The Rhythms of Worship

A Nursery Curriculum for Forming Young Hearts in Worship

Children's Worship Curriculum from
Teach Us to Worship and the PCA Committee on Discipleship Ministries



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Nursery Curriculum about Worship from Teach Us to Worship and the Committee on Discipleship Ministries

Welcome

Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.
Deuteronomy 31:12-13

From the beginning, God has gathered His people to worship Him as a family. Throughout Scripture, God works through His covenant promises, faithfully carried out within households from generation to generation, calling all His people to gather in His presence.

This nursery curriculum affirms a simple but profound truth: **babies and toddlers are covenant children who belong to God's family and are called by Him to gather with His people in worship.** The nursery is not separate from the church's worship life. It is part of God's house, and what happens there is formative.

The Nursery and Corporate Worship

Corporate worship is the center of the church's life. By His grace, God gathers His people to hear His Word, to pray, and to sing. We believe all children, including babies and toddlers, belong in this gathering and should be welcomed as part of the worshiping body.

Nursery ministry exists not as a substitute for corporate worship but as a support to families when needed. Whether children remain in the sanctuary or are cared for in the nursery, they remain part of the church's worshiping life.

This curriculum is designed to ensure that when children are in the nursery, that space reflects the truth of the whole church: God is present, His people belong to Him, and they are called by Him to gather and worship.

Purpose of This Curriculum

The purpose of this nursery curriculum is to help churches be intentional about the spiritual formation of infants and toddlers during corporate worship. Although very young children cannot yet understand explanations or participate verbally, God's Spirit is still at work in their hearts, forming them through presence, repetition, care, and love.

This curriculum aims to:

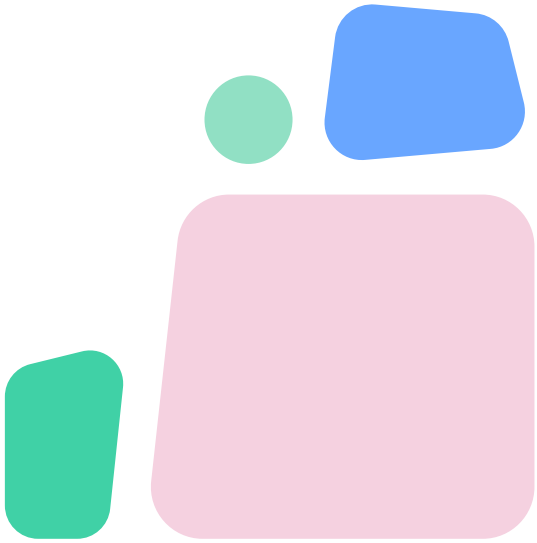
- ✓ Affirm that babies and toddlers are covenant children who belong to God.
- ✓ Shape the nursery into a worshipful space within the life of the church.
- ✓ Encourage volunteers to see their care as an act of worship.
- ✓ Reinforce for children, in age-appropriate ways, that they belong to God's gathered people.
- ✓ Support parents as they seek to teach their children to worship God.

Rather than entertaining or distracting children, the nursery becomes a place where the truths of worship are quietly and faithfully proclaimed.

Through simple words, repeated prayers, songs, visuals, and intentional play, children begin to learn:

- ✓ They are known and loved by God.
- ✓ They are part of God's family.
- ✓ They were created to worship God.
- ✓ God calls His people to gather and worship Him.

These seeds are planted slowly and faithfully, trusting the Holy Spirit to bring growth in His time.



How to Use This Curriculum

This curriculum is intentionally flexible and non-sequential. Nursery ministry is shaped by children's needs, and not every activity will fit every Sunday.

Volunteers are not expected to complete every activity. Some days will be full of feeding, rocking, diapering, and comforting—and these moments are not interruptions to ministry; they are ministry. The practices in this curriculum are designed to fit into the ordinary rhythms of care, not to replace them.

Prayers may be spoken aloud or silently at any time—when children arrive, during diaper changes, while rocking or feeding, or before they are picked up. Songs and hymns may be sung with children, hummed softly, or played quietly in the background. Teaching rhymes and simple words can be repeated whenever children are calm and attentive or simply spoken over them as they play or rest.

