

## Membership Basics

Some of the following information is taken from the SDA Church Manual. [Learn more in the PDF copy of the manual.](#)

The solemn obligations of membership in the body of Christ should be impressed on everyone desiring Church membership. Only those giving evidence of having experienced the new birth and enjoying a spiritual experience in the Lord Jesus are prepared for acceptance into membership. Pastors must instruct candidates in the fundamental teachings and related practices of the Church so they will enter the Church on a sound spiritual basis. While there is no stated age for baptism, it is recommended that very young children who express a desire to be baptized should be encouraged and entered into an instruction program that may lead to baptism. (Church Manual - 18th Edition; page 44)

### Baptism

Baptism is fundamentally the pledge of entrance into Christ's saving covenant and should be treated as a solemn and yet joyful welcome into the family of God. The Church believes in baptism by immersion and accepts into membership only those who have been baptized in this manner.

Those who acknowledge their lost state as sinners, sincerely repent of their sins, and experience conversion may, after proper instruction, be accepted as candidates for baptism and Church membership. (Church Manual - 18th Edition; page 45)

See Church Manual pages 44-49 for information regarding instruction and public examination before baptism, the baptismal vow and commitment, voting acceptance subject to baptism, receiving members who are not known, and baptismal preparations.

**Important note:** The pastor should confirm with the member preparing for baptism that they have not previously been baptized at another Adventist church.

### Rebaptism

Rebaptism of a member is appropriate in the following situations:

- A baptized member from another Christian denomination wants to join the Adventist Church
- A previous member of the Adventist Church who was removed from membership because of apostasy but has been reconverted
- Rebaptism has also been used in situations when a current member has experienced a "spirit of repentance", however, the Church Manual recommends that in these situations the member participate in a communion service instead of being rebaptized

See Church Manual pages 49-51 for additional information regarding accepting individuals from other Christian communions, apostasy and rebaptism, and inappropriate rebaptism.

### Profession of Faith

Professions of faith are appropriate in the following situations:

- A baptized member from another Christian church who wants to join the Adventist Church
- A member of a church outside the NAD (North American Division) who we have been unsuccessful in transferring
- A member of the church whose request for membership transfer has received no response – in this case the church should seek the assistance of the conference clerk
- An individual who has been a member of the Adventist Church but whose membership has been misplaced. A thorough search of NAD membership records should be made before deciding that a person's membership has been misplaced

## Membership Basics, continued

See Church Manual page 51 for additional information regarding accepting individuals from other Christian communions, what to do if you find out a person is already a member at another church, and if professions of faith are appropriate for those who have been removed from membership.

**Important note:** Great care should be exercised in receiving members if they have formerly been members of another congregation. When a person applies for membership on profession of faith, inquiries should be made concerning the applicant's former experience.

View or download a PDF information sheet about baptisms, professions of faith and rebaptisms