



# A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO BAPTISM

(WITH LEADER'S GUIDE)

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thereasa Winnett is the founder of **Teach One Reach One**. She holds a BA in education from the College of William and Mary. She has served in all areas of ministry to children and teens for more than thirty years and regularly leads workshops for ministries and churches. She has conducted numerous workshops, including sessions at Points of Light's National Conference on Volunteering and Service, the National Urban Ministry Conference, Pepperdine Bible Lectures, and Lipscomb's Summer Celebration. Thereasa lives in Atlanta, GA with her husband Greg, where she enjoys reading, knitting, traveling and cooking. Their daughter Katrina, who has been an integral part of their service adventures, attends Pepperdine University.



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# INTRODUCTION

Someone gave you this study because you recently started asking questions about baptism. You may think you are ready to be baptized or you might just want to learn more about it. Either way, this study should help answer your questions.

Although you could do this study by yourself, it is better (and a lot more fun!) if you do it with a trusted Christian adult. Good choices would be a parent, grandparent, Bible school teacher or minister. During this study, I will call that person your study adult.

Let's get started by finding out what you are thinking and feeling about baptism right now. This will help your study adult make sure you learn everything you want and need to know. Take a few minutes to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers, so make sure you answer them the way you really feel right now. When you are finished answering the questions, discuss your answers with your study adult.

## INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. Why are you interested in baptism?

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2. What questions do you have about baptism or being a Christian?

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3. What concerns or fears do you have about baptism or being a Christian?

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4. What other questions do you hope are answered in this study?

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# CHAPTER 1: A LITTLE HISTORY

To understand baptism, we first need to review a little Bible history. When God created the world, he placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It was a beautiful place. They didn't have to work hard and they would never die. The only rule God made for them was that they were not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (See Genesis 2:15-17)

If you remember the story, Satan tempted them and they ate the fruit. (See Genesis 3:1-7) That was the first sin or the first time people disobeyed God. God punished them by making them leave the Garden of Eden. This meant that life would be difficult and when they were older, they would die. (See Genesis 3:16-19 and Romans 5:12)

That is a very sad story except for one exciting event. While God was telling Adam and Eve their punishment, he also made a special promise. He let them know that eventually He would send his Son to save us from spiritual death. (See Genesis 3:15)

In the beginning, God started a very special puzzle. Every story in the Bible is another piece to the puzzle. The completed puzzle is God's special plan for us to have a way to spend eternity (forever) with Him in heaven.

Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, God often reminds the people that He will eventually send His Son to save them. (See Genesis 12:2-3, Genesis 22:14-18, Genesis 28:13-14 and many more) In fact there are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus Christ.

During Old Testament times people weren't baptized like people are today. Instead of praying to God for forgiveness as Christians do, they also had to make animal sacrifices to God. (See Leviticus 1:4, Leviticus 4:14-15) Once a year, there was even a special day of atonement called Yom Kippur. The priests "put" the sins of the people on a ram and sent it into the wilderness. The people had to do the same things year after year to have their sins paid for. (See Leviticus 16:1-34)

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He became the perfect sacrifice for our sins. (See Romans 5:17-19) We no longer have to sacrifice animals. Once we are baptized and become a Christian, we can pray and be forgiven of our sins. Baptism washes our sins away and Christ's blood that He shed on the cross continues to cleanse our sins. God has a wonderful plan and He wants you to be a part of it!



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the first sin?

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2. Why was that a sin?

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3. What were the consequences for that sin?

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4. What has God's perfect plan been throughout the Bible?

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5. What role does Jesus play in the forgiveness of sins?

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6. What must people do today to be forgiven of their sins?

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# ACTIVITIES

\*1. Find the following Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ. Then read in the New Testament where He fulfilled that prophecy.

## Old Testament Prophecy .....New Testament Fulfillment

Isaiah 6:9-10 .....	John 12:37-40
Isaiah 9:1-2 .....	Matthew 4:12-17
Isaiah 11:1 .....	Matthew 2:21-23
Isaiah 35:5 .....	Mark 10:51-52
Isaiah 50:6 .....	Matthew 26:67
Isaiah 53:7 .....	Matthew 27:12-14
Isaiah 53:12 .....	Luke 23:32
Isaiah 55:3 .....	Acts 10:40-41
Isaiah 65:2 .....	John 5:37-40

\*2. Make your own picture puzzle showing God's plan.

\*3. Do research on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur. Especially focus on how it was celebrated in Old Testament times.



## CHAPTER 2: SIN

Sin is the act of disobeying God. The Bible contains what God wants us to do to obey him. Sin separates us from God, because God is perfect. Read Isaiah 59:2 to see how God views our sins (iniquities).

The Bible tells us small children and babies may do something wrong, but God doesn't consider them sinners. (See Matthew 19:13-14) They are too young to really understand what it means to sin. If they were to die, their souls would go to heaven, even though they hadn't been baptized.

At some point, everyone reaches what some people call the age of accountability. It is when you are old enough to understand what it means to obey God. At that point, you understand sin and know when you have disobeyed God. (See 1 John 3:4) Just like everything about growing up, different people understand all of this at different ages. There is no magical age. If someone reaches the age of accountability and continues to live a sinful life, there is a problem. Read Romans 5:12, Romans 6:23 and Romans 8:6-8 to see what the Bible says about sin. If a person has reached the age of accountability, chooses not to be baptized and continues to sin, there is a very serious consequence. When that person dies, his soul would not go to heaven but to hell. (See Matthew 25:31-33 & 46)

Once a person is baptized, Christ's blood continues to cleanse her sins. When she sins, she only needs to repent and pray to God for His forgiveness. God then erases the sin as though it never happened. (See Acts 3:19) When a Christian dies, he has the promise of eternal life with God in heaven. (See Matthew 25: 34-36 & 46b)



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is sin?

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2. Do you feel you are still a child or do you feel you may have reached the age of accountability? Why?

