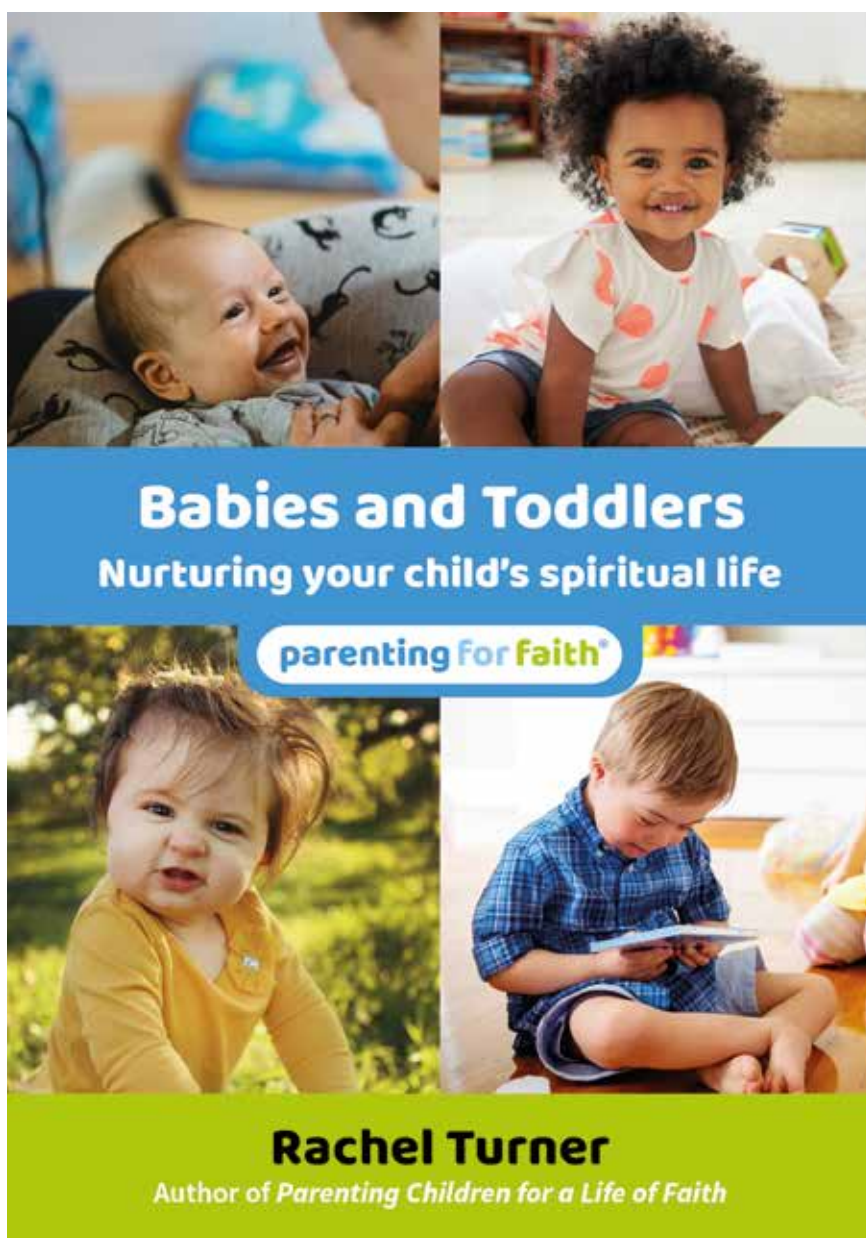


Bite-size sessions guide



Welcome to the Babies and Toddlers bite-size sessions

From their very earliest days, babies and toddlers can meet and know God. Their parents and carers have the amazing privilege of helping them to do this, and churches, other parents, friends and family get to support them and help them feel confident to give it a go.

This guide contains session outlines to be used along with the [videos on the Parenting for Faith website](#). It will help you to run a pregnancy, baby or toddler group where you can help parents and carers get started by sparking ideas of what this could look like in their family.

