

THE MEANS OF GRACE

THE NATURE OF BAPTISM

STORY

Meet your new sister. Her name is Uma. She lives in the village of K. K. Nagar in India. Uma Maherswari enrolled in the Lutheran Hour Ministries Bible correspondence course when she was a teenager after a Lutheran teacher at her Muslim high school encouraged her. Despite opposition from her family, she completed her course when she was fifteen. Later, she earned her master's degree.

Uma's family, strict Hindus, forbade her from worshiping or reading Christian materials, but she continued her lessons with the help of friends. Dedicated to her faith, Uma believes Jesus Christ changed her heart and is always present with her. She wanted to be baptized, but her parents refused. They wanted her to marry a Hindu man.

After seeing how strongly she believed, her parents finally changed their minds and let her go to church. Uma was baptized on Easter Sunday in Simeon Lutheran Church in the nearby town of Pernambut. After Baptism, she no longer uses her second name, Maherswari, because it is also the name of a pagan goddess. Later, she met and married a Christian man. She hopes and prays that her family and village will come to know her precious Savior, Jesus Christ. But for now, she is a member of the larger family of Christ worldwide.

Discuss one-on-one or in small groups the following questions.

1. How is Uma your sister? *She is a member of the holy Christian Church and a child of our heavenly Father through Christ Jesus, our Savior.*
2. How can you see that she is a new person after Baptism? *She dropped her Hindu name.*
3. Uma did away with her Hindu name at Baptism. In some traditions, people adopt a new name—a biblical name—at Baptism. If you took a new name, what would it be? *Answers will vary.*
4. What actually happens in Baptism that by faith changes us? *We receive faith, forgiveness, and a new and eternal life in Jesus, our Savior.*