



Children's Ministry Matters at Conway's First Baptist Church

How Infants and Toddlers Learn About God

Babies are built for learning. Every sensation—touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound—electrifies the infant brain and helps it establish sensory connections that'll last a lifetime.

Because babies build a sense of trust with caregivers as their needs are met, it's vital to respond to their needs in a loving and consistent manner. When adults interact lovingly with babies, their sense of self-worth grows. Babies develop trust in the people who meet their physical needs. You can surround an infant with a sense of acceptance, security, and love

with the experiences you provide for babies in your nursery. Babies feel God's love as it flows from you.

Babies build their earliest foundation of God through their experiences at church. Babies feel God's love as it flows from you.

You can tap into their five senses and build a positive experience for babies in your nursery using the following tips.

- **Sound**—When you sing or talk to babies, use Bible truths such as “God made the birds,” “Jesus loves you,” and “God made you.” Pray aloud with babies.
- **Sight**—Infants are stimulated by contrasting colors because they're easier to distinguish than similar colors such as red and orange. Contrasting colors help create a positive learning environment.
- **Smell**—Pleasant smells of foods and the odor of a clean room help all children want to be in the room and say to parents “We care.”
- **Taste**—Taste is a powerful sensation for babies, especially when it curbs hunger and brings comfort. Tending promptly to an infant's cries of hunger with milk or formula as instructed by parents sends a message that says grownups can be trusted.
- **Touch**—Have you noticed what incredibly strong grips babies have when they grab your fingers? They learn through the senses, including touch. Holding babies or comforting them with a soothing touch also stimulates their brain development.

As babies grow into toddlers, use Bible thoughts, stories, and songs on a regular basis to help little ones learn about God in different ways.

Toddlers' attitudes about God and church are formed early through experiences they have in our classrooms, as well as at home. Toddlers need a safe, loving environment that stimulates them to explore and discover God's world. As leaders, we need to provide positive examples of love, acceptance, and security. We need adults who are willing to invest their lives in the eternal worth of a child.

—Sondra Saunders leads Prestonwood Baptist Church's preschool and children's ministry with more than 5,200 children in Plano, Texas.

Copyright ©2006 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by Permission.