The sessions are aimed at parents and carers of babies and toddlers and those who are pregnant or waiting to adopt this age group. In some cases, we've made some suggestions for how to tailor it specifically to parents who are expecting, have a baby or have a toddler. You may have a whole mixture in your group, so use a selection of the ideas or give options as you go along. All the content is designed to make sense if people are new to faith or just exploring themselves, as well as having ideas for those who have been Christians for a long time.

The sessions are based on the themes and ideas from the book [Babies and Toddlers: Nurturing your child's spiritual life](#) by Rachel Turner, but are not limited to it. It's not essential, but we would recommend [buying a pack](#) for your group so that each parent or carer has something to take away with them and refer back to. After each session outline, you'll find a page that you can either print or photocopy or copy into an email or message, so people have a reminder of the session. We also give lots of suggestions for next steps and our website [parentingforfaith.org](#) has a huge, searchable archive of videos and articles for those who'd like to explore more.

We've suggested some different sections that you might want to include, but feel free to mix and match them to suit your setting. Your sessions could last from five minutes (if you just watch the video) to an hour (if you do the reflection and discussion too). You know your community and context best, so adapt the material however you see fit. You may want to use the sessions as part of an existing group or add in other elements, such as social time, interviewing parents' from your church, midwife questions or baby-care demos to make a longer gathering. At the end of this guide you'll also find some suggestions for how to continue the journey with these families and ideas of other free Parenting for Faith resources to use.

If you have any questions or if we can support or encourage you in any way, you can contact us via [parentingforfaith.org](#).

BRF's Parenting for Faith team

Parenting for Faith is part of The Bible Reading Fellowship. The Bible Reading Fellowship is passionate about making a difference through the Christian faith. We want to see lives and communities transformed through our creative programmes and resources for individuals, churches and schools. Find out more at [brf.org.uk](#).

Running a bite-size session

An overview of some elements you may want to include in a session and some things to think about

Arrival and welcome

One of the key ways that you can support parents and carers is by helping them to find and grow friendships, so give plenty of time to this. Think about how to make people feel comfortable and relaxed. For example, you might want to serve refreshments, use name labels to help people get to know each other or have an icebreaker or discussion starter. For groups with babies and toddlers, provide plenty of toys and safe places to lie, sit and play. Make clear where toilets, baby-changing facilities, buggy parks, highchairs, microwaves, etc. are if you have them. If it's an online group, you could use breakout rooms to make it easier to connect.

Introduction

Introduce yourself and anyone else helping or leading the group. Explain what happens in these sessions. You will want to do this every time as people may forget or may be new. You might want to do a quick recap of the last session. You could ask, 'Did anything stick with anyone from last week that they've been thinking about or been able to use or try?' Then, share what you'll be exploring today.

Discussion starter

Depending on the size of your group, you might want to stay chatting all together or break into smaller groups. You can also use this earlier, as people are arriving, or skip it and jump straight into the video. This is deliberately never a faith-based question, so it should be something that everyone feels able to answer and engage with, wherever they are on their faith journey.

Video

Play the video. If you don't have the facilities to do this during the group, you could send a link to the video and ask people to watch it in advance and then use this time to give a recap. If it's an online group, remember to share your screen and your sound (get help on doing this [here](#)).

The first four videos have a 'pause and process' screen part way through. If babies and toddlers aren't present, or they are all quite quiet and calm, feel free to pause the video for a little longer and you could play some music and give people pen and paper to write down their thoughts. If you have babies and toddlers in the room, people may find it hard to do this, so you might want to just continue to the next part of the video. You can always point this out in the handout, so they can come back to it later if they want to.

Follow-up discussion

This is a chance for participants to explore the ideas more by chatting with other people. If you've split into smaller groups you may want to have some time of gathering back together and sharing. We've suggested some questions, but feel free to change or adapt them for your group. You can also choose whether you give several questions or just one to focus on.

