



teacher's guide

The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

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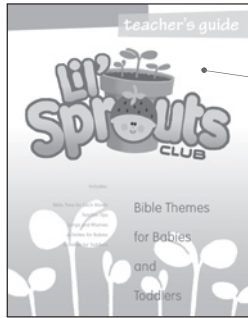
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Regular Baptist Press

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Lil' Sprouts Resources



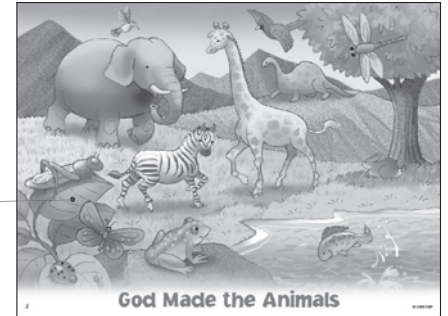
Your Bible

Lil' Sprouts Teacher's Guide (RBP1021)

Order one guide for each nursery room. The teaching ideas for babies and toddlers are not reproducible.

Lil' Sprouts Teaching Pictures (RBP1015)

Order one set of teaching pictures for each nursery room to use with each month's Bible Time.



Lil' Sprouts Music CD (RBP1024)

Order one CD for each nursery room.

Use the familiar children's songs on the CD to reinforce basic concepts about God.



Lil' Sprouts Bib (RBP1014)

Order one to give to each set of parents and one to keep handy in each nursery for those messy feeding times.

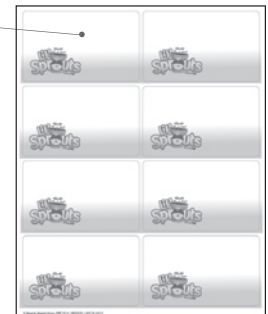


Lil' Sprouts Birthday Card and Envelope (RBP1018)

Order to recognize the first and second birthdays of your lil' ones.

Lil' Sprouts Name Tags (RBP1019)

Order for caregivers to help parents identify who is taking care of their babies. Order them also for children to help caregivers minister to them more effectively. The name tags come in sheets of eight with twenty-four sheets per package.



Lil' Sprouts Poster (RBP1016)

Order to decorate, promote, and identify your nursery ministry. Comes in packages of five.



Lil' Sprouts Bag Tags (RBP1020)

Order to give to each family who has children in your nursery. The bag tags are a nice gift and help you keep your nursery organized.



Lil' Sprouts Iron-on (RBP1017)

Order to decorate your nursery, decorate smocks, or make T-shirts for babies and toddlers.



Ordering information

All materials—except your Bible—are available from **Regular Baptist Press**

- 1300 N. Meacham Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173-4806
- Web: www.RegularBaptistPress.org
- E-mail: orders@rbpstore.org
- Toll-free orders in the United States: 1-800-727-4440
- Fax: 1-847-843-3757
- Canada: Contact your distributor.



How to Use Lil' Sprouts Bible Curriculum

As a Nursery Coordinator or Nursery Teaching Director:

Make sure you communicate to your caregivers the importance of using this curriculum. Have each caregiver read the article "The Importance of Nursery Curriculum" on page 5 of this teacher's guide as well as the information in the next column.

Become familiar with the curriculum by reading through it. The curriculum is organized into months. Each month emphasizes a Biblical account and theme. The activities for each month help the caregivers reinforce the Biblical truths.

Read through the list of teaching supplies on page 4 of this teacher's guide. The supplies on the list are used frequently in this material. Compare the list to what you already have in your nursery. Make note of the supplies you don't have and plan to gather them. Consider posting the list in your church so you have multiple people gathering the supplies.

Some of the items are not typically found in a nursery and wouldn't be stored on nursery shelves. Consider where and how you will store those items.

Infrequently used supplies are sometimes called for in the monthly activities. Make sure you or someone you appoint reads through the activities for the coming month. Then decide which activities you want to focus on so you can gather any materials you don't already have in your nursery.

Be enthusiastic about using this curriculum, especially if your church has never used nursery curriculum. Your enthusiasm will encourage your caregivers to take this ministry seriously and to see their time in the nursery as more than babysitting.

As a Caregiver:

Make sure you read the article called "The Importance of Nursery Curriculum" on page 5 of this teacher's guide. The article should get you excited about using the activities in this curriculum.

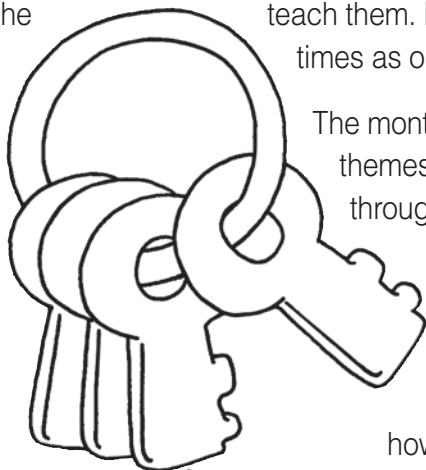
Read through the table of contents and note that each month has a theme based on a Bible account. There is a Bible teaching picture for each lesson and a Bible Time to guide you as you teach. Don't expect the babies and toddlers to sit in a circle quietly as you teach them. Rather, plan for one-on-one instruction times as opportunities arise.