Use this curriculum as a toolbox, offering ideas that can be used as time, energy, and the children's needs allow. As volunteers choose what fits the moment, they can be confident that God's Spirit is at work in even the smallest, most ordinary acts of faithful care.

Each unit offers multiple ways to reinforce the main idea through these elements:

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage focuses on preparing the nursery for the unit ahead. The space where children are welcomed, held, and cared for is a tool for teaching long before words are understood. By shaping the environment with intention, the nursery reflects that it is part of God's house and connected to the church's worshiping life.

Setting the stage helps volunteers, children, and families remember that the nursery is not merely childcare. It is a place where God gathers His family, where children belong, and where worship takes place even in quiet, ordinary moments.

Two primary ways we set the stage in the nursery are **Visual Formation** and **Formation through Play**.

Visual Formation **(What Children and Volunteers See)**	Using images, words, and simple displays, we can reinforce the truths of each unit. What children and volunteers see week after week quietly shapes their understanding of this space and why it matters. Every unit includes a list of suggestions for visual formation.
Formation through Play **(Guided, Intentional Play)**	We recognize that young children learn through movement, repetition, and relational interaction. In the nursery, play is a primary way to teach the truths of God's Word. Through simple, guided activities, children experience what it means to belong to God's family and to gather with His people. As volunteers name what children are doing and connect it to the unit theme, play becomes intentional and purposeful.

Reading, Prayer, and Song

Reading, prayer, and song place the language of worship before young children in gentle, consistent ways. These practices are intentionally brief, simple, and repeatable, helping children become familiar with the rhythms of worship over time.

Through the teaching of rhymes, brief prayers, and familiar songs, children hear truths about God and His people repeatedly, helping them begin to recognize that active worship is a conversation with God that involves listening, praying, and praising Him—habits that will continue to form as they grow.

Devotional for Nursery Volunteers

Each unit includes a devotional written for nursery volunteers. This devotional is designed to prepare volunteers' hearts as they care for God's children during the worship service. It grounds nursery ministry in Scripture, reminds volunteers of the significance of their work, and invites them to view their care as an act of worship offered to God.

Churches are encouraged to share the devotional with all nursery volunteers at the start of each unit. It may be emailed or printed and distributed, and volunteers may read it before they serve. Providing the devotional in advance helps foster a shared vision, theological clarity, and encouragement for those serving week after week.

Below is a simple template churches may use when sharing the devotional at the start of each unit.

> Subject: Devotional for Nursery Volunteers
>
> Dear [Insert name of volunteer],
>
> Thank you for serving in the nursery and for caring for our youngest covenant children.
>
> As we begin a new unit this month, we wanted to share a brief devotional to help prepare your heart for this ministry. This devotional introduces the unit's theme and offers Scripture and reflection to encourage you as you care for God's children during worship.
>
> You are welcome to read it ahead of time, return to it throughout the month, or simply keep its truths in mind as you serve. We are grateful for how God uses your faithful care to bless children, families, and our whole church.
>
> Thank you for serving the Lord through your care for His covenant children.
>
> In His Great love,
>
> [Insert your name]

Nursery Supplies and Simple Materials

Nursery ministry does not require an abundance of toys or specialized materials. This curriculum assumes—and encourages—the use of simple, basic supplies that invite engagement rather than entertainment.

The goal of the nursery is not to distract children from worship but to welcome them, care for them, and gently form them as members of God's family. Simple toys—such as blocks, dolls, soft books, or basic figures—allow children to play, gather, and interact without overwhelming them or the space.

Churches with limited resources are encouraged to focus on a small number of open-ended items that can be used in many ways across units. Familiar toys used repeatedly help children feel secure and allow volunteers to connect play naturally to the truths being taught.

Rather than constantly adding new materials, the nursery is shaped by intention, repetition, and care. God uses ordinary things—and ordinary moments—to form His people from the very beginning.

