

Spontaneous Baptisms How-To Guide

Content created by Elevation Church - August, 2011

As a church we pray Sun Stand Still prayers all the time. We are constantly asking God to do something that seems impossible and then believing that he is going to pull through.

Most recently we prayed and asked God to lead thousands of people to take a public stand in their faith in Christ through baptism. God blew our minds and in two weekends we saw 2158 respond and be baptized.

You can see a highlight video from this amazing, Sun Stand Still, only-God-can-get-the-glory miracle [here](#).

You will also want to watch the sermon from the first week of Follow to see how Pastor Steven cast the vision for people getting baptized spontaneously [here](#).

Included in this document is everything that we did to prepare the way for God to show up. Because like Pastor Steven says in his message Sun Stand Still, “Sun Stand Still faith is active belief in God, joined with participation in his purpose.” So here’s how we activated our faith to pull off our part in God’s miracle:

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Execution of the Event:

Estimating the number of people who will get baptized:

- A. We needed to have a number to work from so we used the percentage of the adult attendance that had been baptized from a previous Spontaneous Baptism event to get a baseline.
- B. The first chart represents the actual numbers from our first spontaneous Baptisms (Awakening: 8/3 & 8/10/2008):

	WK 1			WK 2		
	Adult Attn	# Bapt	% Bapt	Adult Attn	# Bapt	% Bapt
Campus 1	2429	457	18.8%	2255	342	15.2%
Campus 2	987	172	17.4%	824	73	8.9%
Total	3416	629	18.4%	3079	415	13.5%

- Our results for the latest spontaneous baptisms are considerably different.
- This second chart represents the actual numbers from our second spontaneous Baptisms (Follow: 8/6 & 8/13/2011):

	WK 1			WK 2		
	Adult Attn	# Bapt	% Bapt	Adult Attn	# Bapt	% Bapt
Campus 1	4034	743	18.4%	3524	382	10.8%
Campus 2	2817	645	16.5%	2701	202	7.5%
Campus 3	708	83	11.7%	652	56	8.6%
Campus 4	1113	135	12.1%	1009	92	9.1%
Average	2168	357	16.5%	1972	183	9.3%

Estimating the age breakdown of people being baptized:

- A. Our experience shows a 60/40-split women to men being baptized.
- B. i.e. if you estimate that you will baptize 100 people, 60 will be women and 40 will be men based on our baptism numbers.

Clothing Size Breakdown

- A. We operate from a standard percentage when ordering clothing sizes:

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>
XS	18%	0
S	36%	14%
M	29%	21%
L	11%	48%
XL	4%	10%
XXL	2%	7%

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Here are the supplies that we purchased

- A. You will want to calculate the number of each item to be purchased based on your projection of how many people will be baptized, the number of men vs. women, and the breakdown of sizes provided above.

Supplies List for Baptisms

- Dark colored shorts (we ordered from a t-shirt supplier)
- Dark colored T-shirts (we ordered from a t-shirt supplier)
- Sports Bras
- Women's underwear
- Men's boxers
- Towels (buy about 20% more than your projected # of Baptisms to allow for clean-up)
- Wash cloths (buy about 20% more than your projected # of Baptisms to allow for clean-up)
- Makeup Remover (disposable dollar store wipes)
- Combs/brushes (disposable dollar store combs & brushes)
- Hair Dryers (Dollar store, 5 per campus)
- Hair-ties (approx 60% of your total baptism projection)
- Lotion
- Hair care products (Hair gel, Hair Mousse, Hair spray)
- Deodorant (aerosol is best)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Zip lock bags for jewelry
- Flip-flop sandals (1 pair per person projected to be baptized)
- Dollar store or Walmart inexpensive flip-flops of various sizes
- Large address labels for bags and badges
- Sharpies
- Clipboards
- T-shirt bags for wet clothing
- Large white plastic bags for wet towels

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Other Considerations

SET-UP:

Changing Areas:

- A. You should plan on having both dry changing stations (for people to change from their street clothes into the baptism clothes) and wet changing stations.
- B. We planned for 8 to 10 dry and 8 – 10 wet changing stations men and the same number of each for women.
- C. We have used space in our buildings when we had room and we have also rented tents with walls to create our changing areas.

