

ALTERNATIVE FORM FOR THE ADMINISTERING OF BAPTISM TO THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVING PARENTS

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ

Before He ascended into heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ instituted baptism.

He commanded His apostles: *“Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”* (Matt. 28: 19).

Baptism in the Name of the Holy Trinity witnesses to the fact that God, the Father, conforms His eternal covenant of grace with us and adopts us as His children and heirs (Rom. 8: 16, 17).

Baptism in the name of God, the Son, seals unto us that He washes away all our sins with His blood and that He incorporates us into the fellowship of His death.

Baptism in the name of God, the Holy Spirit, reassures us that He dwells in us who are members of Christ, imparts to us the blessings which we have in Christ, leads us, comforts us and remains with us forever. (Acts 2: 39) Heid. Cat. Sunday 53

Baptism proclaims to us a threefold truth:

Firstly, we as well as our children are born in sin and can only enter the Kingdom of God if we are born again (Psalm 51: 7; John 3: 3-5).

Secondly, our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ (One John 1: 7).

Thirdly, we should in gratitude love, trust and serve the Lord God with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength. We should battle against and overcome sin; we are bound to a new obedience (Rom 6: 6; Matt 22: 37).

As circumcision was given as a seal of the covenant under the Old Testament, baptism is the seal of the covenant of grace under the New Testament. Therefore the child(ren) of believing parents should be baptized as heir(s) to the Kingdom of God and His covenant of grace (Gen 17: 2-12; Col 2: 1-12; Heb 8: 6-13).

Parents are bound as their children grow up to instruct them more fully about this.

Although our children are as yet unable to understand these truths, they may not for that reason be excluded from baptism, for God includes the child in His covenant from the beginning. (1 Cor 7: 14; Rom. 1: 16).

He already said this to Abraham, the father of all believers, in these words: *“I will keep my promise to you and to your descendants in future generations as an everlasting covenant.”* (Gen 17: 7).

The apostle Peter confirms this, saying: *“For God’s promise was made to you and your children; and to all who are far away – all whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”* (Acts 2: 39).

That we may then administer the sacrament of baptism to the glory of God, to our comfort and to the edification of the church, let us pray:

Prayer

Merciful God and Father, we thank You that You have cleansed us and our children from all our sins, through the blood of Jesus Christ, that You have incorporated us through Your Holy Spirit as members of His church and adopted us as Your children.

We thank You that by Holy Baptism you seal and confirm this truth unto us and unto our children.

Grant that the child(ren) who is/are brought to be baptized, will be so governed by Your Holy Spirit that he/she/they will constantly serve You in gratitude and with joy, will persistently fight against the devil and all his forces, and overcome to the end, so that he/she/they will at the last appear before

your judgement seat with confidence and without fear, and thereafter praise, thank, worship, glorify and extol You eternally.

Amen.

(The parents of the child to be baptized are now called upon to appear before the pulpit.)

Baptismal promise of parents or witnesses

Beloved in Christ the Lord, you have heard that baptism is an ordinance of God to seal, also unto us and our children, His covenant of grace.

To confirm that you are requesting Holy Baptism to be administered for this purpose, and not out of custom or superstition, you are to answer sincerely to these questions:

Firstly, do you acknowledge that our children, although conceived and born in sin and therefore subject to condemnation itself, are nevertheless sanctified in Christ, and therefore ought to be baptized as members of His church?

Secondly, do you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in the Old and the New Testaments and in the articles of the Christian faith and which is taught here in the Christian church, to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation?

Thirdly, do you promise, and intend to instruct this child, of whom you are the father and the mother (or guardian) in this doctrine, and cause him to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your ability?

Answer (audibly):

I do.

Administering of baptism

Then the minister of the Word, in baptizing, shall say:

NN (full names and surname)

I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The congregation shall then sing an appropriate hymn.