

Setting up a Toddler Group

This document contains a summary of questions that can help to explore a vision for a toddler group and practicalities that need to be considered before starting one up.

For more detailed training resources to set up a toddler group, see 'Building Blocks' by the Carer and Toddler strategy consultative group CATS.

<http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Tiddlywinks/ParentandToddlerGroups/69463.id>

Useful research to consider:

Children's Workforce Development Council, 'More than Sundays' report, 2009 available from The Family Matters Institute (<http://www.familymatters.org.uk>).

Toddler Group Research, 9Dot Research, 2016, accessed at:
http://www.going4growth.com/downloads/Toddler_Group_Research_Report_191016.docx
02/03/2016.

Your leadership groups needs to consider, think through and pray about these things and agree on them.

Your Vision

Who is the group aimed at? – ideally both – great early years opportunities for the children and safe environment and pastoral care for parents/ carers.

What is the purpose of the group? How will you demonstrate it is distinctively Christian?

Consider:

- Will the Bible be overtly shared?
- Christian hospitality
- How will volunteers share their faith?
- Prayer
- Children's spirituality
- Practical support for families.

Where and when will it be held?

What will the group be called?

Your Community

Describe your community? What are the current needs? How will the group fit into the current work of the Church/ Parish?

How will you consult and share the vision within the community, leadership of Church and congregation?

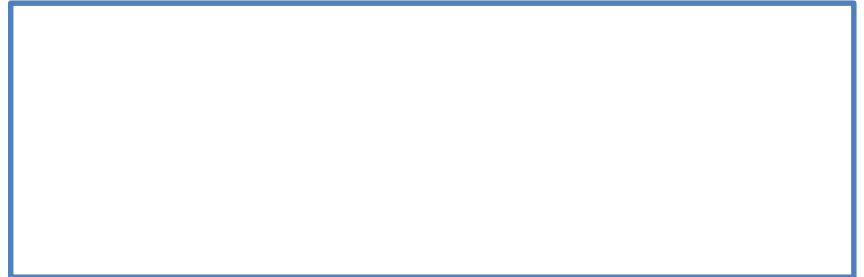
How will you encourage people on their journey of faith within your team? How do you plan to demonstrate God's love, share Christian hospitality and Faith with families and children?

- Will you pray as a team before the session?
- Pray about each family attending?
- Ask families to share something they are thankful for/ would like praying for during the session?
- Ask the Church to pray regularly for you?
- Show Christian hospitality, give parents an opportunity to talk?
- Share your faith with them?

Session Shape

What will be included in your session? In what order?

- Story
- Song and worship
- Prayer
- Play
- Creative time/ craft
- Food/ snacks OR



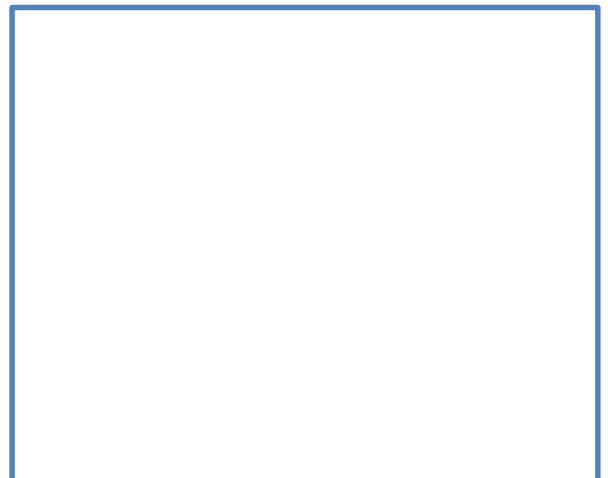
Praise and Play model?

How will families be welcomed?