Baptism tank and set-up

- A. We set-up the tanks the day before and filled them to allow time for the water in the baptistery to warm up.
- B. We use a full size baptistery, model #6, from www.churchpools.com
<<http://www.churchpools.com>> .

Training of Volunteers

The role of each of our volunteers played a vital role in the smooth transition from a person making a commitment to God in the Auditorium to standing in the water ready to get baptized. To execute the event with excellence, volunteers were recruited to the following teams and/or responsibilities:

Area	Responsibilities
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Celebration Team

The team made up of the tank people, wet changing area people, media people and other volunteers on campus that day.
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General Info:

The call for baptisms will happen approx 60 minutes into the worship experience and Pastor Steven will give the call week 1...tbd week 2.

People/Places

Audience (15) 15 people will sit in the worship experience and be the first ones to move when Pastor gives the call.

1. Sit in the auditorium and begin moving forward when Pastor Steven says go.
2. Move intentionally through the highest visibility areas and the longest walk.

Doors (4)

People at the auditorium exit doors directing people out of the auditorium.

1. Sit in the auditorium and begin moving forward and get into position during the call.
2. Act as human door props so people can go through the doors.
3. Smile and clap showing people you are excited they came forward.

Hallway (30-60)
registration area

Have enough to create critical mass as people are moving through the hallway toward

1. Create an atmosphere of Celebration for those being baptized as they walk toward the changing rooms...this needs to be HUGE and over the top celebration!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
2. Leave 2-3 hallway people in the hallway at all times

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Registration Team

Team that helps distribute clothing bags to people that are about to be baptized.

20 vols, 12 handing out bag and 8 directing flow

1. There will be a men's registration area and a women's registration area:
 - a. As people come out:
 - i. Celebrate their decision.
 - ii. Direct them to the men's area and the women's area
 - iii. Ask them their size and give them a bag that corresponds
2. After receiving their bags Direct the people to the "Dry Changing" Area
 - b. Let the group know that they can give their offering after the baptisms as they leave
3. Be ready to jump in and help in other areas as the traffic flow slows down.

Dry Changing Team

Team that helps distribute clothing bags to people as they enter the changing room and directs them back into the hallway after they are changed.

Dry Changing (10 vols, 5 men and 5 women)

1. When people come to the area
 - a. Celebrate their decision to be baptized
 - b. Direct them to the men's area and the women's area.
2. The first people going into the changing rooms have got to be people who move quickly, they must be changed and out in stage in a few minutes. Pick young energetic people, not necessarily those who are there first.
3. Think of the room in terms of a NASCAR pit stop, it has to be a quick in and quick out
4. Control the flow of people into and out of the changing area for a smooth interaction.
5. Those being baptized go into a changing room and put on the baptism clothes and place their clothes in the bag then make their way to the holding area.
6. Women's bags will contain the same size:
 - a. Dark shorts
 - b. Dark t-shirt
 - c. Sports bra and underwear
 - d. Flip Flops
 - e. Hair tie
 - f. Zip lock bag for valuables
 - g. Make up remover packet
 - h. Bracelet
 - i. Note card
 - j. Pen
 - k. Registration card
7. Men's bags will contain the same size:
 - a. Dark shorts
 - b. Dark t-shirt
 - c. Boxers

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- d. Flip Flops
 - e. Zip lock bag for valuables
 - f. Bracelet
 - g. Note Card
 - h. Pen
 - i. Registration card
8. Direct the people back into the hallway/holding areas with their bag in hand.
 9. After the crowd has left, reset the room preparing for the next worship experience.
 10. Keep some of the team in the room, the rest of the team can move into other areas and help people

Host Team

Team that walks with the group being baptized through the entire process from hallway to the locker rooms after being baptized. Your main goal is encourage, smile, hug and be a huge source of support for the people being baptized.

