

Your Three-Year-Old's Growth

Three-year-old minds are full of wonder about the world around them. Family relationships are increasingly significant. To foster your child's spiritual growth, practice several of the suggested activities every day.

Mental (Know)

Three-Year-Old's Abilities

- speaks in 5-7 word sentences; his/her vocabulary may now reach 1200 words; counts to ten
- asks lots of questions
- uses multiple sentences to express his/her thoughts
- likes to tell stories and sing songs
- identifies many colors and some shapes
- distinguishes sequences and matches patterns
- detects the difference between "pretend" and "real"
- focuses on one thing at a time; approaches problems from a single viewpoint
- understands simple comparisons and contrasts (less/more, small/big, etc.)
- recognizes that God is real (though invisible), He gave the Bible, He is good, and that people answer to Him

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Continue *Daily Blessing Time*: read a Bible story together, sing a simple praise song, pray for family and friends, thank Jesus.
- Pay close attention to the things that fascinate your child. Encourage his/her interest by looking for ways to reinforce that passion.
- Answer his/her questions openly and age-appropriately.
- Endeavor to walk in the Spirit every moment of the day—God's enabling grace, energy, and wisdom will sustain you.
- Select an illustrated Bible storybook for your child to view and explore. Read together every day.
- Encourage your child to retell and to act out Bible stories.
- Begin to memorize short Bible verses together.
- Listen to and sing age-appropriate hymns and praise songs.
- Develop his/her sense of wonder and amazement about God by pointing out ways the Lord is involved in everyday situations.
- Pray for your child's spiritual receptivity, mental development, and enjoyment of learning.



Emotional (Feel)

Three-Year-Old's Abilities

- plays well with others; enjoys sharing
- recognizes roles of family members (Mom, Dad, brother, etc.)
- has a strong desire to please parents
- tries to be like Daddy or Mommy
- expresses a growing range of emotions
- communicates personal preferences and opinions
- grows self-sufficient in daily routines (dressing, washing, eating)
- distinguishes between deliberate and accidental actions
- demonstrates a sense of humor; likes to laugh and be silly

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Strive to maintain a Christlike role model in your words, actions, and habits. Identify weak areas and invite a trusted friend to keep you accountable.
- Establish relationships with other parents of three-year-olds who share your values. Meet together often.
- Explain the Golden Rule—"Treat others just as you want them to treat you." Practice being kind and considerate of others.
- Encourage and praise self-sufficiency in daily routines.
- Pay attention to the interests of your child and listen to his/her opinions.
- Talk about your child's feelings and how to express emotions in constructive ways.
- During challenging moments with your child, maintain a calm spirit. Embrace God's strength and peace as you deal with the situation.
- Use animated facial expressions and complete sentences when speaking with your child.
- Introduce laughter, simple jokes, riddles, puns, and other forms of humor.
- Pray for your child's emotional development, childhood friendships, and family relationships.



Physical (Do)

Three-Year-Old's Abilities

- is rapidly replacing baby fat with muscle
- displays increasing agility
- balances on one leg for five seconds
- jumps up and down with both feet
- walks backwards and sideways
- enjoys learning via the five senses
- grasps crayon or pencil correctly
- likes to draw, paint, glue and paste, mold clay, and work puzzles
- is curious about his/her "private" body parts
- shows a growing interest in playing structured games

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Spend one-on-one personal time playing with your child every day.
- If your child is reluctant to try new things, encourage him/her to make an initial effort—and then practice together until it's easy.
- Plant seeds or seedlings of your child's favorite vegetable in a garden or small planter. As you care for the plants and watch them grow, explain how God provides all he/she needs to grow, too.
- Mark your child's height on a door frame and periodically see how much God has helped him/her grow.
- Begin to give him/her daily chores to develop responsibility and character.
- Praise your child's accomplishments and his/her positive behavior each day.
- Identify many body parts and how God gave each one a different job. Talk about how God made boys and girls differently.
- Point out God's amazing creation during field trips or walks.
- Regularly engage his/her senses (hearing, touch, taste, sight, smell).
- Pray for your child's safety, health, and for his/her continued physical development.



You probably realize that those three elements are essential for your spiritual progress, too. Your own growth is pivotal to doing what's very best for your three-year-old! Every Christian parent who genuinely endeavors to grow in these three ways is on God's path toward raising godly children.

How can you raise your three-year-old to follow in Jesus' footsteps? Effective parenting interweaves three components: knowledge + character + conduct.

Your Parenting

Every parent wants his or her child to stand strong through the cloudbursts and challenges that life brings. Jesus' parable illustrates two things: first—parents must ensure that their children have many opportunities to hear God's Word; and second—wise parents provide practical ways to execute those Biblical principles. The destiny of your family hinges on hearing plus doing!

Twenty-First Century Parenting

A solitary verse summarizes Joseph and Mary's parenting efforts: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). Christ's growth progressed intellectually (wisdom), physically (stature), spiritually (favor with God), and relationally (favor with men).

