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Gospel Light's
baby beginnings

teacher's guide

18 to 36 months



Tips and Activities for Parents of
Children 18 to 36 Months • Year 1

God Cares for Me

"God cares about you."

(See 1 Peter 5:7.)

.....

This month we will help your child:

- hear words and songs about God's care for him or her;
- feel thankful for God's care;
- participate in play activities to learn ways God cares for him or her.

June

Do these activities with your child to continue the learning your child has experienced at church.

Tell It!

Jesus Told About God's Care

"Look at the pretty flowers,"

Jesus said.

"God makes them grow.

He makes red, yellow and white flowers.

God made these flowers,

And He cares for them.

God made you.

God loves you and cares for you, too.

God loves you even more than flowers."

(See Matthew 6:28-32.)

Do It!



God Cares for Me

God cares for me

When I sleep.

God cares for me

When I play.



Little Activities for Little People

Toddlers

- Conversation about God's care for your child must be accompanied by loving demonstrations of care. As your child experiences having his or her needs met, the idea of God's loving concern will begin to make sense. As your child hears you talk lovingly about God, he or she will begin to associate God with good feelings and experiences.
- Take your child outside to play and discover things outdoors for as long as he or she is interested (or until he or she needs to eat or rest). In our busy world, it's important to provide unhurried time for your child to explore and enjoy things outdoors with you. You will have many opportunities to help your child see or touch something new. Connect what your child sees and touches with God's loving care. Say, **I see the birds. God made the birds and He cares for them. God made you and He cares for you, too.**



God cares for me
All the time,
Every night and
Every day.



Say and do this finger play with your child. Replace the words "me" and "I" with your child's name. Use the finger play when putting your child to sleep or when playing with him or her. On a bright sunny day, talk about the color of the sky and the sunshine and then say the finger play. In the evening, take your child out to look at the moon and the stars and talk about the nighttime. Repeat the finger play.

Sing It!

I'm So Glad

(Tune: "Skip to My Lou")

I'm so glad that God loves me,

God loves me, God loves me.

I'm so glad that God loves me,

June Parent's Home Page

He loves me all the time.

I'm so glad that God loves you,
God loves you, God loves you.

I'm so glad that God loves you,
He loves you all the time.

Sing this song to your child, replacing "you" with your child's name. Clap your hands as you sing this song and encourage your child to clap with you. These first attempts at clapping are the beginning steps of learning rhythm. Say, **God cares for you when you play and when you sleep! I love you and care for you, too, when you are sleepy or playing!**

Question & Answer

Q: My child has begun crying when I leave her. I feel awful! What can I do?

A: When your child cries at separation time, first remember that it is a normal part of growth to know and to prefer one's parents! Recognize and accept both your own feelings of anxiety as well as those of your child. If you communicate comfort by your calm voice and relaxed body posture, your child will likely "pick up" on these cues and calm down also. However, if your child still has a difficult time calming down, try:

- Staying for awhile, then leaving for a few minutes and returning. Over a period of weeks, increase the length of your absences until both you and your child become more comfortable. Once you return, stay with your child for the remainder of the nursery program. More than one good-bye in a session is too hard on a baby or toddler.
- Providing a "comfort object" (a familiar blanket or toy) and creating a separation routine. Give

the "comfort object" to your child and always say the same "good-bye" words. Try words such as, "I know you are sad. We will come back." or "It's hard to be away from you, but we will be back. Then we will give you a big hug!" By establishing a separation routine, your child will begin to understand what's coming next and will likely react with more calmness.

Pots and Pans

- Pots and pans are ready-made nesting toys. And they are interesting to the youngest children, because they have seen their parents use them.
- Set out several pots, pans and their lids on the floor near your child. If your child is enjoying playing with these, add wooden spoons and metal or plastic measuring cups to the array.
- In playing with the pots and pans, children will find out the different weights of these items, discover what fits in what, use a wooden spoon and pan as a ready-made drum or pretend to cook with them.
- Say, **We use pots and pans to cook with. I like to cook good food for you to eat. I like to care for you and give you good things to eat. God cares for you, too.**

Bonus Activity: Put pots and pans in a low cupboard. When you have a cooking project, set your child near this cupboard and open the doors. Let your child explore the contents of the cupboard as you cook. Make it possible for your child to see some of the stages of your cooking project.

