

## Question 45

---



# Is baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?

## Answer

---

**No, only the blood of Christ can cleanse us from sin.**

### Big Idea

Only the blood of Jesus can save.

### Aim

To help the children understand that salvation is found in Christ alone, not through baptism.

### Bible Passage

Luke 3:15–22

### Memory Verse

“John answered them all, saying, ‘I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’” (Luke 3:16)

### Virtue

Honesty





**Notes**

**Leader’s Notes**

Children are inclined to have a works-based theology, mistakenly believing that they can do something to secure their salvation. They must be continually reminded that salvation is a free gift from God and that there is nothing they can do to earn their salvation. This lesson aims to clearly explain to the children that only the blood of Jesus cleanses people from their sin, and the waters of baptism simply signify that internal cleansing. This lesson will allow the children to further explore and understand the sacrament of baptism.

Things to remember when planning and teaching:

- Churches have different policies on baptism and age. This lesson is designed

to be used in any context, but it will be stronger if you adapt it to your church’s baptismal policy and have the ability to clearly explain it to your class.

- Rather than simply repeating information from Questions 43 and 44, try to build upon previous material.
- Remember to mix and match the activities in the lesson to fit your time frame (see p. 12 for some sample outlines). You won’t have time to do them all. Feel free to adapt each activity based on your class’s strengths and weaknesses.

**Leader’s Prayer**

Saving God, I recognize that salvation comes through faith in the saving blood of Jesus Christ. Thank you that I am cleansed by his sacrificial death on the cross. Thank you that you give us the sacraments to remind us of that cleansing. Help us to rejoice in

them without trusting in them. Grant understanding to the children who will hear this lesson. May they clearly understand that the blood of Jesus cleanses sinners, and that the waters of baptism signify an inward transformation. In Jesus’s name. Amen.

**Leader’s Tool Kit**

- Ping-pong balls
- Bag or bingo cage
- A small, inexpensive dry-erase board
- Permanent marker
- Red dry-erase marker
- Water
- Tissues
- Picture of a crucible
- Blank index cards

**10 Catechism Recap**

Write the numbers of the questions that have already been taught on ping-pong balls and put them into a bag or box. If your budget allows, purchase a bingo cage or blower to add to the fun, or make your own.

Divide the children into two teams, and explain that you are going to have a quiz to help

them remember some of the *NCC* questions that they've already learned. Let each team pick a numbered ball out for their opponents. The opposing team will get two points if they can remember the catechism question and answer associated with the number. The team with the most points wins. Remember, this is meant to be a fun and engaging activity!

**5 Introduction to Question 45**

*You will need a small, inexpensive dry-erase board, a permanent marker, a red dry-erase marker, water, and some tissues. Before the class begins, draw a heart on the dry-erase board in permanent marker and in the heart write SIN also in permanent marker. It's worth having a trial run of this illustration to make sure it works!*

Draw the children's attention to the heart on the dry-erase board and tell them that you're going to try to erase the sin with water. The permanent marker will not be erasable with water. Highlight for the children that this question considers whether baptism with water is the washing away of sin. Explain

to them that the baptism with water is not what deals with sin.

Thoroughly color over the word SIN with the red dry-erase marker and explain to the children that it is only the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses people from their sin. The word *sin* will now rub off with a tissue, clearly illustrating that the water of baptism is not what cleanses people from their sin but rather the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ

Introduce Question 45: "Is baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?" Explain to the children that this lesson is another opportunity to consider carefully what the sacrament of baptism is.

**10 Activity**

Play a word association game with the children. The rules of the game are that the children must say a word that is directly related to the previous word and that there can be no hesitation or repetition. If there is hesitation or repetition, that child must sit

down and another child should be invited to take his or her place. The game can carry on for as long as time allows.

Invite two children up to play the game. Give one of the children a word to start.





## Notes

Below are some words you should use. Every time the players change (through violations of hesitation or repetition), introduce a new word (if it hasn't already been said):

- Baptism
- Water
- Jesus
- Sin
- Forgiveness
- Washed
- Sign

Hopefully, the game will bring out lots of words related to baptism and help the children to remember what they learned during the lessons associated with Questions 43 and 44.

## 15 Teaching Outline

Begin the teaching time by asking for God's help. Ask that the lesson would be taught faithfully and that the children might listen well.

