

## Take Heart!

Every new parent feels incompetent at first—especially with your first child. Give yourselves time to learn, permission to have doubts, and allowances to make mistakes. Forgive, learn, and go on.

If your child seems to have special needs, as soon as possible contact an early childhood intervention agency in your area (talk to your doctor, local family services, or school district). It is not too soon to seek the help and encouragement from teachers and therapists who work with very young children. Pray for God's strength and guidance in decisions you may need to make for your baby and in supporting each other.

It's never too early to start thinking about Baptism for your baby. Who will support you and your child as godparents? Also, start talking to your child about Jesus. Begin at birth to tell your child that Jesus loves him or her and that you love Jesus. Tell what He does for you. Pray to Him out loud. Sing the songs on the *Growing in Christ* CD. Be assured that the Holy Spirit is working through your words. When your child does understand, you are already in the habit of sharing Jesus with him or her and are comfortable doing it. Start early. Practice. Share your faith with your little one as a way of encouraging his or her faith. Tomorrow's memories begin today.

*Share your faith...*



## Helpful Things . . .

Buy a blank book to store memories of your child. Title it *The Adventures of Leah (or Luke)*. Make entries whenever you have things to record and a few minutes to do so. You and your child will treasure this item as the years go by. Also, consider using the following resources:

*Growing in Christ* CD. If you have not already received this CD, ask for one from the person who provided you with this newsletter. Play the recording often.

Concordia Publishing House is a publisher that continually offers new and classic books and resources to aid parents, families, and teachers in nurturing the faith of children in their care. Call CPH at 1-800-325-3040 to request a catalog.

Visit the CPH Web site frequently:  
[www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org)

Consult with your pastor and parish education leaders for suggestions of other resources that may be helpful to you as a new parent.



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# The Miracle of Birth!



Nursery Roll 1  
*Birth*

## Your Child Grows!

Welcome to the family! This new life that already is or is about to become a member of your family is going to turn your lives upside down by just simply being. You'll find this 5- or 6- or 8-pound creation of noise and cries, hunger and wetness, to be one of the most delightful yet demanding changes that has ever happened to you. This little baby, who so recently was still unidentified or undefined in your mind, is now real and crying and hungry and alive.

Take a minute to marvel at how God takes a tiny ovum and a tinier sperm, and once united, they become a baby. Even if this is repeat performance number ten, the awe at the miracle of birth never pales. What an exciting event! How awesome that God should entrust you with the care of such a little one and that He shows again and again how trustworthy and reliable He is. What an opportunity to trust God to help you love and nurture and extend the legacy of faith on to the next generation.

That is what you are doing, you know. The legacy of faith begins in the faithfulness of caregiving in these early weeks and months. We all learn best by experience. That's especially true of babies. They have no words for ideas yet, but their earliest ideas about love and trust and faith are formed even before the words make sense. Your job is to build the experiences that later become those faith words. Build with love.

*Build with love.*



## Dialogue for Dads

Now that this baby is imminent—or here—you can begin to think of it as real. But maybe you still think of this baby as an it. Maybe you have trouble switching from “it” to Emily or Joey or Camille or Jose because he or she only sleeps, cries, eats, and wets. Wait. It will happen. The first time Joletha quiets down for you, the first time Sammy settles in and snuggles against your chest, that's an event you will treasure for a long time.

Think about the fact that you, Dad, are a very important factor in your little one's early ideas about God, her or his heavenly Dad. Babies develop their ideas of love and trust through being loved and having their needs met. We can only love with an imperfect love, while God has revealed His perfect love and forgiveness for us through Jesus. Ask God to help you reflect His love as you love and care for your child.

One of the most tangible examples of love for your child to see is how you treat and respect your wife. Those first few weeks after your child is born, your wife will need your support and devotion. To fix a meal or bring home take-out, to throw in a load of laundry, to pick up groceries, to bathe the baby while she takes a quick rest, all without first being asked, will give the mother of your child the invaluable help she needs right now. Support with love.

*Support with love.*



## Messages for Moms

“What do you think?” How many times have you asked that question as you made countless decisions for and about this new baby? Have you ever turned it around and asked yourself what the baby will think of you?

A baby's thoughts may still be fuzzy by adult standards, but we do know that young children do begin to form memory banks as soon as they are born—maybe even before birth! Your task during these early weeks is not only to care for the physical and safety needs of this new person but to begin his or her memory banks of ideas and concepts. Your actions with this baby become the experiences that we later call dependability and love and reliability.

But you already may be asking, “How long can I be available twenty-four hours a day? How soon will I return to my job outside the home?” These questions may create anxiety. While your baby benefits from your presence at home, economic realities or other factors may pressure you to return to the away-from-home workforce. As you wrestle, seek help from God. At least once a day, spend time praying for guidance while you hold your baby. Frequent yourself in God's house and at His altar. Receive the gifts He offers.

Remember, your husband may feel neglected as you bond with the baby. Take time to give him some undivided attention as you grow to be a family. If you are a single mom, look for a support group or person who will listen and encourage.