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3. What are some of the sins you commit?

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4. What do you do now when you sin?

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# ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Compare an example of someone who sinned and how he tried to repent in the Old Testament with someone who disobeyed God and repented in the New Testament. Write your conclusions or discuss them with your study adult.
- \*2. Read the following scriptures in the book of James to find some of the sins listed in the New Testament. James 1:19, James 1:26, James 2:1-4, James 2:11, James 3:14, James 4:11, James 4:16, James 5:1-6, James 5:9, James 5:12. What types of sins are discussed? Can you find other scriptures in the New Testament to add to your list?



# CHAPTER 3: BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

When you make cookies, there are certain steps that you must take if you want your cookies to taste great. In the same way, there are several steps to take before you become a Christian. Many people have studied the stories in Acts of people who became Christians. They realized these people had each done several things (steps) on their way to becoming a Christian. We will study each of these steps separately to help you understand them a little better.

## Hear

In Acts 13:14-39, we find Paul telling the people in Pisidian Antioch the story of Jesus Christ, His death, burial and resurrection. Before anyone can obey God and become a Christian she must first hear about Him. (See Romans 10:17)

You may have attended church since you were a few days old, or you might have just started coming to church with a friend. Either way, through your own study and through this study, you are hearing God's Words. They will tell you His plan for you and how He wants you to live your life.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When did you first hear about God?

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2. What part of Christ's story have you heard?

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## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Talk to your parents and ask them about your family's faith history. Write it down for future generations of your family.
- \*2. Re-tell the story of Jesus Christ in your own words.

## Believe

The dictionary says to believe is to have confidence in the truth or the reliability of something. In Acts we read about Lydia. You can find her story in Acts 16:11-15. She evidently thought belief was important. She said to Paul, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house." (NIV) Mark 16:16 tells us that believing is an important part of becoming a Christian. In fact the early Christians were often called Believers. (See Acts 11:25-26)

So what does a Christian need to believe? You could probably list a lot of things, but one of the most important is to believe in God. It is also important that we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We need to believe in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. We need to believe that the Bible is God's Word. As you can see, without belief, it would be impossible to become a Christian.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to believe?

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2. What are some important things God wants us to believe?

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3. What are some things you believe?

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4. Is there anything that you don't believe? If so, what?

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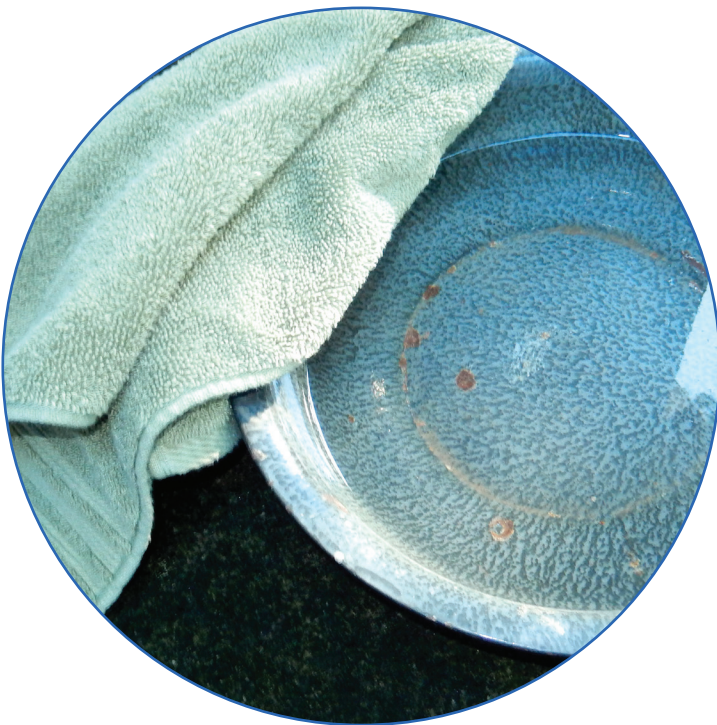
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## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Interview your study adult, a minister or Bible school teacher, an elder and a Christian family member. Ask them what they think the top 5 (or top 10!) things they think a Christian should believe.
- \*2. Using a concordance or other Bible aid, see if you can find scriptures for each belief that your interview subjects listed.
- \*3. Read Lee Strobel's book *The Case for Christ* (there is a student version). How did his beliefs change as he did his research?



# Repent

To repent of a sin means more than just being sorry for what you did. It means that you want to try and never commit the sin again. It means you are turning away or turning your back on that sin. Often, it may also mean doing whatever you can to correct the mistake you made. Zacchaeus is a good example of someone who understood repentance. (See Luke 19:1-10) When he met Jesus, he not only promised to stop stealing but also to repay four times the amount of money he had stolen.

Part of becoming a Christian is understanding you have sinned and need God's forgiveness. You may have heard about a criminal or a drug addict who repented of their sins and became a Christian. You don't have to commit what the world considers "big" sins to repent. Lying, disobeying your parents and using ugly words are still sins in God's eyes. (See 1 John 1:8)

An important thing to remember is that repenting of a sin doesn't necessarily mean you will never commit that sin again. Satan knows what tempts you, and even when you become a Christian, he may tempt you with the same sin more than once. (See how the Apostle Paul felt about his sins in Romans 7:18-25) Repenting is choosing to be unhappy with your sin. It means you continue to try and turn away from sin.

Repentance is an important part of becoming a Christian. It is your way of letting God know you understand you have sinned and need Jesus' blood to cover your sins.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to repent?

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2. Do you need to repent of anything?

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## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Study the stories of Zaccheus and Saul/Paul. What do they have in common?
- \*2. Read the book *Gifted Hands* by Ben Carson. How would his life have been different if he had not changed? What if he had decided to let his sinning in anger continue? How would these changes have affected other people? How many lives would possibly have been changed for the worse if he had not repented?
- \*3. Research an historical figure who needed to repent and change his life but did not. How would his world and others have changed if he had repented? (To really see how much of a ripple affect sin can have, apply this exercise to Adolph Hitler.)

