

Your Toddler's Growth

During the second year of life, your toddler's mental, emotional, and physical development will escalate. To foster his or her spiritual growth, practice several of the suggested activities every day.

13-16 Months

Toddler's Abilities

- MENTAL**
(Know)
- refers to self by name
 - loves to repeat familiar stories and songs
 - understands simple directions and gestures
 - desires more independence—yet can be clingy
 - scribbles and draws lines with a crayon
 - communicates needs without crying

- EMOTIONAL**
(Feel)
- thrives on routine and predictability
 - shows frequent mood swings: from enthusiasm to stubbornness; from laughter to tears
 - shows anxiety when away from parents
 - displays a sense of humor

- PHYSICAL**
(Do)
- walks without support; can pull or carry toys
 - likes to explore and investigate
 - picks up small objects—showing increased concentration and hand-eye skill
 - waves "goodbye"
 - drinks from a cup without help

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.
- Read simple books (including Bible storybooks) and sing familiar songs together every day.
- Pray for toddler's learning patterns and mental development.
- Speak words of blessing: Scripture verses, favorite quotations, and spontaneous expressions from your heart.

- Establish and maintain routines that build confidence.
- Maintain calmness of spirit when toddler is panicky or stubborn.
- Pray for toddler's sense of security and family relationships.
- Express excitement when toddler discovers new sights, sounds, and abilities.
- Shower toddler with affection via hugs, kisses, and endearing words.

- Provide pleasant, safe, clean, wholesome surroundings. Develop specific places for toddler to play and to create.
- Establish a daily Blessing Time together (early form of family devotions): praise and thank Jesus, pray for family, pray for friends, etc.
- Pray for toddler's general health and physical progress.
- Fold toddler's hands when you thank Jesus for providing food.



17-20 Months

Toddler's Abilities

- MENTAL**
(Know)
- understands and follows simple commands
 - points to objects in pictures
 - enjoys playing "pretend" games
 - spends time alone looking at simple books
 - comprehends much better than he/she communicates

- EMOTIONAL**
(Feel)
- demonstrates increased separation anxiety
 - likes to imitate behavior of others
 - communicates in two-word phrases
 - speaks clearly enough to generally be understood
 - may display selfish, defiant behavior

- PHYSICAL**
(Do)
- learns to run (though awkwardly at first)
 - climbs on furniture
 - walks up and down stairs with assistance
 - likes to throw a ball
 - eats with spoon and fork
 - removes clothes without help

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.
- While reading together each day, ask toddler to point out items in pictures.
- Use hand or finger puppets to act out stories and just to have fun.

- Use animated facial expressions and complete words when speaking to toddler.
- Gather a circle of friends (other parents with toddlers) to pray and talk together weekly.
- Pray for toddler's developing temperament and childhood friendships.
- On occasion, divert a stubborn toddler to another interest.
- When correcting toddler, show love and maintain a calm, firm, pleasant voice.

- Designate specific, safe places for toddler to run and climb. Establish off-limits boundaries for unsafe and special furniture.
- Play active games together: hide and seek, chase, dance, romp, etc.
- Daily Blessing Time: praise and thank Jesus, pray for family, pray for friends, etc.
- Praise toddler when he/she obeys: picks up spoon, brings the box, etc.
- Pray for toddler's physical development and for God's future plans.



21-24 Months

Toddler's Abilities

- MENTAL**
(Know)
- follows two or three-step directions
 - likes to sort shapes and colors
 - experiments with make-believe play
 - knows where things belong
 - begins to ask simple questions

- EMOTIONAL**
(Feel)
- displays more independence and selfishness
 - exhibits less separation anxiety
 - speaks in brief sentences with 100+ word vocabulary
 - enjoys being with other children
 - recognizes different emotions in others

- PHYSICAL**
(Do)
- tries to imitate what others are doing
 - brushes teeth with help
 - shapes clay, assembles simple puzzles, etc.
 - walks up and down stairs
 - prefers to use one hand more than the other

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Inflect vocal tones and animate facial expressions when reading to toddler.
- Endeavor to walk in the Spirit every moment of the day—God's enabling grace, energy, and wisdom will sustain you.
- Pray for toddler's spiritual receptivity and learning patterns.
- As you work together, talk about who Jesus is, His care, and your love for Him.

