Top Tips from the Toddler Project

Top Tips for ENCOURAGING FAITH AT HOME

*Church based toddler groups are often reticent about encouraging faith at home. They are worried that by being too pushy, families might be put off coming. But when one leader reflected on it, she said:*

*‘Faith at home? No – don’t know how to encourage that. We don’t want to put (the families) off. I’m not sure they are ready for it. They take the (Bible based) craft away with them though. One or two of (the families) take away the song sheets so that they can sing the songs at home. I’d forgotten – that’s doing faith in the home! It’s a first step. And they liked the prayer bubbles. They could do prayer bubbles at home.’*

*Here are some of the top tips Toddler Leaders has for encouraging faith at home without being pushy:*

**Books to borrow** – We collected a small library of Bibles and Bible story books suitable for babies and toddlers and encouraged families to borrow them.

**Books to buy** – At Christmas and Easter, our local Christian bookshop brings along a range of Bibles, story books and books focused on the season. We suggest parents might buy them as presents.

**Songs and Prayers** – Some parents asked us for the words the songs so that they could sing them with their children at home. We made copies of the songs and prayers we use most so that people could take them away.

**Saying Grace** – We always say a simple Grace before our snack time, so we copied a few Graces that families could take away and use at home.

**Story Bags** – We have put together some Bible story bags. They have a small book, some objects to help tell the story, a craft idea and a prayer. Families can borrow these and then we make sure we refill anything that has been used up.

**Take homes** – We make sure that there’s a colouring sheet and a craft based on the Jesus Storytime that we have. It means that families can carry on talking about the story together if they want to.

**Seasonal Prayer booklets** – We don’t do something every week, but when it is Advent or Christmas or Lent or Easter, we put together a simple prayer booklet which can be taken home.

**Celebrating baptism** – As well as celebrating birthdays, if a child has been baptised we’ll celebrate their baptism as well by lighting a candle. It’s a gentle reminder that they are part of God’s family all the time, not just at Toddler Group.

**Prayer Bubbles** – In our Toddler Group prayer time we thought of things we wanted to say thank you for. Then we blew bubbles and watched them rise, as if they were our prayers rising to God. The children really liked them, so we offered small bottles of bubble mixture if people wanted to use the idea at home.

**Social media** – We make use of Facebook to post faith ideas and activities that could be done at home. That way the parents can use it if they want to, but it doesn’t feel too pushy.

**Additional ideas and resources**

[GodVenture](http://godventure.co.uk/)

[Practicing Faith at Home](http://www.buildfaith.org/home-practices/)

[Faith at Home (book)](https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Books/Faith-Home-Handbook-Cautiously-Christian/0819232769)

[Faithful Families (book)](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Faithful-Families-Creating-Sacred-Moments/dp/0827211228/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1493980287&sr=8-1&keywords=Faithful+Families)

[Prayers at Home](http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/family-prayer-bag-10-easy-and-fun-ideas.html)