## Confess

In Romans 10:10b it says “with your mouth you say that Jesus is Lord. And so you are saved.” (NIV) Read Acts 8:37 in a New American Standard or King James Bible for an example of someone confessing their faith. Read Matthew 10:32, I Timothy 6:12 and Philippians 2:6-11 for more scriptures about confessing your faith.

Usually right before you are baptized, the person who is going to baptize you will ask you to confess your faith. He may ask you to say it in your own words or he might ask you a question. Usually it will be something like “Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God?” The words may be slightly different, but basically you are being asked to say aloud that you believe Jesus is Lord.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does a person need to confess at her baptism?

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2. How comfortable are you with saying (and meaning) those words?

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## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Research Roman persecution of the early Christians. What were some of the consequences when they confessed their faith? How did many of them react in spite of these consequences?
- \*2. Discuss with your study adult what you want to say as your confession when you are baptized. Can you find a scripture with a similar confession?



# Baptism

The word baptism comes from the Greek word “baptizo”. It means to immerse or bury something in water. In a Greek book written a little before the time of Jesus, the word is used to describe a blacksmith putting a piece of hot iron under the water to cool it. Another famous writer of that time used it to describe a ship sinking under water. When someone is baptized, they are “buried” under the water, as a symbol of when Jesus was buried in the tomb after His crucifixion.

In Acts, when you read about people becoming Christians they were all baptized. If you remember, earlier we learned that Christ’s death on the cross was the perfect sacrifice. His death, burial and resurrection were necessary so our sins can be forgiven. It gives us the hope of eternal life with God in heaven.

Read Romans 6:3-13. The act of baptism is burying your old sinful self and rising out of the water to a new life. A life where your previous sins have been forgiven. A life where Christ’s blood continues to cover you. A life where you will have the Holy Spirit to help you in your new walk. A life as a Christian.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the symbolism behind baptism?

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2. What happens when someone is baptized?

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## ACTIVITIES

\*1. Ask some Christians you admire about the day they were baptized.

\*2. Answer the questions at the beginning of this study again. (Why are you interested in baptism? What questions do you have about baptism or being a Christian? What concerns or fears do you have about baptism or being a Christian? What questions do you have that you hope are answered in this study?) Have any of your answers changed? Why or why not?



## CHAPTER 4: MORE ON BAPTISM

Even once you understand what baptism is and what it does for you, you probably still have some practical questions. Below you will find the answers to some frequently asked questions by people who are about to be baptized. Every congregation does things a little differently in these areas. Your study adult can tell you if your congregation does something slightly different. In addition many congregations have special songs they may sing or other activities either during or after the baptism. Once again your study adult can explain those to you.

### FAQs about Baptism

- 1. *Will my clothes get wet?*** If you are being baptized in a church building, there will be special clothes for you to wear when you are baptized.
- 2. *What about the man baptizing me?*** He will usually wear special pants called waders to keep his clothes dry. (Often his shirt gets a little wet though!)
- 3. *Does the preacher have to baptize me?*** In most congregations any Christian man is allowed to baptize people. That means that you can be baptized by your father, Bible school teacher or other special adult as long as he is a Christian. Of course your minister would love to baptize you too!
- 4. *How do they get me under the water and can I hold my breath?*** Usually the person baptizing you will tell you what he is going to say right before he baptizes you. He will probably give you a signal when he wants you to bend your knees and hold your breath. Just relax and let him worry about getting you under the water and back up again. (It only takes a second or two!)
- 5. *Where does the door next to the baptistry go?*** It leads to a special room where you can change your clothes. Usually your parent, a Bible school teacher and others close to you (only women if you are a girl and men if you are a boy) are also allowed in the room with you. There is usually a private area like a department store dressing room where you can change clothes without anyone seeing you.
- 6. *How do I get dry?*** The room has clean towels and usually a blow dryer if you want to dry your hair. (Some congregations have swimming caps if you want to keep your hair dry.)



- 7. Will I feel weird or will something strange happen when I come up out of the water?** Everyone is different in their experiences. Most people I have known mentioned that they felt really clean inside because they knew their sins had been forgiven. Most people also mention feeling joy, happiness or excitement.
- 8. Do I have to understand everything in the Bible to become a Christian?** No. I doubt that there is anyone alive who would claim to totally understand everything in the Bible. Remember, the New Testament had not even been written down when the first Christians were baptized. Many were baptized after hearing only one sermon.
- 9. What is that sentence the person says right before he baptizes you?** Usually, he will say something like, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for the remission (forgiveness) of your sins.”
- 10. What does it mean that I will get the gift of the Holy Spirit?** When a person is baptized, Acts 2:38 says he will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. John 14:26 calls the Holy Spirit the Counselor. Romans 8:26 says the Holy Spirit prays for us when we can’t or don’t know what to pray. Galatians 5:22-23 discusses the fruit of the Holy Spirit living in Christians. While we may not understand exactly how the Holy Spirit works in us, we know that He is part of God. We also know that God the Father has given Christians the gift of the Holy Spirit to help them in their Christian lives. Most people who have been Christians for awhile can give you examples of how the Holy Spirit has helped them. Just remember that receiving this gift doesn’t feel weird or spooky. Gifts from God are good and special because He loves us. When you become a Christian, you may not even recognize the Holy Spirit is in you. Often it is only when Christians look back over the things that have happened since they became Christians that they can see what the Holy Spirit did for them.
- 11. Do I have to be perfect after I am baptized?** The Bible says the only person that never sinned was Jesus Christ. (See Hebrews 5:9 and I Peter 2:22) No one is perfect after their baptism, just like no one is perfect before their baptism. The difference is that after baptism, Christ’s blood continues to cover your sin. (See “What Happens When I Sin as a Christian?” for more details of what to do when you sin after baptism.)
- 12. What happens after I am baptized?** That is when your life as a new Christian begins. The next sections will give you some information to get you started.