"God sends children for another purpose than merely to keep up the race—to enlarge our hearts and to make us unselfish."

Mary Howitt

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How to Use the Baby Beginnings Curriculum

If You Are the Children's Pastor or Nursery Coordinator

- Prior to the start of each month, send home the appropriate month's overview (first two pages of each month's section) to each caregiver in the nursery.
- If you have a regular, consistent staff for the month, include the activity pages for the month as well and encourage your staff to plan together which activities they will prepare and provide each week of the month. (For example, one person would be prepared to lead a God's Wonders activity each week while another person would be prepared to lead an Active Play activity each week.)
- If you have a rotating staff, select several of the activities yourself. Collect any needed supplies and place them in the appropriate rooms along with the page of instructions (highlight or mark the activity). Alert the staff to look for these items when they arrive to serve.

If You Are the Toddler/2s Classroom Coordinator or Teacher

- Each teacher in the classroom needs a copy of the monthly overview and activities. (Print out copies from the CD-ROM that comes with the *Baby Beginnings Teacher's Guide—18 to 36 Months*.)
- Teachers plan together which activities they will prepare and provide each week of the month. (For example, one person would be prepared to lead a God's Wonders activity each week while another person would be prepared to lead an Active Play activity each week.)

Note: Consider creating for each room a box for each month that contains the supplies for the month's learning activities as described in the *Baby Beginnings Teacher's Guides*. At the beginning of the month, the box is placed in the appropriate rooms for use by teachers.

For Parents

- Distribute a copy of the reproducible *I Love to Sing!* CD to each family.
- At the beginning of each month, send home (or ask your children's pastor to send home) both the appropriate month's *I Love to Look!* Bible Story Picture Card and *Parent's Home Page*. *Parent's Home Pages* are available on the CD-ROM that comes with this book, as well as in *Nursery Smart Pages*. Purchase one set of *I Love to Look!* Bible Story Pictures for each family.

Teaching Toddlers

Somewhere between infancy and the preschool years, is the wonderful world of the toddler. God has made each child unique, and it is important to get to know each one, and their families, personally. Teachers should develop good communication with each family and learn about each child's strengths, challenges and needs. However, there are some characteristics that describe most typically developing toddlers. Taking these characteristics into account will make your teaching much more effective.

- Toddlers are active. They love to move and explore. They learn about the world by using all of their senses, by manipulating objects and by imitating the actions of others. Learning activities should involve things to look at, listen to, touch, smell and do.
- Toddlers live in the here and now. Make the most of "teachable moments" by connecting the curriculum learning aims to what a child is doing at the moment. Such guided conversations can help toddlers begin to understand spiritual concepts. For example, when a child offers a toy or comfort to another child, a teacher can say, "That was a very loving thing to do. Jesus wants us to love each other."
- Toddlers need close supervision. Their drive to explore may lead them to wander, climb, or do things they are not ready for. Some may still be putting fingers and objects in their mouths. It is important that everything in the toddler's environment is safe, too large to choke on and non-toxic.
- Toddlers want autonomy! They often use the word "no," even when they mean "yes." They may cry when their will is thwarted. Good teachers understand these feelings, while still setting and enforcing limits.
- Toddlers have difficulty waiting. It is important to have things ready for snack or other activities in order to minimize

waiting. It is helpful to have more than one of a favored toy available.

