

Children's Baptism

If you are reading this, it is likely because of a decision your child has made for Jesus to be their forever friend! We are so excited! You have done a great job as their **primary faith-shaper!** We want to make you aware of some things we frequently hear at the adult baptism: *"I was baptized as a child but really didn't understand what it meant. Baptism was really important to my parents and I wanted to please them. I had several friends being baptized and wanted to join them. My church required baptism."* In reflecting on these testimonies and desiring the very best for you and your child, we believe there are several reasons why it is wise for kids to wait until they are **12 years old** to get baptized. Here are our thoughts...

- We recognize **baptism** is a **defining moment** in a child's faith journey.
- We love what Reggie Joiner says, "**Faith** and **character** develop over **time**." We want to give kids the time they need for their faith to develop before they take the important step of baptism.
- We think baptism happens best when it is an expressed desire of an **individual**, not because a family is doing it together.
- We are also influenced by Willow Creek's perspective that, *"the symbolism of Baptism requires a more adult level of **cognitive** and **developmental readiness**."* They reference Proverbs 20:25, *"It is a trap to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider one's vows. This issues a significant caution against the danger of making a vow before adequate knowledge, forethought, and reflection have been given Our goal is to prevent young people from making a premature commitment they may not fully understand."*

Michelle Pemberton, HCC's Children's Pastor puts it this way, "I wanted my daughters to choose the right time to be baptized. I believe the Holy Spirit guided them to make their profession of faith. I want it to be a stake they put in the ground. When Amy decided she wanted to be baptized at 15, it was powerful. After experiencing a life changing HCC missions trip to Mississippi, her faith became her own and she was baptized at Heartland's All Church Baptism that August."

Ultimately, parents are the primary faith-shapers for their children and we trust the parents to know if this is the right time for their child to be baptized. If you have any questions, please call Michelle at (913)341-5820 x116 or email her at michellep@heartlandchurch.org. If, after praying about it, you have decided the time is right for your child to be baptized, please sign up at www.heartlandchurch.org

Children can participate in all sorts of faith-shaping activities before they are baptized:

- Have an age appropriate **Bible** for your child. We recommend ***Beginners Bible, My First Message, The Jesus Bible Storybook Bible, The Action Bible, or Hands on Bible-NLT.***
- Read and discuss ***Jesus Calling For Kids*** by Sarah Young.
- Show your child how you have a **devotional time** with God.
- **Pray out loud** together about things you're are thankful for and when you need God's help.
- **Regularly attend** a HCC service on Sundays so your child is making friends with other kids and small group leaders.
- Use the monthly curriculum handouts so you can extend the lessons your kids learn at HCC, which is also on the **HCC App**.

- Our curriculum has a great website **studio252.tv** or the **Parent Cue App** for activities that compliment the weekly Sunday lessons. This sets you up to have great **faith conversations**.
- At Heartland, a child can **take communion** before he or she has made Jesus their forever friend. Taking communion together as a family is a way to experience what Jesus has done for each of us. Here are some ways to connect with your child about communion:
 - Read Mark 14:22-25 and Matthew 26:1-2, 26-28 and talk about communion.
 - Take Communion together at First Wednesdays at 7pm on the Dock.
 - Take communion together at home.
 - Once a month we have communion at our services and your child can take communion with you during the service or after the service is complete.
- Listen to **praise music** together.
- Attend a **HCC Family Faith Shaping Event** which happens each quarter.