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Group Guide

The Church Calls for Baptism

July 20, 2025

Main Passage: Acts 10:44-48

Theological Theme

Acts gives us a model for baptism: When we receive salvation, we make a public profession of faith through believer's baptism. Baptism is not necessary for salvation, but it is an act of obedience and a proclamation of following Jesus.

Introduction

- ❓ What are some questions or possible misunderstandings you've had about baptism in the past?
- ❓ Have you been baptized before? If so, when? If not, what has kept you from this?

1. Repent and Be Baptized (Acts 2:37–41)

After Jesus's followers received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter delivered a sermon to the stunned crowd. In this sermon, Peter explained the outpouring of the Holy Spirit using Old Testament Scripture, acted as Jesus's witness by proclaiming the truth about Him (Jesus is the risen Messiah), and explained how Old Testament prophecy pointed to the truth about Jesus (Jesus is the Messiah the people had been waiting for). At the end of his sermon in today's passage, Peter issued a call to repentance.

- ❓ Peter told those listening to repent and be baptized. Why are these two steps linked?
- ❓ What does this passage teach us about the connection between belief in Jesus and baptism?
- ❓ Application: The crowd took Peter's call seriously. Have you considered the importance of baptism if you have placed your faith in Jesus? How might you need to respond?

2. Baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:44-48)

During Jesus's earthly ministry, Jewish and Gentile cultures mostly remained apart. Following their return from exile—which was a result of the Jews turning away from God by participating in Gentile culture, namely idol worship—religious legalism emerged among the Jews. Initially, this shift was meant to protect the people from future disobedience.

- ❓ What do you notice about the order of events in this passage?
- ❓ What connection was there between receiving the Holy Spirit and responding in baptism?
- ❓ Application: What can we learn about baptism from this passage?

3. Saul's Baptism (Acts 9:15-20)

In this passage, we see the baptism of Saul (better known as the apostle Paul). When we met Saul of Tarsus earlier in Acts, he was an up-and-coming Pharisee who had studied under the well-respected Jew, Gamaliel, and he persecuted the church. In Acts 7, Saul had a front-row seat to the stoning of the first Christian martyr, Stephen. Afterward, with the approval of the Jewish religious leaders, Saul began aggressively working to stomp out Christianity. The chapter heading for Acts 8 in the CSB Bible, "Saul the Persecutor," is an accurate description for how Saul was working against the church at that time!

- ❓ What was the order of events connected to baptism in this passage?
- ❓ What does this teach us about the way we should practice baptism?
- ❓ Application: How has obedience in baptism propelled you to share your faith with others? How is baptism a first step in doing that?

Conclusion

- ❓ What did you learn about baptism today? Anything new that you didn't know previously?
- ❓ How can we encourage and support all who have believed in our group toward baptism? Does anyone feel called in that direction now?
- ❓ If you have been baptized, how are you seeking to continue your public profession through sharing the gospel with others?