



Saint John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church
2175 1st Street
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
651-429-5351

Dear Friends in Christ,

Welcome to our Baptism preparation workshop for youth and adults. The workshop itself is not a “test” for anyone, but is simply a way for those being baptized to understand the process better, and to be able to discuss their own ideas about Baptism and what it means to be Christian.

Christian Baptism is more than a rite of passage or of admission into the church community, although these are components of it. In Baptism we make promises to be part of God’s people in a Christian community. Our promises become a covenant with each other and with God. Through them we acknowledge that we are set apart to live a life that recognizes God as the center, and that all of Creation – including each person – is a gift from God. The occasion of Baptism is a one-time event; it is not an end in itself, but the beginning of a lifelong commitment to live into this covenant with God and God’s people. In joining with others being baptized, we also recommit ourselves to being part of this covenant.

In this workshop we will explore the meanings of the portions of the baptismal ritual which asks questions of candidates, sponsors, and community members. There are no right or wrong answers, but simply a way to better understand the relationships among individuals, community, and God.

The Baptismal Covenant begins with questions about traditional Christian teachings. The responses are within the story we teach and trust: the Apostles’ Creed. We will not review them here, but you may want to consider the responses on pages 304-305 of the *Book of Common Prayer*. (For the entire service of Holy Baptism, see the *BCP*, pages 298-314.)

May God bless you and your loved ones on your spiritual journey. We welcome all seekers in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,

The Community of Saint John in the Wilderness

**Saint John in the Wilderness
Baptism Preparation Worksheet
Youth and Adults**

I. Presentation and Examination of the Candidates

A. Adults and Older Children

Sponsor

I present *N.* to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

Celebrant

Do you desire to be baptized?

Candidate

I do.

What does Baptism mean to you? How do you understand your commitment to the Christian life? How will you live this out in your own life?

B. The Renunciations

Question Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

Answer I renounce them.

Satan is a Hebrew word meaning "adversary" or "tempter." 'Satan' is a personification of all the negative and life-destroying forces that oppose God and Godliness. When you say this, what does it mean for you? From what negative or life-destroying influences do you want to turn away?

Question Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

Answer I renounce them.

What "evil powers" (political, social, economic, or other systems) do you wish to avoid? In what ways will you do this?

Question Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

Answer I renounce them.

What are some of the human failings which inhibit God's children from becoming what God has intended them to be? How do you understand your own humanity, and the propensity of each of us to turn away from God?

C. The Affirmations

Question Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?

Answer I do.

How do you understand a relationship with a savior? How do you understand your own needs, and what does it mean to ask for and accept the support of God and others in their life's journey?

Question Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

Answer I do.

What does it mean to you to “put your whole trust” in God’s love?

Question Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

Answer I do.

What does it mean for you to promise to “follow” and “obey”? How do you expect to follow the Christian way of life?

The Celebrant addresses the congregation, saying

Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support *these persons* in *their* life in Christ?

People We will.

How do you understand Christian community? How will you become an active part of the Christian community, and to be open to and supportive of others?

II. *The Baptismal Covenant*

Celebrant Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

People I will, with God's help.

What does it mean for you to be an active Christian in regular fellowship with the community? How will you do this?

Celebrant Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People I will, with God's help.

We recognize that we are human, and will fail at times, but we will not give up on God's mercy or the support of the community. How do you understand that commitment?

Celebrant Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

People I will, with God's help.

What does "proclaiming the Good News" mean to you? How will you proclaim the Gospel in all aspects of life?

Celebrant Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

People I will, with God's help.

What does seeking and serving "Christ in all persons" mean to you? How will you look for Christ's presence in others?

Celebrant Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

People I will, with God's help.

What is your commitment to affirming dignity, peace, and justice among all people? How will you do this?