Next steps

These sessions are deliberately not too long or heavy, so it's helpful to leave people who are interested with opportunities to explore more. At the end of each section, we've included some or all of the following:

- The relevant chapters of [the book](#)
- A takeaway sheet which you can print, email or share in a message
- A few links to pages on [our website](#) that explore the theme of the session further
- An introduction to another free resource from Parenting for Faith.

Other optional extras

If you have more time, there are lots of creative things that you could do with the session. For example:

- Have someone share from their own experience or a story of parenting and faith
- Share a bit about your church, and invite people to come on a Sunday or to an event
- Offer to pray for or with people
- Have someone share something about birth or baby care.

1 Getting going

Introduction

Introduce yourself and anyone else helping or leading the group, and explain what will happen during the session, as well as all the practical things, like where the toilets and drinks are. Share that you're going to be exploring what it means to nurture our little one's spiritual development, why we might want to do that and why parents and carers are better at doing it than the church is!

Discussion starter

Ask the group: as you think about your little one growing up, what sort of things would you like to do to help them learn and grow? These could be places you'd like to take them to, activities you'd like to do with them or things you'd like to chat to them about.

Video

Play the video. The pause and process slides comes at 2:30. It says:

- **They never need to feel alone or afraid.**
- **They always have someone to chat to who hears and understands them.**
- **They learn to be purposeful.**

Do any of those ideas stand out to you, as something you already see in your child or something you'd like for them? If you feel comfortable, chat to God in your head about which one(s).

You may want to pause on that screen for a bit longer or let the video keep playing.

Follow-up discussion

Here are some ideas of questions to ask the group.

- How are you feeling about helping your child get to know God? Confident? Daunted? Somewhere in between? What excites or worries you about it?
- What did you think about the idea that you are the best person to help your child learn about God and get to know him? Did you agree or disagree? Why?

Next steps

Give people some pointers of where to find out more:

- Chapter 1 of the book
- Print or email the takeaway sheet on the next page or share the file in a message
- If they want to get going with this straight away, share parentingforfaith.org (you could screenshare or get the website up on a projector) and suggest looking at the first two **Key Tools**, 'Creating Windows' and 'Framing'.

Getting going takeaways

- Every child has a spiritual part of them and whether you know God a little or a lot, you get to be a key part of introducing them to him.
- You are the best person to do this because you are the most important person to your child, you spend lots of time with them and you are with them in their day to day life.
- God is part of normal, everyday life and connecting your baby or toddler to him can be too. This isn't another activity to do, it needn't take lots of time or effort and you don't need to be an expert.
- However you are feeling about it, God is there with you helping and guiding you.

Things to think about

Why might we want to help our little ones get to know God?

Do any of the ideas shared stand out to you, as something you already see in your child or something you'd like for them?

If you feel comfortable, chat to God in your head about which one(s).

Things to chat about

How are you feeling about helping your child get to know God? What excites or worries you about it?

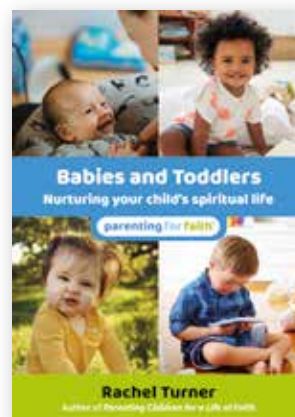
What did you think about the idea that you are the best person to help your child learn about God and get to know him? Did you agree or disagree? Why?

Ideas to try

Ask God to help you spot moments in your day or week where you can be aware that he is with you and your little one.

Ask a friend about how they help their child learn about God or connect with him and what it looks like in their family.