Jesus concluded His Sermon on the Mount by contrasting two fortunes diverged radically. People who live out their faith are truly wise.

First Century Parenting

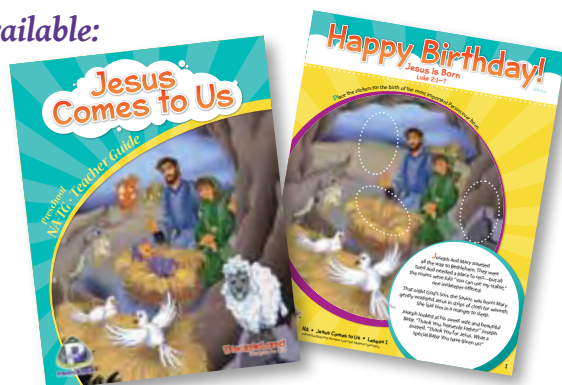
Your Action—God's Wisdom

Do you want your three-year-old to grow into a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ?



This parenting series, **Raising Godly Children**, will assist parents and teachers in the disciple-making process. Each brochure is packed with proven activities that will assist you, along with your local Church, in nurturing your child's faith.

Also available:



In **DiscipleLand Preschool**, your little ones will discover God's greatness and plan. Preschoolers will fall in love with the Bible and become Jesus' friends.

- Old Testament Series:
Discover God (8 Quarters)
- New Testament Series:
Discover Jesus (8 Quarters)



DiscipleLand.com
800.284.0158

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Disciples for Life

Raising Godly Children

What Your Three-Year-Old Really Needs



Your Three-Year-Old—God's Rock!

God wants to help you be wise parents—to build a rock-solid family. Jesus explains the key difference between believers who thrive through adversity and those who ultimately crash and burn:

Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.

Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise

and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock.

But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand.

When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.

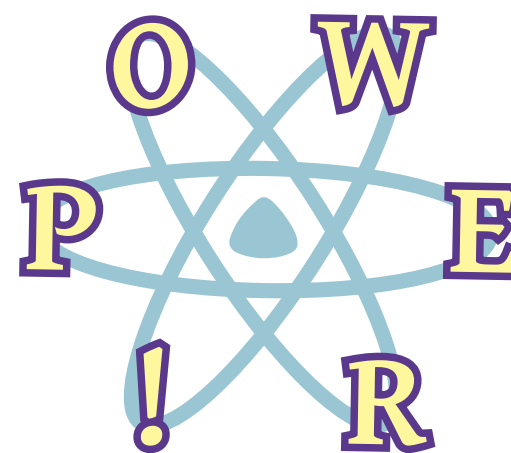
(Matthew 7:24-27, NLT)

Your three-year-old keenly observes everything you say and do. He or she is learning to imitate the way you walk, talk, and live. Build your family brick by brick, day by day—practice the principles of your faith everywhere you go. Become a bedrock-solid family that immediately implements God's truths!

Your P-O-W-E-R Walk

Parents who embrace the responsibility to raise godly children must assess their own spiritual condition. First and foremost, Jesus Christ calls every believer to follow Him. Walking in Jesus' steps and being His disciple is the Christian's highest privilege and priority!

God invites you to walk with Him every moment of every day. As you practice these five disciplines, the Lord will live His life in and through you! God gladly supplies His incredible P-O-W-E-R as He directs your steps as a parent. (See Isaiah 40:31; Acts 1:8; and Galatians 2:20.)



Three-Year-Olds Need a Foundation

Young children love to play with blocks. They enjoy building things and stacking them high. They soon learn that when they move the bottom block, the whole tower crashes to the floor.

For preschoolers, learning is like constructing a tower. Each block must support them before they step higher. During those formative years children lay the foundation for all other learning. Higher-order information makes sense only when they add it to an existing foundation of knowledge. This is why kids need solid exposure to Bible stories while they are still young.

What You Can Do: Reinforce your child's foundation of Bible knowledge. Provide exposure to God's Word every day. Remember that new learning builds on previous learning. Therefore, review and repeat Bible stories often. Become the expert of your child's abilities and experiences. Don't push too hard; but don't let him or her slide into mediocrity, either.



Three-Year-Olds Need Direction

As babies grow, they depend upon and trust the people who are closest to them. Soon they bond with these special people. Babies gradually sense that they belong to a "family." As they grow up, young children are exposed to widely divergent family configurations and lifestyles.

Remember that the family is God's idea. God calls Himself "Father"—the One who leads His children. In the Bible, God explains how to maintain healthy, dynamic relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren. God establishes and endorses the family as a fortress to withstand hostile influences.

What You Can Do: Acknowledge that God has entrusted you with the responsibility of providing spiritual direction for your child. Be proactive every day—in every area of his or her life. Pursue a variety of meaningful experiences together. Read lots of Bible stories together. Discover something about God in each one—who God is, what He is like, and what He can do. Talk about ways to apply God's Word to your preschooler's world.



This poster tells how to boost your three-year-old's spiritual growth!