Escort Team (2 per group of 12-14 people being baptized)

1. Start in the hallway smiling, clapping and creating an atmosphere of excitement and help direct people to the changing rooms.
2. As people come out of the dry changing area the team of 2 hosts gather a group of 12-14 people and that group will stay together through the entire baptism experience.
3. Your job as a host is to celebrate people, make them feel comfortable and prepare people for an amazing baptism experience.
4. Things to do with your group:
 - a. Celebrate as a group and have people quickly share their name with the rest of the group.
 - b. As the group is sharing names, the host prints the name tags that are Legible and places the name tag on the outside shoulder. Depending upon the tank it could be right or left, but the shoulder that is away from the baptizer so the tag is not obstructed during photos.
 - c. Write the name in two lines and leave room for a tracking number to be written in the upper RIGHT corner of the name tag.
 - d. Have them take the registration card out of their bag and fill it out, legible handwriting is important.
 - e. Have them take out their phones and tweet #follow that they are being baptized today!!
 - f. You are looking for 1 or 2 great stories in your group. When you ID those individuals, place a "black wrist band" on them so that the video crew can interview them after they are baptized. After they are baptized help ensure they go to the video recording area.
 - g. Some of them may have given their life to Christ, have them stop by Next level area.
 - h. Labeled clothing bag in hand. (a label is placed in the upper RIGHT hand corner of bag.
 - i. Remind them of their note card in the bag they can fill out.
 - i. Talking Pt - "you have a note card in your bag and we wanted to give you the opportunity to thank someone that may have been instrumental in you being here today"
 - j. Give them instructions on what will happen at the baptism tank.
 - i. Give the registration card to the announcer
 - ii. You will be helped in and out of the tank...please hold hands both ways
 - iii. The person baptizing you will place the washcloth over you mouth and nose, grab their arm.
 - iv. As you go back, sit like you are going to sit in a chair.
5. Once the group is ready you will walk them out to be baptized. Place their bags in a pre-determined secure location with security.
6. Talk with the people in line, assure them, love them and answer any last minute questions.
7. After everyone is baptized, take the entire group to the "Wet Changing Area"

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8. Hug everyone person in your group as the exit the wet changing area and remind them we're doing baptisms week 2 and they should start thinking of who to invite back with them give them an invite card.

Tank Team

Help people move through the baptism tank with safety and celebration.

Tank roles (9 per tank) BOTH hands held getting into and out of the tank...grab their hand, don't wait for them to grab your hand!!!!

1. (2) ushers helping people into the tank,
2. (2) ushers helping people out of the tank
3. (2) ushers putting towels over shoulders
4. (1) usher taking wash cloths from the person baptizing
5. (1) usher collecting registration card, writing down their order # on the card and announcing name
6. (1) person working with announcer and putting a number on the person's name tag...put the number in the upper RIGHT corner of the name tag. The number corresponds with their order number on their registration card for picture purposes.

Wet Changing Team

Help people change back into their street clothes and send them out with a big hug and smile!!

Wet Changing Team (10 volunteers, 5 men and 5 women)

1. Direct people to the areas to be changed and provide a new dry towel.
2. Assist people as needed
 - a. People can keep the t-shirt, t-shirt bags are available to place wet items in.
3. Separate wet clothing out into separate bags by size for laundry
 - a. Towels
 - b. Shorts
 - c. T-shirts
 - d. Boxers and underwear
4. Distribute wet items to all volunteers at the end of the day for laundering...bring back to Matthews sometime the following week.
5. Help clean up after the day is over

Media Team

Gathering great stories and sharing them with the video team as well as working with photographers.

Media Team (3 or more)

1. (2) people working with hosts and circulating amongst the team mining great stories and pushing them up to the video crew.
2. (1) person work with photographer at the tank ensuring that we're staying in order and tracking photo numbers that correspond with the baptism number.

VHQ Team

Creating a place to celebrate the volunteers that are making the day happen!!!

VHQ Team (as many as each campus thinks)

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1. Create a place where people can grab something to eat, something to drink and relax for a minute.

Determining the Pace of the Baptisms

Due to our prior experience, it takes us on average between 30 to 45 seconds to baptize each person. This includes entry into the baptistery, the announcement of their name, baptism and exit.

Capturing the Baptisms and Stories

- A. Pictures were taken of each individual baptism, and photographs were later sent to each person.
- B. We created a hash tag on Twitter and tweeted individual stories. We had a crawl on our iMag screens of live twitter feed to build excitement during the Worship Experiences.
- C. We selected individuals with great stories and captured video testimonies.

For any questions concerning spontaneous baptisms event planning or about Elevation Church generally please feel free to email us at info@elevationchurch.org.

God bless you as you plan and prepare to see God move in a powerful way in your church through spontaneous baptisms. We are believing in faith that your Sun Stand Still Prayer will be answered and that people far from God will be filled with life in Christ.

The Elevation Staff