

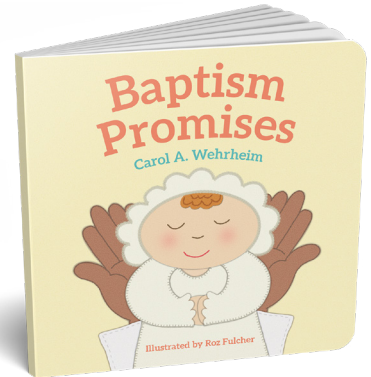
READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

Baptism Promises

By Carol A. Wehrheim

Baptism—a visible sign (water) of an invisible reality (God’s grace) in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—is one of the two practices, along with Holy Communion, that are considered sacraments. It recognizes the declaration of faith and commitment of the one being baptized, or in the case of infants/young children, their care giver’s intention to provide for the Christian nurture of their child, as well as the community’s promise to do so. It’s a special day for the baptized, even if they don’t yet realize it; the promises of God and new life in Jesus Christ are for everyone! The newly baptized is welcomed into the family of faith as a sibling of Christ. *Baptism Promises* introduces your child to, or reminds them of, their baptism, the promises and love surrounding them by family, community, and God. This book also includes four simple prayers for mornings, mealtimes, to say sorry, and at bedtime.



★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- In this story, the parents and the church made promises as the pastor baptized the child. In what ways do you think families and churches live out those promises?
- What two things does everyone know about the child after the baptism? Why do you think those two things are so special?
- If you have seen a baptism, what can you remember about it? What did the pastor do? How did the one being baptized respond? How was the congregation involved?
- Look at the prayers at the end of the book. Why do you think there are prayers for when you wake up, eat, are sorry, and go to bed?
- What kinds of prayers would you add to the four that are already in this book?

★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Talk together about your child’s baptism. Who will be or was there? What promises will be or were said? Talk together about how your family and your faith community will fulfill those promises.
- How does it make you feel that you will be or were baptized? Draw a picture of what it might look like or reenact it while remembering or learning the words and actions that accompany it.
- Make a prayer poster with the following words: Thanks, Oops, Help, and Wow! Talk together about each kind of prayer: what you can be thankful for, times you’ve made a mistake or hurt someone, how you or someone else may need help, and what wows you about God, God’s creation, and God’s gifts.

PRAY

Loving God, we are thankful for our baptisms! Please help us to live as Jesus taught and to always remember the promises that were made to and for us. May we live into the baptism promises, remembering that we are indeed your beloved child. Amen.



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Baptism provides the chance to celebrate a person's inclusion in the family of faith as a sacramental act of worship. For many Christians, including Presbyterians, this frequently happens in infancy or young childhood. In this meaningful milestone, promises are made to both the child and to God. As with other big milestones, we seek God's blessing in the presence of a larger community to celebrate and deepen our connections. Some ideas to explore themes around baptism include:

- Create a ritual to mark the anniversary of the baptisms of family members. Ideas include singing a favorite hymn, lighting a candle, sharing memories of the day, offering prayers for the coming year, or other ideas of your own.
- Read stories in Scripture about baptism. These may include Jesus' baptism, the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch, the baptism of Cornelius and his family, and the story of Mary and Joseph bringing Jesus to the temple to be dedicated.

As you consider baptism as just one of the ways that families celebrate the arrival of a child, take time to explore the traditions, rituals, and experiences of other faiths and cultures. Some ideas to explore include:

- Hear the stories of others. If you have friends of other faiths or cultural backgrounds, ask them about the meaning of traditions and rituals that are important to them.
- Research other faith and cultural practices. While baptism is a uniquely Christian milestone that we understand and practice in specific ways as Presbyterians, the idea of marking the birth of a child (or the new life in Christ in older children or adults) is a practice that occurs in numerous ways including:
 - A bris (Jewish ritual circumcision)
 - A "first laugh ceremony" (Navajo)
 - The Korean Doljanchi (first birthday celebration) and the Doljabi (future-telling ritual)
 - Various naming ceremonies found in cultures around the world.

MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

ADDITIONAL BOOKS THAT CELEBRATE GOD IN OUR LIVES

- [*A Very Big Problem*](#), by Amy-Jill Levine, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, and Annie Bowler
- [*God's Big Plan*](#), by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Theodore Hiebert - Also available as a [board book](#)!
- [*God's Coming to Visit*](#), by Franz Hübner, Angela Glöckler, & Rea Grit Zielinski
- [*When God Gave Us Words*](#), by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Darcy Day Zoells
- [*Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*](#), edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim

Guide written by Becky D'Angelo-Veitch. Created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](#)" (pcusa.org/aroundthetable).



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