion
 10. True or False? A United Methodist Pastor can only perform Baptisms in a church setting.
 11. True or False? When someone from another Christian Denomination wants to join a United Methodist Church, they have to be re-baptized.
 12. Who does the baptizing in the UMC?
 - a. The Pastor
 - b. The Bishop
 - c. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 13. After Jesus was Baptized...
 - a. They had a covered dish meal
 - b. A voice was heard, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
 - c. Jesus was given his first Bible.
 14. True or False? Baptism is necessary for Salvation.
 15. Parent's bring their babies to be baptized because...
 - a. They want to get their kid "done."

- b. They want to give their baby all the opportunities they can to come to know Jesus as part of the family of God.
- c. If they don't, they will be asked to leave the church.

- 16. True or False? The congregation has a role in every baptism they witness.
- 17. True or False? Christians believe baptism means that God has also chosen us as daughters and sons and knows us intimately as a parent.
- 18. True or False? A person who has not been baptized can participate in Holy Communion.
- 19. True or False? Baptism is a sacrament. In a sacrament, God uses common elements -- in this case, water -- as means or vehicles of divine grace.
- 20. True or False? If someone dies before they have a chance to be baptized, they do not go to heaven, but to Purgatory.

Answers

- 1. Baptism and Holy Communion
- 2. John Wesley
- 3. The River Jordan
- 4. His Cousin, John the Baptist
- 5. 30 years old
- 6. False
- 7. True
- 8. False
- 9. All of the Above – Sprinkling, Pouring, Immersion
- 10. False
- 11. False
- 12. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- 13. A voice was heard, “This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
- 14. False
- 15. They want to give their baby all the opportunities they can to come to know Jesus as part of the family of God.
- 16. True
- 17. True
- 18. True
- 19. True
- 20. False