The monthly activities are focused on the themes. Use the same activities frequently throughout the month. Babies and toddlers like repetition, and repetition helps them learn.

Read through several of the activities to become familiar with how they are organized. Notice that they usually begin with a list of materials to GATHER and include actions to DO and words to SAY. Often the theme comes out in your words to the children, so make sure you pay particular attention to the SAY sections.

Consult with your nursery director about gathering materials for the coming month of lessons. If you don't have a nursery coordinator, then make sure you read the instructions above.

Take seriously any training your nursery coordinator offers to you. Read the articles she hands out and seek to implement the training with a smile!



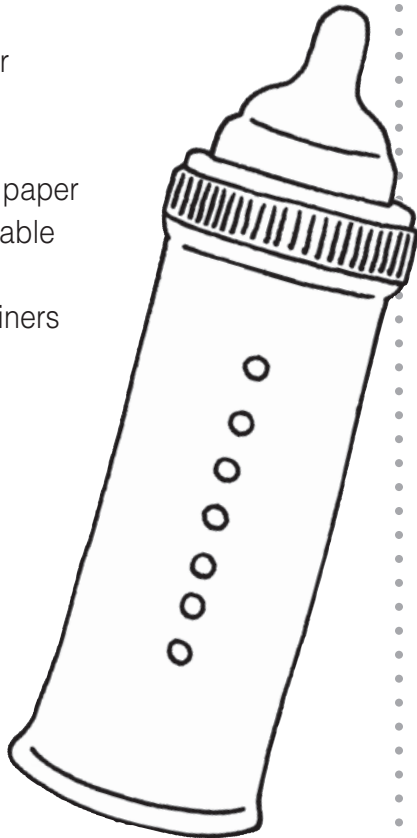
Frequently Used Teaching Supplies

This list includes frequently used items to conduct the baby and toddler activities in this curriculum. Consider collecting these supplies and storing them where nursery teachers can access them easily. You would not leave many of these items out for children to play with. They are meant to be used as teaching tools.

These lists do not include standard nursery toys. See the Toys and Books article in the Lil' Sprouts Director's Guide for more information about appropriate nursery toys.

Supplies for Activities for Babies

- Baby dolls
- Bath towels
- Bubble solution and wand
- Child-size cups
- Dollhouse figures
- Drumming supplies (e.g., coffee cans with lids, pots, pans, wooden spoons)
- Flashlight
- Laundry basket
- Maracas, rattles, or shakers
- Mid-size exercise ball, giant beach ball, or pouffe
- Nonbreakable mirror
- Copy paper box
- Pinwheels
- Sheets of wrapping paper
- Several small, washable stuffed animals
- Various-sized containers with lids
- Wood blocks



Supplies for Activities for Toddlers

- Baby dolls
- Brown paper grocery bag
- Bubble solution and wand
- Butcher paper
- Colored construction paper
- Colored tissue paper, crepe paper
- Con-Tact paper
- Crayons
- Digital camera
- Dollhouse figures
- Drumming supplies (e.g., coffee cans with lids, pots, pans, wooden spoons)
- Flashlights
- Glue sticks
- Large appliance box
- Laundry basket
- Magazines, catalogs, and store ads with pictures of children
- Mid-size exercise ball, giant beach ball, or pouffe
- Copy paper box
- Paper towel tubes
- Photo albums (lightweight, simple-sleeve style)
- Plastic cups
- Several small, washable stuffed animals
- Soft mid-size balls (about the size of a toddler's head)
- Toddler Bible
- Toy instruments
- Various-sized containers with lids
- Wood blocks

The Importance of Nursery Curriculum

“It’s the *nursery*. Just feed them, change them, and keep them out of their parents’ hair. That’s all there is to it. After all, they’re just babies.”

This is how many people view their church’s nursery ministry. They see it as relatively unimportant and even as a nuisance. But nothing could be further from the truth. The nursery is a vital ministry that should be one of a church’s top priorities. The children aren’t “just babies.” They are made in the image of God and have great potential to learn about God so that one day they might trust in Christ as their Savior.

Nursery Bible curriculum (1) helps you make the most of a critical learning window, (2) provides an example for parents, and (3) helps the nursery staff focus on ministry.

Curriculum Makes the Most of a Critical Learning Window

The children in your nursery ministry are at a key point in their lives. More brain development will occur in the first three years of their lives than will occur throughout the rest of their lives. Never again will their brains be so ready to learn and absorb knowledge. It would be a tragedy to waste these precious early years by simply passing time in the nursery.

Within each brain are millions of neurons (nerve cells) that are connected to each other by synapses. The trillions of synapses and the pathways they form make up the wiring of the brain.

The organization of these connections influences everything from the ability to recognize letters to the forming of ideas, opinions, and relationships. Between birth and eight months, the synapses are formed quickly. There may be as many as one thousand trillion synapses formed in a baby’s brain by the time he is eight months old!