## CHAPTER 5: CHURCH STRUCTURE

When you become a Christian, you are automatically a member of Christ's church. In the New Testament, we read there is one body of Christ, the church. (See I Corinthians 12:13). Since Christians lived in different areas, we do read that groups of Christians living near each other met together. Today, we call each of these groups a congregation. In the New Testament, each group or congregation had its own leaders. Although there are examples of congregations helping each other in times of need (See I Corinthians 16:1-4), there is not an example of one congregation's leaders telling another congregation's leaders what to do.

In Titus 1:5, Paul told the congregations to have leaders who are called elders (or shepherds). In I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, you can find the qualifications for a man who is to be an elder. The elders of the church lead the congregation in the direction they believe (from study and prayer) that God would want them to go. They usually make decisions like how the money in the contribution is spent. They often help members who are struggling with sin. Usually, they are also involved in teaching others.

Another type of servant leader mentioned in the Bible is the deacon. The apostles first appointed deacons to take care of the widows so the Apostles could spend more of their time teaching (See Acts 6:1-6). Today deacons help with the ministries of the church. They often coordinate ministries like missions, worship, building, finance and many others. In I Timothy 3:8-13, you can read about the qualities a deacon needs to have. Ministers are employed by the elders to help teach various groups in the congregation. They may also help with many of the ministries there.

### ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Find out the names of the elders in your congregation. Interview one of them to find out his duties.
- \*2. Find a list of the ministries the deacons in your congregation serve. Interview a deacon to find out some of the things he does for his ministry.
- \*3. Interview an elder's wife and a deacon's wife to see how they help their husbands in their ministries.





## CHAPTER 6: LIVING A CHRISTIAN LIFE

Being a Christian is more than just being baptized. Becoming a Christian is committing your life to Christ. It is a life made up of lots of little decisions that you will make every day. Hopefully, you will make good decisions that will keep you on God's path.

There are several activities Christians participate in on a regular basis. Some of these activities you may have already participated in, while others are meant especially for Christians. The following list is not complete, but includes some areas you may have questions about.

### Worship Service

If you have been attending church, you are probably familiar with the different parts of the worship service. We sing songs, pray prayers, listen to God's words and give some of our money back to God. Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is a special part of worship that is meant for Christians. (See 1 Corinthians 11:23-29)

The Lord's Supper was actually started by Jesus right before He died. You can read about it in Luke 22:7-22. The Lord's Supper has two parts.

The first is called the bread. It reminds us of Christ's body on the cross. It is usually some sort of cracker or matzo passed from person to person on a plate. When the plate gets to you, just break off a small piece and put it in your mouth. You can chew it quietly and swallow it. While everyone else is taking their turn, you should think about Jesus on the cross. You can also read scriptures or pray silently during this time.

The second part is called the "fruit of the vine" or grape juice. It reminds us of the blood Christ shed for our sins. It is usually in small cups served in a tray. When the tray reaches you, take one cup and drink the juice. Watch the people near you to see where you need to put your empty cup. You should use your time while waiting as you did after the bread.

### ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Use a concordance to find some scriptures to read during the Lord's Supper.
- \*2. Decide what you will think about during the Lord's Supper.



# Giving

Everything that we have is a gift from God to us. The beautiful earth we live on, our families, our homes, our food and even our talents, were given to us by God. Paul praised the people in the Macedonian church for their generosity. (II Corinthians 8:1-7) There are many examples in the Bible of people who gave part or all of their possessions for the Lord's work. Many people struggle with how much of their money they should give back to God. You may even hear some people mention a specific percentage of the money you earn that you should give back to God. Read II Corinthians 8:1-7 again and the story of the widow in Luke 21:1-4. If we remember what God has done for us, I believe we will be extremely generous in sharing what we have with God and others.

The money that is given during contribution in worship service is used for many purposes. It may be used to pay for the building where you worship, feed orphans in another country or buy Bibles for people who have never owned one. You can also give by donating clothes, food or your time to help others. If you haven't been contributing regularly in the past, now is a good time to start giving.

## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Have your parents or study adult help you write a budget. Make sure to include giving some money to God.
- \*2. Research all of the ways people can give back to God in your congregation. Make a list. How many of these ways can you participate in now?



# Bible Study

In Deuteronomy 11:18-21, God tells the people all of the ways they are to study His Law. It makes sense He would want us to study the entire Bible with the same attitude. In fact II Timothy 3:16-17 says “All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” (NIV) Once you become a Christian, you will want to learn as much about God’s words as you can. The Bible will answer many of the questions you will have about what kind of person you should be and how you should live your life. It has lots of great stories about real men and women who made good choices and some who made bad choices. (Many of them did both!)

During your lifetime, you will read through the Bible many times. Parts of the Bible you will even memorize, so it will be in your heart to help you when you need it. You don’t always have to read the Bible straight through like a regular book. This is a book you can learn from even if you skip around. New Christians often like to start with the New Testament and read it from start to finish. Some student Bibles have lists of different ways to read your Bible. Christian adults can give you other ideas. The important thing is to try to get in the habit of reading a few minutes every day. If you skip a day, don’t get too upset; just start reading again the next day.

## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Ask seven Christians for their favorite passage of scripture. Read one each day for a week. Memorize your favorite.
- \*2. Find a study plan for reading your Bible that you like. Choose a time every day when you will spend a few minutes reading scripture.



# Prayer

Prayer is our way of talking to God. Colossians 4:2 says “Devote yourselves to prayer...” You can use your own words and tell God what is on your heart. Nothing is too big or too small for you to take to God. If you ever have something that is on your heart, but don’t know the words to say, remember the Holy Spirit will help Christians pray.

