January

God Helps Me to Grow

Jesus Grew
(See Luke 2:52.)

"God made us."
(See Malachi 2:10.)

This month you will help each child:

- associate new accomplishments with God and Jesus;
- enjoy the success of new accomplishments.

Devotional

Read Luke 2:21-40. Mary and Joseph must have closely observed their infant son in the days and weeks following their visit to the Temple. The prophecies of Anna and Simeon, added to the previous announcements by angels, undoubtedly stirred expectations of unusual qualities in their child. Would this child with such a special destiny show special abilities at an early age?

If Mary and Joseph had anticipated some dramatic evidence of Jesus' divine nature in the early years of His life, they must have been disappointed. After the excitement of the prophecies, life settled back into normal routines. Jesus gradually began to mature. The Gospels do not record any amazing intelligence, precocious abilities, or supernatural authority. Like all babies and toddlers, He simply continued to grow. Gradually, daily, He kept increasing "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).

When we discover significant insights or have dramatic spiritual experiences, we often expect that life will suddenly become different. We are frequently disappointed that the impact of Sunday seems so weak on Monday. We would like to reach maturity in large, bold moves. We become impatient with the slow, small steps that seem to make so little difference.

Yet as Jesus grew normally through all the stages of infancy, childhood and adolescence, Scripture assures us the grace of God was upon Him (see Luke 2:40). That same grace works today in each Christian's heart and mind, guiding the gradual but powerful process of growth, as we seek to become more like Jesus.

During the month of January, display this poster at child's eye level. Talk about the baby and the girl in the poster and how God helps children grow.

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God Helps Me to Grow

Do It!

I'm Growing

When I was a baby,
I was very, very small.
Now I'm growing older.
I'm growing big and tall.

When I was a baby,
I could only crawl.
Now I can walk, and I can jump.
But, sometimes, down I fall!

Sing It!

I Am Growing

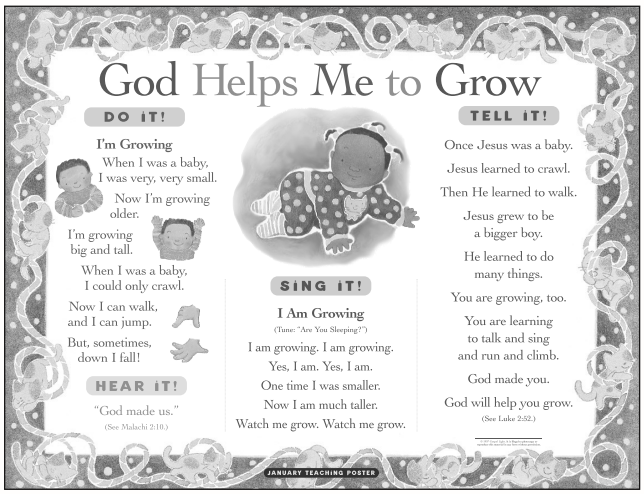
(Tune: "Are You Sleeping?")

I am growing.
I am growing.
Yes, I am.
Yes, I am.
One time I was smaller.
Now I am much taller.
Watch me grow.
Watch me grow.

Tell It!

Jesus Grew

Once Jesus was a baby.
Jesus learned to crawl.
Then He learned to walk.
Jesus grew to be a bigger boy.
He learned to do many things.
You are growing, too.
You are learning to talk and sing and run and climb.
God made you.
God will help you grow.
(See Luke 2:52.)



Display this poster at teacher's eye level in your nursery. Tell the Bible story, sing the song, do the finger play and repeat the Bible verse to one or more interested children.

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Activities with Babies

Choose one or more of these learning activities to provide for babies during a session. Consider your facility, the number of babies and teachers and the supplies you have available as you plan which activities you will use. Continue the activity as long as the child is interested. For more information on using this curriculum, see "Why Use Curriculum?" on page 6.

God's Wonders

What Do You Feel?

Collect

Several of these touch-and-feel items: soft toy, small amount of water, towel, silk fabric, cotton ball, crumpled paper

Do

Gently stroke a baby's hand with a soft toy.

Wet your hand and stroke the baby's hand, dripping a little water on it. Dab a towel on the baby's hands to dry up the water. Use other objects to stroke the baby.

Say

Tianna, God made your hands. Can you feel the cool water? The towel feels dry.

Thank You, God, for Tianna's hands. Thank You for making her hands to grow so big and strong.

Movement

Hold On

Do

While a baby is lying in the crib or sitting in your lap, offer a finger for him or her to grasp. Older babies may pull themselves to a sitting or standing position. Younger babies will simply enjoy pulling on your finger.

Say

Your hands are so strong! God made your strong hands!

God is helping you to grow.

Tip

Your smiles and conversation will encourage a baby who is learning to sit up, crawl or walk. Give assistance only when needed so the child can succeed.

Music

I'm Growing!

Collect

I Love to Sing! CD and player

Toy people or dolls

Do

While a baby is seated on the floor near you, play "Grow Song" and move the toy people or dolls rhythmically in time to the music. If a baby is interested, he or she may want to hold onto the items.

