

Splash! Parent Pages

Introductions

by the Rev. Nancy Windels

O God, the giver of all life, look with kindness upon the fathers and mothers of these children. Let them ever rejoice in the gift you have given them. Make them teachers and examples of righteousness for their children. Strengthen them in their own Baptism so they may share eternally with their children the salvation you have given them, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (from Service of Holy Baptism in *Lutheran Book of Worship*)

Soon after a child is born or adopted, this question arises:

“When will the child be baptized?”

Sometimes a family member raises this question with a dire sense of urgency about the child’s spiritual safety. What might happen if God doesn’t know the child and tragedy strikes?

But baptism is not a formal ceremony where you introduce God to your child. God already knows your child. Scripture reminds us that God knit your child together within the womb (Psalm 139). God created and cradled your child long before you even saw a heartbeat on a monitor. Baptism is where parents,

godparents, and church family promise to do all in their power to introduce their children to the God who created and claimed them.

As parents we are our children’s first priests, the ones entrusted with bringing our children up to worship and serve this

God who loves them. Much like we support our children getting to know their extended family through stories and visits, we support their relationship with God by telling God’s stories in Scripture and encouraging time spent together in worship. This relationship begins in baptism and continues their whole life long.

This may seem a daunting task, but teaching love, grace, and faithfulness happens simply in these first few months of life. Look at your child with love, and your child will know she is loveable and glimpse the God who is love and has loved her from the first.

The Rev. Nancy Windels is pastor of education and family ministry at Normandale Lutheran Church in Edina, Minnesota. She is a parent and sings in the trio Moms Making Music.

As a parent, you are your child’s first priest.

One Parent’s Perspective

Watching my own parents interact with their new grandchild gave me a glimpse of what life might have been like all those years ago when I was their new baby.



Months

8

Food for a Crowd

Around eight months, many babies begin to master the use of the thumb and forefinger to pick things up. Your child is likely to enjoy feeding himself finger foods such as crackers, cereal rings, and chunks of bananas. In the Bible story of the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus handed out chunks of bread and fish to a huge crowd

**John
6:1-14**

of men, women, and children. As you tell this story to your baby from a children's Bible, offer him a small piece of bread. Then give your child a chance to distribute pieces of bread to other family members.



God gives gifts



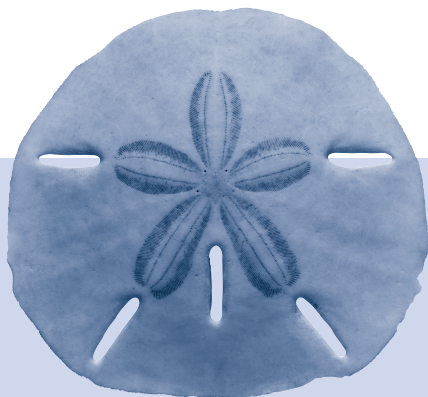
Not Just "No, No"

As children begin to move about in their environments, they tend to experiment in ways that may be dangerous to themselves or to the items within their reach. Soon your little one may rip pages from books, dig in potted plants, and splash rather than drink juice from a cup. While saying "No, no" and "Stop" may be helpful in a crisis, keep in mind that often babies are just being babies. Rearranging rooms and setting up safe places for crawlers to explore can limit the problems. All of those who care for young children may also pray to God for patience, understanding, and gentleness in guiding those little ones and keeping them from harm.

God's Gifts for Life

God gives gifts in abundance. God provides all that we need to live because God loves us. Gather some basic necessities for life that have an interesting texture or make a sound of some sort and place them in a basket. Consider the broad categories of food (potato with several eyes), clothing (soft sock or mitten), shelter (smooth piece of wood), parts of creation (rubber ducks, rocks, sand, water), and love (warm blanket) as you gather items.

For your family devotion time, retell the Bible story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. Show your child the basket, and help her to feel the texture of it, then help your child experience each item you gathered as you say, "God gives us (*name the item*)" and put it into the basket. Complete your devotion time with the words, "God gives us what we need because God loves us."



Successful Snacks

Infants and young children seem to eat like birds—small amounts at many times throughout the day. Depending on the time of the worship service that your family attends, your child may be hungry during the service. By planning ahead for your child's needs, you can eliminate an unhappy child during worship. As you think about small snack items to bring for your child during worship, consider foods that are bite-size and not too messy or crumbly. Pack a damp cloth or baby wipes for cleaning up, and make sure to do a little cleanup in the pew or seat around you when the service is over.

in abundance.



Let Us Pray

Create a very simple prayer that your little one can anticipate saying before each meal such as “Thank you, Jesus, for this good food. Amen.” At first, your infant’s participation may be limited to folding his hands, or holding hands with you and another family member as you pray. As your little one begins to talk, ask him to pray along as you point and say the names of items on the table. End each prayer with a rousing, Amen!

Crib Notes by John Bush



May I Have This Dance?

Now is the time to clear a floor space, crank up the tunes, and boogie with your bouncy baby. Sit on the floor, hold her hands, and bounce to the rhythm of the music. When she is ready to stand, pull her up, supporting her with your hands. Although her brain responds best to classical music, any beat will do to get her bouncing along. Search your home for music makers. Buckets, rattles, spoons, boxes, and keys add to the bopping fun. If your baby is in less than a lively mood, swoop her up to your level for a cheek-to-cheek slow dance.



The Songwriter Speaks

In Her Own Words: Beki Hemingway

Beki discusses the inspiration behind “God Is Watching.”

“Randy [Kerkman, Beki’s husband] wrote this really pretty music, and I was thinking of my baby nephew Jackson. It’s just a simple song that says what I think little ones should know.

“I never fell asleep easily as a child. My father was in a dangerous line of work... Anyhow, when I was five or six, a musician came to live with us and he had this great song about how the Lord is our shepherd. I used to sing myself to sleep with it whenever I felt scared or worried that the big bad world was going to creep in. It was a huge comfort to me, and I was hoping this song might be that way for some kid. You know, God is watching, and Jesus loves you as you are, and angels protect you.”

Beki and Randy’s song “God Is Watching” is Track 8 on the Sleepy Time Tunes CD.



Family Kin-nections: Soothing Song

It can be upsetting for everyone when your baby cries. Encourage brothers and sisters to sing a simple lullaby, hymn, or another favorite tune when she is upset. Siblings will be glad to help soothe and comfort the baby in times of distress, and they will get to know one another better in the process.

Baby Talk

Crackers, toast, cereal, biscuits—how does your baby like her introduction to **bread**?

Spanish: pan [pahn]

German: Brot [broht]

Norwegian: brød [broot]

Dutch: Brood [broot]

Italian: pane [PAH-neh]



The Food We Eat

by Felicity Henderson
(Strawberrie Donnelly, illustrator)

God nourishes us in so many ways! Enjoy this fun read as your child begins to eat more varied foods while the family is gathered around the table for mealtime. **Look for this book and other titles at www.augsburgfortress.org/store.**

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8 Months

Splash!
Parent Pages
Birth to Three Faith Formation