

## MEADOWBROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH

Champaign, Illinois

*Loving God Completely, Loving People Unconditionally*

### WATER BAPTISM, GOD'S ORDINANCE

(An explanation for children)

"I got it," called Steve as he rushed in the front door; "County Ordinance No. 135 on Bicycle Riding and Licensing. What does 'County Ordinance' mean?"

"Just 'county rules,' or 'county law,' that's all," answered Dad. "Laws that are made and enforced by the county are county ordinances. An ordinance is a law."

In church the next day, Steve heard the word 'ordinance' again. The pastor was talking about water baptism. Steve had been wondering for some time if he should be baptized too. When the pastor said, "Water baptism is an ordinance of the church," Steve's ears perked up. "I wonder why the church would make water baptism a rule," he thought. He didn't have to wonder for long though because Pastor was reading the Bible, "*Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*" Because water baptism is commanded by God, it has been made an ordinance or rule of the church.

After lunch that afternoon, Steve picked up his bicycle ordinance pamphlet again. "Listen to this, Mom," he said. "'Always use hand signals to show your intentions to turn or to stop.' The drawings show how each signal should be given. I knew cars had to signal, but I never thought about it for bicycles. I guess it's so other people will know which way you are going."

Mom smiled. "That reminds me of this morning's sermon, Steve. After we accept Christ we need to be baptized in water to show people around us which way we're going. When a Christian goes down under the water, he is showing himself and everyone watching that his old life is dead. He is demonstrating that his sins were completely removed when he became a Christian. When he comes up out of the water, the Christian is showing himself and the world that when his sins were taken away, he becomes a new person, living a new life in Christ."

Dad nodded and said, "Since water baptism is a picture of having been saved, it doesn't make sense for someone to be baptized if he hasn't been saved, does it? Will water baptism make an unsaved person a Christian?"

Steve thought for a minute, "I don't see how it could. No, I know it couldn't because I remember what I learned in Sunday School about becoming a Christian. It's easy as A-B-C. You Ask for forgiveness for your sins. You Believe Jesus died to pray for your sins. You Confess Jesus as your Lord and Saviour."

Steve picked up his bike ordinance pamphlet. "Hey! I get it now! The hand signals aren't really turning, but they represent turning - they are a picture of the turn I'm going to make."

"Right again!" encouraged Dad. "How does that compare to water baptism?"

“Water baptism isn’t really dying to sin, and it isn’t really having our sins washed away and it isn’t living a new life, either. It sure is a neat picture of all of those things, though, isn’t it?”

“It show which way you are going,” add Mom.

“Water baptism really shows something else too,” add Dad. “Remember when Jesus died on the cross, was buried, then rose again?”

“I know!” said Steve. “Jesus died and was buried; that is going under the water. He rose from the dead; that’s coming up out of the water!”

“Very good!” congratulated Dad. “Do you think you understand water baptism now?”

“I sure do,” said Steve. “Water baptism is a picture that represents what Jesus did for me and shows the world which way I am going - that I am going to live for Jesus. That’s one ordinance I intend to obey!”