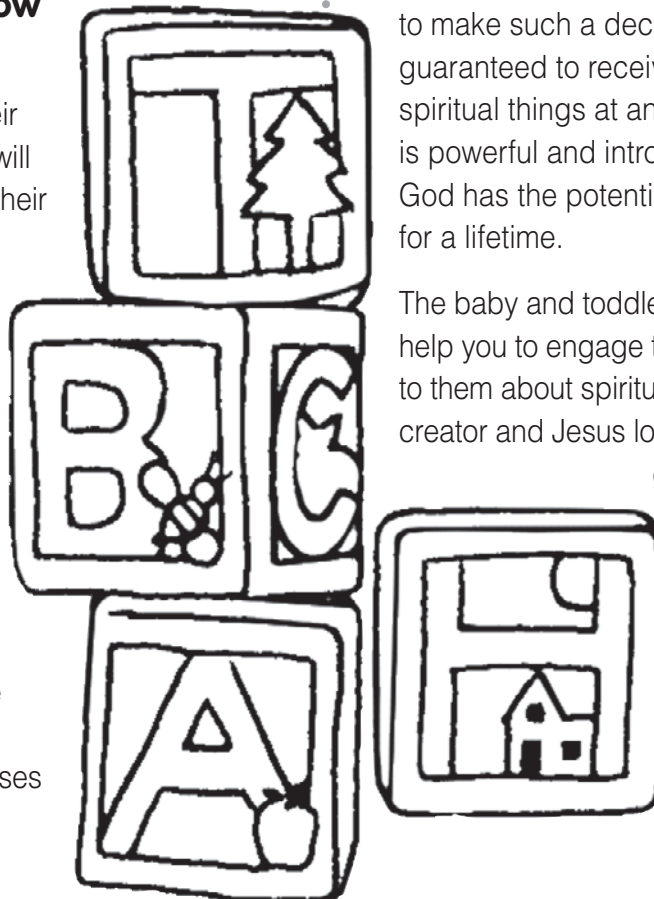
The brain operates on the “use it or lose it” principle. Only those connections and pathways that are frequently used are retained. It is from early infancy to early childhood that these vital connections are made permanent, so early experiences have a dramatic effect on the formation of brain synapses.

When babies and toddlers learn about God, Jesus, and the Bible, the Holy Spirit can use that foundation of truth in their minds to convict them of their sin and their need for a Savior when they are old enough

to make such a decision. No baby or toddler is guaranteed to receive Christ if he is taught about spiritual things at an early age. But God’s Word is powerful and introducing young children to God has the potential to influence those children for a lifetime.

The baby and toddler activities in this curriculum help you to engage the children’s minds by talking to them about spiritual truths such as God is the creator and Jesus loves you. But the activities also

give you a chance to affect the children’s bodies by helping them learn skills such as rolling, grasping an object, or sorting shapes and colors. The most important emphasis, though, is on introducing the young children to God, Jesus, and the Bible.



Using Curriculum Sets an Example for Parents

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7).

There is never a time when a child is not learning. God expects parents to take advantage of daily opportunities to teach their children about Him. This passage does not give any age limits. It doesn't say, “When your children reach five years old, begin teaching them about Me.” The passage also doesn't assign teaching to a certain time or day of the week. It doesn't say, “Make sure your children receive a spiritual education by sending them to Sunday School each week.” No, it says God's truth is to be taught at every age, all day long, in everything we say and do! Curriculum helps you incorporate God's truth into a child's daily activities and routines.

As you use this nursery curriculum you are showing parents that you take teaching their children spiritual truths seriously. That will encourage parents to take it seriously too. Parents who are

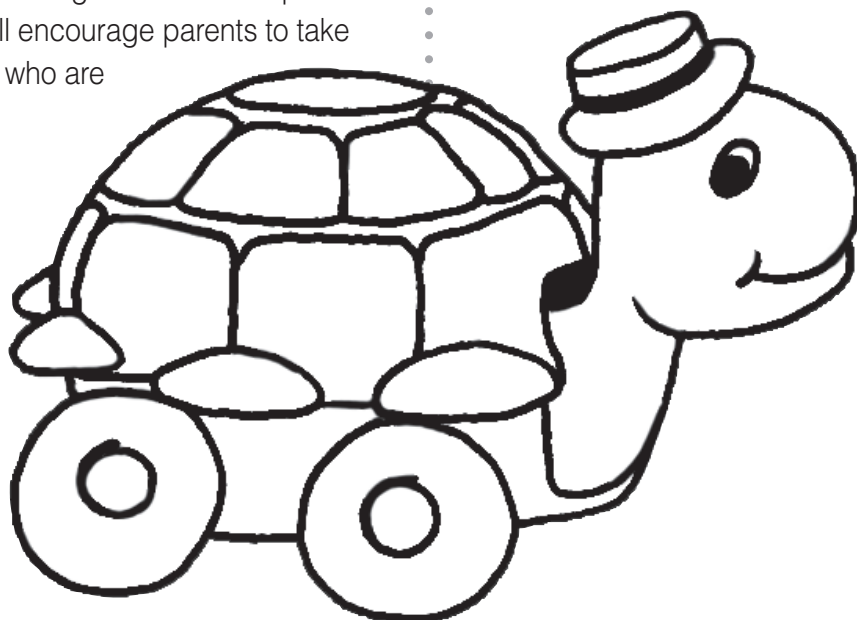
nursery caregivers will see firsthand how Biblical truth is being taught and incorporated into their child's time in the nursery. They will be encouraged to do the same at home.