- Toddlers' vocabularies are limited, but expanding rapidly. They understand more than they can articulate. A rich language environment is important, including adults who speak often and respectfully with them, and who listen and respond to what they say. Reading short, illustrated stories to toddlers will help expand their vocabularies.
- Toddlers have a short attention span. They will stay with an activity as long as they are interested. It is best to let them move to another activity when they are ready. When doing a group activity such as singing or moving to music, it is important to let toddlers join and leave the group as they choose. Stories work best when read to one or two toddlers at a time.
- Toddlers' concepts of God, Jesus, church, the Bible and prayer are very formative. They need adults who will demonstrate God's love and then connect that love to the name of Jesus. The concepts and stories in this curriculum have been chosen because they can be tied to children's own experiences. For example, when they see things that God has made and are told that God made them, toddlers' concepts of God begin to take shape.
- Toddlers have a short memory. Just because you said something once, do not expect toddlers to remember it later. Repetition of learning concepts, and classroom rules, is important.

Let the example of Jesus be your guide in relating to toddlers. The Bible tells us that He welcomed them even though He was very busy. He took them in His arms and blessed them. You can demonstrate the love of Jesus for His precious children with your loving words, your smile, and your touch.

Loving and Guiding Toddlers

The heart of good teaching is relationships. It is important for teachers to form a relationship with each child in their class as well as with the child's family. Children respond more readily to guidance from those they love, and families are more open to input about their children if they know the teacher knows, understands and loves their children.

To build strong relationships with children and families, you can:

- **Pray** regularly for each child and family.
- **Give** parents a form to fill out requesting information about the child and family (see registration forms in *Nursery Smart Pages*).
- **Greet** each child and parent by name when they enter the classroom.
- **Express** your joy that they have come.
- **Ask** how their weekend is going to get an idea of how the child might be feeling.
- **Remember** the names of siblings and others important to the child and make reference to them.
- **Join** a child in a favorite activity.
- **Notice** and comment on pro-social behaviors. ("Thank you for sharing the play dough. That was kind.")
- **Assist** children when you sense they need help.
- **Comfort** children who are distressed.
- **Give** appropriate physical affection as you sense a child wants or needs it.
- **Follow** the child's lead in warming up to the classroom environment.
- **Tell** parents how the child's time in the classroom was spent, giving details that show you know their child. Be sure to tell parents about any event that might be upsetting to a child (getting hurt or frightened).

- **Call** or send notes to families when their children are absent.

Creating an age-appropriate environment will prevent many behavior problems from happening. To do this, you can:

- Make sure all toys, furniture and equipment are safe and child-sized.
- Store things that children should not touch out of their reach.
- Provide duplicates of popular toys.
- Carefully supervise all children at all times.
- Have enough adults available to respond quickly to children's needs.
- Avoid making children wait longer than necessary.
- Keep a consistent routine (the same activities in the same order), but be flexible with the time taken for each.
- Help children with transitions from one activity to another by giving them some warning and helping them do what you are asking (clean up toys, throw away trash, etc.).



To guide children's behavior in a way that is helpful, teachers must have realistic expectations of toddler behavior. These include:

- High levels of activity. Toddlers need space to move both indoors and out.
- Short attention spans. Toddlers need the freedom to change activities frequently on their own schedule.

Loving and Guiding Toddlers

- Short memory. Toddlers need frequent reminders of what is expected of them.
- Low tolerance for frustration. Toddlers may cry or lash out when they cannot have what they want.
- Self-centeredness. Toddlers have difficulty understanding the feelings and needs of others.
- Resistance to limits. Toddlers resist, but need, limits on their behavior.
- Limited ability to express themselves through language. Vocabulary is developing rapidly, but many children express themselves physically, especially when they are upset.
- Accidents and mistakes. Toddlers may spill their juice, wet themselves or break things.
- Expression of empathy. ("I know you want the toy, but Maria is having a turn.")
- Demonstration of appropriate behavior. ("We don't throw sand. Put it in the bucket like this.")
- Redirection to another activity. ("Jason is using the red truck. Let's see if we can find one for you.")
- Removal from a situation when inappropriate behavior persists. (A child who persists in throwing sand after reminding and demonstration should be removed from the sand area and encouraged to find another activity.)

