

Your Baby's Growth

During the first twelve months of life, your baby will develop mentally, emotionally, and physically. To foster his or her spiritual growth, practice several of the suggested activities every day.

Birth-4 Months

Baby's Abilities

MENTAL
(Know)

- grows in awareness of surroundings
- identifies voices of parents
- attracted to and focuses on faces
- captivated by light

EMOTIONAL
(Feel)

- enjoys gentle motion and fluid movement
- communicates different needs through crying
- starts to coo, laugh, and squeal
- likes to respond to smiles

PHYSICAL
(Do)

- brings both hands together
- follows moving objects held close to face
- reaches out and begins to grasp objects
- holds head up when on stomach
- learns to turn over

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Endeavor to walk in the Spirit every moment of the day—God's grace, energy, and wisdom will enable and sustain you.
- Create pleasant, safe, clean, wholesome surroundings for baby.
- Speak words of blessing while you rock, feed, or change baby: Scripture verses, favorite quotations, and spontaneous expressions from your heart.
- Pray for baby's learning patterns and mental development.

- Sing aloud or dance together to soothing music: hymns, classical, easy listening, etc.
- Hold baby close to your heart to cultivate love and security.
- Pray for baby's family relationships and developing temperament.
- Smile and establish frequent eye contact with baby.

- Develop daily routines that build confidence and predictability: sleep time, mealtime, bath time, social time.
- Pray for baby's general health and physical progress.
- Move baby's arms and legs while rhythmically talking and singing about Jesus.
- Play gently with baby on a floor blanket.



5-8 Months

Baby's Abilities

MENTAL
(Know)

- likes routine and predictability
- puts things in mouth to explore and learn
- distinguishes between some colors
- makes new discoveries daily

EMOTIONAL
(Feel)

- forms strong attachments with parents and caregivers
- responds to frequently-used words and gestures
- shows signs of his/her God-given temperament
- babbles when happy
- prefers people to objects

PHYSICAL
(Do)

- pushes with arms to raise chest
- holds body and head steady when sitting
- reaches out and tries to pick things up
- begins to creep or crawl
- begins to eat solid food: crackers, dry cereal, fruit

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Maintain personal spiritual disciplines so you will receive God's enablement and peace.
- Pray for baby's mental development and spiritual receptivity.
- Read and show baby colorful picture books about God and creation.
- Sing songs and recite rhymes to foster language development.
- Identify various objects and exclaim, "See what God made!"

- When speaking to baby, use animated facial expressions and complete words.
- Talk freely about God's care and Jesus' love.
- Select people with Christlike character to spend time with baby.
- Gather a circle of friends (other parents with babies) to pray and talk together weekly.
- Pray for baby's developing temperament and childhood friendships.

- Praise and thank God aloud for baby's progress and growth.
- As you gently stretch baby's arms and legs, sing or talk about each body part that God made.
- Pray for baby's physical development and future plans.
- Play happily with baby on floor blanket (with age-appropriate toys).
- Introduce baby to playpen as a structured learning center.



9-12 Months

Baby's Abilities

MENTAL
(Know)

- realizes that words represent distinct objects
- recognizes and responds to various tones of voice
- looks for hidden objects
- begins to develop self-awareness

EMOTIONAL
(Feel)

- responds to and initiates affection
- feels anxiety when separated from parents
- learns to be wary of strangers
- becomes attached to pacifier or blanket
- communicates with gibberish, gestures, and a few words

PHYSICAL
(Do)

- crawls freely
- drinks from a cup
- plays games: peekaboo, patty-cake, ball rolling
- stands and "cruises" while grasping furniture

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Express excitement when baby discovers something new about God's world.
- Pray for baby's spiritual receptivity and learning patterns.
- Voice thankfulness to God during regular activities such as eating, changing, and naptime.
- Endeavor to walk in the Spirit every moment of the day—God's grace, energy, and wisdom will enable and sustain you.

- Shower baby with affection via hugs, kisses, and endearing words.
- Develop baby's security and confidence by ensuring that he/she is always safe and protected.
- Build a repertoire of spiritual songs that you sing regularly to baby (occasionally insert baby's name, or make up your own words).
- Pray for baby's childhood friendships and family relationships.

- Ensure that baby's surroundings are safe and baby-proofed.
- Assess baby's physical needs and limits as his/her attention span grows.
- Play movement games that develop eye-hand-object coordination, balance, and ranges of motion in arms and legs.
- Pray for baby's future plans and overall health.
- Use the playpen as a learning center with age-appropriate toys.



You probably realize that those three elements are essential for your spiritual progress, too. *Your own growth is pivotal to doing what's very best for your baby!* Every Christian parent who genuinely endeavors to grow in these three ways is on God's path toward raising godly children.

Effective parenting intertwaves three components: knowledge of how to raise your baby to follow in Jesus' footsteps; character + conduct.

Your Parenting

Now replace those first-century sandals with your favorite 21st-century footwear. God has given you—parents—primary responsibility for the spiritual training of your children. But most new parents today don't know where to begin. They feel overwhelmed with this responsibility. So, many moms and dads entrust this task to the Church, or to chance.