Curriculum Helps Nursery Staff Focus on Ministry

The following scene is all too familiar in church nurseries: two nursery staff members sit comfortably in rocking chairs, chatting away, while the children entertain themselves on the floor with a myriad of toys.

Talking with other believers is encouraged by God, but the goal of the church nursery should not be to give caregivers a chance to chat. Using curriculum helps caregivers stay focused on the importance and value of the nursery ministry. Curriculum gives everyone a common goal and sense of purpose. By following the monthly themes, telling the Bible accounts, and incorporating the activities, caregivers should see their time in the nursery as valuable ministry to children rather than a time for idle chitchat.

Use this curriculum to its fullest and make your nursery ministry much more than babysitting!



Nursery Ministry and Music

Music and children go together as naturally as peas and carrots. It's almost impossible not to rock an infant without singing some sort of lullaby. Music will most definitely be a part of your church nursery ministry. It can help establish routines, stimulate cognitive development, create a mood or distraction, and most importantly, music can be used to communicate God's truth.

Music and Routines

Music can be an effective way to help babies adjust to their time in the nursery. Choose a certain song to play as children arrive. Use a song to signal snack or departure times. Children will quickly learn to associate certain songs with various activities. Music can help children transition from one activity to another. Be sure to use the same song each time you change activities.

Background Music

Many nurseries like to have cheerful Sunday School songs or familiar children's choruses playing on a CD player. Background music is fine so long as it does not overpower or agitate the children. The songs on the Lil' Sprouts Music CD are appropriate as background music.

Be sensitive to children with sensory perception issues. Sometimes too much stimulus can make a child cranky and unable to deal with the bombardment of sensory input.

Music and Baby Development

A baby's brain is forming millions of neural pathways each day. Music can aid in

the development of neural pathways for gross motor movement and language.

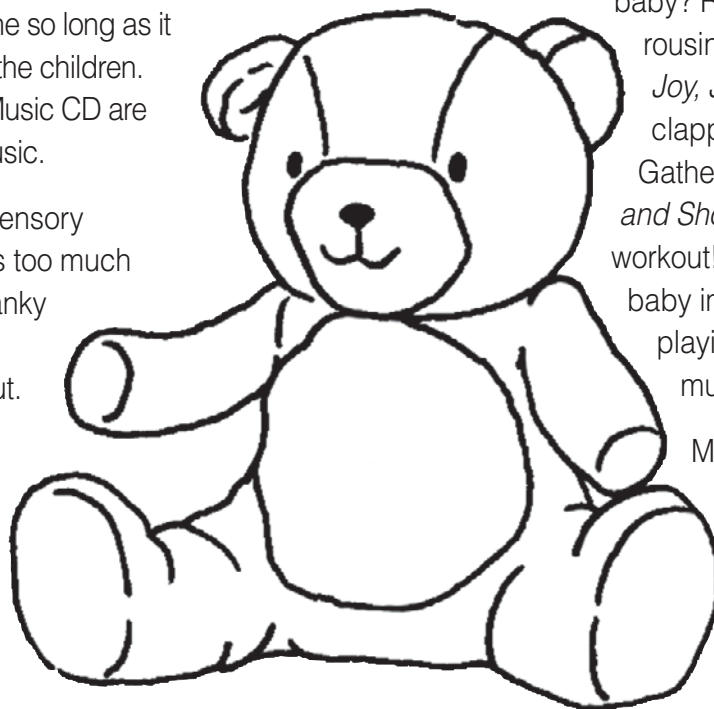
Gently rocking, tapping, clapping, and swaying along to music helps develop a baby's sense of balance and in turn helps the baby begin to sense where his body is in space (vestibular system). Such stimulation will soon lead to the ability to crawl, walk, balance, and move with purpose.

Music also has a distinct way of developing the language centers of the brain. Singing songs emphasizes "phonemes," or combinations of sounds, that exist in language. This lays the groundwork for pitch, rhythm, tone, and expression—the music of language! In time this early exposure will have a positive effect on a child's ability to read, speak, and express himself.

Music and Mood

Music can be used to enhance or change the mood of a baby. Fussy baby? Try rocking or swaying while singing a soft, familiar hymn or lullaby. Happy baby? Rejoice together with a rousing chorus of *I Have the Joy, Joy, Joy!* as you practice clapping. Restless toddlers? Gather them together for a *Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes* workout! Sleepy baby? Try placing baby in a dimly light room and playing a soft lullaby from the music CD.

Music can also be used to head off an upset. If a toddler trips on his way to discover a new toy, panicking and fussing over the minor bump



might only make matters worse. Instead, respond with a smile and a song such as the following song (to the tune of *London Bridge*):

Oopsy-daisy, you fell down! That's okay. Let's not frown!

