

Guidelines for lesson 14 Baptism

AIMS OF LESSON 14

For each learner to:

- a. Understand three truths that baptism shows.
- b. *Either* look back in gratitude for their baptism in the past,
Or look forward and plan for their baptism in the future.
- c. Memorize Matthew 28:19.

TO START THE MEETING

START WITH PRAYER

LAST WEEK'S PRACTICAL TASK:

- Say: "Lesson 13's Practical Task was to seek an opportunity to tell one person about Jesus Christ. Did you have an opportunity? Tell us about it." *[Discuss together. For those who have not yet had an opportunity, ask 'are you definitely praying for this?']*

TODAY'S TOPIC

- Say: "Are you like Hamid in the picture, puzzled about baptism? We will try to answer your questions today."

ANSWERS TO THE LESSON REVIEW

- Turn together to Lesson 14 Review and ask what the learner(s) wrote:
Question 1: "Go 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).
Question 2: a) person; b) sins, washed; c) community
Question 3: very important

Cultural Clue: *BMBs and Baptism*


Baptism is an important step for BMBs. It marks their allegiance to Christ and to his community. However, their Muslim families and community see this step as a mark of betrayal. In their view, the person being baptized rejects their old family and brings great dishonour on them. This makes the family and community very angry, and in some Muslim countries they might even kill the believer. There is less risk in the West, there will probably still be severe hurt and rejection. It is important to be aware of this and to try to reduce the shock and shame for the family so far as possible.

Therefore, in preparing a BMB for baptism, don't just think about the spiritual dimension but also the social implications. Discuss with the person:

- When is the right time for them to be baptized? (Usually God will show this to them by His Spirit, so don't rush the process; but when the time is right, don't hold back either).
 - Which people should be present at the baptism? (At least some close trusted friends; but what about the wider church, or what about Muslim relatives? Discuss these questions with the believer, as circumstances vary).
 - Will the believer tell their Muslim family beforehand? (This depends a lot on the family situation)
 - Will photos be taken at the baptism and will there be any control on their spread? (With digital photos and Facebook this is a very important question! Public spread of baptism photos may bring danger to the believers and will certainly bring dishonour to their family. The most sensitive point is when the BMB is going under the water, ESPECIALLY if it is a male baptizing a female. Such photos should be strictly controlled. But group photos afterwards, of the newly baptized person with their Christian friends, are less sensitive).
 - For female BMBs, what steps will be taken to guard their modesty as they come out of the water? (Thin clothes cling when wet. Wear thicker clothes and have a towel ready to wrap around as soon as she comes out of the water).
 - Can a baptism certificate be given? (This is no problem in the West but can be a danger in strict Muslim countries, for both baptizer and baptized. But some proof of baptism is important. Discuss it.
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A) WHY SHOULD I GET BAPTIZED? (Questions 2-3)

Question 2

 **Read** the whole of question 2.


 **Ask:**

- “What is the best reason to get baptized?” *[Because our Lord Jesus Christ commanded it.]*
- “Do you know what was the occasion when Christ gave this command?” *[It was after his resurrection, just before he was raised up to heaven. With these words he commanded his close followers to continue the work he had begun. From that time until today Christ’s followers have been making disciples and baptizing them.]*

Practise the memory verse Matthew 28:19.

B) WHAT DOES BAPTISM SHOW? (Questions 4-14)

Question 4 (a new person in Christ)

 **Read** the first paragraph.

 **Ask:**

- “In your own words, explain what baptism shows about our old and new natures” *[Our old nature has been put to death and we have risen to a new life with a new nature.]*
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Question 7 (sins washed away)

Cultural Clue: Ritual Washing in Islam


In Islam, it is compulsory to carry out *wudu* (ritual washing of one’s head, arms and feet) before the five-daily set prayers. Less frequent is the full bath or *ghusl* which is believed to cleanse major impurity. New Muslims are taught that all their old sins are washed away when they convert to Islam, and many of them do the full *ghusl* as a symbol of that. However, those who turn from Islam to Christ often focus more on baptism as a symbol of rising to a new life than of washing away sin.

 **Read** Firaz’s story.

 **Ask:**

- “When you came out of the water, did you feel like Firaz? What were your emotions?” *[Discuss.]*
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Question 10

 **Read** the first paragraph of question 10.

 **Ask:**

- “Does the water have magic power to wash away our sins?” [No.]
 - “So what does wash away our sins?” [*Christ’s sacrifice, as it says in 1 John 1:7. Water just washes the dirt from our bodies, but it is a strong symbol of Christ washing sin from our hearts.*]
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Question 12 (joining Christ’s community)

 **Read** the whole of question 12.

 **Ask:**

- “What would you say to the person who claims, ‘I am getting baptized for my own sake, it’s between me and God, and I don’t have to join a church’?” [*According to question 12, baptism means committing ourselves fully to Christ’s community. This may be a traditional church or it may not, but we must join the body of believers in some way. We belong to them and they belong to us. Together we are God’s chosen people.*]
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C) IS BAPTISM ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION? (Questions 15-17)


Question 16

 **Ask:**

- “Imagine it is your baptism and that you are giving your testimony to the whole group. What will you say, in five minutes? Use the notes you prepared for question 16.” [*One or more people to share their testimony. Note that BMBs are often called upon to do this, as new believers. It becomes a kind of ‘rite of passage’ for them. Sometimes they are asked to do it too many times and they no longer want to be put on a pedestal. Be aware of this as you ask who would like to practise giving their testimony to the group.*]
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D) WHEN SHOULD I GET BAPTIZED? (Questions 18-22)

Question 21


 **Read** the whole of question 21

 **Ask:**

- “What did you write here?”
[*Discuss together. Suggestions are:*
 - *Don’t announce it publicly, but instead invite trustworthy people privately;*

- Have the baptism in a quiet place where outsiders can't see;
- Only have one camera and let the baptized person decide who will have copies of the pictures;
- With that one camera, don't take photos when the baptized person is actually in the water (any photos can be taken afterwards, in a group with friends);
- If there is a baptism certificate, keep it in a very safe place.
- See also the 'Cultural Clues' at the beginning of this lesson on 'BMBs and Baptism'.]

Question 22a

 **Read** the first paragraph.

 **Ask:**

- "What did you write here?" [Discuss together. There is no 'right' answer because it depends on circumstances. Those who waited until they could take baptism with their spouses have often been glad of it. But if after many years the spouse still does not turn to Christ, the believing spouse might feel it is right to go ahead on their own.]

Note:

- Check in learners' books, that they have written something for questions 21 and 22. Writing helps them think about it more seriously and take better part in the discussion.

Question 22b

 **Read** the teacher's speech bubble.

Say:

- "Yes, even though baptism is a bit risky, we should not be too afraid. It is a time to celebrate!"

TO FINISH THE MEETING

ASK:

- "What difference will today's lesson make in your life?"
[Each person should share, including you as advisor.]

READ the Lesson 14 Practical Task.

SAY:

- "Do this Practical Task if you have not previously taken baptism. And if you are baptized already, you could meet this week with a member of our group who is still thinking about this step. Give that person your advice and pray with him/her."

CLOSE IN PRAYER

- Thank God for the three meanings of baptism we have discussed today, and pray for any member of our group who is thinking about getting baptized.