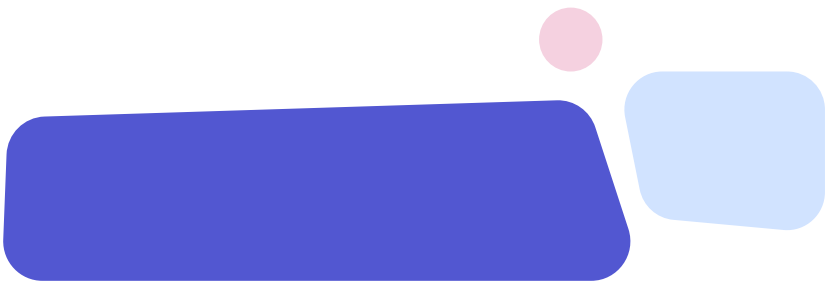
Setting the Stage in Shared or Temporary Spaces

Many churches do not yet have permanent buildings or dedicated nursery spaces. Church plants and congregations that rent or share space often set up and tear down nursery areas each week, adapt classrooms for multiple uses, and work with limited storage and supplies. This curriculum has kept such needs in mind.

Setting the stage for worship does not depend on a permanent room or extensive resources. Even temporary spaces can be prepared with intention. A portable poster, a familiar prayer, a simple song played softly, or repeated words spoken during care all help communicate that this space is part of God's house and connected to the worship of His people.

Churches are encouraged to adapt the suggestions in this curriculum to their context. Visuals may be simple and portable; play activities may be minimal, and routines may be brief. What matters most is not permanence but faithfulness. God gathers His people wherever they meet, and He delights in forming His church—often in borrowed spaces.

For church plants and congregations that rent space, this curriculum is intended to support, not burden, them. Even small, repeated practices can help children, volunteers, and families remember that God calls His people to gather and worship Him wherever He has placed them.

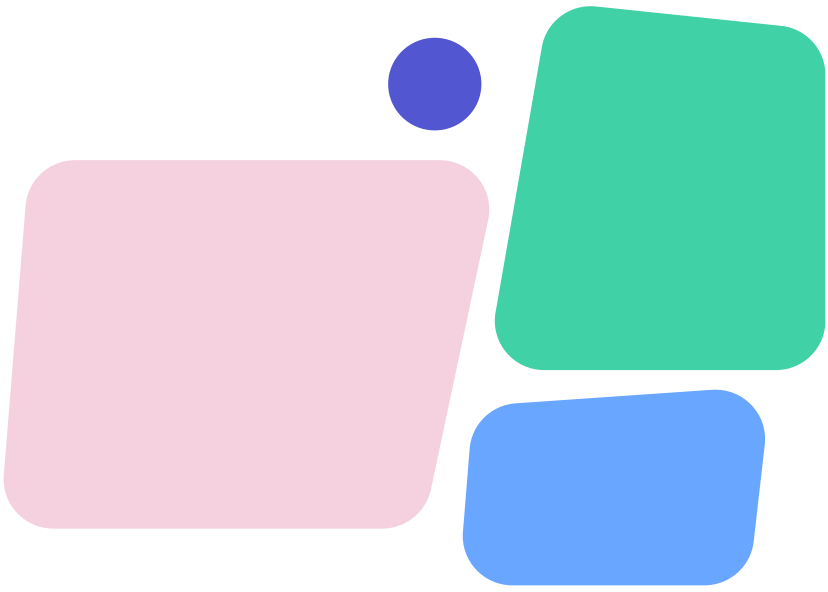


Partnering with Parents in the Worship of God

God has entrusted parents with the primary responsibility of teaching their children to know and worship Him (Deuteronomy 6:4-8). The church comes alongside families in this calling, encouraging and supporting them as they cultivate habits of faith in everyday life.

For this reason, lessons from this nursery curriculum will also be shared with parents. These materials invite families to practice simple, age-appropriate activities at home—such as praying short prayers, singing familiar songs, using repeated words, and naming God's presence in daily routines. In this way, the rhythms children experience in the nursery can be echoed and reinforced at home.

By partnering with parents, the church affirms that worship is not limited to one place or one hour each week. As children are cared for, prayed for, and gently taught at both church and home, they are formed to recognize that they belong to God's family and are called to gather with His people to worship Him.