Oopsy-daisy, tippy-toes! Happy baby, off you go!"

Songs can be impromptu, and they don't even have to rhyme or fit a familiar tune. It's the song and your voice that convey the mood. Children will take their cues from you. If you panic, they panic. If you calmly respond with a smile and a song, so will they!

Music and God's Truth

Perhaps the most beautiful way to use music in your nursery ministry is to convey Biblical truth.

Remember, a child's receptive language develops long before his oral language capabilities. So even if the children can't sing along with every word of *God Will Take Care of You*, they are still processing the truth the song conveys. Use the songs and rhymes in the teacher's manual as much as possible during the normal course of nursery activities. When you are building blocks, sing a song about God's power. When you are cuddling in a rocker, sing about God's love. When you are changing a diaper, sing about God's creation. Decide on some core songs that all your nursery workers sing over and over. Someday you will hear an eighteen-month-old begin to babble "Yes, Jesus loves me!" The truths you convey through music will stay with these children for the rest of their lives.

Lil' Sprouts Song CD

This list of song tracks will help you locate songs once the song CD is in the CD player. The first number is the vocal rendition; the second number is the instrumental rendition. Consider using the songs in the months listed after each one.

1 & 26	A Shepherd Boy (May, June, July)	14 & 39	Jesus Loves the Little Children (Mar.)
2 & 27	Away in a Manger (Dec.)	15 & 40	Love One Another (Feb., Apr., July)
3 & 28	Baby Jesus (Dec.)	16 & 41	Mary's Baby Boy (Dec.)
4 & 29	Baby Moses (Apr.)	17 & 42	My Home (Apr.)
5 & 30	Christmas Bells (Dec.)	18 & 43	Only a Boy Named David (June)
6 & 31	Friends (July)	19 & 44	The Animal Song (Oct.)
7 & 32	God Gave Me (Nov.)	20 & 45	The B-I-B-L-E (All months)
8 & 33	God Made the World (Sept., Oct.)	21 & 46	The Body God Gave Me (Nov.)
9 & 34	I Am Glad You're Here Today (Aug.)	22 & 47	The Church Song (Aug.)
10 & 35	I Have Decided I Will Be Friendly (July)	23 & 48	The Wonder Song (Sept., Oct.)
11 & 36	I Know God Cares for Me (Jan., Mar.)	24 & 49	Twinkle, Twinkle Special Star (Jan.)
12 & 37	I Like to Go to Church (Aug.)	25 & 50	Zacchaeus (Feb.)
13 & 38	Jesus Loves Me (Mar.)		

God Made the World

September

Key passage

Genesis 1:1–19

Key verse

“God created the heaven and the earth”
(Genesis 1:1).

Topic

Creation

Theme

God is the creator of the earth.

Each child will

- begin to associate the world around him with God.
- explore parts of God’s creation.



Teaching babies and toddlers about God and Creation

The goal of this month's theme is to introduce babies to God as the creator. Use the curriculum as a guide to help your conversations and activities center around the theme. By talking about God and the world around us, you are linking God to everything we see and experience. Don't expect the toddlers to all sit in a circle for 5 minutes while you tell a Bible story. Instead, let the activities and conversations flow as a natural part of your interactions with each child. God intended for parents to do this with their children. In Deuteronomy 6:6 and 7, God told parents to talk to their children about His truth as they go about their daily activities as a family. As a teacher in the nursery you are helping parents fulfill that responsibility God gave to them.



Bible Time

Weekly Reminder

Use this Bible time each week this month. Children will welcome the repetition and seeing the same picture each week.

Before you begin each Bible Time, hold your Bible, touch it and say, "This is my Bible. The Bible is God's Word." Then have each child touch the Bible. Say the word "Bible" as each child touches it. Eventually, toddlers will know what the Bible is and will say the word "Bible" themselves. Treat your Bible respectfully and gently. The children will learn that the Bible is important and to be honored. Toddlers will enjoy the "B-I-B-L-E" song and may start singing along after several weeks of repetition. (See track 20 of the Lil' Sprouts Music CD.)



This Month's Bible Time

As you hold a baby on your lap, look at Bible teaching picture 1 from the Lil' Sprouts Kit and talk about Genesis 1. Point to various parts of the pictures and name each figure. Tell the children that God made each of the parts of creation in the picture.

Set a toddler on your lap and let him hold Bible teaching picture 1 from the Lil' Sprouts Kit. Point to objects in the picture as you talk. Describe the colors, shapes, and sizes of things in the picture. Use the following story as an example of your conversation.

Say

God made everything we see. (Point or have toddlers point.) God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. Can you pretend to be a star shining in the night? (Raise child's hands over his head. Sing *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. See the altered lyrics under the

Songs and Rhymes section and use instrumental track 49 on the music CD.)

God made green trees, grass, pretty flowers, and good fruit to eat. (Point to the apples hanging on the trees. Pat child's tummy and say "yum, yum.")

Can you point to a pretty flower? That flower is pink. Can you point to another one? That flower is yellow.