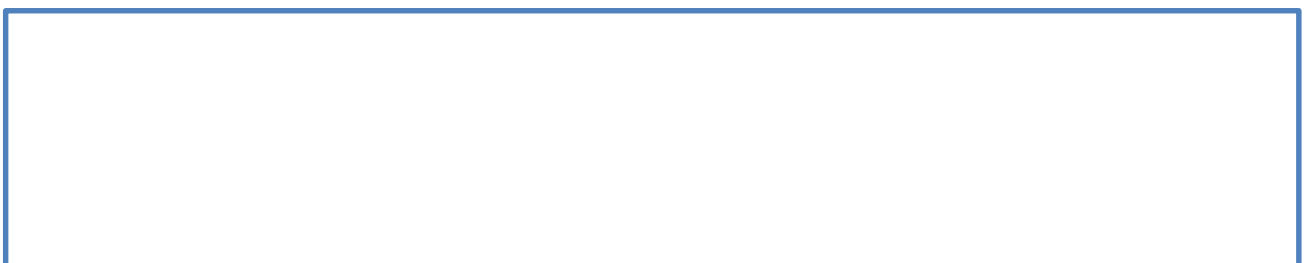


Who will be responsible for the following?

- Advertising
- Welcoming
- Taking payment/ keeping records
- Set up/ tidying up
- Planning
- Buying resources
- Preparing crafts/ activities
- Health and Safety (room checks, risk assessments)
- Safeguarding
- Preparing Food
- Linking with Church



What resources do you need to buy/ obtain before the group can start



Practicalities to consider:

Room set up/ tidy away

Room check sheet

Risk assessments

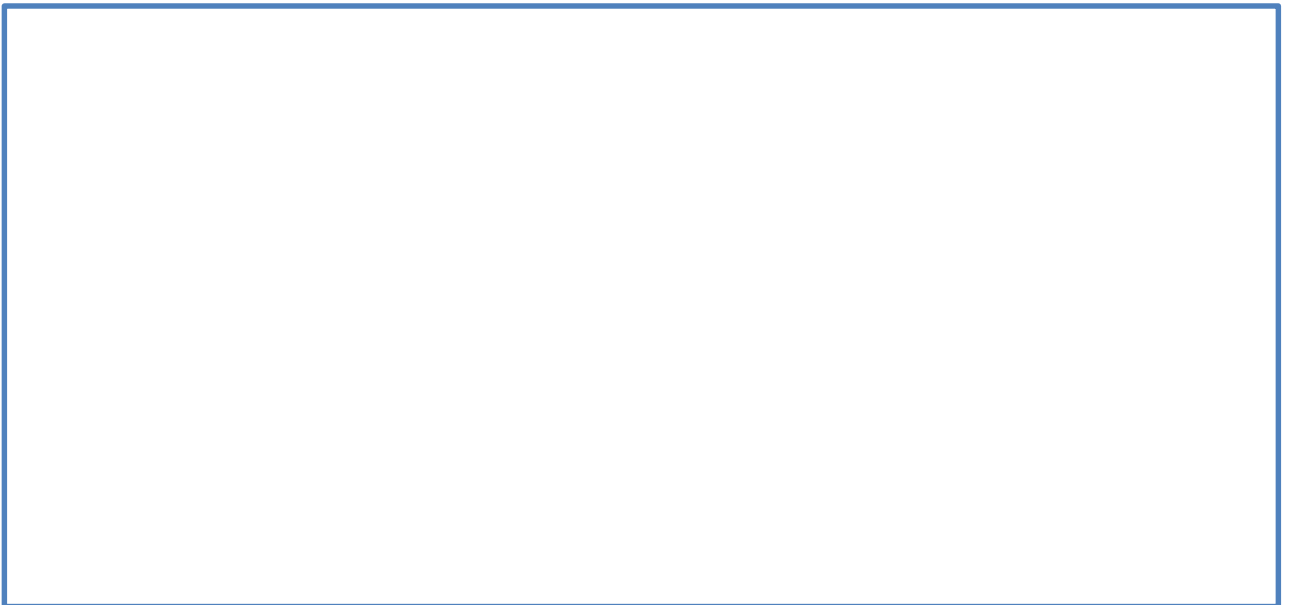
Hot drinks? (Managing)

Safeguarding

How much to charge? Float/ money/ banking.

Planning

How will your sessions be planned? Annually, broken down into terms/ weeks? How will you decide this? What resources will you use?



Free resources

Websites

www.1277.org.uk – 1277. Make them count. National strategy for Christian toddler groups.

www.careforthefamily.org.uk – Parenting, faith in the home.

<https://www.brf.org.uk/childrens-and-family-ministry> - Bible Reading Fellowship – resources and links.