Find out more



- Look at [chapter 1](#)
- Go to the [Key Tools page](#) on the Parenting for Faith website and look at the first tool, 'Creating Windows'

2 Keeping it real

Introduction

Remember to introduce yourself and anyone else helping or leading the group, and remind people what will happen during the session, as well as all the practical things, like where the toilets and drinks are. You could recap last week's session and ask if anyone tried anything from it. Share that this week you're going to explore how we feel about helping your child meet and know God and some simple and easy ways to do this as part of our normal day.

Discussion starter

Ask the group:

- **For pregnant/waiting to adopt** – What excites you about becoming a parent? What are you nervous about?
- **For parents and carers of babies or toddlers** – What do you find hardest about parenting? What do you really enjoy?

Video

Play the video. The pause and process slides comes at 2:30. It says:

You have everything you need to help your child meet and know God, because:

- **helping your kids meet and know God is about supporting and growing your child's faith, not being perfect in your own**
- **nobody is perfect**
- **you are the person that God chose to be alongside your children for their faith journey**
- **God trusts you with your children**
- **God knows what parenting is like.**

Which one(s) stands out to you? Is there anything you'd add? If you feel comfortable, ask God to help you remember any of those points that you need to hear today.

You may want to pause on that screen for a bit longer or let the video keep playing.

Follow-up discussion

Here are some ideas of questions to ask the group.

Think of those four ideas of opportunities to connect your little one to God – through nature; using music; as you share they are loved; when they are afraid.

- **For pregnant/waiting to adopt** – Do you remember doing any of those things when you were little or have you spotted anyone around you doing them? Which ideas would you like to try?
- **For parents and carers of babies or toddlers** – Are there any of those that you already do or that you'd like to try? Is there anything else that you do with your baby or toddler in the everyday that helps nurture their spiritual side?
- **For parents and carers of toddlers** – What has changed now that they are a bit older? Do you do things differently to when they were a baby? What are they starting to show an interest in now?

Next steps

Give people some pointers of where to find out more:

- Chapters 3, 9 and 11 of the book
- Print or email the takeaway sheet on the next page or share the file in a message
- Share about the weekly Parenting for Faith podcast, which is available at parentingforfaith.org/podcast or wherever they normally listen to podcasts. A new episode comes out every Tuesday and includes all sorts of ideas for parents and carers to think about.

Keeping it real takeaways

- However you feel, you are powerful and important in your child’s life and able to give them everything they need to meet and know God.
- There are lots of easy ways to do this as part of normal, everyday life. You can enjoy nature and music together, share kisses and cuddles and chat about God’s love or remind them that God is near if they feel afraid.

Things to think about

You have everything that you need to help your child meet and know God.

Do any of the reasons why shared in the video stand out to you?

If you feel comfortable, ask God to help remind you of any of them that you need to hear today.

Things to chat about

Think about the four examples of ways to connect with God in the everyday.

Pregnant/waiting to adopt – Do you recall doing any of those ideas when you were little or have you spotted anyone around you doing them? Which would you like to try?

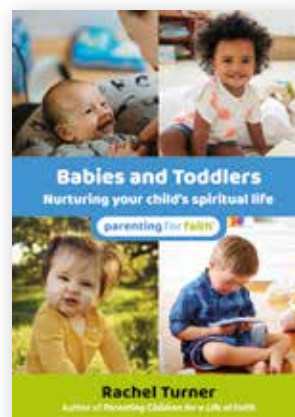
Parents and carers – Are there any of those that you already do or that you’d like to try? Is there anything else that you do in the everyday that helps your child nurture their spiritual side?

Ideas to try

Try one of the ideas from the video, like:

- stopping to enjoy nature and chatting about it
- sharing music that you like that shares something about God or helps you connect with him
- when giving kisses and cuddles, tell your little one that God loves them too
- remind them that God is near when they are afraid.

Find out more



- Look at [chapters 3, 9 and 11](#)
- Look at the [second Key Tool, ‘Framing’](#)
- Try listening to the [Parenting for Faith podcast](#)

3 Connection and communication

Introduction

Do your usual welcome and introductions, and recap the last session. Share that you're going to be looking at how we can help our babies and toddlers connect and communicate with God.