The Rhythms of Worship

CURRICULUM YEAR 1 OUTLINE

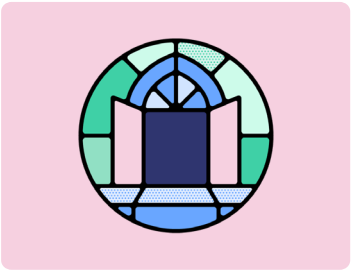
UNIT 1: WE GATHER TO WORSHIP



We worship God together.

Lesson 1: We are the church. (1 Peter 2:4-5)
Lesson 2: We worship only God. (Matthew 4:1-11)
Lesson 3: We worship God through Jesus. (John 4:1-30)
Lesson 4: We worship God together. (Acts 2:42-47)

UNIT 2: CALL TO WORSHIP



God calls His people to gather and worship Him.

Lesson 1: God Is the Creator. (Genesis 1)
Lesson 2: God Is the Promise Keeper. (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6)
Lesson 3: God Is Holy. (Exodus 19 & 20)
Lesson 4: Jesus Is God. (Matthew 17:1-8)

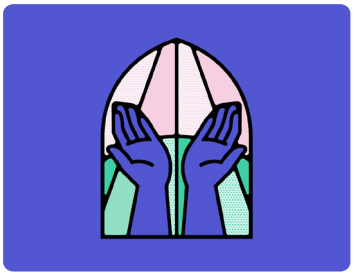
UNIT 3: PRAYER



We talk to God through prayer.

Lesson 1: We thank God in prayer. (Daniel 6)
Lesson 2: We pray God's kingdom will grow. (Matthew 6:9-13)
Lesson 3: We bring requests to God in prayer. (I Samuel 1)
Lesson 4: We confess our sins in prayer. (Luke 5:17-26)

UNIT 4: PRAISE



We gather to praise God with all our being!

Lesson 1: All creation praises God! (Psalm 148)
Lesson 2: We praise God with our songs. (Exodus 15:1-21)
Lesson 3: We praise God with our words. (Luke 17:11-19)
Lesson 4: We praise God with our bodies. (Acts 16:25-34)

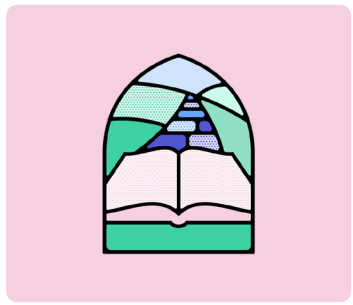
UNIT 5: READING THE WORD



God speaks to His people through His Word.

Lesson 1: God spoke to Moses from a burning bush. (Exodus 3:1-12)
Lesson 2: God called to Samuel when he was a boy. (I Samuel 3)
Lesson 3: Jesus called his disciples. (Matthew 4:18-22)
Lesson 4: Jesus told Lazarus, “Come out!” (John 11:1-44)

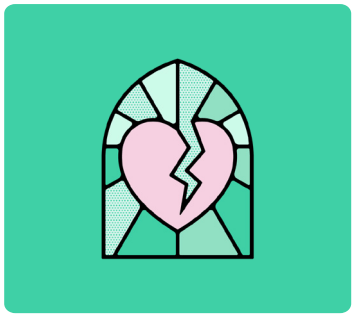
UNIT 6: WALKING IN THE WORD



God’s Word teaches His people how to live.

Lesson 1: God told Noah to build an ark. (Genesis 6:9-7:5)
Lesson 2: God called Abraham to make a sacrifice. (Genesis 22:1-19)
Lesson 3: Jesus called Zacchaeus to come out of the tree. (Luke 19:1-10)
Lesson 4: Jesus called Paul while he was traveling. (Acts 9:1-19)

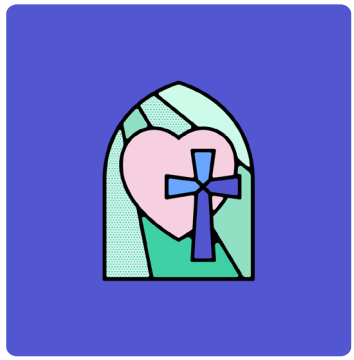
UNIT 7: CONFESSION OF SIN



Because God loves us, we can confess our sins to Him.