- During challenging moments, embrace God's comfort, strength, and peace.
- Build a repertoire of spiritual songs, hymns, and praise choruses that you sing regularly (occasionally insert toddler's name, or make up your own words).
- Ensure that toddler attends a safely-run church nursery.
- Pray for toddler's emotional development and family relationships.
- Dramatize Bible stories, emphasizing the feelings of major characters.

- Invite toddler to help: fold clothes, clean up, put things away, etc.
- Reinforce obedience as a positive virtue that pleases Jesus.
- Daily Blessing Time: praise and thank Jesus, pray for family, pray for friends, etc.
- Pray for toddler's future and for his/her overall health.
- Play response games: copycat, Simon Says, bigger or smaller, etc.



Make it your ambition to know God intimately, to love Him passionately, and to serve Him selflessly. Your own growth is pivotal to doing what's very best for your toddler! Every Christian parent who genuinely endeavors to grow spiritually is on God's path toward raising godly children.

How can you bring up your toddler to follow in Jesus' footsteps? Begin by acknowledging that you need God's help to grow closer to Him yourself! Unless you continue to love God with all your heart, mind, and strength, you cannot expect to help your child do so.

Your Parenting

The parents who brought their children to Jesus earnestly wanted God's best for them. Similarly, when parents today present their little ones to the Lord, they desire God's assistance in raising them. For many families, this is where discipleship begins. Disciple-making, like parenting, is an ongoing process.

Twenty-First Century Parenting

One day, several well-intentioned parents brought their young children to see Jesus. Realizing that Christ was much closer to God than typical religious teachers, these devoted parents eagerly hoped that the Lord would place His hands upon their children's heads and pronounce God's blessing on them.

First Century Parenting

Your Desire—God's Blessing

Simply put—parents who love God wholeheartedly eagerly embrace His commands. Those parents must harness everyday situations to pass along God's truths to their children. That's your divinely-appointed legacy; your most important job on earth!

(Deuteronomy 6:5-7, NIV)

*Talk about them when you sit at home
and when you walk along the road,
when you lie down and when you get up.*

Impress them on your children.

*These commandments that I give you today
are to be on your hearts.*

*Love the Lord your God
with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your strength.*

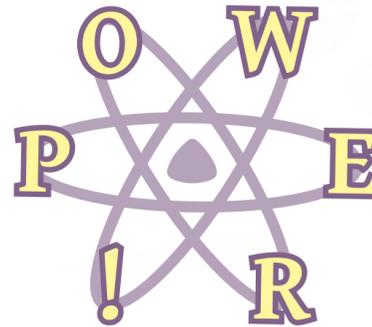
God has a wonderful plan for your precious toddler. What's more, the Lord has provided a roadmap (the Bible) and a tour guide (the Holy Spirit) to help you navigate. These verses outline your journey:

Your Toddler—God's Legacy

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 toddler 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 toddler 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 Toddler Really Needs



Toddlers Need Prayer

Parents rejoice over their toddler's first words—a new stage in their relationship has begun! A young child's accelerating ability to speak opens the opportunity for him or her to talk with God. It's time to learn about prayer!

Indeed, God yearns to hear from His children! Just as the Lord invites us to speak to Him through prayer, God speaks to us through the Bible and the Holy Spirit. God created us to enjoy unbroken fellowship with Him. That's His heart's desire!

What You Can Do: Carry on a dialogue with the Lord throughout the day. Be sure that your toddler overhears your prayers. As you develop a heart-to-heart relationship with God, your child will desire one as well. This **H-E-A-R-T** acrostic may help. When you pray:

Honor God with praise and respect.

Examine your life, confessing any sins.

Ask God to supply your personal needs.

Request God's help for the needs of others.

Thank God for blessing you every day.



Toddlers Need Routine

Daily routines are essential for young children! Constant change confuses and frustrates most toddlers. An unstructured environment that lacks a daily regimen is detrimental and counterproductive. Toddlers cannot succeed in chaos. They thrive on doing things in a prescribed order.

A well-planned day with a variety of ordered activities often leads to peace and harmony in the home. To develop secure, stable, and confident children, establish a consistent routine—their early exposure to self-regulation. Every child must learn to wait and to anticipate. All the while, be sensitive to the specific needs of your toddler.

What You Can Do: First, establish a routine based upon your toddler's sleeping patterns. Plan for meals, naps, play, visits, and visitors. At the beginning of each day, let your toddler know the plan. Then stay on schedule. In time, your child will learn to delay gratification and to enjoy the activity at hand.



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