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**OPEN THE CONVERSATION**

Take some time to build relationships with the students:

* Ask for each student’s high and low from the week.
* Today’s RBQ (Relationship Building Question): If your summer had a title like a movie or TV show, what would it be called?

**INTRODUCTION**

Some things in life feel like a shift—like something that marks a new chapter. Maybe it’s getting your driver’s license, starting a new job, going to a new school, or trying something that used to scare you. It’s not always a big, dramatic moment, but it feels like something has changed.

That’s kind of what baptism is like. Not because it changes your relationship with God, but because it shows the world what God has already done in you. It’s a way to say, “I belong to Jesus,” in a visible and personal way.

In Acts, baptism always came after belief. People would hear the message about Jesus—who He is, what He’s done—and when they believed, they were baptized. It wasn’t something they waited on or treated like an optional step. It was how they responded to the gospel.

And that’s the same pattern Jesus gave us in Matthew 28, when He told His followers to make disciples and baptize them. Baptism doesn’t save us—but it’s a faithful step after salvation, a way to make our faith public. Today we’re looking at three short stories from Acts where people responded to Jesus by being baptized. Each one is a little different, but they all show us this: when Jesus changes your life, baptism is one of the clearest ways to respond.

***READ ACTS 2:37-41***

1. **Peter’s listeners were “pierced to the heart” after hearing the truth about Jesus. What do you think it feels like when God convicts someone personally—not just with guilt, but with clarity? Have you ever experienced something like that?**
2. **After they believed, Peter told them to be baptized right away. Why do you think baptism was such an immediate and important next step for them—and why might it still be today?**

***READ ACTS 10:44-48***

1. **Why were the Jewish believers surprised that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit too? What does this tell us about who the gospel is for?**
2. **The Gentiles were already showing signs of faith—the Holy Spirit had come, they were praising God—yet Peter still said they should be baptized. What do you think that tells us about why baptism still matters, even after someone believes?**

***READ ACTS 9:15-20***

1. **Saul had a complicated past, but he didn’t wait to be baptized—he responded right away. What does his story show us about how baptism fits into someone’s faith journey, no matter where they’ve come from?**
2. **Why do you think God includes so many different stories of baptism in Acts? What does that tell you about how God works in people’s lives?**

**WRAP UP**

Baptism doesn’t save you—but it shows that you’ve been saved. It’s a way of saying, “I belong to Jesus, and I want people to know.”

If you’ve already placed your faith in Jesus, have you taken that step yet? What’s been holding you back? And if you’ve already been baptized, how does your life show people that you still belong to Him?

Ask for prayer requests, and pray together—especially for boldness to respond to Jesus in real ways, and for those who haven’t yet taken that next step.

**EXTENDED CUT**

Baptism in Acts isn’t a side detail—it’s a central expression of what it meant to follow Jesus. In Acts 2, the crowd was “pierced to the heart,” convicted both by Peter’s message and their role in Jesus’s death. Their immediate response wasn’t just internal—it was action: repent and be baptized. For them, baptism was the visible next step after belief, not something saved for later or made conditional on maturity. The large number of baptisms that day (3,000) shows how closely faith and baptism were linked in the early church.

Later in Acts 10, the surprise wasn’t just that Gentiles believed, but that the Holy Spirit came on them just like it had for the Jews at Pentecost. Peter’s reaction was simple: “How could we not baptize them?” It reinforced the idea that no one is excluded from the gospel—and no one should be held back from publicly declaring faith in Jesus. Belief led to baptism, no matter the person’s background.

Even Paul—formerly Saul—understood this. After being blinded, confronted by Jesus, and healed, his first public step was to be baptized. For someone who had persecuted Christians, this wasn’t a small thing. It marked a complete break from his past and a step into a new life. The point Acts makes, over and over, is that when people truly encounter Jesus, they respond—and baptism is one of the clearest ways they do that.

This is a chance to reframe baptism—not as a religious formality, but as a response of obedience, identity, and joy. And for those who have already been baptized, it’s a reminder to continue walking in that identity and reflecting that faith in everyday life.

**1. Peter’s listeners were “pierced to the heart” after hearing the truth about Jesus. What do you think it feels like when God convicts someone personally—not just with guilt, but with clarity? Have you ever experienced something like that?**

It’s like something hits you that you can’t ignore. When Peter’s listeners realized they had rejected Jesus—the very One God had sent—they were overwhelmed. But this wasn’t just guilt. It was clarity. That’s what conviction feels like: when something inside you wakes up and you know something has to change. It’s not always loud or emotional, but it feels personal—like God is saying, “This is for you.” And that kind of moment usually makes you want to respond.

**2. After they believed, Peter told them to be baptized right away. Why do you think baptism was such an immediate and important next step for them—and why might it still be today?**

Baptism gave them a way to say, “This isn’t just in my head—I’m all in.” It was public and personal, like drawing a line in the sand. They weren’t just believing quietly; they were showing it with their actions. Today, it’s still a way to say your faith is real. It takes courage to be public with your faith, and baptism gives you a way to take that first bold step. It’s not about being perfect or having all the answers—it’s about trusting Jesus and being willing to be known as one of His followers.

**3. Why were the Jewish believers surprised that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit too? What does this tell us about who the gospel is for?**

They were surprised because, up to that point, most of the people following Jesus had come from a Jewish background. Seeing the Holy Spirit fall on Gentiles—people who weren’t part of the Jewish community—was a big deal. It challenged their assumptions and showed that salvation wasn’t just for one type of person. This moment made it clear that the gospel is for everyone—no matter your background, culture, or past. It reminds us that we should never decide who’s “in” or “out” based on what we see. God’s love reaches further than we expect.

**4. The Gentiles were already showing signs of faith—the Holy Spirit had come, they were praising God—yet Peter still said they should be baptized. What do you think that tells us about why baptism still matters, even after someone believes?**

It shows that belief is personal, but baptism makes it public. Even though the Gentiles clearly had real faith, Peter didn’t treat baptism like an optional extra. He saw it as the natural next step—something that needed to happen. It reminds us that baptism isn’t just a symbol, it’s obedience. It’s a way of showing that our faith is real and that we’re willing to be seen as someone who follows Jesus.

**5. Saul had a complicated past, but he didn’t wait to be baptized—he responded right away. What does his story show us about how baptism fits into someone’s faith journey, no matter where they’ve come from?**

Saul’s story is kind of wild. He had been actively trying to shut down the church, but when he encountered Jesus, everything changed—and he didn’t hesitate to get baptized. That tells us you don’t need to be perfect or have it all figured out first. Baptism isn’t about having a spotless past—it’s about taking a step forward in faith. Saul’s response shows that once you’ve met Jesus, your past doesn’t define you anymore. Baptism is a way to step into that new identity and let people know your life is now headed in a different direction.

**6. Why do you think God includes so many different stories of baptism in Acts? What does that tell you about how God works in people’s lives?**

God could’ve just told one story—but He didn’t. We see people from all different backgrounds—Jews, Gentiles, former enemies of the church—all coming to faith and being baptized. That shows us that God works differently with each person, but He invites all of them into the same family. Some hear a sermon. Others have a vision. Some are on the outside, some are religious insiders. But every time someone truly meets Jesus, there’s a response—and baptism is part of it. It reminds us that God meets people where they are, and He wants all of us to take that step of faith.