

Tips and Activities for Parents of
Children 0 to 18 Months • Year 1

I See God's Love at Church

"I like to come to church."

(See Psalm 122:1.)



This month we will help your child:

- feel secure and comfortable at church as we demonstrate God's love to him or her;
- begin to associate God and Jesus with loving people and enjoyable activities.

September

Do these activities with your child to continue the learning your child has experienced at church.

Little Activities for Little People

Babies

- Hold a hand mirror or stand in front of a mirror, holding your baby so your child can see his or her face and hands. Talk about and touch each part of your child's face while he or she looks in the mirror. Sing a lullaby to show your pleasure in your child.
- While your baby is lying in a crib or sitting in your lap, offer a finger for him or her to grasp. An older baby may pull him- or herself to a sitting or standing position. Younger babies will simply enjoy pulling on your finger. Talk to your baby about what he or she is doing, commenting on the baby's strong hands.

Do It!

I Come In

I come in,



There's a smile on my face.

I come in,

My friends are in this place.

I come in,

My friends say "hi" to me.

I'm going to church,

What a happy place to be!



Say and do this finger play with your child as you prepare to go to church. Use the child's name instead of "I" and "my." Toddlers will enjoy the sounds and actions, although they may not yet be able to do the finger play with you.

Sing It!

It's Fun to Go to Church

(Tune: "Farmer in the Dell")

It's fun to go to church!

It's fun to go to church!

With all the other boys and girls

It's fun to go to church!

Sing this song as you play or drive in the car with your child. Young children like to hear the same song over and over. They look forward to the familiar and happy sounds of a song sung many times. Children will experience God's love at church when they are having enjoyable experiences with loving caregivers.

September Parent's Home Page

Leaving Your Child at Church

Separation anxiety may begin with a look of uncertainty as a child's eyes dart around the room, absorbing each detail of this strange place. Then the arms desperately clutch at Mommy or Daddy and the head presses firmly against the familiar shoulder. Finally, tears mix with loud wails that seem to ask, "How could you leave me in this place?!"

Vigorous protests are common when young children sense they will be separated from Mommy or Daddy. Anxiety at being left with strangers usually begins at around six to eight months of age. But such an upset is actually a healthy sign that the child has built a strong attachment to parents. However, learning to accept and trust other adults is a necessary step in every child's growth.

When your child begins objecting to leaving you, consider these suggestions:

- On the way to church, talk with your child about enjoyable activities or people he or she will encounter at church. Even if your child does not understand your words, your loving, focused attention will strengthen feelings of security.
- When your child is staying in the nursery for the first time, you may choose to remain through the beginning of the first session to help your child relax and become comfortable with the new surroundings.
- When leaving your child, move at a relaxed pace, but don't linger. It may help to establish a "good-bye ritual" of a hug, a kiss and a wave good-bye. Do this every time you separate. Then

make a quick exit, even if your child cries. Tears are normal—and prolonged departures often make matters worse. Be sure the caregivers know where you will be in case they need you.

- Return to check on your child only if you intend to stay for the remainder of the session. One tearful good-bye is all a little one should be expected to endure in a morning!
- If your child cried when you left, seeing other parents come for their children may stimulate more tears. So return quickly to the nursery after church has concluded. During the time your child is adjusting to being left at church, limit your separation to one hour at a time.
- If possible, invite a regular caregiver from the nursery to visit your child at home. Seeing a familiar face at church also eases separation.
- Be as regular as possible in attending church. Even one absence may make your child feel like a stranger again.

Stacking Toys

- Collect a variety of colorful plastic spray-can caps from items you use around the house (shaving cream, cooking spray, dusting spray, etc.). Try to find caps of varying sizes, making sure not to use caps that are small enough to fit into a child's mouth. Sterilize and dry each cap.
- Children will enjoy stacking the caps, knocking down the cap towers you have built, or nesting the caps inside each other. Help children learn colors by naming the color of each cap a child holds.

"Who of us is mature enough for offspring before the offspring themselves arrive? The value of marriage is not that adults produce children but that children produce adults."

Peter Devries