

# Diving In

Life Group Agenda for the week of July 17<sup>th</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup>

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**WELCOME (15 min)** – Welcome everyone. This is a time for us to focus outward on our relationships with one another. Share the Goals and 1 Guideline. This week, we are continuing in our series titled, “*Summer Splash.*” Let’s **stop and pray** for our church at this time.

**WORSHIP (15 min)** – This is a time for us to focus upward on our relationship with the Lord. Prepare a creative worship time that can be enjoyed by Children as well as adults/teens (*you will be releasing the Children to their Kids Slot time after the worship*).

**WORD (45 min)** – This is a time for us to focus inward and discover what the Lord is saying to us individually and collectively through His Word.

**This week’s truth to be shared:** *Baptism is a public, symbolic expression of a changed heart.*

Today, we are discussing the meaning of and reasons for baptism. Baptism is simply celebrating your new life in Christ in such a way that family, friends and others can see your public commitment to God. The actual word is derived from the Greek word “Baptizo” which means “to plunge under or immerse”... Though your salvation is a personal decision and can many times be private, baptism is your public profession of that personal decision. You simply go under the water the old you and emerge from the water the new you. In fact Jesus thinks it is so important that He actually was baptized Himself. He knows how this will be a major mark in your spiritual journey with Him and you will be able to point back to it as the time in your life when you surrendered to Him.

**INTRODUCTION:** **Have you ever known that you needed to do something, but weren’t sure you had the courage to do it?**

Allow 5 – 7 minutes for this question.

**Read Acts 8:26-40**

**OBSERVATION:** **What was it about the passage of Scripture the Ethiopian was reading that made it natural for Phillip to share the gospel with him?**

One of the great things about this encounter between Phillip and the Ethiopian is that we see Phillip thrust into this dialogue that almost made it impossible for him not to share the gospel. He was able to “dive” right in to the explanation of how Jesus came to set us free and the Ethiopian was able to “dive” into the waters of baptism. (*Note to leader: This may be a good time to have someone in the group share a testimony about how they first heard the message of the gospel.*)

Spend about 5 – 7 minutes on this question.

**UNDERSTANDING:** As we heard in the sermon this weekend, the only requirement for baptism is spiritual birth (being born again). What is your salvation or born again story?

*SPECIAL NOTE to Life group Leader: Pay special attention to those who do not share. They may have never made a profession of faith. Following this question, you may want to ask everyone in the group to bow their heads and if anyone has not been born again they can simply look at you and everyone can pray a prayer of salvation together. Remember, you do not want anyone to feel uncomfortable or "forced," so talk to your Section Leader or Community Pastor for ideas, if you are unsure.*

The purpose of baptism for us is that it indicates that we have surrendered our life to the Lord, have put our old life behind us and will live a new life for Him. Sometimes people are baptized before they ever have the opportunity to make the decision to follow Jesus. From what we learn in scripture, baptism is something you do AFTER repenting of your sin and surrendering your life to the Lord. If you have made that decision, then you need to be baptized whether or not you were baptized earlier in your life.

Spend about 10 minutes on this question.

**APPLICATION #1: Phillip didn't have to go searching for an opportunity to share his faith, God brought the opportunity to Him! What opportunity do you think might be out there for you to share your faith?**

**Application #2: If you have not yet been baptized since accepting the Lord, are you willing to set a date for your baptism? How can being baptized also be an opportunity to share your faith?**

Inviting friends and family to see you get baptized is a great way to share your faith with them. Some may not respond positively, but that's ok. The invitation itself plants a seed in their heart that God may use in the future. Those who do attend, will see that you are serious about your new life in Christ and may even decide to join you on your faith journey.

**WITNESS (15 min)** – This is a time for us to focus outward on our ministry to the world.

- Share any praise reports from your FRAN list that you've been praying for.
- July 29th – Tim Hawkins Concert (tickets are \$15 at the bookstore)
- August 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> – Global Leadership Summit (<http://www.celebrationchurch.org/summit>)
- August 13th – Leadership Summit
- Don't stop... SERVE LIKE CRAZY, plan your Life Groups next serve event.
- Make Shared Ministry Assignments and then Fellowship together.

*(Now is the time to welcome the children back into the group and let them share something about what they've learned. Have a brief time of prayer with the whole group before fellowship).*