Appropriate guidelines for toddlers include:

- Children should use gentle touches and kind words. They should not be allowed to hurt others with their bodies or their words. ("We say kind words." "I can't let you hurt our friends at church.")
- Children should use toys and materials appropriately. ("We need to roll the ball.")
- Children should be seated while eating and drinking. ("Here is the place for you to sit while you eat.")
- Children should walk when running might be dangerous. ("We need to walk when we're inside.")
- Children should obey their teachers' instructions. ("I need you to listen and do what I say. Thank you.")

Helpful teacher interventions when toddlers exceed limits include:

- Staying close enough to intervene when a child uses aggressive behaviors.
- Frequent reminders of what is expected. ("Touch your friend gently.")

If there is a child whose behavior consistently exceeds limits or harms others, ask teachers to observe the child and be ready to prevent or stop inappropriate behavior and to demonstrate appropriate behavior.

If the interventions above are not sufficient, the child's parents should be consulted.

Teachers should never:

- Use any type of physical punishment, including a slap on the hand.
- Shake a child.
- Raise their voices in anger.
- Deny food or beverage as a punishment.
- Deny physical activity as a punishment.
- Restrain a child, except for safety reasons.
- Use "time out" as a punishment. Children may need to be removed from an area until they calm down. The purpose should be to help the child.



Loving and Guiding Toddlers

- Use God as a way to control children's behavior (by saying things such as, "God doesn't like it when you do that").

Speaking with parents about their child's behavior will be easier if you have already built a good relationship with the family. However, you should not be surprised if parents respond defensively. Parents believe that their child's behavior reflects on their parenting abilities. The following ideas can make talking to parents go more smoothly:

- Pray for guidance before speaking to the parents.
- Consult a more experienced teacher or children's ministry staff person.
- Talk to parents in private, not when others are around to hear.
- Tell parents positive things about their child.
- Tell parents you have observed some behaviors that concern you.
- State the nature and frequency of the behaviors.
- Avoid using any labels ("hyper"), suggesting a diagnosis (ADHD), or making a value judgment ("aggressive").
- Ask parents if they have noticed the same behaviors at home. If they have, ask them how they handle it.

- Incorporate parents' suggestions, if appropriate.
- Invite the parents to observe in the classroom.
- Provide parenting classes for all families.

Special circumstances: Toddler behavior may be outside the norm in circumstances of family stress, such as divorce, moving, the birth of a new sibling or any other significant change in the family's life. Behavior should improve with time and loving support. Toddlers with identified developmental delays, allergies or other special needs may require extra support or alternate strategies to be successful in your classroom. This should be discussed with the parents, and teachers may need specialized training.

Remember that God made each child unique, with a unique temperament, personality and timetable of development. We have only a few glimpses in the Bible of Jesus' interactions with children. It is clear that children were important to Him. He made time for them while adults waited, He rebuked those who tried to keep them away, He took them in His arms and blessed them. The most important thing we can do for the toddlers in our care is bless them with our words and actions as Jesus would. They can begin to know the love of Jesus through our love. Love must be at the heart of our relationships with toddlers.



Why Use Curriculum?

"These kids simply need to be fed, changed and played with . . . what can they possibly learn about God? Why would we need curriculum for them?"

First of all, our goal in using curriculum is not to get a child to spout theological concepts! Instead, our goal is to individually (one-on-one) teach each child through natural learning processes what he or she can begin to learn about God. Curriculum is designed to help you, the teacher, use the time you spend at church with little ones to build spiritual foundations.

Secondly, using curriculum also benefits you, the teacher, as much as the child. Singing and talking about Jesus is a powerful reminder that what you are doing is not just custodial care, but ministry in its truest sense. The same is true for parents. Just as young children need to hear about Jesus, their parents need to begin talking comfortably about Him with their child. The model the church provides of how we care for and "teach" children is intended to help parents catch on to the fact that they can and should do the same things at home.

Curriculum provides you with ideas and words that help make your natural teaching effective. Since the best kind of teaching for toddlers is primarily one-on-one, don't expect that these young children will sit in a circle or have a group time, or even remain interested in what you are doing for very long. But as you sit on the floor talking and playing with two or three children, make frequent use of the conversation ideas and songs suggested in your curriculum. Look for teachable moments—times when you can talk about the child's actions and connect them to the monthly theme. "Jocelyn, you used your hands to roll the red ball. God made your hands."

