



GROTON
BIBLE
CHAPEL

Baptism Policy

Policy Statement

This document seeks to address the minimum requirements for those seeking Christian baptism at Groton Bible Chapel.

I. The baptism candidate must be a believer

First and foremost, one must have made a genuine profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. This means that they are able to articulate their faith story—their conversion—beyond an intellectual agreement to facts about Jesus, and/or His crucifixion and resurrection.

I.e. One can know much about Jesus, without knowing Him as the only possible means for their eternal salvation, and the one for Whom they want to live their lives.

While this might be deemed as being too insistent, the very nature of showing an interest in baptism should evidence this. 1 John 2:4; Matthew 7:21-23

II. The baptism candidate must be old enough to understand salvation and demonstrate Christian living

The elders of Groton Bible Chapel suggest the minimum age of 10 as a likely age in which a child has demonstrated both a comprehension of their own salvation and a demonstrable consistency in practice.

They are old enough to “comprehend” their salvation- They should not only be of an “age of accountability”, that is, old enough to understand the basics of salvation, including:

1. Their need of saving and inability to save themselves- original sin- Romans 3
2. The provision of Jesus as God’s Savior Messiah- Jesus preeminence- Colossians 1 and 2
3. The means of salvation- Repentance and faith- Belief and reception- Appropriation of Christ’s finished work on their behalf- Romans 10; John 3; Ephesians 2:8-10

But they are also old enough to have “evidenced” their Christian life- I.e. through; Obedience to parents, desire for God and His Word, sorrow over sin, joy in their forgiveness, desire for other’s to know Jesus, excitement over Christ’s coming again one day.

(These would be identical evaluators for adults).

III. The baptism candidate must be committed to GBC as their church home

This means that they:

1. Have attended Welcome Aboard- being exposed to GBC's segment of faith, and have had the opportunity to voice any concerns about the Chapel's beliefs and doctrinal positions.
2. Are in agreement with and committed to the GBC statement of faith
3. Have been in attendance long enough to have evidenced a genuine faith in Christ (see below).
4. *Children under 15, particularly those involved in youth ministry are excepted from needing to attend Welcome Aboard.

IV. Baptism exceptions

Unique circumstances of those seeking baptism may be approved by the elder's. Situations like those who may be deploying, or changing duty stations, college students desiring to be baptized where they were saved or went through youth ministry, etc.

V. The baptism candidate must attend the baptism class

All sessions of the class need to be attended. If a baptism candidate is going to miss one or more classes, arrangements must be made for an alternate communication of the baptism materials. All of the curriculum must be covered.

VI. A baptism candidate must show evidence of profession and belief, commensurate with their "place" in their walk with the Lord

Rather than physical age in years, as dealt with above, the concern here is that new converts have an awareness of sin, and a desire to step away from previous behaviors.

(The beginnings of inside/out *sanctification* because of the outside/in work of *justification* through the blood of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross).

This might include former, and even some current, vices including but not limited to; all manner of sexual sin, cohabitation, alcohol or drug abuse, foul language, a habit of stealing, anger, etc.

A refusal to see such things as contrary to God's work in their life, and a desire to be growing away from these things would evidence an absence of the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Such a refusal would be grounds not to proceed with baptism.

VII. Conclusion

In summary, baptism candidates should be old enough to understand their commitment to Jesus, and have shown some evidence of young faith in development.

They should be easily able to share with anyone who asks, how they came to trust in Christ, and how their lives have change, as well as where they are still growing.

Finally, they will joyfully speak of their commitment to the local church, and their desire to obey the Lord in Christian baptism. If these things are not readily clear a future baptism opportunity should be suggested so that they can work toward meeting the minimums.