There are several areas you may want to consider covering in your prayers. The first area is praise (See Psalms 145:3). This is the time you use to tell God how awesome you know He is. Another area is thanksgiving (See Philippians 4:6). Use this time to thank God for His blessings and answered prayers. Confession is the part of your prayer when you confess your sins to God and ask for His forgiveness (See I John 1:9). The final area of prayer is supplication. (See Matthew 21:22). This is when you ask God for His help and His blessings. Examples would be praying for someone to get well or for God to help you with something about which you are concerned.

The great thing about prayer is you can pray any time and anywhere. In fact in I Thessalonians 5:16-18, it says to pray continually. That means if something happens during your day, you don’t have to wait until your next meal or bedtime. You can and should pray about it right then. Prayer is a great way to keep in constant contact with God during your day.

## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Use a concordance or other Bible aid to find scriptures that contain God’s promises about answering prayers. Make a list to remind yourself God answers prayers.
- \*2. Start a prayer journal. Record your prayer requests and the dates you pray them. Later record God’s answer when you receive it. (Remember, God can answer a prayer with “Yes”, “No”, or “Wait”.)
- \*3. Find some Christians you admire who will agree to pray for you. Ask them if you can have them pray for you, when you have special requests of God.
- \*4. Interview some Christians you admire about a dramatic answer to prayer they have seen in their life.



# Sharing Your Faith

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gives the apostles what is often called the Great Commission. He tells them, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (NIV) There are many ways to share your faith with others.

Often when people watch you make Christian choices, they will start asking you questions. Be ready to answer them in love. You can often share with them the story of Jesus and what He has done in your life. The great thing is that the longer you live a Christian life, the more stories you will have to share about how God has affected your life. As you get older and learn more, you can share your faith in more formal ways. You may teach Bible classes, lead Bible studies, or study the Bible one on one with someone. If you look out for opportunities to share your faith, I am sure God will provide many chances for you to do so.

A good way to start practicing now is to invite your friends to church activities. It is okay if they say no, the important thing is for you to keep asking people to join you to learn about God. You might just be surprised who says yes!

## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Ask someone to be your guest at church or a church activity this week.
- \*2. Ask several Christians about someone who shared their faith with them.
- \*3. Ask several Christians what they would tell a non-Christian that God/Christ has done for them.



# Service

One of my favorite scriptures is I Timothy 6:17-19. Paul instructs Timothy to tell Christians “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share.” (NIV)

There are plenty of examples in the New Testament of both commands to help others or examples of Christians helping other people. Perhaps the best example is Christ washing the disciples’ feet (See John 13:1-17). No matter how old you are, there are many ways you can serve God by helping others.

One way to serve is to help with the jobs that are necessary to keep the church running smoothly. Maybe you can help fill the trays for the Lord’s Supper, organize the food pantry or help clean up after a congregational event. Depending on your age, you may be able to help in worship nursery, assist in a children’s Bible class, help pass out communion or collect attendance cards.

Another area of service is helping those in need. These acts of service can be done with your congregation, your family, on your own or with another group like scouts. You may help feed people, fix up old houses, visit nursing home residents or read to orphans.

The best way to serve is to just look around you and see how you can help others. Sometimes it may be as simple as helping your parents with chores around the house (without being asked!). The activities below can help you get started.

## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Read the following scriptures and make a list of some of the types of people we are commanded to serve. Matthew 25:41-45, I Timothy 5:3-4, James 1:27, I Timothy 5:1-2, Matthew 19:21.
- \*2. Ask your study adult to help you make a list of all the ways someone your age can serve God in your congregation.
- \*3. Check out Girl Scout or Boy Scout websites to find ideas for other ways you can serve other people. Make a list of the ones that interest you.
- \*4. Find an area of need that isn’t being met. How can you serve those people? Be creative!





# Taking Care of Yourself

Read I Corinthians 3:16-17. If your body is a temple, you are going to want to take good care of it. That means staying away from things we know harm our bodies. Abusing drugs or alcohol, smoking and eating an unhealthy diet can shorten our lives by many years. Although there aren't necessarily scriptures that specifically list each of these things, it just makes sense God can use us more effectively if we are healthy.

## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. List all of the ways you can take care of your body. Put a star by the ones you need to focus on more carefully.
- \*2. List the ways taking care of your body can help you be a more effective Christian.

# Relationships with Others

There are a lot of commands in the New Testament about how we are to treat other people (See I Corinthians 13). Jesus even said in Matthew 22:37-40 the second greatest command is to love your neighbor as yourself.

Non-Christians watch us to see how we treat other people. When they see us treat everyone, even our "enemies" (See Luke 6:27-36) with love and kindness, they will want to learn more about God. In a way, how you treat other people is a way to share your faith.

## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Use a concordance to find scriptures about how we should treat other people.
- \*2. List some practical ways to show your love for others. Pay special attention to listing ways to show love to people others might consider "unlovable."





# Glorifying God

Read Romans 15:5-6. A Christian should try to glorify God in everything he does. The dictionary says that to glorify means to magnify with praise or to praise in adoration. You can glorify God by keeping His commands, worshipping Him, sharing your faith, serving others, giving God the glory for what He has done and in a lot of other ways.

You have probably heard the expression “What would Jesus do?” Read Matthew 5:16 and John 17:1-5 to see what Jesus had to say about glorifying God. Glorifying God is a large part of the Christian life. The activities below can help you get started.

## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Find songs in your congregation’s song book that mention glorifying God. What do they say?
- \*2. Make a list of ways that you can glorify God.



# What Happens When a Christian Sins?

At the beginning of this study, we learned Adam and Eve introduced sin and death into the world when they disobeyed God. A perfect sacrifice was required by God to cover our sins. Jesus Christ gave his life on the cross to be that perfect sacrifice. When you are baptized, all of the sins you have committed up until that time are forgiven. Read Colossians 2:13-14. It is as if those sins have never happened. After you become a Christian, Satan will still try to tempt you. You will commit sins, probably quite a few in your lifetime. It is not necessary to get baptized again every time you sin. Jesus' blood continues to cover your sins, no matter how horrible you think they are.