In every session, plan to provide several of the learning activities. Play portions of the CD, repeating the same songs frequently. The sounds, words, actions and most of all, the feelings that are created in this casual setting will flow into a natural pattern of teaching and learning that will eventually build a young child's understanding of God, Jesus and the loving comfort found in the people around him or her at church. And using a curriculum with monthly themes helps provide continuity to the activities in the nursery, especially when teachers change frequently.

In a large classroom where there are many children and adults in the same room, designate certain learning activities for each adult to provide for children throughout the session. For example, one teacher may position him- or herself on the floor with large cardboard blocks, building and talking about them with interested children. Another adult may sit near an open area of the room with a container of rhythm instruments, playing them and singing songs with children in that area of the room. However, as the session progresses, adults need to be ready to move to "where the action is." Flexibility is key.

A child's learning takes place all the time, as a natural part of living. So the teaching in your classroom is accomplished by your every look, word and act while you are in the presence of children. Your teaching is ministry just as surely as teaching a theology class for adults would be. This curriculum helps you to focus your playing, talking, caregiving, singing and finger plays in ways that familiarize a child with God's name and His love. Awareness of God's love for each child takes your time in the nursery far beyond the level of just singing "Itsy-Bitsy Spider" again!

June

God Cares for Me

Jesus Told About God's Care

(See Matthew 6:28-32.)

"God cares about you."

(See 1 Peter 5:7.)

.....

This month you will help each child:

- hear words and songs about God's care for him or her;
- feel thankful for God's care;
- participate in play activities to learn ways God cares for him or her.



Devotional

It's easy to see how God could care for the young children in our care: sweet and happy, they delight us with their excitement over everyday things. It's a joy to tell them of His love as we play with them and care for them. No doubt God cares for them even more than we do! But what kind of care does God have for us grown-ups? Let's look at Peter's statement in 1 Peter 5:7: "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

How much worrying do you think young children do? Do you suppose they wake in the morning, stressed over where their food will come from? Does their blood pressure rise as they fret over the possible problems of the day? Here they are, dependent on the caregivers—and instead of being stressed about their dependency, they respond in a blessed confidence, nestling in the arms of one who loves them and falling asleep in a relaxed lump of total trust. That's not just a sweet picture; it's the reality of God's care!

Now take a moment to think about the anxieties you faced this week: from the plumbing to the trouble your child had at school to worries about whether or not the groceries will stretch until payday. Adult lives seem to swell with anxiety-producing situations! Our blood pressure rises, our stomachs churn—and all the while, God invites us with open arms to give our anxieties to Him, relax in that child-like blessed confidence and stop losing sleep over our troubles! Perhaps we don't play with excitement as well as we once did, but God wants us to remember that no matter how big and responsible we are, we're still His little ones. He is willing—and waiting—to care for our anxiety. So give your anxieties to Him. Rest in Him. He cares for you!



During the month of June, display this poster at child's eye level. Talk about God's care for flowers and His wonderful love and care for children.

God Cares for Me

Do It!

God Cares for Me



God cares for me
When I sleep.

God cares for me
When I play.



God cares for me
All the time,
Every night and
Every day.



Sing It!

I'm So Glad

(Tune: "Skip to My Lou")

I'm so glad that God loves me, God
loves me, God loves me.

I'm so glad that God loves me, He loves
me all the time.

I'm so glad that God loves you, God
loves you, God loves you.

I'm so glad that God loves you, He loves
you all the time.

Tell It!

Jesus Told About God's Care

"Look at the pretty flowers,"
Jesus said.

"God makes them grow.

He makes red, yellow and white flowers.