Remind the children that baptism is a sign with a message, something external that signifies an internal change.

**Read Luke 3:15–22.** Provide Bibles for the children to read along.

Explain to the children that in this passage John the Baptist is preparing the way for Jesus. He was preaching repentance and baptizing people. Draw the children's attention to verse 16, and ask what strikes them about the verse. John says that he is baptizing with water but One is coming who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. Explain to the children that John is referring to cleansing of sin that happens when someone turns to Jesus in repentance and faith; remind the children that at that moment the Holy Spirit indwells people's hearts, cleanses them from sin, and brings them to new life in Christ.

John was clearly declaring that it is not water that cleanses, but rather the blood of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. There is no external act necessary for salvation.

**Read Luke 23:39–43.**

The thief who died on the cross next to Jesus declared his faith in Jesus, and Jesus assured him of his salvation by saying, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise" (v. 43). Point out to the children that the thief had not been baptized, and yet Jesus confirmed his faith. This account shows that while Jesus established the sacrament of baptism in his church to be the normal experience of every believer, baptism is not necessary for salvation.

**Conclude the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 45 and the answer to memory.**

*(These notes are just for guidance. Please expand or amend them to suit your own children and context. Write out your talk in your own words and include illustrations and applications that you know will connect with your children.)*



**10** Activity



Notes

Divide the children into small groups, and invite them to make up a short skit that could be shown to other children to help them understand the meaning of baptism. Give the groups different prompts, such as:

- Having a discussion at the lunch table at school about baptism with a kid who's never heard of it

- Someone becomes a Christian on her deathbed and asks about baptism
- A conversation with someone who thinks he needs to be baptized again every time he commits a sin

If time permits, invite some of the groups to perform their skits.

**5** Discussion and Question Time

Some questions that might arise include:

**? Can people who are not baptized be saved?**

Yes, absolutely! Remind the children that baptism is an outward sign of something that happens inside a person's heart. Highlight that Jesus has ordained that Christians should be baptized, but they will still be saved if something prevents that.

the church family. It is a great encouragement to the church and will also help the church community to support those who profess faith and also their families.

Also use this opportunity to help the children think about their own lives and how this question and answer affects them personally.

**? Why does baptism need to happen in public?**

Explain to the children that baptism is a public declaration made before

- Ask the children if there is anything they find confusing about baptism.
- Ask the children what they might say to someone who believed that the water of baptism brings salvation.

**10** Virtue Vision



**Honesty**

Have ready a picture of a crucible (a pot in which metals can be melted).

Remind the children that today's Bible passage says that we will be baptized "with the Holy

Spirit and fire." Ask the children what they think it might mean to be baptized with fire.

Explain that one way to think about it is to think about the purifying qualities of fire. Normally we think that fire only destroys, but



## Notes

that is not always the case. Explain that when precious metals like gold are taken out of the ground, they have impurities in them that need to be removed. Tell the children that one of the best ways to remove these impurities is to put the raw gold into a crucible and then melt it in a hot fire. (Show picture of crucible.) The impurities would separate from the gold so that only the pure gold was left. In other words, the fire would help separate the true gold from that which was not true gold.

Tell the children that the Holy Spirit does the same thing in our lives, and baptism is a sign of that process. Just as the fire separates

out the true gold, the Holy Spirit helps us to know the truth and to remove all falsehood from our lives. The Holy Spirit helps us to have honesty and integrity. Sometimes, we don't even know the lies in our lives. We believe lies that tell us we can't control our temper or lies that tell us we can be good without God's help. We may even start to tell other people these lies. When we are saved by God's grace, which is demonstrated through baptism, God begins to wash away these lies. Suggest that he may even use difficult circumstances that feel like fire to show us the truth, but in the end, we will know what is true from what is not true.

### 10 Memory Activity

*Write each word of the memory verse or catechism question and answer on a separate index card. You will need one full memory verse set of cards for each team.*

- Divide the children into teams.
- Read the memory verse or question and answer aloud to the children.
- Read it again, inviting the children to repeat each phrase after you.
- Read it again, inviting the children to say the entire verse along with you.
- Hand out a full set of memory verse cards to each team; make sure the words are not in order! Ask the children to put the words in the correct order. The first team to finish wins.
- Practice the memory verse together one final time.

### 5 Closing Prayer Time

Pray that the children would have great confidence in the saving power of the blood of Jesus.