

Surprise Church



Infant & Child Baptism FAQs

At Surprise, we empower parents to choose the proper time to baptize their children, in order to ensure that parents embrace their role as the “pastors” of their home. This means that we eagerly baptize adults and teenagers as they come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Parents may choose to baptize infants or young children as well, provided that they can actively demonstrate a Christ-centered lifestyle as spelled out in this document.

Where do we do baptisms at Surprise? Location is somewhat flexible. We often do infant baptisms in our worship space after our 11am service. We’ve also gone offsite for infant, child, and adult baptisms, either in a “tank” at other churches, a local pool, or a natural body of water. We like to do multiple baptisms together to throw a big fun party, but occasionally do them individually if schedule requires. Since baptism is a public proclamation of God’s saving love for your child, and your commitment to raise him/her in that love, we always look to involve a wider community of people.

Who should we invite? Anyone. Everyone. Baptism is an exciting and inviting event, and your friends and family will want to support you. It’s also a chance to invite people who have been disconnected from faith-life but may find this a meaningful opportunity to reengage.

Will we have to say anything? Three things. 1) Below, we list the promises that you’ll make as the parent of a baptized child. You’ll say “I do” to affirm your commitment to carrying them out. 2) We will also ask you to share a brief statement about why your family is choosing to baptize your child, including how you intend to live out the promises you’re making. 3) Finally, share a brief word about how those gathered can pray for and support you as you live out these promises.

What do parents promise to do in baptizing a child? You will make promises to raise your child to know and serve Jesus Christ. Specifically, you’ll promise to:

- 1) **Make worship a weekly priority in your home**
- 2) **Make the Bible essential in your family’s life**
- 3) **Harness spiritual growth tools**, resources, and historical elements of the church (Lord’s Prayer, Apostles Creed, and the Ten Commandments) to expand your child’s faith. Visit surprisechurch.com/pastoryourfamily for a wide range of resources.
- 4) **Partner with Surprise Church** to nurture your child’s faith in Christ. This includes trying a DNA Group or Missional Community, engaging as a family in Surprise Kids, and **creatively involving your kids** as you invest in Surprise’s mission through serving and giving, so that these family rhythms become second nature in your child’s life. Additionally, you’ll designate your home as a “Lighthouse” in your neighborhood (surprisechurch.com/lighthouse). On your

application, we'll ask you to get specific about these items in order to ensure that you can confidently commit to modeling and fostering spiritual growth in your child's life.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Many parents baptize their children hoping that an active faith-life will emerge in the *future*, but statistics confirm that this rarely takes place. *Anticipated* rather than *active* faith deprives children of critical faith-development rhythms in their formative years and does not foster a lifelong faith adherence. **The time to set the spiritual tone is now, not later!** At Surprise, we challenge parents to embrace Christ-centered patterns PRIOR to baptizing their children, making active faith a REALITY rather than a future possibility. This sets your family up for success and makes your baptism celebration far more meaningful. If a family is not ready to invest in these Christ-centered rhythms in partnership with the local church, we strongly urge them to delay baptism until they can eagerly do so, while working through all obstacles in the meantime.

Am I ready to have my child baptized at Surprise?

Once your family is actively engaged in the rhythms described above (trying a DNA Group or Missional Community, enjoying a routine of worshipping, serving, and giving at Surprise), then you're ready to baptize. If you aren't sure about which church you'll be a part of, or aren't committed to invest in a local congregation, we recommend that you address those obstacles, so that baptism becomes a way of deepening and celebrating your partnership with the church family.

I've never had an "active partnership" with a church and am not sure I'm ready. But I would like to baptize my child while I consider it. Understandable but unwise. Parents must be careful not to baptize their child for the wrong reasons, which includes family pressure, guilt, a rite of passage, making a memory, or traditional obligation. Baptizing for these reasons is counterproductive in the lives of our children and doesn't honor God's vision for baptism itself. Some Christ-centered rhythms may be new to some of our families, but they are **incredible opportunity** for your family to grow together. Your kids will remember growing up with Christ as a vivid priority in your home, which is nothing short of exciting!

Should we get sponsors? Yes! This is a great opportunity to invite 1 to 4 people into the life of your child to have a special, spiritual role. This shouldn't be a ceremonial role, but an active role in which spiritual maturity and commitment is necessary. Sponsors stand next to you and make the same promises that you make, and so you want people who can sincerely do so. In the years following, your job is to keep them in the loop on prayer requests and progress, re-inviting them to play this important role in the changing seasons of life.

What if my spouse, X-spouse, or co-parent and I don't agree on baptism. Ideally, you would work out a compromise with your spouse before baptism, in a manner that prioritizes the needs of your child. It's always best for parents to be on the same page rather than to use baptism as a means of leverage or control. Do your best to communicate your priorities and be flexible. Consider meeting with a pastor or

counselor for some third party advice. We'll work with your circumstances as long as you're doing your best.