God made these flowers,

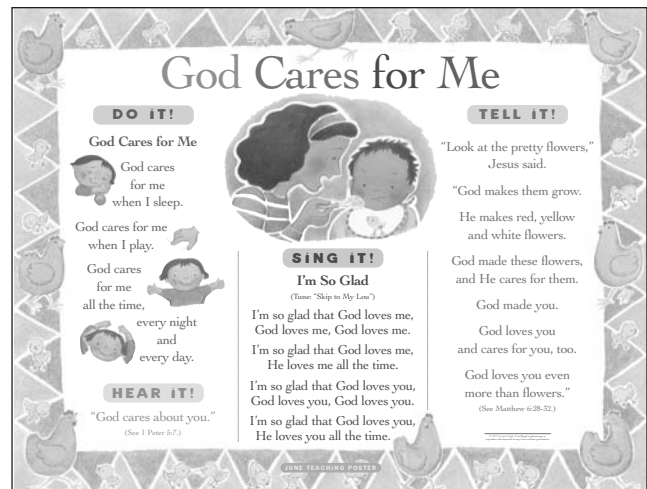
And He cares for them.

God made you.

God loves you and cares for you, too.

God loves you even more than flowers."

(See Matthew 6:28-32.)



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.

Activities with Children

Choose one or more of the learning activities on pages 83-88 to provide for children 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 8.

J U N E

God Cares for Me • Active Play

Seed to Flower

Collect

Packet of flower seeds
Empty watering can

Do

Show children a packet of flower seeds. Take out a seed to show how small it is. Tell them the seed needs water and sunshine to grow into a flower.

Children crouch down to make themselves small, like seeds.

Pretend to water the "seeds" with watering can. Children stretch up and pretend to be flowers.

Say

Look at these small flower seeds. When we plant the seeds and water them, they will grow into flowers like the picture on the seed packet.

You can pretend to be a seed. I'll pretend to water you so you will grow into a flower.

Jesus said that God cares for the flowers. God gives them rain and sunshine so they will grow.

Jesus said that God cares for you, too.

Bonus Idea: Plant seeds in an outdoor area near your classroom, or in pots that can be kept indoors.

God Gives Me Food

Collect

Toy food and/or empty food containers
One or more large baskets

Do

Place food items in various places around the room.

Ask children to find foods and name them.

Ask children to place the foods in the baskets.

Say

God gives us lots of good food. God cares for us. Let's find some pretend food and put it in this basket.

What did you find, Mariah? God gives us apples because He cares for us.

Watering Flowers

Collect

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

One or more small watering cans filled part way with water

Several flowering plants

Do

Show and talk about the Bible Story Picture.

Children water plants. (Optional: Take children outside to water plants in an enclosed play area.)

Say

Jesus told people that God cares for flowers and God cares for us. Thank You, God, for caring for us.

Let's water the flowers. Flowers need water to grow.

God sends rain to water the flowers He made.

Bees and Flowers

Collect

Poster board in assorted colors
Scissors

Do

Before class, cut large flower shapes from poster board.

In class, place flowers on the floor.

Encourage children to "fly" from flower to flower like bees.



Say

Let's fly like bees. Bees like flowers. We can fly to the pink flower and then to the red flower.

God made the flowers and He cares for them.

God made you and He cares for you.

“God Cares for Me” Picture**Collect**

12x18-inch (30.5x45.5-cm) sheet of construction paper for each child

Marker

Pictures of people and food, cut from magazines

Glue sticks

Do

Before class, cut each sheet of construction paper into the shape of a house. Print the words “God cares for me” on each house.

In class, help one child at a time glue pictures onto a house.

**Say**

These words say, “God cares for me.”

Hunter, God cares for you. You are gluing a picture of a dad on your house. God gives you a family because He cares about you. Thank You, God, for dads.

Trevor, you have the picture of spaghetti. God gives you food. God cares for you.

Flower Garden**Collect**

Large plastic or paper cups

Artificial flowers with stems

Do

Let children put flowers into and out of cups, pretending to plant, pick and then replant flowers.

Say

Look at all the flowers in our garden. God made flowers.

God made dirt for the flowers to grow in.
God is good. He cares for us.