<http://www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk> – free downloadable resources.

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk/> - Ideas and free resources!

www.Godventure.co.uk – ideas, resources, materials to buy.

www.ministry-to-children.com – links to free resources

www.spiritualchild.co.uk – ideas and resources

<https://uk.pinterest.com> – lots of ideas and photos for inspiration.

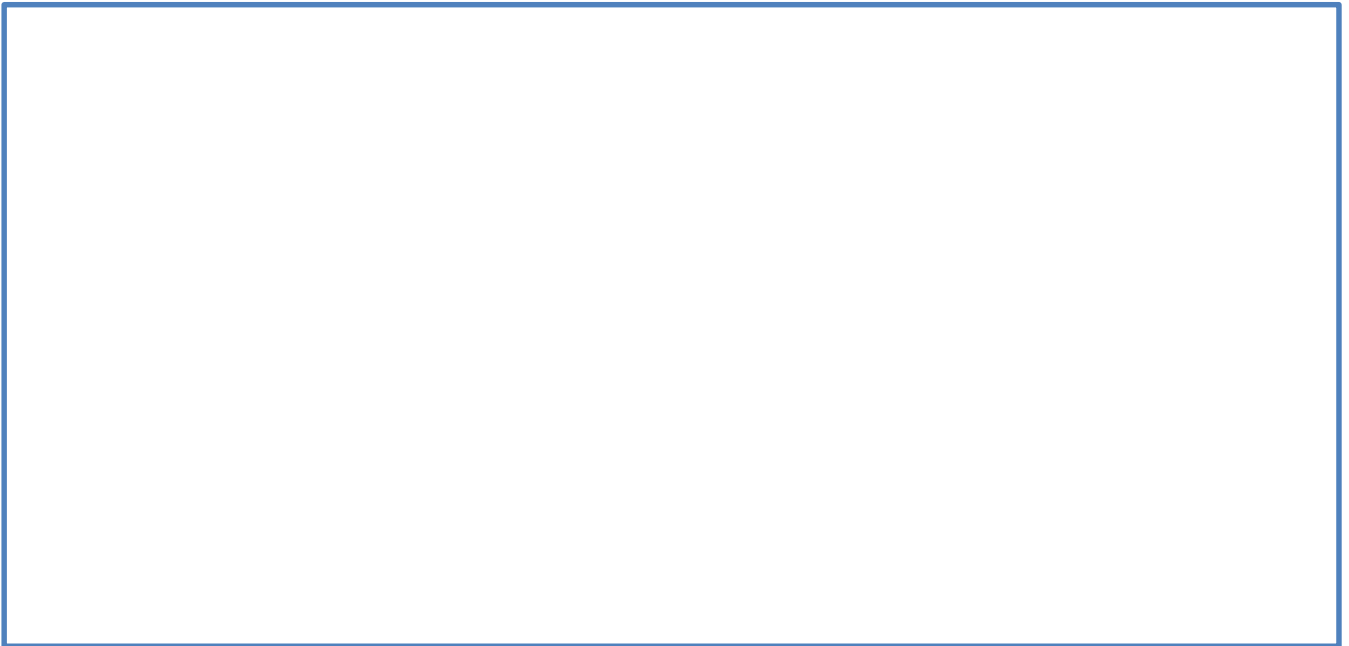
Resources to buy/ subscribe to:

<http://www.energize.uk.net/>

www.scriptureunion.org.uk/

<https://www.rootsontheweb.com/>

Next steps



Can you.....?

- Provide a safe and happy environment for children to play, learn and interact?
- Provide a welcoming place, of trust and safety, for all parents and carers to make friends and feel supported?
- Offer a listening ear, a lifeline to families in crisis, support for parents and carers having a tough time, empathy with those dealing with the on-going demands of young children?
- Care about developing long-lasting relationships for young families looking for friendship and support?
- Make people feel special through attention to detail, such as birthdays, remembering special occasions, difficult situations, knowing their names?
- Offer prayer for particular circumstances?
- Pray together before each toddler group session, highlighting any special concerns without breaking confidences?
- Hold regular planning meetings?
- Demonstrate a genuine love for each other as a leadership team?
- Keep church members informed and praying for you and those who attend?
- Inform and involve your church leader as much as possible?

