

Your Two-Year-Old's Growth

Throughout this year, the mental, emotional, and physical growth of your child will probably astound you! To foster his or her spiritual growth, practice several of the suggested activities every day.

25-30 Months

Two-Year-Old's Abilities

- MENTAL (Know)**
- speaks in simple, two-word sentences using up to 250 different words
 - enjoys daily routines and familiar schedule patterns
 - sings simple songs and mimics hand or body motions
 - begins to use his/her imagination to play make-believe
 - turns pages of familiar storybooks at the proper times
 - recognizes that God loves and cares for him/her, prayer is talking with God, and that church is where God's people meet

- EMOTIONAL (Feel)**
- expresses a growing number of emotions: anger, fear, happiness, sadness, embarrassment, guilt, pride of accomplishment
 - clings to parents when around strangers or in new surroundings
 - is increasingly conscious of "self"
 - enjoys being with other children; plays side by side with them but often does not share willingly
 - becomes frustrated when he/she is not understood
 - needs help making choices and decisions

- PHYSICAL (Do)**
- shows more and more physical strength, torso flexibility, and balance
 - screws and unscrews jar lids, builds stacks of six blocks, and assembles simple puzzles
 - likes to sort objects by shape and by color
 - uses crayons or markers to "draw"
 - walks smoothly, using heels and toes
 - begins to run, jumps with both feet, pedals a tricycle
 - walks up and down stairs using alternating feet
 - dresses and undresses with increasing success

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Continue *Daily Blessing Time*: read a Bible story together, sing a simple praise song, pray for others, thank Jesus.
- Endeavor to walk in the Spirit every moment of the day—God's enabling grace, energy, and wisdom will sustain you.
- Engage in simple spiritual conversations: *What is God like? What does God do? What did God create?*
- Introduce biblical words along with simple definitions: prayer is talking with God, church is where God's people meet, the Bible is God's Book.
- Build a repertoire of age-appropriate praise songs and hymns for your daily listening.
- Pray for your child's spiritual receptivity and learning patterns.

- Practice making faces together that show different emotions. Explain that God wants him/her to use feelings correctly. Laugh together every day.
- Frequently tell your child how much you love him/her—and that God does, too.
- Demonstrate how to share with others; practice taking turns.
- Encourage your child to depend more and more upon God and less upon you.
- During challenging moments, maintain a calm spirit. Embrace God's strength and peace as you deal with the situation.
- Instill positive expectations and anticipation as you attend church regularly.
- Explain that God gave him/her a heart to love Jesus and to care for other people.
- Pray for your child's emotional development and family relationships.

- Provide daily opportunities to run, jump, climb, and stretch.
- Explain that God made his/her body to do good things that please Him.
- Encourage your child to accomplish daily routines on his/her own.
- After playing "Follow the Leader" or "Simon Says," explain that God wants him/her to follow and obey Jesus.
- Ask for help with simple chores (set table, clean up, etc.).
- Affirm your child's obedient behavior as a way to make God proud and happy.
- Pray for your child's health and continued physical development.



31-36 Months

Two-Year-Old's Abilities

- MENTAL (Know)**
- speaks in 4-5 word sentences; his/her vocabulary may now reach 500 words
 - stays focused for lengthening periods of time
 - differentiates between boys and girls
 - asks simple questions to find out more—or to challenge authority (*Why? What is it? Where are we going?*)
 - identifies Bible heroes and heroines as God's friends
 - recognizes that God created everything, God wants him/her to be good, obedient, kind, and loving, and that Jesus is God's special Son

- EMOTIONAL (Feel)**
- enjoys being in the company of friends
 - shows increased awareness of the feelings of others
 - expresses personal likes and dislikes
 - finds it difficult to wait or to make choices
 - displays more and more affection; uses words to express his/her feelings
 - struggles to understand or control impulses; may engage in temper tantrums or show defiance
 - wants to be increasingly independent (dressing, washing, eating, etc.)

- PHYSICAL (Do)**
- learns new skills by copying the actions of parents and siblings
 - draws simple shapes (circle, square, triangle)
 - is gradually honing fine motor skills
 - enjoys make-believe games and fantasy play (may have an imaginary friend)
 - begins potty training
 - runs with increased coordination and confidence
 - plays simple throw and catch games

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Maintain your own spiritual disciplines as a parent so you will be filled with God's wisdom and power.
- Converse about spiritual topics. Ask questions that challenge him/her. (*Why do we pray? -So God will help us. Why does it rain? -God is giving the plants a drink of water.*)
- As you read your Bible storybook, point out people who love the Lord. Talk about what God is like and what He does.
- To help your child obey more readily, clearly communicate boundaries, penalties, and rewards (have him/her repeat them back to you). Maintain those rules consistently.
- *Daily Blessing Time*: read a Bible story, sing a praise song, pray for others, thank Jesus.
- Pray for your child's mental development and enjoyment of learning.

- Establish relationships with other parents of two-year-olds who share your values. Meet often so the children can play and the adults can talk and pray.
- Use animated facial expressions and complete words when speaking to your child.
- When a temper tantrum flares, calmly say, "I know you're angry. You can be angry, but you cannot be mean." Pray with your child when he/she expresses emotions in an inappropriate way.
- Encourage your child to make choices based on long-term benefits instead of immediate gratification of desires. Help him/her think through the options.
- Strive to maintain a Christlike role model in your words, actions, and habits.
- Pray for your child's sense of security and for his/her childhood friendships.

