

Faith Development

By

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In Touch the Wind, Jo Carr says, "There is a person whom I love dearly. It happens to be a very small person, still very young in the ways of the world. If I could give this beloved child-person a gift - one single, splendid gift of anything that is or ever was - I would like most to give this small person a feeling of communion with God - a love, a sense of Presence, an awareness of God's love."

So how do we, as Sunday school and Mother's Day Out and Preschool teachers, help a child get that?

A child's faith is nurtured in the classroom by . . .

. . . As you love each child in your classroom, and lovingly meet his needs, you teach that baby, that toddler, that two-year-old about the love of God.

. . . In the infant room love comes through the tone of your voice, the soft touch of your hands as you change diapers or rub a back, the comfort you offer as a child cries, the time and attention you give them in play.

. . . Predictability. The same room, the same carers, the same routines, the same smocks, the same songs. Until almost three these things give a child a sense of safety and love.

. . . Encouraging her trust. Trust grows out of a loved relationship between your infant and you. It grows when her needs are met consistently; when her discomforts are quickly removed; and when she is consistently cuddled, played with and caressed. NGC

. . . Working to know each child individually, and see each child as God sees them.

. . . Your example - through your attitudes, feelings and actions, you teach the child about God's love and love of neighbor.

. . . Recognizing a toddler's innate curiosity and encouraging it rather than curtailing it.

. . . Always giving thanks before snacks and lunch in classes for toddler and two's.

. . . Making and using God Blesses Books and Thank You, God Books.

. . . Teaching songs and finger plays that give words to our faith.

. . . Offering spontaneous prayers of thanks or praise on walks, in the sandbox, at the art table - or simply talking about God during the day.

- ... Giving the stories of our faith words through storytimes and by having lots of good books in the classroom.
- ... Having Book Baskets with a nativity set, a Noah's Ark, etc.
- ... Using role play for the nativity and Bible stories
- ... Taking those infants, toddlers and twos to the sanctuary.
- ... Using nature as a stepping stone to helping the child see God as Creator and appreciate all His wondrous gifts to us.
- ... Taking a "find something beautiful walk." Using cell phone pictures to remember them.
- ... Using consistent, positive discipline to create a safe place for all and to help a child understand that there are limits to our freedom.

Music and Rhymes

Young children are sensitive to music and rhyme. Songs, poems and finger plays can be used as prayer or prayer beginnings. Find ones that teach your child about God's love, the wonder of God's creation and the blessings we receive from God.

Two little eyes

Two little eyes to look to God (point to eyes)
 Two little ears to hear God's word (point to ears)
 Two little feet to walk God's ways (point to feet)
 Two little lips to sing God's praise (point to lips)
 Two little hands to do God's will (open hands)
 And one little heart to love God still (fold hand over heart)

Thank you, Lord, for giving us life.

Tha-ank you, Lord, for giving us life. . .
 Tha-ank you, Lord, for giving us life.
 Tha-ank you, Lord, for giving us life.
 Tha-ank you, Lord, for giving us life.
 Right where we are.

Alleluia, praise the Lord.
 Alleluia, praise the Lord.
 Alleluia, praise the Lord.
 Right where we are.

Tha-ank you, Lord for giving us _____.
 (You let each person have turn at naming what they are thankful for. This simple song can go on and on and on!)

Oh, Jennie, do you love Jesus? (Substitute each child's name for Jennie)

Oh, Jennie, do you love Jesus?

Oh, yes, I love Jesus.

Do you really love Jesus?

Yes, I really love Jesus.

Tell me why you love Jesus.

This is why I love Jesus:

Becau-ause He first loved me.

Oh, how I love Jesus.

Oh, how I love Jesus.

Oh, how I love Jesus.

Because He first loved me.

Great books for babies, toddlers and twos:

God Made You by Tommie Nelson (Small Miracles)

Baby's First Bible, The first bible collection by Standard Publishing

Baby's First Bible Songs, The first bible collection by Standard Publishing

Baby's First Prayers, The first bible collection by Standard Publishing

Things I See in Church by Stiegemeyer

Things I Do in Church by Stiegemeyer

Blessings Everywhere by Mackall and Kucharik

Prayer for a Child by Rachel Field

Read Aloud Bible Stories - all 4 volumes by Ella K. Lindvall

The Rhyme Bible Story Book for Toddlers by Zonderkidz

The Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd-Jones

11 Bible stories recommended for infants, toddlers and twos.

God's good world - stories of creation and how God made people

Noah's big boat with emphasis on how God loved Noah, not how he punished the world.

Miriam and baby Moses

David

The Birth of Jesus

The Shepherds visit the baby Jesus

Zacchaeus finds a friend

Jesus and the children

The storm on the Sea of Galilee

Palm Sunday

(The Read Aloud Bible Stories by Ella K. Lindvall are all excellent.)

Book Baskets

Combine books and toys to make a Book Basket. Book Baskets are a way for toddlers and twos to experience the stories of our faith through both their senses and their imaginations.

- Provide a nativity scene that can be manipulated by toddlers. The cloth ones are excellent as is the one by Fisher Price (which can be ordered from the FP catalog or online.) Combine the crèche with books about the birth of Jesus like Sleepy Jesus by Pennie Kidd and Susie Poole, Christmas in the Manger by Nola Buck and Felicia Bond or the Arch Book The Night the Angels Sang.
- Fisher Price's Noah's Ark is great. Add the extra animals and include a book or two about Noah. Noah's Ark by Lucy Cousins is a good board book.
- Provide a Moses basket, a doll baby and a book on Moses and Miriam.

This monthly newsletter is an excellent handout for parents of infants, toddlers and twos.

- "Splash! Birth to Three Faith Formation,"
- Augsburg Fortress Press, augsburgfortress.org

Videos

- Cedarmonk Kids, Sunday School Songs
- Cedarmonk Kids, Toddler Action Songs.

Audios

- "Hi God" by Rev. Carrie Landry