Discussion starter

Ask the group:

- **For pregnant/waiting to adopt** – What is your favourite way to spend time with people you care about, such as your partner or friends? What do you like doing together? When do you have your best chats?
- **For parents and carers of babies or toddlers** – What makes you feel connected to your baby or toddler? What funny, weird or cute things do they do that you know and understand what they mean?

Video

Play the video. The pause and process slides comes at 5:23. It says:

Some ideas for helping your little one connect with God:

- Give words to what they are feeling, and share them out loud with God.
- Encourage them to use their words and bodies to share their thoughts and feelings with God, e.g. 'Point out your favourite character' or 'Show God with your face how you feel.'
- Tell them that God loves hearing from them about anything, anytime, anywhere.
- Give them some ideas of things to chat to God about, and let them whisper into their hands or a cushion as they chat to him.
- Share some of your thoughts and prayers out loud, so they can hear and copy you.

Are any of those ideas things that you might try? Which one do you think your baby or toddler might respond to?

If you feel comfortable, pick one or two to try this week or chat to a partner or friend about how you'll give it a go once your little one is here.

You may want to pause on that screen for a bit longer or let the video keep playing.

Follow-up discussion

Here are some ideas of questions to ask the group.

- **For everyone** – Have you ever felt that God was communicating to you? What did it feel like and what did he say to you? Are there certain times or places where you are more aware of God communicating with you?
- **For parents and carers of toddlers** – Can you think of a time over the next week where you could make some time and space for your child and God to communicate.

Next steps

Give people some pointers of where to find out more:

- Chapters 2 and 6 of the book
- Print or email the takeaway sheet on the next page or share the file in a message
- Share about the Parenting for Faith Facebook Live sessions for parents of under-5s called 'Bedtime Drinks'. You can find out details, including the topic of the next session, at parentingforfaith.org/upcoming-events and invite them to join.

Connection and communication takeaways

- God promises that as we and our children communicate with him, he will hear and understand us. He made them and knows every detail about them, so he can understand them even better than we can.
- There are a whole range of ways that we can help them communicate with him even before they have words.
- This communication isn't just one way. We can help our children become aware of God communicating with them by naming it when we notice it and leaving space and asking them questions.

Things to think about

Look again at those ideas for helping your little one connect with God.

Are any of those ideas things that you might try? Which one do you think your baby or toddler might respond to?

If you feel comfortable, pick one or two to try this week or chat to a partner or friend about how you'll try it once your little one is here.

Things to chat about

For everyone – Have you ever felt that God was communicating to you? What did it feel like and what did he say to you? Are there certain times or places where you are more aware of God communicating with you?

For parents and carers of toddlers – Can you think of a time over the coming week where you could make some time and space for your child and God to communicate.

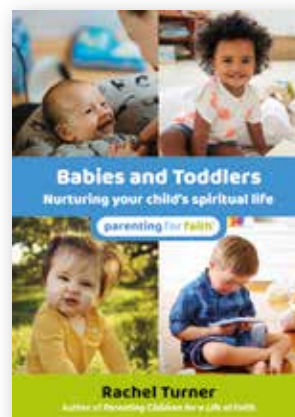
Ideas to try

Try one of the ideas from the video to help your little one connect with God.

If you've never tried praying, try chatting to God in your head this week.

If that's something you already do, try praying out loud in front of your child.

Find out more



- Look at [chapters 2 and 6](#)
- Look at the fourth [Key Tool, 'Chat and Catch'](#)
- Check out the [Parenting for Faith Facebook Live sessions](#)

4 Bible stories and bedtimes

Introduction

Do your usual welcome and introductions. Find out how people's week's have been and reflect or recap on the last session. Share that you're going to be looking at sharing Bible stories and how to help our little ones feel connected to us and to God at bedtime.

