

Emphasize **Baptism**

Place the font in a prominent place in the sanctuary and have fresh water in it at all times. If you are designing a new worship space, consider designing a substantive font and giving it the emphasis it deserves in the space.

Pour water into the font at the assurance of pardon to connect forgiveness with baptism.

Have the congregation renew their baptismal vows on appropriate days in the church calendar—i.e. [Baptism of the Lord Sunday](#), [Easter Vigil](#), [Pentecost](#). You can find services for the renewal of baptism in the [Book of Common Worship](#).

Require pre-baptismal preparation, not just as instruction in what it means to be a Presbyterian, but as [an apprenticeship in The Way](#).

Connect all of ministry to living out our baptismal faith so that people make the connection to where God is in all of what we do. “We’re called to love as members of Christ’s body,” one church member said to the church Session trying to decide whether to house a much-needed food pantry in the community. “If we don’t do this, then everything you told me when you prepared me for baptism is just a bunch of words that mean nothing.”

Make baptism a big deal. Give it the time it deserves in the worship service. Invite the children up front to see baptism so they can gain a sense of how important it is.

Give meaningful gifts to the newly baptized, such as a candle to be lit at the family table on the anniversary of their baptism. If you have a prayer shawl ministry, have those involved present the newly baptized with the shawl which they made in prayer. One congregation anointed the teen being baptized with almond oil prepared with other essential oils, then presented it in a beautiful perfume bottle with a dove in flight as the stopper with the charge to offer her life to God as a sweet-smelling sacrifice in Holy Spirit.

At each Session meeting, have one elder testify as to what baptism means for her/his life until everyone has testified.

God uses material things to bless human life. Trace where the water in your font comes from and check its purity. **Ask questions about others’ access to clean water in the world and why our baptism might call us to ask such questions.**

Have members find out when they were baptized and the stories surrounding their baptism.

Honor members’ baptismal days. Send a card to them, mention it in the church newsletter, give thanks for the baptisms of members in the prayers of the people.

Encourage members to frame their baptismal certificate and put it in a prominent place.

Encourage members to give thanks for their baptism each time they bathe or shower.

Encourage parents to put baptized children to bed each night with a ritual of reading Bible stories and prayer. As you tuck them in, make the sign of the cross on their forehead with the words, “Remember, you are baptized, NAME, one of God’s beloved.” Seal this with a kiss on the forehead and your own, “I love you.”

Regularly preach and teach on the meanings of baptism.

Help people discover the meanings behind the baptismal liturgy and give them space to talk about baptism. You’ll be amazed at the depth of the symbol.