

What Is Said

The participants gather around a baptismal font with a minister or someone playing that role holding a baby or a doll.

Youth: The Presbyterian Church has designated this decade as the Decade of the Child. This is a time to lift up the special gifts and needs of children from birth to age eighteen within our congregations, communities, nation, and world. We respond to those special gifts and needs of children by educating ourselves, offering direct ministry, and advocating on their behalf. We have witnessed and participated in infant baptisms at this font. The vows taken in such a baptism inform the church's response to the gifts and needs of children. Let's look in a different way at the context in which a baby is baptized.

Minister: *What children say to adults sets the context for baptism.*

Child A: Can I have some more ice cream?

Child B: Do we have enough food to have supper tonight?

Child A: I scraped my knee riding my scooter.

Child B: Why does Daddy get so mean when he drinks?

Child A: Do I have to go to school? I want to stay home and watch TV.

Child B: I wish I had shoes so I could go to school.

Child A: I did it!

Child B: I give up.

Child A and B: Why did the minister put water on that baby's head?

Minister: *What adults say to children sets the context for baptism.*

Adult A: What would you like to do together today?

Adult B: Get out of here and leave me alone.

Adult A: Way to go!

Adult B: You can't do anything right!

Adult A: God takes delight in you.

Adult B: If you buy this product, you'll be popular with your friends.

Adult A: Big kids watch out for little kids, and adults have a special obligation for all of you.

Adult B: You're on your own.

Minister: *What adults say about children sets the context for baptism.*

All Adults: I promise to tell them the good news of the gospel.

Adult C: No, I'm sorry, I'm too busy to teach Sunday school.

All Adults: I promise to help them know all that Christ commands.

Adult D: I guess cutting the children's program is the only way to balance the budget.

All Adults: I promise by my fellowship to strengthen their family ties with the household of God.

Adult E: Having those kids in the worship service is so distracting. Can't we have something else for them at that time?

Minister: *What Jesus says about children sets the context for baptism.*

Child C: Let them come to me and do not stop them.

Child D: Whoever welcomes a child in my name welcomes me.

Child C: Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.

Child D: It is to such as these little children that the reign of God belongs.

Minister: This child of God is now received into the one holy catholic and apostolic church through baptism. See what love God has given us that we should be called children of God, and so we are! The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

All: Amen!

"What Is Said" from *Whoever Welcomes A Child: An Intergenerational Peacemaking Journey through the Gospel of Matthew* by Kirby Lawrence Hill, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, www.pcusa.org/peacemaking