Lesson 1: Sin separates us from God. (Genesis 3)
Lesson 2: King David sinned against the LORD. (2 Samuel 12)
Lesson 3: King Josiah repented when the scroll of the law was found and read to him. (2 Chronicles 34-35:19)
Lesson 4: We are all like sheep who have gone astray. (Isaiah 53:6, John 10:1-18)

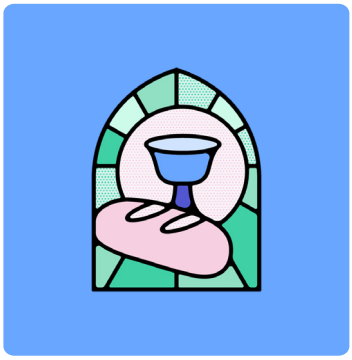
UNIT 8: ASSURANCE OF PARDON



We know we are forgiven because we belong to God and Jesus died for our sins.

Lesson 1: Jesus told the story of a father who forgave his son. (Luke 15:11-16)
Lesson 2: Jesus forgave a sinful woman. (Luke 7:36-50)
Lesson 3: Jesus healed a paralytic and forgave him. (Mark 2:1-12)
Lesson 4: Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches; we are forgiven because we are in him. (John 15:1-17)

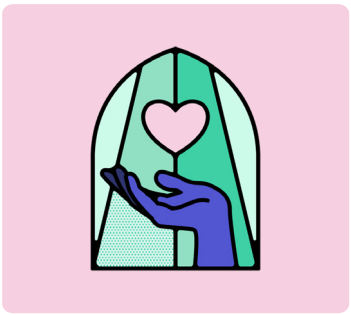
UNIT 9: SACRAMENTS



God gives us signs to proclaim His love for us and seal us as His own.

Lesson 1: Jesus is baptized. (Matthew 3:13-17)
Lesson 2: The jailer believed in Jesus, and he was baptized with his family. (Acts 16:25-34)
Lesson 3: God told His people to celebrate Passover. (Exodus 12)
Lesson 4: Jesus instituted a new meal to celebrate as God's people. (Matthew 26:17-29)

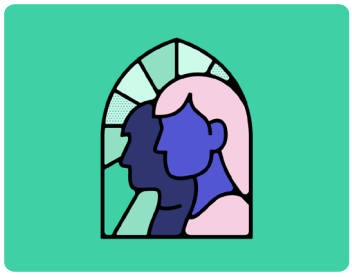
UNIT 10: TITHES & OFFERINGS



Everything Belongs to the Lord!

Lesson 1: Because we belong to the Lord, we give to Him. (Genesis 4)
Lesson 2: Because we belong to the Lord, we trust He will provide for us. (Luke 21:1-4)
Lesson 3: Because we belong to the Lord, we care for others. (Ruth)
Lesson 4: Because we belong to the Lord, we care for His creation. (Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 2:15)

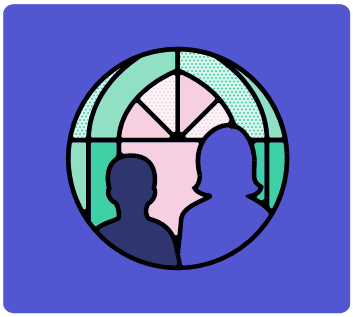
UNIT 11: CONFESSION OF FAITH



We gather and affirm what we, as God's people, believe.

Lesson 1: We believe by faith alone. (I Samuel 17:1-54)
Lesson 2: We believe that Jesus is God. (Mark 4:35-41)
Lesson 3: We believe there is only one God. (I Kings 18)
Lesson 4: We believe in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:1-12)

UNIT 12: BENEDICTION



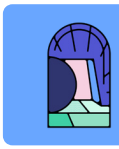
God sends us with His blessing.

Lesson 1: God watches over you. (Mark 10:13-16)
Lesson 2: Jesus tells His disciples to make disciples of all nations. (Matthew 28:16-20)
Lesson 3: The Church* was born to share the good news of Jesus. (Acts 8:26-40)
Lesson 4: Jesus is coming again! (Jude 24, Revelation 22:12-14)

ADDITIONAL UNITS:



ADVENT



EASTER

Teach Us to Worship



RHYTHMS OF WORSHIP

Unit 1: We Gather to Worship

UNIT MAIN IDEA

We worship God together.

