**HOPE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

**COURSE:** Relational Evangelism

**PROFESSOR:** John Hendee

**HOW TO BAPTIZE SOMEONE**

Those who will be sharing the IAAR with others are hopefully going to experience some or many deciding to become a disciple of Jesus and they will want to be baptized. As we point out in the IAAR section on baptism, according to the practice in the New Testament, a new disciple can be baptized into Jesus on any day, in any body of water deep enough to do it in, by any other believer. Some denominations or individuals have changed all that for a number of reasons. But if you help lead someone to Jesus and they want to be baptized it would be good to be prepared for that event.

1. Offer your assistance. Even though I am the one who may have shared the IAAR with them and led them to making a decision, I must not assume that I am the one they would want to baptize them. So I always say to them, “While I/we are the ones that have to do it for it to be effective, I want to let you know I’m available and would be happy to baptize you. The most important thing isn’t WHO does it, but that YOU do it. If there is another Christian you would like to do it or help with it, that is fine. But, again, I’m here to help you carry through on this.” In most cases they will ask the one who spent the time with them and showed enough interest in them to take them through the IAAR to do it.  In some cases they might ask someone to help or assist. Two of you could do it, one on each side of them.
2. Don’t push. It is their decision.We can’t and shouldn’t force them to do it. Present the facts, encourage them, offer help, leave it to them.
3. If you have never baptized anyone you might even want to practice on another Christian at church or in a pool. You don’t  have to, it is not real complicated, but if that will help put you at ease, why not.
4. Remember this is NOT about you, it is about them. We are not the center of attention.
5. Any day, any body of water, any disciple. Some denominations teach “our day, our water, our person.”
6. There are no examples in the New Testament of someone being “sprinkled” or “poured on.”

There are different words in the Greek for both those; not used in the New Testament where baptism is talked about.

1. There is no example in the New Testament of someone who claimed to have become a disciple but refused to be baptized. So if you ask me what happens to them, I have no biblical statement or writing that I can refer you to.
2. People can be and have been baptized in pools, tanks, ponds, rivers, ocean, bathtubs, whirlpools, baptistries (little pools) at church facilities.
3. Whom to invite. That is up to the one being baptized but I like to share with them that it is a great opportunity to share with others something important and in a way witness to them of what is happening in their life. There is no number given in the New Testament that have to be present other than the baptizer and the one being baptized. I think it is a good idea to make simple invitations for the person to fill out and give to others.
4. I’ve seen where some ask the person to fill out a 3 X 5 card (not a full page) ahead of time saying what this moment or occasion means to them. It is good to review it to make sure there isn’t something really weird or off base on it. Then you can ask the person to read that just before they are baptized. It is a kind of testimony they give at the moment. It makes them think about the moment ahead of time, maybe is another teaching moment. With it being written out they don’t have to fear forgetting something. This isn’t taught as a must in the New Testament but it can add to the experience.
5. What does the one doing the baptism say? It is normally good to read some Scripture related to baptism at the time and pray with them. Once the person is in the water and just before immersing them many like to ask the other for a confession of faith such as “Bob, do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and your Savior?” After a positive response it is common to say, (quoting Matthew 28:18-20), “Bob, based on your confession of faith in Jesus I now baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Some like to add “for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit” (quoting Peter in Acts 2:38).  Then baptize them. You don’t hold them under the water for any length of time. Once they are under you immediately bring them back up. This seems pretty obvious, but just in case you are new at this.
6. If it is an unusual situation, cold water, cold outside, etc., THINK.  Say and read what you want to say before you get into the water in order to minimize time in the water.
7. How to stand? Stand to the side of the person. Ask them to hold one of their wrists with their other hand. The free hand then is for them to hold their nose closed when you lean them back and immerse them in the water. That is obviously so water doesn’t go in their nose. Tell them that when you lean them back, they should bend their knees, don’t step or keep stiff legs. Then take their confession, make your statement and gently lean them back. In some cases some like to have another person on the other side helping out.
8. What do you wear? Some churches like to have people wear white robes. While I understand the symbolism of that, it is not a practice in the New Testament. I always tell people they can wear shorts and a shirt, or slacks, etc. Be sure and warn women to be careful, a lot of blouses once wet are clingy and see through. They can bring a change of clothes to change into after if they want.  Be sure there are towels ready, too.
9. Person in a wheelchair. I’ve baptized people who were in wheelchairs and some with little use of their arms or hands too. I found the best thing to do is move them to a folding chair and go to where the chair can be seated on the ground and just lean the chair back. I did it once and the man floated. I didn’t want to let go of the chair. I learned it might help to gently and loosely strap something around them so they stay in the chair. Always have others helping you in this case, too.
10. While I don’t ask people about this, I’ve learned over the years that a lot of people are terribly afraid of water. Be patient, kind, gentle. If their fear becomes evident and they comment on it, give them time to relax.
11. Now what? After they are baptized why not spend some time together? Have a meal, a dessert, a barbeque. Have a time of prayer with them. If they have friends there meet then and visit with them and show interest in them.