After the baby has lost interest in the toy people or dolls, continue to play and sing along with the song and gently tap the child's arms or legs in time to the music.

Say

Bailey, you are growing bigger every day! God is helping you to grow!

So Big!

Do

Talk with a baby about he or she is growing "so big." Raise your hands in the air when you say "so big." If the baby seems interested, gently raise the baby's hands when you say "so big."

Sing the words on the next page to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?" (also printed on the January Teaching Poster from *Nursery Posters*), raising the baby's arms when you sing "Now I am much taller."

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I am growing.
I am growing.
Yes, I am.
Yes, I am.
One time I was smaller.
Now I am much taller.
Watch me grow.
Watch me grow.

Say

Lily, God is helping you to grow. You are growing bigger.

Pictures and Books

Growing All the Time

Collect

January Poster from *Nursery Posters* displayed at child's eye level

Sturdy books with pictures of people of different ages

Do

Show the poster or the book to a baby. Point to the people and talk about how they have grown.

Say

I see a baby and a big sister in this picture.

Calvin, you're a baby now, but you are growing. God helps you to grow.

Jesus Grew Like You

Collect

Bible Story Picture from *I Love to Look!* or *Nursery Posters*

Do

Show and talk about the picture. Let a baby hold the picture if desired. Connect the child's action with the story.

Say

Devin, this is a picture of Jesus. Jesus grew and learned to sit up and crawl and walk. You are growing, too.

God helps you to grow.

Quiet Play

Make a Noise

Do

Make any of the following sounds while you are near a baby or holding him or her: "coo coo," kissing sound, tongue clicking, "ch, ch" sound, blowing air out or in.

Repeat a sound several times. If the baby responds by making the sound, then repeat the sound enthusiastically back to the baby.

Say

I like to hear you make new sounds, Brittany. God made your mouth. God made your tongue.

God helps you grow and make new sounds.

Tip

This activity can also be done when you are rocking a baby or changing his or her diaper. Focus your attention on the baby and take advantage of this one-on-one time.

What Do You *See*?

Collect

Variety of toys

Wall-mounted mirror or large child-safe mirror

Do

While a baby is lying on his or her stomach, place one or two toys in front of the baby to look at. Describe the things the baby sees.

Then position the baby in front of a wall-mounted mirror or prop up a mirror in front of the baby. Point to the baby's eyes, nose, mouth and ears in the mirror and talk about them.

Say

There's Samantha! God made your eyes to see so many things. Thank You, God, for Samantha's eyes.

Look in the mirror and you can see you are growing so big! God helps you to grow.

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Activities with Toddlers

Choose one or more of the learning activities on pages 45-48 to provide for toddlers during a session. Consider your facility, the number of children and teachers and the supplies you have available as you plan which activities you will use. The best kind of teaching for toddlers will happen as you take advantage of teachable moments as children play and experience the learning activities you have provided. Continue an activity as long as one or more children are interested. For more information on using this curriculum, see "Why Use Curriculum?" on page 6.

Active Play

Where's the Toy?

Collect

Two identical toys

Do

Show the child two identical toys. Put one toy somewhere in the room. Put the other toy in front of the child.

Say, "Here is a red block. Can you find the other red block?"

If the child doesn't see the other block, bring the child with you to get the block. Play game several times.

Say

We found the red block! God made your eyes so you can see the red blocks.

God made you!

Play Ball

Collect

One or more clean, child-safe balls (beach balls, basketballs, soccer balls or volleyballs)

Do

Sit or stand next to a child. Push a ball away from you. After you or the child retrieves the ball, push the ball away again. Give the child time to bring the ball back.

Say

Delaney, you have such strong arms and legs. You can go and get the ball and push or carry it back all by yourself.

God helps you grow and try new things.

Shape Walking

Collect

Large circles, triangles and squares approximately 12 inches (30 cm) in size cut from different colors of construction paper

Masking tape

Do

Use tape to attach the shapes to the floor in a path. Encourage children to walk on the shapes. Say each shape's name and color.

Say

I am stepping on a red circle. Now it's your turn! Kenna, you walk so well. God made your legs to grow and move. Thank You, God, for helping Kenna to grow and walk.

Tip

A toddler's attention span is very short so he or she will change activities quickly. Look for an opportunity to repeat the activity later with the child.

Growing Up Tall

Collect

Several scarves

Do

Give a child a scarf and hold one scarf yourself.

Crouch low. Then stand up high and wave the scarf. Encourage the child to imitate you.

Say

Let's see how little you can be. Now let's see how tall you can be.

You are growing taller.

God helps you grow every day.

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Art Play

Handprints

Collect
Sheet of paper for each child
Crayon

Do
While a toddler is nearby, trace around one of your hands on a sheet of paper. If a child is interested, trace around his or her hands, too.

Say
Garrett, I traced your hand. Do you want me to trace your other hand, too? You are growing. Your hands are getting bigger!
God helps you to grow.

