

# Planting a Fruitful Nursery Ministry





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# Planting a Fruitful Nursery Ministry

Behind the organization and direction of healthy nursery ministries, lie vital biblical principles. These truths, often overlooked, result in nurseries that have conformed to babysitting. The intent of this workshop is to renew our thinking and transform our nursery into a ministry with a vision and purpose. This workshop is for anyone who desires to minister to babies and their families. We will give tips and tricks on the following topics.

- Getting the Vision!
- What 0 – 2-Years-olds Can Learn
- What Teachers Can Teach
- How To Pray for the Babies

## Getting the Vision

- Why bother? Isn't it just about babysitting? What's the big deal?
- Many nurseries merely exist and limp along because they have no vision for ministry to babies.
- Parents need to feel confident that their children are being ministered to in a safe and loving environments centered on Christ.
- Many parents want more than baby-sitting. Every parent is looking for ministries that give meaning, purpose, and direction to life for their children.
- Recruitment: people want to be involved in a ministry that knows where it's going.
- Healthy, growing ministries have a clear-cut direction and purpose. They know what God has called them to do and what NOT to do.
- The AIM of our ministry is Christ-centered. We desire to lead children into a personal dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ and to equip the child to grow in that relationship. We want the child to understand that Jesus Christ is an integral part of his/her life as he/she grows "in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and Man." (Luke 2:52)
- Help the child to discover what God's Word says and how to apply that truth to his/her life. Equip the child to put truth into action.
- Provide an environment that stimulates learning.
- Minister to the whole child by exposing our babies to attitudes, actions and an

atmosphere that begins to form their spiritual development.

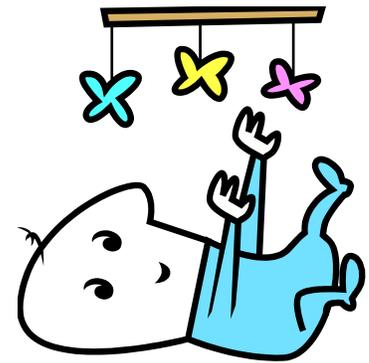
- 0-2 year old must feel they are safe.
- They need a routine and environment that is comfortable and predictable.

## What 0 – 2-Years-olds Can Learn

A baby's learning begins when he takes his first breath! A young infant may not be reached with words, but will learn through experiencing and feeling trust.

Here's what babies can learn:

- God loves and cares for him or her.
- Provides sun and rain
- They can discover lots of things about God's creation
- They can thank God and sing to God.
- Church is a place to learn about God and to see friends
- Church is a loving and caring place where God's people come to share God's love.
- They can learn simple prayers before snack and naptime.
- Give thanks for all things
- They can learn simple Bible songs that also help them to pray



## What Teachers Can Teach

Our nursery ministry can be a life-changing ministry that is more than just holding our babies.



Pleasant experiences and hearing Bible stories are the first step toward developing a love for God's Word. When you read scriptures to babies and young children, they may not be capable of intellectually comprehending the words you speak, but you are beginning to minister the love and power of God's Word to the whole child: body, soul and spirit. God's word never comes back void. We cannot afford to wait until a child can give us a verbal response in order to substantiate his/her spiritual awareness.

Interact with Babies with guided conversation. Repeat words or phrases that reinforce the fact that God loves them.

## How to Pray for the Babies

- Pray for their ears; that they will hear, listen and later obey the voice of the Lord. That they will learn to distinguish the voice of the Lord from the voice of the enemy.
- Pray for their hands; that they will learn to serve God and others;
- Pray for their feet; that they will be bold witnesses for God as they take the Good News into their schools and neighborhoods.
- Pray for their arms: That others will be led to Christ through the testimony of the baby you are holding.
- Pray for their mouths: that they will speak only those things that are true, honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute,
- Pray for their minds, that if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, they would dwell on these things.

## Summary: Growing and Nurturing a Quality Nursery

1. Who can work in the nursery?
  - Anyone who has a loving heart and willing hands.
  - I Corinthian 13:4-8
2. What does a good nursery provide?
  - Safety/Cleanliness
  - Positive relationships
  - Play/Exploration/Movement
3. How do babies & toddlers learn?
  - Their own firsthand experiences
  - Trial & error
  - Repeating what they find interesting
  - Initiating actions they are interested in imitating what they see others doing
  - Identifying with people who care for them

- Hearing words connected to what they are doing

#### 4. Planning a good session

- Arrivals dos & don'ts
  - ✓ Accept separation anxiety as normal & healthy
  - ✓ Accept & express both parents' & child's feelings
  - ✓ Keep the goodbye brief
  - ✓ Tell parents they will be alerted if the crying persists
  - ✓ Keep your distance and avoid direct physical contact at the start
  - ✓ Capture interest
- Learning activities for babies
  - ✓ Loving care to meet the child's needs
  - ✓ Play with babies & toys
  - ✓ Look at books & pictures
  - ✓ Enjoy things God has made
  - ✓ Sing, move, listen to music
  - ✓ Talk about Jesus
  - ✓ Pray
- Learning activities for toddlers
  - ✓ Loving care
  - ✓ Toddler toys
  - ✓ Books, pictures & stories
  - ✓ Nature items
- Singing/Music
- Praying

- Games

5. Tips to make nursery activities effective & enjoyable

- Tip #1 – Use a soft, conversational tone – and keep it lively!
- Tip #2 – Give friendly, positive direction
- Tip #3 - Accept children's short attention spans
- Tip #4 – Sing your key ideas
- Tip #5 – Change toys often
- Tip #6 – Be patient; let the child set the pace
- Tip #7 – Redirect problem behaviors
- Tip #8 – Connect the child's activity to Bible truth

