



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 9: Baptizing

Suggested Week of Use: July 28, 2024

Core Passage: Acts 8:26-39

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### News Story Summary

Each state has its own flag with icons and symbols representing important historical and cultural influences. States can also name an official song, flower, tree, and more. California currently has forty-four symbols, including a state folk dance, mushroom, and dinosaur. Now the state's legislature is discussing another possible symbol: an official seashell.

Some leaders want to make the black abalone, an endangered marine snail found along the shorelines of California, the state's official shell. They want to call attention to the environmental dangers that threaten it—overfishing, disease, natural disasters, and climate change. Officials also want to recognize the black abalone's place in the history of the Native American tribes that used the snails as a food source for thousands of years. The snail was also used for trading and making jewelry.

For more about this story, search “Black abalone may become California's official shell”

### Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, print or download some lesser-known road signs with symbols on them. (*Examples: hazardous materials, steep grade, exempt, triple reverse curve, no skaters, no U-turn, and so forth*) As adults arrive, show the signs one at a time and allow them to guess what each one means. (If you want to stump the group, show road signs from other countries!) Note that symbols are a huge part of our culture. Share the story of the possible adoption of the black abalone as the state seashell of California. Explain that it will be a symbol of the state's history, as well as the symbol of the need to protect the crustacean.

Transition by saying, *We use symbols every day—and not just for driving. Wearing a favorite team's logo symbolizes your affinity for the team. Wearing a wedding band symbolizes your love for someone.* Explain that this session focuses on an important symbol of the Christian faith, one that serves as a declaration to the world and to other followers of Jesus.

### Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, recall the story of the black abalone. Review how baptism symbolizes our identity in Christ. Put adults into teams of three or four and distribute markers and paper to each team. Instruct them to create a symbol that emphasizes the importance of baptism. After several minutes, allow teams to share. Say: *If you are a believer but have not been baptized, feel free to speak to me or our pastor to explore that possibility. I will also be available after class to answer questions you might have.* Then close in prayer.