LESSON 1	LESSON 2	LESSON 3	LESSON 4
We are the church. *1 Peter 2:4-5*	We worship only God. *Matthew 4:1-11*	We worship God through Jesus. *John 4:1-30*	We worship God together. *Acts 2:42-47*

UNIT MEMORY VERSE

You can say this to the children or gather them and use the paraphrased version and hand motions to say it together.

And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:22-23

And [God] put [Jesus] as head

(Touch your head.)

over the church.

(Touch your fingertips together high overhead to make a triangular-shaped church roof.)

Introduction: We Gather to Worship

Devotion for the Nursery Worker: Prepare Your Heart to Minister

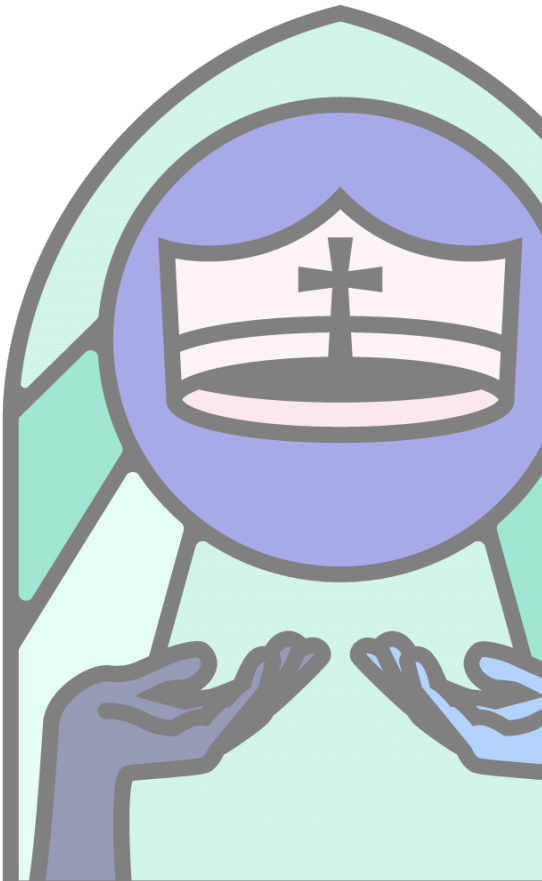
From the beginning, God communes with, rescues, and redeems His people within families. Gifting Adam a wife, God commands the new couple to be "fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28). Noah's wife, sons, and the sons' wives "went into the ark with Noah" and were kept safe as God's wrathful flood "blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground" (Gen. 7:15, 22). Childless Abraham was given a son in his old age who would be the start of a great nation in which "all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). That familial nation received God's law through Moses on Mount Sinai. King David was raised to power and promised a descendant whose "throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam. 7:16). When God fulfilled these promises by sending Jesus to conquer sin on the cross and then raised Him from the dead, a new family was created— the Church.

The local church, like a body, is "one and has many members" who are to "care for one another" (1 Cor. 12:12, 25). Regardless of age, social standing, race, or cultural background, all members of Christ come together as a family to worship the One True God.

As with any family gathering, corporate worship can get messy. Little ones get squirmy in their seats. Exhausted members sometimes drift off to sleep. Illness robs attendance records. Serving one another can sometimes pull us out of the worship service. Yet despite the mess and imperfection, we are called as a corporate family to worship God.

Today, you are serving some of the youngest members of this body and their families. Your time today allows parents to sit under the faithful teaching of Scripture. You will interact with little ones who may not yet be able to string together enough words to form a sentence. Maybe a little one in your arms will cry most of the time. Have no fear. Your time and ministry matter. These little ones will understand and remember more than you think.

You are planting seeds. With the power of the Holy Spirit, songs, Scripture, and prayers will work their way into the hearts of these children. They, too, are part of the body of Christ. Remember, God communes with, rescues, and redeems His people in families.



Setting the Stage

This section prepares the nursery for the unit ahead and helps create an environment that is worshipful for both the covenant children and the nursery volunteers.

Through space, rhythm, and repeated words, the nursery becomes a place where God's people learn—together—that we belong to Him.

