

Baptism by Conservative Mennonites and Anabaptist Jesus Disciples

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1 Disclaimer

This educational leaflet presents an overview of baptism practices in Conservative Mennonite congregations and Anabaptist churches emphasizing Jesus' discipleship, including relevant scriptural citations. It is a general guide and may not capture all variations in different congregations; for comprehensive understanding, consult with local church leaders. This content aligns with Jesus Christ's teachings, notably John 14:6 and encourages reflection and discernment in the spirit of 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

2 Baptism at Conservative Mennonite Congregation

The process of baptism in a Conservative Mennonite congregation typically involves several key steps:

1. **Expression of Interest**: The process usually begins with the individual expressing a desire to be baptized. This is often done after a period of personal reflection and decision-making, where the individual feels a commitment to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.

2. **Instructional Classes**: Many Mennonite congregations require individuals to attend a series of instructional classes or catechism. These classes are designed to educate the individual about the core beliefs, practices, and values of the Mennonite faith. The duration and content of these classes can vary from one congregation to another.

3. **Pastoral Meetings**: The individual may have one-on-one meetings with the pastor or church elders. These meetings are meant to discuss the individual's faith journey, understand their reasons for seeking baptism, and ensure they have a clear

understanding of the commitment they are making.

4. **Congregational Approval**: In some congregations, the church community may have a role in approving baptisms. This could involve a formal process where the congregation is informed about the individual's desire to be baptized and given an opportunity to express their support or concerns.

5. **Public Testimony**: Before being baptized, the individual may be asked to give a public testimony of their faith in front of the congregation. This is a personal account of their spiritual journey and the reasons why they have chosen to be baptized.

6. **The Baptism Ceremony**: The actual baptism is typically conducted during a regular worship service. Conservative Mennonite congregations usually practice believer's baptism by pouring or immersion. The individual is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

7. **Post-Baptism Integration**: After baptism, the individual is usually received into full membership of the congregation. This might involve participating in the Holy Communion, if they had not been doing so previously, and taking on more active roles within the church community.

8. **Ongoing Spiritual Growth**: Baptism is seen as the beginning of a lifelong journey of faith. New members are encouraged to continue growing spiritually through personal devotion, community involvement, and ongoing learning.

It's important to note that these steps can vary based on the specific congregation's traditions and practices within the Conservative Mennonite community. Anyone interested in baptism should speak directly with a local Mennonite pastor or church leader to understand the specific process for their congregation.

3 Anabaptist Jesus Disciple Baptism

In an Anabaptist church that emphasizes following Jesus' discipleship closely, the process of baptism would be deeply rooted in scriptural teachings. Here's an outline of the process with relevant scriptural citations:

Expression of Interest and Personal Conviction

This step involves the individual feeling a personal conviction to follow Christ, similar to the early believers in the New Testament. This conviction often leads to a desire for baptism.

- **Scriptural Citation:** Acts 2:37-38 – "When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Instruction and Discipleship

Before baptism, the individual would undergo a period of instruction and discipleship, learning about the teachings of Jesus and the implications of following Him.

- **Scriptural Citation:** Matthew 28:19-20 – "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Repentance and Confession of Faith

Repentance and confession of faith are essential prerequisites for baptism, emphasizing a personal commitment to turn from sin and follow Christ.

- **Scriptural Citation:** Mark 1:15 – "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Community Witness and Accountability

In Anabaptist tradition, the church community plays a vital role in witnessing the baptism and providing ongoing accountability and support in the believer's spiritual journey.

- **Scriptural Citation:** Acts 2:41-42 – "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

The Baptism Ceremony

Baptism is typically performed by immersion, symbolizing the death and resurrection of Christ, and the believer's union with Him in His death and resurrection.

- **Scriptural Citation:** Romans 6:3-4 – "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Integration into Church Life and Service

After baptism, the individual is fully integrated into the church community, participating in communion, fellowship, and service.

- **Scriptural Citation:** 1 Corinthians 12:13 – "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

Ongoing Discipleship and Spiritual Growth

The journey of faith continues with ongoing discipleship, spiritual growth, and living out the teachings of Jesus in everyday life.

- **Scriptural Citation:** Colossians 2:6-7 – "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

Each of these steps is framed within the context of scripture, highlighting the Anabaptist emphasis on closely following the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. It's important for anyone interested in this process to engage with a local Anabaptist church to understand their specific practices and interpretations of these scriptural principles.