Music

Movin' Music

Collect
I Love to Sing! Music CD (or other lively children's music) and player

Do
Play "Grow Song" (or other music) and lead children in a variety of actions: clapping, waving, patting head, etc.

Say
Look at all the things you have learned to do. Gabriella, you are growing bigger just like God plans for you to grow.
God helps you grow. God planned for your arms and legs to grow strong.
Tip: Personalizing the words of this song by using the child's name in the song will increase the child's interest in the activity.

God's Wonders

Rainbow Colors

Collect
Large, sturdy resealable bags
Water
Food coloring in several colors

Do
Before class, fill several bags half full with water. Add several drops of food coloring to each bag, making a different color in each bag. Place each bag in another bag and seal.
In class, children look at and handle bags, gently patting them. Talk about the colors they see.

Say
Thomas, you are holding the bag with blue water in it. God made your eyes so you can see colors. God made you! God is helping you to grow.
Delaney, pat the bag with your hand. God made your hands so you can do lots of things. I'm glad you are growing bigger.

Look at My Doll

Collect
Doll

Do
Use a doll to demonstrate the different parts of a child's body; then ask the toddler to find his or her own eye, arm, leg, feet, etc.
Talk about the fact that God made us.

Say
Bella, here are this doll's feet. Where are your feet? God made your feet.
God made you. God helps you grow bigger every day. Thank You, God.

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Pictures and Books

Growing Every Day

Collect

Bible Story Picture from *I Love to Look!* or *Nursery Posters*

Sturdy books picturing children at different stages of growth: a baby sleeping, then crawling, and walking

Do

Show and talk about the pictures. Describe how God helps children to grow and do new things.

Say

Jesus grew and learned to crawl and then walk just like you!

We can thank God for helping you to grow and do new things! Thank You, God!

Tip: Display posters at child's eye level. If possible, display the poster near an area where children play with toys. Then look for ways to connect the child's activity with the way in which Jesus grew as a young child.

Pretend Play

All Aboard

Collect

Two toddler-sized chairs

Do

Place chairs together to form a pretend car. Invite a child to sit on a chair. Ask the child to drive you to the store, to church or to the park.

Talk about what you "see" along the drive and at each place.

Say

Annissa, you can be the driver of the car. We are driving to so many places. You're growing bigger, Annissa, so you can go lots of different places!

God made you. God helps you to grow!

Growing Talk

Collect

Toy telephone

Do

With the telephone, sit down by a toddler. Make the sound of a ringing phone, and then pick up the receiver. Talk on the phone to the child, describing what the child is doing.

Invite the child to talk on the phone, too. Each time you talk on the phone, comment about a different part of the child's body that is growing (legs, arms, feet, etc.).

Say

Hi, Kayley. How are you today? I see you're using your hands to play with the farm animals. Your hands are getting bigger! God made you! God helps you to grow!

God loves you.

What's for Dinner?

Collect

Toy dishes, cups

Napkins

Do

Children take turns placing dishes, cups and napkins on a table. Children pretend to serve food and drinks.

God gives you good food to help you grow. God loves you, Shandra.

When we eat good food, our bodies grow. I'm glad God helps us grow.

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Quiet Play

What's that Sound?

Collect

Several toys or objects that make sounds (bells, rattles, shakers, etc.)

Cloth or paper bag

Do

Place one toy or object inside the bag. Shake the bag for a child to hear.

Let the child take a turn to shake the bag and/or pull the toy or object out of the bag. Repeat with other toys and objects.

Say

I hear the bell. Cameron, can you hear the bell?

God made your ears to hear. God helps you to grow and hear sounds.

Puppet Friends

Collect

One or more hand animal puppets

Do

Put a puppet on your hand. Softly talk to the child about what he or she is wearing, and the ways in which the child is growing. If the child is interested, put the puppet on the child's hand.

Say

Hi, Jolie. I'm glad to see you today. You are wearing a blue dress with white flowers on it. I see your strong legs. God made your legs. God is helping your legs grow bigger and stronger.

God planned for your legs to grow strong so you can have fun walking and running. Thank You, God, for our legs.

Beanbag Fun

Collect

Several child-safe beanbags

Do

Let children hold and play with beanbags. Children may carry them around the room, put them into containers, drop them, put them on their heads, etc.

Say

We're having fun playing with these beanbags. Damon, you put the beanbag on your head. You are learning to do so many new things!

You are growing bigger, just like God plans for you to grow. God loves you!

Bead in a Cup

Collect

One or two large wooden beads (too large to swallow)

At least two plastic cups

Do

Show the child how to pour the bead from one cup to the other. Let an interested child have a turn to pour the bead back and forth.

Say

Niki, I see that you can pour the bead from the red cup to the blue cup. You are learning to do new things every day. God is helping you to grow.

God made you and He helps you grow.

Tip

Keep a camera handy. As you see a child having a particularly good time, take a picture. After printing the picture, talk about it with the child and then send it home to parents.

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