Twenty-First Century Parenting

A solitary verse summarizes Joseph and Mary's parenting efforts: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). Christ's growth progressed intellectually (wisdom), physically (stature), spiritually (favor with God), and relationally (favor with men).

Just for fun, put yourself in the sandals of Joseph or Mary. Jesus was very special. God's only Son had come to earth as a little baby!

First Century Parenting

Your Plan—God's Very Best

Your baby is God's masterpiece! But the Lord's intimate involvement with your child didn't stop at birth. God is present right now and He wants to continue working on His magnificent creation at every stage of your child's life!

(Psalm 139:13-16, NLT)

*You saw me before I was born,
Every day of my life was recorded in your book.
Every moment was laid out
before a single day had passed.*

*Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.
You watched me as I was being formed in utero section,
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.*

*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.*

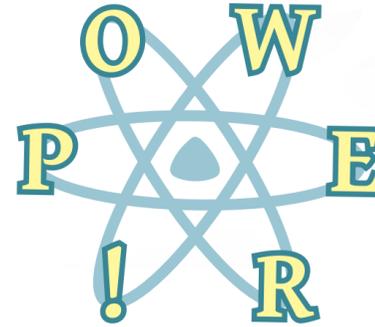
God has given you an indescribable gift. Your baby is uniquely shaped in God's own image—created in His very likeness! The Creator has carefully formed every detail of your tiny son or daughter:

Your Baby—God's Masterpiece!

Your P-O-W-E-R Walk

Parents who embrace the responsibility to raise godly children *must* assess their own spiritual condition. First and foremost, Jesus Christ calls every believer to follow Him. Walking in Jesus' steps and being His disciple is the Christian's highest privilege and priority!

God invites you to walk with Him every moment of every day. As you practice these five disciplines, the Lord will live *His* life in and through *you!* God gladly supplies His incredible P-O-W-E-R as He directs your steps as a parent. (See Isaiah 40:31; Acts 1:8; and Galatians 2:20.)



Pray from Your Heart

Prayer is talking openly with God. He eagerly responds to your requests! (2 Chronicles 7:14; John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15)

Obey Your Loving Shepherd

God is your Shepherd and your Lord. Things always go better when He's in charge. (John 10:27-28; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:23-24)

Worship with Your Church

The Church is your Christian family. Unwrap your spiritual gifts to help you worship God and serve the Church. (John 4:23-24; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 4:10)

Explain Your Faith to Others

Everyone needs to hear about God's love and forgiveness. Share your faith with those around you. (John 3:16, John 14:6; Acts 1:8)

Read Your Bible Daily

The Bible came from God. He speaks to you on every page. (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

You can trust God's wonderful plan. God chose you and your baby for His special purposes. The Holy Spirit wants to guide every step of your journey together (Jeremiah 29:11; John 16:13; Romans 8:28).

Do you want your baby to grow into a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ?



This parenting series, **Raising Godly Children**, will assist parents and teachers in the disciple-making process. Each brochure is packed with proven activities that will assist you, along with your local Church, in nurturing your child's faith.

Also available:



In **God and Me**, your little ones begin trusting the Lord. Very simple teaching techniques help your youngest children:

- "See What God Made" (birth-24 months)
- "See What God Does" (25-36 months) [available 2013]



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Raising Godly Children

What Your Baby Really Needs



Babies Need Love

Far beyond anything else, babies crave love. Studies confirm that babies who receive generous amounts of affection will likely grow into confident, secure children. Infants who are neglected, abused, or unloved often become angry, problematic youth.

God's love is selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional—it remains constant regardless of circumstances. In the Bible, love is not a feeling or emotion; it is something we see in action. Love has arms and legs that serve. Love is the disciplined will and resolve to seek the welfare of others. Selfless love motivated Jesus Christ to abandon heaven's glory. Love kept Him on the cross, paying for the sins of His beloved.

What You Can Do: Give your baby generous dosages of selfless, unconditional love. Young children need undiluted affection that consistently mirrors the qualities described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Tell your baby often that God loves him/her—and that you do, too. Validate the presence of God within you by finding creative ways to express your love.



Babies Need Family

As babies grow, they depend upon and trust the people who are closest to them. Soon they bond with these special people. Babies gradually sense that they belong to a "family." As they grow up, young children are exposed to widely divergent family configurations and lifestyles.

Remember that the family is God's idea. God calls Himself "Father"—the One who leads His children. In the Bible, God explains how to maintain healthy, dynamic relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren. God establishes and endorses the family as a fortress to withstand hostile influences.

What You Can Do: Work on generating family loyalty. Make sure that baby knows and feels that he/she belongs to your family. Building trust, value, and allegiance when children are very small will promote family teamwork that can withstand the world's hurricane-force winds. Make your home a priority; express sincere appreciation; spend lots of time together.



This poster tells how to boost your baby's spiritual growth!