

Tips and Activities for Parents of  
Children 18 to 36 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:**

- hear songs and words about God's love;
- feel glad to be at church with people who demonstrate God's love to him or her;
- participate in enjoyable activities at church.

## September

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

### Tell It!

Jesus Came to Church

When Jesus was a baby,  
His parents brought Him to church.  
People at church were glad to see baby Jesus.  
They talked to Him.  
They smiled at Him.  
They held Him close.  
Jesus was happy to be at church.  
You can be happy at church  
Because people show God's love to you here.  
(See Luke 2:22-38.)

### 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.



## Little Activities for Little People

Toddlers

- Provide a favorite toy for your child to hold while being changed. Sing to him or her and talk about how the child is growing. Think of changing time as an ideal setting for enjoyable one-to-one interaction, and not as an unpleasant chore.
- Place a few fresh flowers or leaves in an unbreakable container without water. Invite your child to touch and smell the nature items. Talk about what your child is doing. Say, **We are glad God made pretty flowers! Thank You, God, for the flowers.**

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 can occur at later ages, too. 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. Your 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 teacher 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**