

South Weber Utah Stake

Baptism Best Practices for Bishopric Members

The purpose of this outline is to assist in making the experience for 8-year-old baptismal candidates as consistent as possible, and to help bishopric members who are new to have a better understanding of some of the logistics of the service to make it as meaningful and sacred as the baptismal ordinance deserves.

1. Communicate with your primary presidency about what kind of help you would like in planning baptismal services. (Handbook 18.7.2)
2. Conduct a baptismal interview with the candidate several weeks ahead of the Stake Baptism date. (Handbook 18.7.1.1)
3. The Sunday before Stake Baptisms occur, determine which member of the bishopric will be at the baptism and inform your ward primary presidency.
4. **Arrive at least 10 minutes prior** to the start of the service. (Ward baptism times and rooms are detailed on the stake calendar for your convenience.)
5. Because this is a ward baptism, you will be presiding and conducting. Stake leaders will have the font filled and be on hand to direct people, answer questions, etc.
6. At an appropriate place in the program, introduce the baptismal candidate(s). Ideas on how to make this meaningful are:
 - a. Have them each stand up where they are seated and turn around and face the group as their name is read.
 - b. Have them come to the front (or the stand, if in the chapel) and read their names while somehow identifying which person is which of those who are at the front at that moment.
 - c. Have them come up to the front (or the stand) one by one as you read their names.
7. When it comes time for the candidate(s) to be excused to the font,
 - a. Remind everyone that the ordinance is sacred and pictures or video are not to be taken of it. (Handbook 38.2.2) It is best to get pictures in the foyer or outside the building. (It is, however, acceptable for the program and baptism to be streamed live to close family members who are not able to attend in person. (Handbook 38.2.3))
 - b. Ask family and friends of the baptismal candidate to follow the candidate(s) and their parents and the person performing the baptism to the font room.
 - c. Ask the baptismal candidate(s) and baptizer(s) to go into the room and sit down on the front row and wait until invited to go into the font. If several candidates are getting baptized and the group is too large for the font room, you may excuse one candidate at a time (with their family and friends) to go to the font room.
8. Once in the font room, it is recommended that the bishopric member:
 - a. Welcome everyone. Acknowledge the candidate, baptizer and the mother (or parents if the father is not baptizing). Give them the opportunity to sit up close on the front row if they aren't already.
 - b. Request reverence for the sacred ordinance

- c. Read names of the witnesses. Make sure they know their duties. (Handbook 18.7.6)
Laminated witness cards are available from the stake leaders, if you would like to use them.
 - d. State who is performing the baptism and invite the candidate and baptizer to enter the font, together, through the same door. If a girl is being baptized, show which side the mom can enter to take her daughter to the dressing room after the baptism.
 - e. Invite witnesses to come forward (while candidate and baptizer are making their way to the font)
 - f. Invite little children to come closer so they can see (while candidate and baptizer are making their way to the font)
 - g. After the baptism and at the appropriate time, thank everyone for their reverence and excuse them to go back to the previous room (RS Room, Primary Room or chapel)
9. After the baptismal candidate(s) and baptizer(s) return, state who will be confirming the first candidate and invite them to come forward. Invite those holding the Melchizedek priesthood who have been invited to stand in the circle. After the ordinance, allow the candidate to shake hands with those in the circle. Continue with confirmations until all the candidates have been confirmed.
 10. Thank everyone for coming and conclude with the closing song and prayer. The group is welcome to mingle for a while in the room, if they would like. Please have them maintain a quiet reverence as they exit the building as there may be other baptismal services in progress.

As a reminder: (Handbook 18.7.2)

“A baptismal service should be simple, brief, and spiritually uplifting. It may include the following:

1. Prelude music
2. A brief welcome from the brother who is conducting the service
3. An opening hymn and prayer
4. One or two short messages on gospel subjects, such as baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost
5. A musical selection
6. The baptism
7. A time of reverence while those who participated in the baptism change into dry clothes (hymns or Primary songs may be played or sung during this time)
8. The confirmation of 8-year-old members of record
9. A closing hymn and prayer
10. Postlude music”

“When a baptismal service for 8-year-old children who are members of record involves only one ward, a member of the bishopric plans and conducts it. He may ask Primary leaders to help with planning.”