God made a beautiful earth for you and me. God is the creator. God made everything.

(Fold child's hands.) Dear God, thank You for making trees, sun, flowers, and food. In Jesus' name, amen.

Songs & Rhymes

Weekly Reminder

Use the following songs and rhymes to reinforce the Bible time. You will most likely be able to work with only one child at a time. But as you begin singing the songs and saying the rhymes, you may attract other children to join you. Repeat the songs and rhymes throughout the month so the children will begin to become familiar with them. Note that some of the activities for babies and toddlers incorporate these songs and rhymes.

Songs

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle little star;
God placed you just where you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle little star;
God placed you just where you are.

God Made Everything (Tune: "Skip to My Lou")

God made the sun and moon.
God made the sun and moon.
God made the sun and moon.
God made everything I see.

(Sing again and again, substituting the names of other objects such as "plants and trees" and "sky and sea" for the words "sun and moon.")

Rhymes

God Made the World

God made the sun so big and bright; *(Move child's arms in a big circle.)*
God made the stars to shine at night; *(Move child's arms and fingers like twinkle stars.)*
God made the flowers, both white and red; *(Pretend to smell a flower.)*
God made the grass for the rabbit's bed. *(Pretend to sleep.)*
God made the trees that grow up high; *(Lift child up over your head.)*
God made the birds to fly in the sky; *(Flap child's arms like a bird.)*
God made the animals, big ones and small; *(Make child's arms show "big" and "small.")*
God made the world; He made it all! *(Make big circle with child's arms.)*

God's World

Here is the world—so big and round. *(Hold child's hands in front of him in a circle.)*
God said, "I'll make water and grass for the ground." *(Plant child's feet on the floor or your lap.)*
God's world was dark, so He made sun for light. *(Cover child's eyes and do peek-a-boo.)*
And He made the moon to brighten the night. *(Do twinkle stars with child's fingers.)*
God made the world—so big and grand. *(Circle child's arms.)*
Thank You, God; I'll clap my hands! *(Clap child's hands.)*

Activities for Babies



Tummy Roll

This activity will help the youngest of infants. It is a soothing and calming activity.

Gather

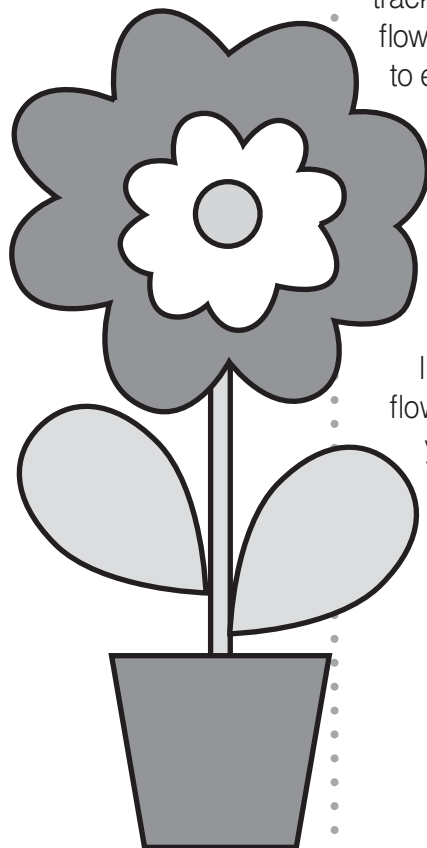
Bath towel (rolled up)

Do

Lay baby on his tummy and put his head and torso on the towel with arms and legs dangling over the sides. Gently rock the baby back and forth in a motion that will encourage rolling.

Sing

Sing *God Made Everything* as you rock the baby back and forth. (See the Songs and Rhymes section for this month.) Be attentive to baby's cues. If he likes it, continue the activity.



Flower Focus

This activity is for young infants who are still working on head control.

Gather

Bright flower (potted, silk, or fresh cut), small towel or receiving blanket (rolled up)

Do

Lay the baby on her tummy with the roll across her chest and under her arms. This gives the baby a little extra boost and makes lifting the head more rewarding. Get down on the baby's level. Talk encouragingly as you show the baby the flower. Encourage her to lift her head.

This activity can still be done with older infants to improve their visual tracking skills. Slowly move the flower from right to left and back to encourage baby to follow and focus on the flower.

Say

Look at this beautiful flower. It is yellow. God made all the flowers. God loves you. You are strong and healthy. I like the way you can watch the flower. God made you. God loves you.

Day and Night

This activity not only lets babies explore cause and effect, but it also teaches opposites and differences in God's creation. This activity is best done in an interior room with no windows. But it can be done in any room with a light switch.

Do

Show the baby how to turn the lights on and off. When you turn the lights off, proclaim, "Now it is dark." And when you turn the lights on, say, "It is light!" Let the baby try the switch. His little fingers might not be able to grasp the switch yet, but show him how to flip it up and down by using his whole hand.

Say

When God made the world everything was dark. God said, "Let there be light!" And there was light.

At night everything is dark. God made the moon and the stars for night. During the day, the sunlight shines bright. God made dark and light!