Visual Formation

Use images, words, and simple displays in the nursery to help children and volunteers remember what God is teaching us in each unit. What we see week after week quietly shapes our hearts, reminding us that this space is part of God's house and that even our youngest children are included in worship.

- We are the family of God! Create a bulletin board with a picture of a church at the center. Add photos of the children and their families to show that God gathers His family to worship.
- Display the unit poster with the *"Prayer for Our Children."*

Formation Through Play

Use intentional, guided play to help children learn the truths of each unit.

- **Building Blocks** – Build a church with blocks. Use people to enter the church. Say, **"God's family goes to church!"**
- **Come Sit with Me** – Invite toddlers one by one to sit near a volunteer. Say **"Come, [insert name]. You are part of God's family!"**
- **Simple Call and Response** – Toddlers can echo one word.

  Use the First Catechism Question 1.

  Q: Who made you?

  (Hold your arms out as if asking a question.)

  A: God.

  (Point upwards.)
- **Care for Each Other** – Rock a doll or stuffed animal together. Say, **"We care for each other in God's family."**

Read

Use these teaching rhymes each week to teach young children the unit's main idea.

Lesson 1

We are the church. (1 Peter 2:4-5)

You are the family.
(Point a finger outward.)

I am the family.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We are the family of God.
(Make a sweeping open gesture with your arms.)

You are the body.
(Point a finger outward.)

I am the body.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We are the body of God.
(Make a sweeping open gesture with your arms.)

You are the church.
(Point a finger outward.)

I am the church.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We are the church of God.
(Make a sweeping open gesture with your arms.)

Lesson 2

We worship only God. (Matthew 4:1-11)

You are the church.
(Point a finger outward.)

I am the church.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We are the church of God.
(Make a sweeping open gesture with your arms.)

You will worship.
(Point a finger outward.)

I will worship.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We only worship God.
(Point a finger up towards the sky.)

Lesson 3

We worship God through Jesus. (John 4:1-30)

You are the church.
(Point a finger outward.)

I am the church.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We are the church of God.
(Make a sweeping open gesture with your arms.)

You will worship.
(Point a finger outward.)

I will worship.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We only worship God.
(Point a finger up towards the sky.)

Jesus came
(Rock an imaginary baby in your arms.)

so that we
(Make a sweeping open gesture with your arms.)

can worship God through Him.
(Point a finger up towards the sky.)

Lesson 4

We worship God together. (Acts 2:42-47)

You are the church.
(Point a finger outward.)

I am the church.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We are the church of God.
(Make a sweeping open gesture with your arms.)

You will worship.
(Point a finger outward.)

I will worship.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We only worship God.
(Point a finger up towards the sky.)

Jesus came
(Rock an imaginary baby in your arms.)

so that we
(Make a sweeping open gesture with your arms.)

Can worship God through Him.
(Point a finger up towards the sky.)

You will worship.
(Point a finger outward.)

I will worship.
(Point a finger to your chest.)

We worship God TOGETHER!
(On the word "together," jump up and cheer and clap your hands.)

Pray

You may use this prayer as children enter the nursery, when you change diapers, or when you rock them. God hears our prayers for our covenant children, who belong to Him, and He receives our loving care as an act of worship.

We gather to worship You.
We belong to Your family.
Hold [child's name] in Your loving care.
Thank You, Lord, for the blessing of belonging to Your family.
Amen.

You may gather the children and sing this with them, followed by the prayer.

Open, shut them. Open, shut them.

(Open and close eyes and hands.)

God hears us today.

(Cup hand around your ear.)

Open, shut them. Open, shut them.

(Open and close eyes and hands.)

It is time to pray.

(Put hands together and bow heads in prayer.)

Dear God,
Thank you for giving us Jesus as head of Your church.
Thank You for inviting us to worship You together at church.
In Jesus's name,
Amen.

Sing

Sing or play worship songs with the children. You can use songs from your worship service or the suggested playlist below.

Song Suggestion Playlist:

- "The Church's One Foundation"
- "Jesus Christ Is the Same" by Slugs and Bugs
- "Thy Word"
- "Here I Am to Worship"
- "The Doxology." This is a song you may play as children are picked up by their parents.