

What is a green place in creation where you enjoy spending time with your little one?

SHINOW 13 MONTHS

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Splash! Parent Pages



YOUR DEVELOPING CHILD

Stepping Out, Toddler Style

Somewhere around your child's first birthday, you will likely start using a new name to describe them—*toddler*. Whether your child has been walking for a few months or is still happy to crawl around, the early walking stage signals a range of physical and neurological developments. While the act of toddling looks clumsy and unsteady, your child is actually demonstrating a complex set of motor skills each time they put one foot in front of the other. This act of coordination, balance, and strength becomes smoother and more confident every day. In addition to this physical advance, toddling activates many other areas of growth and development.

- Toddling can expand a child's options for play. Toys that can be walked, propelled, or pushed become appealing to young toddlers once they can stand and move, opening up new ideas for imaginative play.
- Walking upright means a whole new view of the world, with many possibilities for exploration—and a whole new level of babyproofing. This expanded view of their environment plays a role in a toddler's budding sense of self.
- Once a child walks independently, they need more words to go with their new discoveries. You can ask your child to bring you a favorite toy, or walk with you to a different room in your home. As you encourage their exploration, you'll be helping their language development too.

These first steps are examples of the marvelously integrated development of a young child. Enjoy them, and be prepared for many steps to come!

GROWING IN FAITH

First Steps of Faith

As your child enters year two of life, maybe you're wondering how to help them develop a faith in Jesus. You might be wondering if you're doing enough, saying the right things, singing the right songs, going to the right classes. Before you get trapped in a spiral of anxiety about whether you are doing everything right, know that every time you show your child love and care, you are taking those first steps of faith formation. Right now, your child is learning what love, protection, and acceptance feel like. And that sense of what care and comfort are will give your child everything they need as their faith grows.

Faith is something that comes from God—we can't force it. But we can give our children language for talking about and understanding the love of Jesus. So as you step into this second year, think about adding songs like "Jesus Loves Me" and other simple tunes to your music repertoire. Pray before meals and bedtimes. Read Bible stories together. Say the Lord's Prayer and parts of Psalm 23 aloud in your child's presence. These prayers from God's Word will touch you in a new way as you sense God embracing your toddler—and you.

**For by grace you have
been saved through faith,
and this is not your own doing;
it is the gift of God.
—Ephesians 2:8**





Then God said,
“Let us make humankind
in our image,
according to our likeness.”

—Genesis 1:26

PLAY



PLAYFUL PLANTS

Introduce ways for your child to spend some playful time with plants. If you have a garden, let your child touch the soil and growing plants. If you have houseplants, help your child pour a cup of water on them to give thirsty plants a drink. Visit a plant nursery, conservatory, or florist shop. Smell the flowers and talk about their colors. Touch some tree trunks. Collect leaves from the ground. Bring something home to remember your trip and tell other family members and friends about your plant adventure.

FAMILY CONNECTIONS



CREATE A TRADITION

Family traditions help children develop a sense of identity and belonging. Encourage grandparents to establish their own unique traditions to do with their grandchildren whenever they are together. For example, they might take a walk together to explore God’s world or visit a bakery to share a special treat.

MEALTIME



LIGHT A CANDLE

A candle on your table can help transform the humblest or most chaotic of dinners into a more peaceful feast. After you set the table, after all the food is on the table and everyone is seated, quietly light a candle. Consider singing a little song to signal what is happening, and be sure to light the candle slowly, quietly, gracefully. Pre-dinner chaos softens in candlelight, especially if the room is otherwise more dark than light. At the end of the meal, give your child the chance to blow out the candle.

PRAY



THANKS FOR GREENERY

In your home, outside your window, or in the yard, look together at plants. Houseplants, grass, trees, and even dandelions are fascinating and amazing. Name each plant for your child as you observe and touch them carefully. Then give thanks to God for the world of plant life all around you. Pray together using words and whole body actions, naming the plant life you have experienced together. Pray, “Thank you, God, for trees” as you stretch your arms high, and “Thanks, God, for our spider plant” as you droop your arms and head in imitation of that spiderlike greenery.

WORSHIP



MUSICAL MOVES

Your child probably loves moving to music, whether it’s playing through speakers or sung by you. Music is an important part of worship, and you can help your little one love that music, too. During familiar hymns or sung parts of the liturgy, hold your toddler and move from side to side in rhythm with the music. Clap together to worship songs with stronger beats. (It might even catch on with grown-ups!) Point out the choir and people playing instruments. If possible, after the service, take your child to look at an instrument and ask the musician if you can carefully touch it.

BIBLE



GOD MADE EVERYTHING

Genesis 1:1—2:4

Snuggle together and read the creation story aloud from a favorite Bible storybook or retell it in your own words. This story tells us that God made everything. Take a creation walk outside to find and name some of the parts of creation—the sun, water, plants, animals, and people. Practice naming these things with your child and thanking God for creating them. Finish your creation walk by eating some fruits or vegetables from God’s good creation.

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