Finger Fun**Collect**

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

Paper

Jumbo crayons

Do

Children color on paper. Talk about the flowers God made in the colors used by children.

Show and talk about the Bible Story Picture.

Say

Anthony, you are drawing with the red crayon. God made red flowers.

Look at the picture of Jesus. Jesus told people that God cares for us all the time. God cares for flowers. God cares for us even more!

Thank You, God, for loving us.

Father's Day Card**Collect**

8½x11-inch (21.5x28-cm) sheet of card stock or construction paper for each child, folded in half

Marker

Stickers

Crayons

Do

Write “I love you, Daddy” or other greeting inside the card. Encourage child to add decorations with stickers or crayons.

Write child's name. Trace child's hand with crayon.

Say

Would you like to make your daddy (uncle, grandpa, etc.) a card?

We can put your handprint on the front.

Your daddy cares for you. So does God!

Bonus Idea: Glue a photo of each child to the inside of the card.

J U N E

God Cares for Me • God's Wonders

Flowering Plants

Collect

One or more flowering plants in pots

Do

Place plants on a child-sized table where children can see them.

Help children notice differences in the plants. Place plants out of reach when adult supervision is not available.

Say

God made so many kinds of flowers.

He gives them water and sun and dirt to grow in.

God cares for flowers. God cares for you, too.

Flower Petals

Collect

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

Flower petals in a plastic jar

Do

Show and talk about the Bible Story Picture.

Let children take petals out of the jar, feel them, smell them and return petals to jar.

Say

Gabriel, look at the pretty pink flowers God made. Do you see a pink flower in this picture?

Jesus said that God cares for flowers. God cares for us even more!

Thank You, God, for Your care.

Bonus Idea: Take pictures of the flowers with a digital or instant camera to display in the classroom.

Edible Flowers

Note: Post a note alerting parents to the use of food. Also, check children's registration forms for possible food allergies.

Collect

Broccoli and cauliflower, cut into small pieces

Do

Show children the broccoli and cauliflower.

Give interested children small pieces to touch and taste.

Say

This is broccoli. It's a flower we can eat.

Calvin, would you like a taste?

God gives you good food. God cares for you.



What's in the Bag?

Collect

Variety of 4-inch (10-cm) fabric squares in different colors and textures

Bag

Do

One at a time, place a fabric square into the bag.

Children take turns looking into the bag and then taking out the fabric square.

Say

Xavier, you used your eyes to look into the bag. Then you used your hand to take the red cloth out of the bag. God made your hands. God cares for you!

God gives us what we need! God loves us very much!

Walking, Walking

Collect

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

I Love to Sing! CD and player
Several dolls

Do

Show and talk about the Bible Story Picture.

Play "I See You!" on CD.

Children walk around the room holding dolls.



Say

Jesus told people that God cares about them. How many children do you see in this picture? God cares about you, too!

Mia, you are having fun walking with your doll. God made your legs so you can walk. God cares for you.

Blake, you are taking good care of your doll. God cares for you.

Bonus Idea: Lead children on a walk outdoors in an enclosed play area.

God Cares for Me

Do

Sing the following words to the tune of "God Is So Good" during teachable moments while you are playing with a child, or while eating a snack with a child:

God cares for me. God cares for me.
God cares for me. He's so good to me.

Additional verses: God gives me food. God gives me love. God gives me friends.

Say

I'm so glad that God cares for us! Let's sing about the good things God gives us.

Ellie, God gives you lots of friends here at church. God cares for you.

Fingers, Nose and Toes

Do

Sing the following words to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It":

Put your fingers on your nose
and then your toes.

Put your fingers on your nose
and then your toes.

Put your fingers on your nose,
put your fingers on your nose.

Put your fingers on your nose
and then your toes.

Say

God made us. God cares about us!

God made our noses. God made our toes.

Thank You, God, for caring about us.

Drum Music

Collect

I Love to Sing! CD and player

Round, empty oatmeal boxes (or other cylinders)

Construction paper

Scissors

Tape or glue

Stickers

Do

Before class, tape or glue lids to oatmeal boxes. Cut paper to fit around the boxes. Glue or tape paper securely to boxes.