Read I John 1:9. If no one but you and God knows about your sin, then you only need to pray for God's forgiveness. If you have sinned against someone else, read what Matthew 18:15 says you need to do. Maybe you lied to someone or said ugly things to them. You should still pray to God for forgiveness. This scripture tells us that we also must try to make things right with the person. Sometimes all you can do is apologize. Other times, like in the story of Zacchaeus, you may need to make some sort of restitution for your sin. James 5:16 talks about public sins. A public sin would be something so obvious that it seems everyone knows about it. An extreme example of a public sin would be if someone got arrested for breaking the law. Even then, you should still pray to God for forgiveness.

Most congregations have a time during their service when you can ask the congregation to pray for you also.

## ACTIVITIES

- \*1. Discuss with your study adult examples of sins that might fit into each of the three categories. Review what someone should do in each case.
- \*2. Use your concordance to find scriptures about sin in the New Testament. What do you learn from these scriptures?



# Heaven

The goal of every Christian is to spend eternity with God in heaven. Read the following scriptures to get an idea of what heaven is like. Hebrews 11:16, John 14:2, Revelation 21:21 and Isaiah 6.

## Final Thoughts

I hope this study has answered a lot of your questions. It would be a good idea to answer the questions in the beginning of this study one last time and discuss the answers with your study adult. This time add one more question. Do you believe you are ready to be baptized and become a Christian? Why or why not?

## A Special Suggestion

When you are baptized (whether is now or sometime in the future) make a scrapbook about your special day. Many people call the day they are baptized their spiritual birthday. You can put in pictures of your baptism and notes, emails or cards people send you. (You may even want to save this study to help you remember what you studied.) There are two very important items I think you should add. One is to ask your study adult to write down his or her recollections of your study together. The other is for you to write down what you are thinking and how you feel that day. This scrapbook will become very special to you over the years.

May God bless you!



# CHAPTER 7: LEADER'S GUIDE

## Introduction

For me, there is nothing as exhilarating and terrifying as the idea of studying with a young person who has expressed an interest in becoming a Christian. Whether you are studying with a student in your Bible class or your own child, the sense of feeling responsible for another soul can be overwhelming. (Hebrews 6:10)

Sometimes, we feel an added burden when studying with a young person. We convince ourselves it is our responsibility to decide if the young person is spiritually mature enough to make such an important eternal decision. (Philippians 2:12-13)

Ultimately, the decision about whether or not the young person should be baptized lies with the young person. Only he and God know for sure what is in his heart. Our focus needs to be on providing a study with the scriptures that will help the young person make a wise decision. (Acts 18: 18-28)

I have over thirty years of experience teaching and working with children from infancy through the teen years. One thing I learned early in my journey is that when young people feel safe and loved, they are usually very open and honest. This is especially true if you ask them open ended questions and actively listen to their answers. Using the questions at the beginning of the study should help you discern the reasons the young person you are studying with has for wanting to be baptized. This should help you decide whether to use the comprehensive or accelerated version of this study. Hopefully by the end of the study, it will be obvious to both you and the young person whether or not she is ready to become a Christian.

If you believe the young person is not ready, or you are unsure about his readiness, please be very careful how you handle the situation. I have known too many young people who were quickly and strongly discouraged from being baptized. Many of them lost all interest in Christianity and never made the commitment. This study is designed with a comprehensive track to allow you to encourage young people who may not be ready to make such an important decision. It allows you to show your enthusiasm for her interest in doing God's will, by taking the time to study with her. It allows you to stretch the study out long enough to give her the time and the tools necessary to grow and mature spiritually. No matter how immature her initial reasons for wanting to be baptized are, she is showing an interest in God and spiritual matters. This is an attitude you want to encourage and nurture. (Acts 17: 16-34)



Before you begin an in depth study with a young person, I have a few suggestions that will help you prepare.

1. Pray. Pray for wisdom for you and your student. Pray for God's guidance. Pray for your student and her spiritual growth. Pray without ceasing!
2. Mail your student a note. Let him know how proud you are of him for loving the Lord. Tell him how excited you are about studying with him. Let him know that you are praying for him.
3. Read the student materials.
4. Gather any recommended outside materials or study aids you need for the various activities.
5. Set an initial meeting place and time. The initial meeting should take place as quickly as possible after the young person has expressed an interest in studying with you. Meet where the student is comfortable, but try to avoid studying where there will be distractions and interruptions.
6. Have your initial study with the student. Use the open ended questions as a starting point. In a loving, non-threatening way, you are trying to help the student reveal to you what is on his heart and mind. You are not grilling him to make a judgment, but getting to know him better so you can make a wise decision about which study track to use with him. The important point to remember throughout this study is that your goal is to create an open and ongoing dialogue with the student regarding spiritual matters.
7. Use the personal information gathered from the student during the initial study to determine which study track to use and how often to meet. This is another time to pray for wisdom. This is your decision as the leader and should not be openly discussed with the student. Remember that no decision you make now has to be permanent. You can change tracks or the frequency of meetings at any point in the study. The student's response to the study will help you decide whether you need to speed things up or slow them down. If you choose the comprehensive track, let the student help pick the activities that are the most appealing to her. If she is having fun, the study will be more successful.





# Study Tracks

The two tracks in this study are:

1. **Comprehensive Track** – This track is designed for the student who may not be mature enough to quickly make an important spiritual commitment. The comprehensive track provides additional activities that will help the student continue to learn and grow while not discouraging her interest in becoming a Christian. This track can be completed in a few weeks or over many months if necessary. The length of the study will be determined in part by how many comprehensive activities (marked by \*) you assign to the student in each section. Let the student help pick the specific activities as much as possible. He will learn more from activities that interest him than from those he finds tedious.
2. **Accelerated Track** – This track is designed for the student who has given every indication she is probably ready to make an important spiritual commitment. The accelerated track will allow you to study or review all of the fundamentals of becoming a Christian and beginning life as a new Christian. Depending upon the student, it can be completed in a few hours, a few days or a few weeks. If desired, any or all of the comprehensive activities (marked by \*) may be completed by the student as a spiritual growth exercise after she is baptized.