Discussion starter

Ask the group:

- **For pregnant/waiting to adopt** – What is your favourite book and why? What helps you fall asleep?
- **For parents and carers of babies or toddlers** – What stories do you enjoy reading and looking at with your child? Do you have any rhythms or routines that you do at bedtime? What does your child like to wind down?

Video

Play the video. The pause and process slides comes at 4:43. It says:

If you've ever read the Bible, which bits stood out to you and why?

Are there characters or situations in the Bible that you relate to?

Have you ever shared these with your child?

You may want to pause on that screen for a bit longer or let the video keep playing.

Follow-up discussion

If you have access to a range of different children's Bibles or stories, have some out for people to look at and borrow, if that's appropriate. You could also screen-share or put up on a projector some of the popular apps or stories. Ask around for recommendations. You might want to try [The Bible App for Kids](#), [The Little Worship Company](#) or [Bible Buds](#).

Here are some ideas of questions to ask the group.

- **For parents and carers** – If you've shared any Bible stories with your child, which versions, stories or apps did you like? Or during the session have a look at some of the websites or apps that have been suggested and see if there are any that your child might like.
- **For everyone** – Pick a Bible story and have a look at it. What questions could you ask when reading it? What stands out to you that you could share with your child? Which tricky words might you need to explain?
- If you've tried any of those ideas for helping them feel connected to you, helping to connect them to God or giving them a next step, which ones did your child like and why. If not, which ones do you think you might like to try?

Next steps

Give people some pointers of where to find out more:

- Chapters 4 and 10 of the book
- Print or email the takeaway sheet on the next page or share the file in a message
- Encourage people to connect with Parenting for Faith on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

Bible stories and bedtimes takeaways

- The Bible is a book of lots of stories about God and his relationship with lots of different people. Reading about them helps our children to learn more about him and the way that different people relate to him.
- There are lots of different books, apps and versions to choose from. We can help our little ones engage with Bible stories by asking questions and wondering together, sharing what stands out to us and explaining tricky words.
- At bedtime, we can help them to settle down by connecting them to us, connecting them to God and then leaving them with a next step so that they can keep connecting with him without us there.

Things to think about

If you've ever read the Bible, which bits stood out to you and why?

Are there characters or situations in the Bible that you relate to?

Have you ever shared these with your child?

Things to chat about

For everyone – Pick a Bible story and have a look at it. What questions could you ask when reading it? What stands out to you that you could share with your child? Which tricky words might you need to explain?

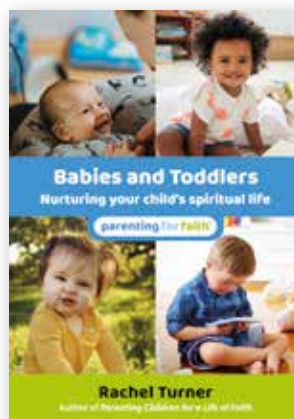
For parents and carers – If you've shared any Bible stories with your child, which versions, stories or apps did you like? Or during the session have a look at some of the websites or apps that have been suggested and see if there are any that your child might like.

Ideas to try

Try reading a Bible story to your baby or toddler or choose one you'd like to try when baby is here.

See if there are any characters you can relate to or any questions you'd like to ask about what the characters were thinking or feeling.

Find out more



- Look at [chapters 4 and 10](#)
- Watch [‘The bedtime routine’](#) or [‘Reading a Bible story with under-fives’](#)
- Follow Parenting for Faith on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#)

5 Chatting to God

Introduction

Do your usual welcome and introductions. Recap and reflect on the previous session and how people are doing. Share that you're going to be looking at prayer and how you and your little one can chat to God throughout the day.

Discussion starter

Ask the group:

- What do you like chatting about?
- Who do you like chatting to?
- When is your baby or toddler chattiest?

Video

Play the video. There is no pause and process slide for this session but feel free to pause it at any point if you think that would be helpful.

Follow-up discussion

Here are some ideas of questions to ask the group.