At night you sleep and snuggle in your bed. But when it is light, you play and eat and come to church! Thank You, God, for the dark night. Thank You, God, for the light in the day.

Pinwheel Play

Gather

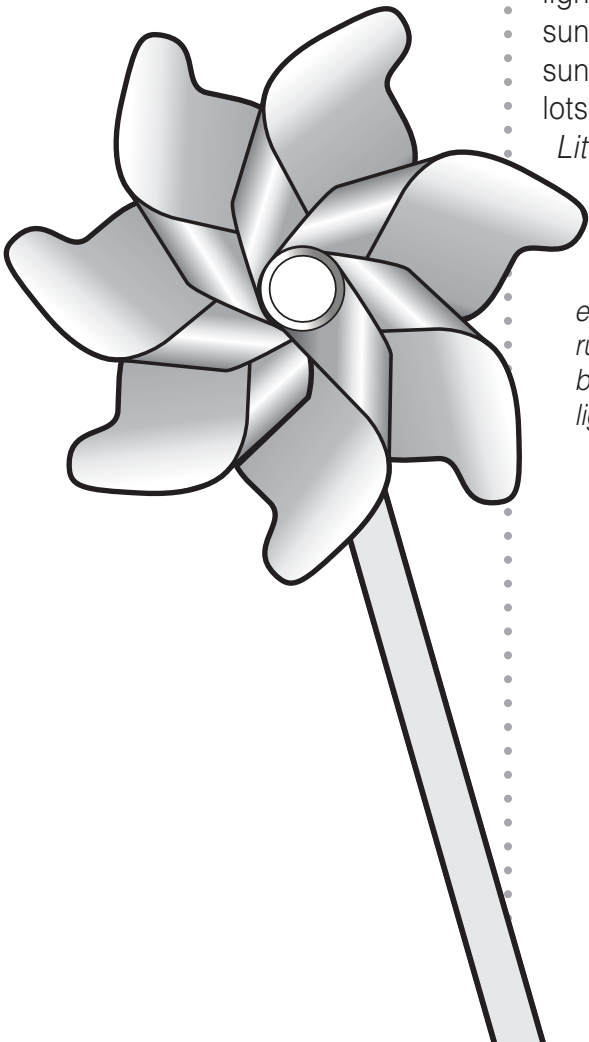
Pinwheel

Do

Blow the pinwheel for the baby. Let the baby track and reach for the pinwheel. Let the baby hold the pinwheel while you blow. Show older babies how to wave the pinwheel and make it spin.

Say

God made the wind. The wind blows the trees and grass. (Blow.) Thank You, God, for wind.



Flashlight Fun

Gather

Flashlight

Do

Shut off the room lights. Lay baby on her back. Flash the light on and off. Let baby track the light with her eyes.

Say

God made light. The moon gives light. God made the moon. The sun gives light. God made the sun. God filled the night sky with lots of stars. Sing *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.

Tip—Don't turn off the lights in your nursery if it will make your nursery completely dark, especially if toddlers are up and running around! The babies may be able to follow the light with the lights on.



Touch and Feel

Around four or five months old, babies are fascinated with textures. Provide several nature objects for baby to touch.

Gather

Small pumpkin, bright flower (silk or real), chunk of tree bark, pinecone (one without sharp points), large leaf, sponge

Do

For young babies: With a baby on your lap, hold the object at his eye level. Help the baby pat and stroke the object. Or, lay the baby on his tummy and place an object in front of him. Encourage the baby to lift his head or scoot towards the object.

For older babies: Lay two or three objects on baby's high chair tray or on the floor in front of him. Let him choose and handle each object.

Say

This is a beautiful flower. God made the flowers. God made this a red flower. Feel its soft, smooth petals. Thank You, God, for flowers.

Feel the rough pinecone. God made the pinecones to grow on pine trees. Thank You, God, for pinecones.

Pat the pumpkin. It is orange. God made the pumpkin hard and smooth. A pumpkin is food. God made food for us. Thank You, God, for pumpkins.

Tip—Be careful! Babies explore with their mouths. Do not let the babies place these objects in their mouths.

Activities for Toddlers



Star Stickers

Gather

Dark-colored construction paper, metallic star stickers

Do

Give each child a sheet of paper and a sheet of stickers. Show children how to peel and stick the stickers. You will need to help some children. Let children create a night sky.

Say

God made the stars to shine at night. How many stars can we count on your page? (Count the stars.) The stars are far, far away. God made many, many stars. We cannot count all the stars God made! There are too many! God is the powerful creator. Thank You, God, for stars.

Sing

Sing the words "God made stars so bright" to the tune of *Skip to My Lou* as children work. (See *God Made Everything* in the Songs and Rhymes section for this month.)

Flower Power

Gather

Blocks of Styrofoam or lumps of Play-Doh, several silk flower stems

Do

Show children how to poke the flower stems into the foam or the Play-Doh. Make a garden. Take out all the flowers and do it again.