In class, children attach stickers to their drums.

Play "All I Need" and let children pat drums with their hands.

Say

Let's make some drums. We'll use our drums when we sing about God's care for us.

I'm glad you came today, Carlos. I care about you! God cares about you, too!

God Cares for Me • Pretend Play

Hats for You and Me

Collect

Washable sun hats or plastic visors
One or two beach towels

Do

Interested children put on hats and sit on beach towels, pretending they are going swimming.

**Say**

Toby, let's pretend we're going swimming. Let's sit on our beach towel. Which hat do you want to wear?

God cares for you. God loves you very much. God loves us wherever we go.

Play House

Collect

Large cardboard appliance carton
Utility knife
Carpet square
Markers or non-toxic paints and paintbrushes

Do

Before class, cut windows and a door in the carton. Place carpet square on inside of carton on "floor." Decorate outside of carton with markers or paint.

In class, children play inside the "house."

Say

Let's pretend this is our house. Who would like to go inside?

God gave you a home to live in.

God cares for you. I'm glad God cares for you. I'm glad God cares for me!

Gardening

Collect

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

Toy garden tools
Watering can
Silk flowers and/or plants

Do

Show and talk about the Bible Story Picture. Children pretend to be gardeners by using the tools and watering the flowers.

Say

Chloe, where are the red flowers in this picture? That's right! Jesus said that God cares for the flowers. God cares for us, too.

Let's pretend we are gardeners. Micah, where should we grow our plants? We can take care of our plants by watering them.

God takes care of us, too. God loves us! Thank You, God, for Your love.

God Gave Me a Family

Collect

Toy house and people

Do

Children play with toy house and people.

Say

Ariel, who are you putting in the house?

God gave you a family to love you. God cares for you.

God Cares for Me • Quiet Play

Flower Sort

Collect

Plastic or silk flowers (no small parts) in a variety of colors, at least two of each color

Do

Children play with and sort the flowers. Talk about flowers whose colors match. (Note: Many young children are just beginning to distinguish colors.)

**Say**

Sophie, this flower is red. Can you find another red flower? Here it is. Let's put them together.

God made so many pretty flowers. God cares for the flowers. God cares for you.

Bonus Idea: Help interested children match flowers to colors of toys in the room.

Shape Fun

Collect

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

Shapes (triangle, circle, star) approximately 3 inches (7.5 cm) in size made from a variety of colored card stock

Do

Show and talk about the Bible Story Picture.

Children play with the shapes. Talk with children about the colors of the shapes, count the shapes, etc.

Say

Alyssa, where is the tree in this picture? Where is Jesus? "Look at the pretty flowers," Jesus said. "God cares for them." Then Jesus told people that God loves them, even more than flowers!

God cares about you. God made your eyes so you can see so many things.

William, can you point to the triangle? That's right! There it is. God made your eyes. God cares about you! Thank You, God, for Your love and care.

"God Cares for Me" Game

Collect

Pictures (from magazines or Internet) of food, clothes, families and homes

Laminating equipment or clear Con-Tact paper

Box with a lid, large enough to hold the pictures

Heart cut from red construction paper

Marker

Glue

Do

Before class, laminate or cover pictures with Con-Tact paper to protect them. Print "God cares for me" on the heart. Glue the heart to the top of the lid. Place pictures inside the box.

Let one child at a time choose a picture from the box.

Say

Let's see how God cares for you, Kyle. You can take a picture out of the box. I see you found the picture of apples. God gives you good food to eat. God cares for you by giving you what you need to grow.

Katie, you found the picture of the family. God gives you a family. God cares about you.

Sharing Books

Collect

Sturdy picture books with simple text about God's love and care

Do

Look at the pictures in a book with one or two children at a time. Read the text to interested children.

Say

Michael, the boys and girls in this picture are friends. God gives us friends to play with.

I'm so glad God cares for you and me.

Thank You, God, for giving us so many good things.