- Assign simple chores for your child to accomplish. Demonstrate how to complete each one and praise him/her with each success.
- As your child notes his/her growth, explain how God provides all we need to grow.
- Express confidence that your child can, with God's help, do anything he/she decides to do.
- Generously praise him/her for each accomplishment and small growth step.
- If your child is reluctant to try new things, encourage him/her to make an initial effort—and then practice together until it's easy.
- Pray for your child's safety and for God's future plans for him/her.



The next panel explains more!

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

How can you raise your two-year-old to follow in Jesus' footsteps? Effective parenting intertwaves three components: knowledge + character + conduct.

Your Parenting

Your two-year-old can become a healthy "tree" planted beside a nourishing stream of water. The deeper the tap root, the stronger his or her faith development. Provide daily opportunities for your child to delight in God's Word. Make the Bible the centerpiece for conversation and for conduct in your home—day and night. God's path leads to prosperity and to His blessing!

Twenty-First Century Parenting

Was it easier to raise a child 3,000 years ago? All in all, parenting hasn't changed much. The Psalmist distilled God's wisdom for parents into three brief verses (Psalm 1:1-3). Even from a child's early years, the path of the righteous begins to diverge from the way of the wicked. Everything hinges on whether or not he or she chooses to follow God and His Word.

Old Testament Parenting

Your Path—God's Delight

Do you want your two-year-old 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)



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Parents who genuinely want God's best for their child will feed him or her a steady diet from God's nutritious Word. This will develop a strong root system for his or her growing faith. As the spiritual tap root deepens, the tree grows strong and tall. The Bible is the surest way for you to direct the non-stop steps of your two-year-old!

(Psalm 1:1-3, NASB)

He will be like a tree
Firmly planted by the streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season
And its leaf does not wither;
And whatever he does, he prospers.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord
And in His law he meditates day and night.

How blessed is the man
Who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of scoffers!
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

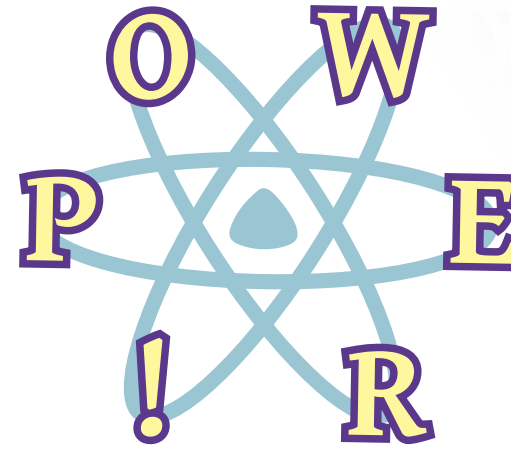
God knows exactly what your child needs to be successful. The Lord wants him or her to grow, to blossom, and to be fruitful—just like a healthy, thriving tree. These verses describe your child's road to prosperity—and to God's blessing:

Your Two-Year-Old—God's Tree!

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.)



Raising Godly Children

What Your Two-Year-Old Really Needs

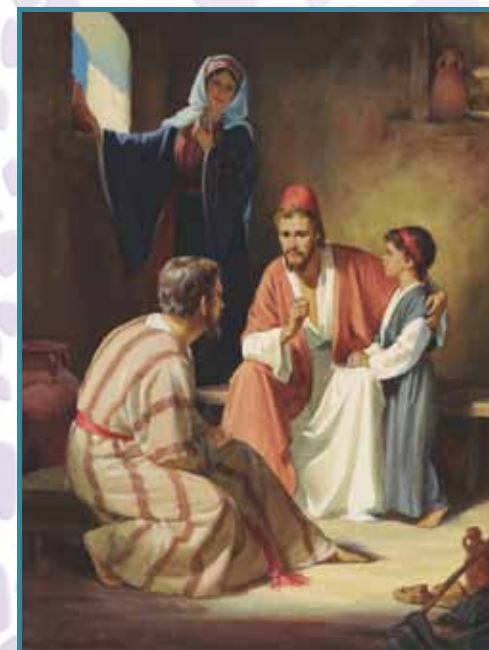


Your Child Needs Encouragement

Many younger children are intimidated when they see other kids doing things that they have not yet attempted. Uncertain of their own abilities, these children hesitate or refuse to try new things. As a result, they become frustrated and develop self-doubt.

Just as a battery continually needs to be recharged, your child requires a constant supply of encouragement. To counterbalance self-imposed limitations, kids need large doses of support, affirmation, and praise. Look for ways to build your child up. Become his or her biggest cheerleader. Let your kids know that you believe in them—no matter what!

What You Can Do: Help your child face each challenge that stands in his or her path. If an obstacle appears to be overly daunting, break it into a series of mini-challenges. This will build much-needed confidence to break through the next barrier. Be sure to surround your child with people



who will provide positive input. The changes in your child's outlook and performance might amaze you!

Your Child Needs Boundaries

As children grow older, they want fewer restrictions and more freedom. Young kids cannot understand why parents don't trust their judgment. They view parental boundaries as road-blocks to their independence.

Boundaries provide both security and freedom. Ultimately, God wants everyone to depend upon *Him*—not on parents or on self. Total "independence" is dangerous—and it's not biblical! At birth, children are entirely dependent upon their parents. The Bible directs Christian parents to wear their children from dependence upon themselves so they gradually learn to depend upon God.

What You Can Do: Establish clearly-defined boundaries with your children. Make sure that they understand why each boundary is important. Explain that fences keep good things in and bad things out. Inside the fence, kids enjoy freedom to roam within a safe environment. Outside, dangerous influences lie in wait.



This poster tells how to boost your two-year-old's spiritual growth!