Say

God made so many different flowers. God made red flowers and pink flowers. God made white flowers and purple flowers. Some are small and some are big. God made such beautiful flowers for us to enjoy. Can you help me plant some flowers in my garden? Good! Now let's pick a bunch of flowers. Thank you. How beautiful! Thank You, God, for flowers.



What's Inside?

Toddlers love to uncover, open, and discover.

Gather

Simple nature objects (e.g., rock, flower, small pumpkin, leaf, pinecone), one shoebox for each object

Do

Place one object in each box and cover with the lid. Lay out the boxes. Let the children open, explore the object, and put the object back in the box. Mix the boxes around and repeat. Or fill the boxes with new objects and repeat.

Say

Ask the child what color each object is. Ask the children to describe the feel or smell of the object. Help the child say "God made pinecones" as she handles the object.

Flashlight Fun

Gather

Small flashlight for each toddler

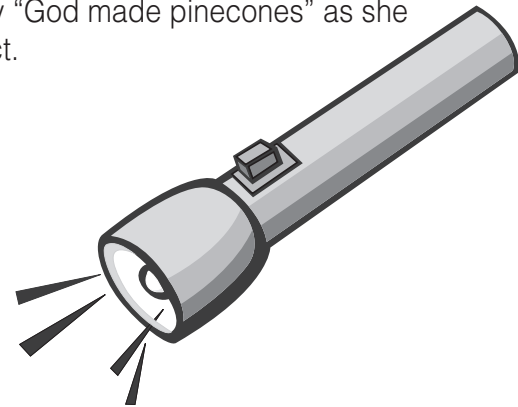
Do

Dim or shut off lights. Let each toddler hold a flashlight. Older toddlers can learn how to turn flashlights on and off. Show them how to shine their lights on the ceiling or on various other objects.

Say

God made light. God is the powerful creator. He spoke and there was light! God made the sun to light the day. God made the moon and stars to light the night. Sing *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* as children play, or say the rhyme "God's World." (See the Songs and Rhymes section.)

Tip—This activity is best done in dimmed light so you can still see the toddlers and they won't hurt themselves by running into anything.



Rainbow Run

Gather

Solid-colored scarves, sheets of colored tissue paper or colored paper streamers (e.g., crepe paper)

Do

Play upbeat music and let children wave their scarves and streamers in the air.

For older toddlers: Go to a large open room. Stand the children against one wall. Call out a color. All those with that color run to the opposite wall. This will take adult assistance and will probably end in everyone running at once, but it is fun!

Say

God made all the colors in the rainbow. Have you ever seen a rainbow in the sky after it rains? God made it red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and violet. Look at all the beautiful colors God made! Can you name something God made that is red? Can you name something God made that is green? Blue? Yellow?

Book Look

Gather

Book that shows many natural objects or a baby book about creation

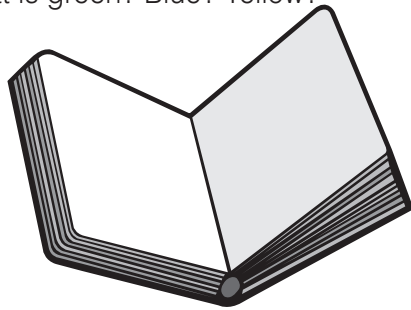
Do

Let a toddler or two sit on your lap. Point to pictures. Let children name each object or name it for them.

Say

God made the trees. Where is a tree? I see a flower. Can you find a flower? God made the flowers.

Tip—Remember that Book Look is more about looking and pointing than it is about reading the text. If you have a chance to read a couple of sentences, that's great. But don't worry if toddlers only want to point and turn to the next page.



Nature Walk

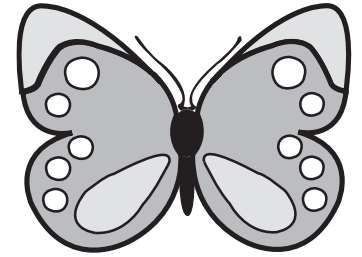
Do

Take older toddlers outside. (Make sure you have no more than two toddlers per adult.) Point out grass, trees, shrubs, flowers, dirt, worms, butterflies, rocks, and any other parts of God's creation that interest the children. Let the children smell flowers, touch pine cones, leaves, and rocks. Point to the sky and clouds. Keep a close eye on each child and don't let anyone put anything in his mouth.

Say

God made the grass. What color is the grass? The grass is soft and green. (Encourage children to feel the grass. You may even have the children take off their shoes and socks so they can feel the grass on their toes.) Describe colors, sizes, and textures.

Tip—Use the phrase "God made" over and over again. Older toddlers might be able to mimic your sentence.



Leaf Sort

Gather

Leaves of various sizes and colors, basket or container

Do

Let children take leaves out of the basket. Discuss their colors and sizes. Let children touch, wave, and toss the leaves. For older toddlers, encourage sorting, either by color or size. Keep sorting to two or three categories at the most (e.g., big or small, yellow or brown).

Say

God made the trees. Leaves grow on the trees. God made the leaves. Look at the beautiful colors God made. What color is this? Feel the leaf. Feel the front and the back. One is smooth, the other is bumpy. Thank You, God, for leaves.

