



Toddler Learning Styles

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Can one-year-olds learn? Yes, they are learning during every waking moment. The more important question is **WHAT** will toddlers learn during their group times in God's house. Toddlers have their own distinct learning style. Teachers who understand toddler learning styles can tailor Bible learning to fit the way toddlers learn.

Toddlers Like the Familiar

Toddlers are happier in God's house when they know their teachers. If possible, ask teachers to teach at a specified time for a specified period (i.e., during the Sunday School hour for six months). If that isn't possible, create lesson routines and rituals that will become familiar to the children. Remember, in the toddler years, "familiarity breeds contentment."

Toddlers Enjoy Ritual

Once toddlers master an activity, they like to repeat it again and again. Their enjoyment of ritual is an expression of their joy in learning.

Toddlers Learn Through Exploration

Plan ways to teach Bible ideas in a box, with a block, with toy animals, with a puzzle, with any safe object a toddler can explore.

Toddlers Learn from Imitation

If a teacher shakes a bell or moves a toy in a way related to a Bible story, toddlers will probably imitate that part of the lesson.

Toddlers Learn Through Repetition

Rather than changing the lesson every time the children come to church, repeat lesson



ideas and activities. These young children need repetition to give them time to master new skills. For this reason, consider making lesson activities, complete with instructions, that can be stored in and taught in the toddler room during every service for at least a month.

Toddlers Can Be Passive Participants

From time to time, toddlers will watch the teachers without imitating. During these times, toddlers continue to learn. When they have decided how to imitate (or that it is safe to imitate), they will become active participants.

Toddlers Understand More Than They Can Say

Some educators believe that for every word a toddler can say, he can understand 100 words. Toddlers can follow simple instructions. They can enjoy simple stories. They can also repeat funny sounds and simple words. Their level of understanding lets them learn first ideas about God.

Toddlers Respond Quickly to Music

Teachers can use music to gain (and regain) toddler attention, to gather children for a new activity, or to help children remember Bible ideas. One way to do this is to make up new words to familiar tunes.

Toddlers Need Help to Find Good Ways to Play Alongside Others

Teachers can guide toddlers toward good ways to take turns, to solve problems, to build with blocks, to play instruments, to cooperate, etc. If toddlers come

to see grown-ups as people with good ideas, they may continue to seek grown-up help as they grow older. Generally, children who love and trust grown-ups find it easier to love and trust God too.

Toddlers Learn Through Their Senses

The more senses that teachers can involve in Bible lessons,

the more children will enjoy church, remember Bible ideas, and transfer God's ways into everyday living. So watch for ways to allow toddlers to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell during every Bible session.



“You have known the Holy Scriptures since you were a child. The Scriptures are able to

make you wise. And that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:15, International Children’s Bible)

Questions for Further Study—

1. According to this article, what are the ways a toddler learns?
2. What tool can teachers use to gain a toddler’s attention?
3. How can you help a toddler learn to play well alongside others?
4. What are some ways you can involve more of the toddler’s senses in a Bible lesson?



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