

# Building faith in your 1 to 3-year-old

Toddlers are beginning to learn that they are a separate person from their parents with a mind and will of their own. As they grow in independence and explore their world, you are the person who provides boundaries as well as affirmation.

There are some significant elements that help children to grow strong foundations in their faith. Here are some ideas for this particular stage of your child's development.



Care for the Family is a Christian initiative to strengthen family life. A registered charity (England and Wales: 1066905; Scotland: SC038497).

[cff.org.uk](http://cff.org.uk)



Inspire a faith that lasts



## Home

Putting boundaries in place keeps children safe and is the beginning of understanding right and wrong. It takes courage for parents to set and maintain boundaries but it creates an essential sense of security.

What you choose to enforce sends your child a message about what you think is important. For example, is telling the truth high on your values list? Then you will want to encourage that in your child.



## Prayer

This is a great time to get into the routine of praying at mealtimes and before bed. Simple, short prayers are best and your child may enjoy shouting 'Amen' at the end. As they grow they can repeat some of the words after you.



## Be real

Holding it together can be really challenging when toddlers tantrum (especially in a public place). They are learning to say 'no' and you are probably learning the same thing! It may help to know that you are not alone and that this is a normal stage of development. Try not to take it personally. Ask God to help you grow in patience as you seek to establish consistent boundaries.

## Discovery

As toddlers explore and learn about the world around them they need boundaries but they also need the space to discover. The joy of finding out new things can be built into their developing understanding of God.



## Be intentional

Most children love story time and reading Bible stories is a great way to introduce them to God's world. At this age children are great explorers and you can very naturally talk about God's creation as you take a walk and kick the autumn leaves or spot the new growth of spring.



## Belong

Church can be fun and exciting! There's often space and music, new faces and other children. Try not to worry too much about your child running around or making lots of noise. They will learn from the freedom and enjoyment they have with their church family, feeling at home in God's house.

The Kitchen Table Project is a faith-based initiative for Christian parents, carers, church leaders and children's workers from Care for the Family.

Check out our website to find out more about the elements that build faith, as well as a variety of books, videos, resources and blog posts. [kitchentable.org.uk](http://kitchentable.org.uk)