

Tips and Activities for Parents of  
Children 18 to 36 Months • Year 1

## God Helps Me to Grow

### “God made us.”

(See Malachi 2:10.)



#### This month we will help your child:

- hear words and songs about the way in which Jesus grew;
- feel thankful that God is helping him or her to grow;
- experience opportunities to demonstrate new accomplishments.

## January

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

## Little Activities for Little People

Toddlers

- Point to facial and body features of people pictured in magazines and books. Ask the child to touch his or her own nose, ears, chin, etc.
- As your child plays with toys, comment on the parts of his or her body being used in play. Show pleasure in your child’s developing skills. Say, **God made you so you can do so many things. You’re growing just as God planned!**
- Rocking a crying child and acknowledging the child’s feelings (“You’re feeling sad right now”) are time-proven methods for soothing upset feelings. However, sometimes an unhappy child will object strenuously to merely being rocked. So, you will need to gently draw your child’s attention to a colorful toy, book or picture. Or begin to softly stroke your child’s leg, arm or tummy, talking about each part you touch. Your quiet voice, interesting movements and steady rocking will help your child relax and calm down.

### Do It!



#### I’m Growing

When I was a baby,  
I was very, very small.  
Now I’m growing older.  
I’m growing big and tall.



When I was a baby,  
I could only crawl.



Now I can walk, and I can jump.  
But, sometimes, down I fall!



Say and do this finger play with your child. Use your child’s name instead of “I.” Toddlers will enjoy the sounds and actions, although they may not be able to do the finger play with you yet. Acting out the poem as you say it will also be enjoyable for your child. Encourage a toddler to crawl with you or to gently sit down.

### Sing It!

#### I Am Growing

(Tune: “Are You Sleeping?”)

I am growing.  
I am growing.  
Yes, I am.  
Yes, I am.  
One time I was smaller.  
Now I am much taller.  
Watch me grow.  
Watch me grow.

Sing this song as you play with your child. Show a picture of him- or herself when younger. Talk about how much bigger he or she has grown. **Lindsay, you’re learning to crawl. God helps you grow.** Children will begin to associate God’s care with their new accomplishments.

# January Parent's Home Page

## Tell It!

Jesus Grew

Once Jesus was a baby.  
Jesus learned to crawl.  
Then He learned to walk.  
Jesus grew to be a bigger boy.  
He learned to do many things.  
You are growing, too.  
You are learning to talk and sing  
and run and climb.  
God made you.  
God will help you grow.  
(See Luke 2:52.)

## Praying with Your Child

I stood over the tiny bundle lying in the bassinet and decided she was starting to look less like a prune. But she was still so helpless and I felt so inadequate. So I did the only thing I thought might help. I prayed.

"Lord, you know I've never been a father before. The idea used to sound like fun, but now I'm scared. I really need your help."

That was the first of many similarly inelegant prayers I whispered late at night, standing beside my sleeping baby's crib. I knew she could neither hear nor understand me. But I began to feel these moments of prayer were bonding me to her in a way I found very special.

Gradually, a brief prayer became part of our

**"You can talk to God about your children. You can tell Him everything, ask Him anything. You can even laugh with Him about the funnier things. I believe He understands laughter, for He is the One who made your child so funny in the first place."**

**Ethel Barrett**

bedtime ritual, mixed in with the tummy rubbing, forehead stroking, chin tickling and cheek kissing that helped Kari relax and go to sleep.

Through this process, I stumbled onto a key that continued to make our prayer time meaningful, even as Kari entered adolescence. I found myself talking to God about the experiences Kari and I had shared each evening. As Kari grew and began to contribute her own prayers, she followed the same pattern of thanking God for herself and me and for the good times we shared, and of asking God's forgiveness for failures.

Over the years our father-daughter prayer times have been among the strongest experiences in building our relationship. I have often wondered if the pattern would have been so consistent and meaningful if I had not begun practicing in those nights beside her crib. If I had waited until she was two or four and could have understood what I was saying, would I have persevered through my awkwardness or simply given it up as inappropriate for a young child?

—Wes Haystead, Parent and Author

## Have a Snowy Day Indoors

- Sit with an older toddler at a kitchen table or counter. Put a small amount of whipped cream or vanilla pudding in your child's hand to feel. Say, **This (cream) feels and smells good.**
- Spread a 1-inch (2.5-cm) layer of cream or pudding on a cookie sheet (or directly on the table top, if you prefer). Show your child how you can "walk" a plastic animal through the "snow," making prints. Then "drive" a play car through the snow or use a paper cup to clear a road.
- Let your child experiment with moving things in the cream or pudding. He or she may enjoy simply moving fingers in a sensory experience.
- If your child remains interested in playing with the cream or pudding for a length of time, refresh the snow by smoothing over the previous marks or by spreading more cream or pudding onto the cookie sheet.