## Resource Materials Needed by the Student to Complete All Activities

1. **Bible** – The student is probably more comfortable with his personal Bible. You may want to have an NIRV version to show scriptures written in very simple English. An American Standard Version is also helpful.
2. **Bible Concordance** – Your Bible may have an adequate concordance or you may want to use one that is more comprehensive.
3. **Bible Dictionary** – A child's Bible dictionary will probably be the easiest to understand.
4. *Walk With Y'shua Through the Jewish Year* by Janie-sue Wertheim and Kathy Shapiro and *Celebrate: A Book of Jewish Holidays* by Judith Gross
5. *The Case For Christ* by Lee Strobel – This book has child, student and adult versions. Choose the version that is most appropriate for the maturity level of the student with whom you are studying.



6. *Gifted Hands* by Ben Carson

7. Encyclopedia or internet access to research historical figures.

8. Book or articles on Roman persecution of Christians

9. Names and contact information for the elders, deacons and minister in your congregation.

10. Chronological Bible or other plans for reading through the Bible. Many of these can be found in study Bibles.

11. Hymnal from your congregation.

12. Notebook or journal, pen, markers

## Additional Scriptures to Use with Each Topic in this Study

The student workbook contains only a handful of scriptures for each topic. This was done to prevent a young person from being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of possible scriptures. As you study with your student, you may find he has more questions on a particular topic. You may also want to give him more scriptures in areas where you believe he needs more study. Listed below are additional scriptures that can be used to study any topic in greater depth. This list is not comprehensive. Your concordance can provide you with even more scriptures to study.

### Sin

I Kings 8:46

Prov. 14:9

Prov. 20:9

Jer. 31:30

John 8:7

John 8:34

Romans 5:12

I Peter 2:11

Romans 7:14

Gal. 6:8

I John 3:4

Mark 9:42-48

Hebrews 12:1

James 1:15

Romans 8:5-8

I John 1:8





# Prophecies Fulfilled by Christ

Gen. 3:15 – Luke 1:34-35

Gen. 4:25 – Luke 3:23-38

Gen. 22:8 – John 1:29

Exodus 12:46 – John 19:32-33

Deut. 18:15 – Matthew 21:11

Deut. 32:43 – Luke 2:23-32

Ruth 4:12-17 – Luke 3:23-32

Psalm 2:1 – Acts 4:25-28

Psalm 2:2 – Matthew 26:3-4

Psalm 2:6 – John 12:12-13

Psalm 2:7 – Acts 13:30-33

Psalm 16:8-10 – Matthew 28:6

Psalm 18:49 – Ephesians 3:4-6

Psalm 22:9 – Luke 2:40

Psalm 27:12 – Matthew 26:59-61

Psalm 40:6-8 – Hebrews 10:10-13

Psalm 55:12-14 – Luke 22:47-48

## Sacrifices

Gen. 4:1-7

Gen. 8:20-22

Gen. 22:1-19

Exodus 20:22-25

Exodus 29:35-46

Exodus 30:1-10

Lev. 1:1-9:24

Lev. 22:17-31

Lev. 23:4-38

## Jesus as the Perfect Sacrifice

Eph. 5:2

Hebrews 9:1-10:21

Hebrews 7:23-28

I John 2:1-2

I John 4:10

## Hear

Romans 10:14-17

Matthew 11:15

Matthew 13:14-23

John 8:47

James 1:22-25



## Believe

John 12:44-45  
Mark 1:14  
Luke 8:12-13  
John 3:16-18

John 4:42  
John 6:28-51  
John 10:25-30  
John 14:9-11

## Repent

Luke 13:3  
Luke 5:31-32  
Luke 24:45-47  
Luke 15:7, 10  
Acts 2:38  
Acts 3:19

Acts 17:30  
Acts 20:21  
Acts 26:20  
II Cor. 7:10  
II Peter 3:9



## Confess

Hebrews 13:15

II Timothy 2:19

## Baptism

Acts 22:16  
Acts 16:25-34  
Acts 2:38  
Matthew 28:19-20  
Mark 16:15-16  
I Peter 3:21  
Galatians 3:26  
Col. 2:12  
Acts 2:41

Acts 8:12-13  
Acts 8:36-38  
Acts 9:18  
Acts 10:48  
Acts 16:15  
Acts 18:8  
Acts 19:5  
Acts 22:16

## Holy Spirit

John 3:5	I John 3:24
Romans 8:5-17	I John 4:13
I Cor. 2:10-14	Jude 20
I Cor. 6:19	Acts 5:32
I Cor. 12:13	John 14:15-27
II Cor. 1:22	John 16:5-15
II Cor. 5:5	

## Forgiveness of Sin

Acts 5:31	Acts 26:16-18
Acts 10:43	Eph. 1:7
Acts 13:38	Col. 1:14

## Worship

Psalms 100:2	John 4:24
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## Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:26-30	Acts 20:7
Mark 14:22-26	Acts 2:42

## Giving

II Cor. 8:7	Hebrews 13:16
Acts 2:45	Romans 12:13
II Cor. 8:3	I John 3:17
II Cor. 9:6-8	



