

THE MEANS OF GRACE

THE POWER OF BAPTISM

STORY

Chief Seattle of the Puget Sound Indians was known as “The Big One” because of his six-foot physique and his powerful skills as a warrior. He was an intelligent and formidable chief, valued by his tribe for his courage, and led successful raids against neighboring tribes in the mid-1800s.

When one of his sons was killed in battle, he was profoundly moved. Soon after, he sought and received Baptism from missionaries, taking the Old Testament Noah as his baptismal name. Many of his tribe were also baptized and raised in the faith. Later, he reaffirmed his commitment to faith through confirmation.

His conversion marked the end of his fighting days, and he became a leader who desired peace with incoming settlers, who arrived in 1846. They named their community “Seattle” in his honor. In his later years, he tried to protect his people from extinction by signing over ancestral lands in exchange for a reservation.

Seattle became a loyal and kind chief after his conversion, even seeking peace with white leaders. His children continued his legacy and were baptized themselves. For those interested in learning more about Chief Seattle’s conversion, see content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/buerge2.html#seattle.

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

1. The history of American Indians is filled with warfare, disease, and death. In what ways is the account of Chief Seattle unique? *He became a Christian. Against terrible odds, he tried to protect his people while still building bridges with those who were coming to settle the ancestral lands of his people.*
2. What evidence can you see of the Holy Spirit working in Seattle’s life through his Baptism? *Many in his tribe came to faith, and he changed from warrior to peacemaker.*
3. How were you changed at your Baptism? *At our Baptism, we became children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. We received freedom from sin, death, and the power of the devil. God gave us forgiveness of sin, salvation, and strength to live our life for Jesus as His people.*