- **For everyone** – If you pray, how, where or when do you chat to God? What sort of things do you talk to him about? If you've never tried prayer, [this website and app](#) might be an interesting experiment for you.
- Do you feel like God understands you and is there for you? What do you need from him most at the moment?
- **For parents of babies and toddlers** – Do you ever pray out loud in front of your child or for them? How do they respond? What prompts or reminds you to do this?

Option

If you feel it is appropriate for your group, you could lead them in a short time of guided prayer. Give them some suggestions of things to chat to God about and then leave some space for them to share in their heads with God. You could suggest things like:

- Tell God about something that scares you
- Share with him something that made you laugh this week
- Tell him your favourite thing about being a parent or what you are most looking forward to about being a parent
- Share with him something you're struggling with that you'd like him to help you with.

It needn't be long or formal, and don't worry if there's lots of baby and toddler noise.

Next steps

Give people some pointers of where to find out more:

- Chapters 5 and 12 of the book
- Print or email the takeaway sheet on the next page or share the file in a message
- Share about the [Parenting for Faith course](#). For parents who've enjoyed these sessions and would like a next step, this is a great resource. You could run a course for them or just encourage them to watch the videos on their own or with a partner or friend.

Chatting to God takeaways

- Prayer is simply sharing your emotions and your words with God as you go about your day. There's no right way to do it. Be honest, be yourself and let God hear all about whatever is going on in your heart and mind. You can pray about anything, anytime, anywhere.
- You can also chat to God about your child. Try doing it out loud sometimes so they know what you are doing and can feel close and connected to you and to God.
- God still parents us, even when we are parents, so go to him and ask for whatever you need.

Things to think about

What do you like chatting about?

Who do you like chatting to?

When is your baby or toddler chattiest?

Things to chat about

For everyone – If you pray, how, where or when do you do it? What sort of things do you talk to God about? Do you feel like God understands you and is there for you? What do you need from him most at the moment?

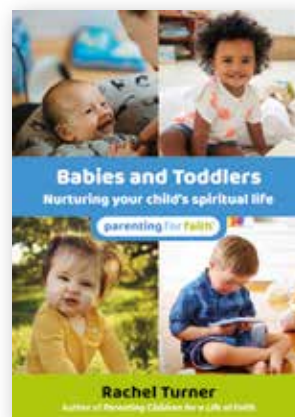
For parents and carers – Do you ever pray out loud in front of your child or for them? How do they respond? What prompts or reminds you to do this?

Ideas to try

If you've never tried praying, the trypraying website and app might be an interesting experiment for you.

Have a look at 'Chat ideas for parents of babies and toddlers' or '101 ways to start a conversation with God' and try some of them.

Find out more



- Look at [chapters 5 and 12](#)
- Try watching a session of the [Parenting for Faith course](#) on your own or with a partner, friend or group.

What next?

Thank you so much for using and sharing these resources. We pray they have been a blessing to you. If you'd like to make a one-off or regular donation to enable us to keep creating these resources, go to brf.org.uk/donate.

If you'd like to run some follow-up or reunion sessions, you could use our [baptism and dedication preparation videos](#) on words, music and community. The videos are a similar style and format – 'Words' recaps what you have already explored about prayer; 'Music' looks at how we can use music to help our children connect with God; and 'Community' introduces what church is for and what to expect at a Sunday service.

If you sense your group is keen to go a bit deeper, you might want to consider doing [the five Key Tools with under-fives](#) with them or [the Parenting for Faith course](#). Both are free and available online. The Key Tools are half-hour sessions that are based around two-minute videos looking specifically at under-fives. The Parenting for Faith course consists of longer sessions (1–2 hours) based around 30-minute videos looking at all ages.

Keep in touch

There are several ways you can keep in touch with Parenting for Faith:

- Join our email newsletter to stay up to date at parentingforfaith.org/email
- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#)
- Subscribe to our podcasts at parentingforfaith.org/podcast