## Bible Study

II Timothy 3:14

Phil. 4:8-9

Proverbs 1:1-7

John 6:45

Psalms 119: 15, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148

Psalms 143:5

Psalms 1:2

Psalms 104:34

Col. 1:10

I Timothy 4:7-8

## Prayer

Proverbs 15:8, 29

Matthew 5:44

Matthew 6:5-9

Luke 6:28

Romans 8:26

Eph. 6:18

I Thess. 5:17

Acts 1:14

James 5:13, 16

Acts 2:42

Phil. 4:6

Col. 4:2

## Sharing Your Faith

Romans 10:14-15

I Peter 2:12

## Service

Eph. 4:12

I Peter 4:10

I Cor. 16:15

James 1:27

II Cor. 9:6-8

Gal. 6:9-10

Eph. 2:10

Col. 1:10

Hebrews 10:24

Hebrews 13:16

I Peter 2:12

Romans 12:13

James 2:14-24

I John 3:17



## Good Health

Romans 12:1

Eph. 5:18

Proverbs 23:21



## Relationships with Others

Luke 6:35

Luke 10:27

Romans 12:10-21

Romans 13:9-10

I Cor. 16:14

Galatians 5:14-22

Eph. 4:1-3

I Thess. 4:9-12

I Peter 4:8-11

II Peter 1:5-9

I John 3:11-23

## Glorifying God

Psalms 96

Psalms 34

Romans 15:6

## Heaven

Matthew 26:64

Acts 7:55

Phil. 3:20-21

I Thess. 4:16-18



## Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. *I am using the study with a young person who doesn't enjoy reading/writing. What should I do?*** You want him to enjoy the study and look forward to your meetings. Feel free to be creative with the assignments. Instead of requiring written responses, discuss his answers to the questions with him. Many of the suggested resources have versions for younger students. You may want to consider choosing those editions. Feel free to read passages or chapters out loud to him instead of assigning the books to him to read. Go with the student on interview assignments and take notes for him. Feel free to skip any assignment that would require a lot of reading or writing.
- 2. *We have completed the study. I really was convinced that the young person with whom I was studying was ready to become a Christian. Suddenly she is expressing new doubts and fears. What should I do?*** This is a very common experience. Ask her a lot of questions and try to determine what her main fear is. Usually the first doubt or fear she will express is not what she is truly concerned about. Calmly answer her questions and try to calm her fears. This is an eternal life decision. If she is taking the process seriously, it is perfectly natural for her to be nervous at the last minute. This does not mean she is not ready to make a wise decision.
- 3. *A young man in my Bible school class wanted me to study with him. I set up the first meeting, but now he seems to have lost interest. What should I do?*** I would see if he will meet you somewhere casually for ice cream or a meal. In a very non-threatening way, ask a few questions to see if he will tell you why he was interested in baptism. You may find he just had a simple question based on something that he saw or read recently. He may not be ready for a study or a personal commitment yet. Continue to develop a personal relationship with him. This should allow you opportunities to periodically check with him to see if he has a renewed interest in studying with you. Pray for him to give you or someone else an opportunity to study with him in the future.



**4. *I believe my daughter has reached the age of accountability. I am concerned because she has not expressed an interest in becoming a Christian. Should I require her to do the study with me?*** Just because your daughter has not talked to you about becoming a Christian, it does not mean she hasn't considered it. Hopefully she has regular exposure to other Christians, the Bible and other Christian literature. Without mentioning the study to her, I would casually start asking some of the open ended questions at the beginning of the study. Try to ask the questions during a conversation when she is relaxed and has opened up to you about other areas. It may take more than one conversation for you to understand where she thinks she is spiritually. If she appears interested, you may want to offer to study with her. Sometimes it is actually more effective if she studies with a family friend or Bible class teacher. Remember though that pressuring your daughter to complete this study or to be baptized does not ultimately help her. The decision to become a Christian needs to be her heart's desire. Pray that she will express a desire to study with you or another Christian in the near future.

**5. *Where can I find the outside resources that you suggest to use with this study?*** Your local Christian bookstore may have many of the resources in stock. Online, I personally have found Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble and Christian Book Distributors to be reliable resources for ordering books.

## Ways to Encourage the New Christian

Baptism is only the first step in the life of a Christian. A successful Christian walk will require opportunities for a young Christian's faith and knowledge to grow. (I Peter 2:2) I encourage you to continue your relationship with the young person who has just become a Christian. He will need your encouragement and wise council many times over the years. Although there are no specific scriptures encouraging presents after someone's baptism, I encourage you to consider doing something special to celebrate (Luke 15:7). There are probably hundreds of ways to encourage a new Christian. Here is a brief list of ideas to get you started.

1. Create a baptism scrapbook for him. Include your memories of your study time together and his baptism. Place pictures of the actual baptism and cards and notes from other Christians in the scrapbook. Have the young person write down his memories of this special time. You may even want to place a copy of the study in the back, so he can remember what he studied. The scrapbook will come to have more meaning for him as time passes.
2. Consider purchasing a piece of cross jewelry with the date of her baptism engraved on the back.
3. Send periodic notes to her, letting her know that you are thinking about her and praying for her to continue to grow into the Christian that God wants her to be.





4. Give her a new student or study Bible. There are so many good Bibles now that include a lot of extra study material. Try to purchase a version in easy to understand English.
5. Give her a gift certificate to the Christian bookstore. Encourage her to use it to purchase a study that she finds interesting.
6. Complete any comprehensive activities that you think will encourage her spiritual growth. You may want to focus on the topics contained in the sections about life as a new Christian.
7. Offer to find a Bible study that she finds interesting and do it with her. She may have grown to enjoy her study times with you and want them to continue.
8. Help her find new ways to become involved in service for the Lord. Most new Christians have a lot of enthusiasm and want to do something for the Lord immediately. You want to encourage her. Help her find her gifts from the Lord and find ways to use them.
9. Let her know that you remember her spiritual birthday. Send her a note or take her out to lunch on the first anniversary of her baptism. Tell her specifics about the spiritual growth you have seen in her since her baptism.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

I pray that God blesses you as you study with the special young people in your life. If you would like more practical ideas on how to help a child grow to be an enthusiastic servant of the Lord go to <http://www.parentinglikehannah.com>.

