

Is there a need for a toddler group?

- Pray
- Consult with people in your community, including parents of toddlers and professionals such as childminders and midwives to discern the local needs
- Find out what groups already exist.

Starting a new group can seem like a big and challenging task, but here are some adapted ideas from Care for the Family to support you as you consider embarking on this exciting journey. Don't forget to start this whole journey with prayer, seeking God's will for the people in your community. Then begin by asking the questions on this page.

How to start a toddler group

What are your aims?

- To use this as a missional group, how can you make your toddler group distinctively Christian, but in a sensitive and appropriate way?
- Ensure aims are shared and understood by your team
- Share your aims with the wider church
- Review your aims annually to ensure they are still relevant.

When will you meet?

- Consult those who you anticipate coming to the group
- Research the time and days other groups meet and where the gaps might be
- Be aware that toddler groups tend to be fluid, changing as children get older, and as parents return to work from parental leave.
- Review your meeting times annually to ensure you are meeting the needs of those attending.

"It is estimated that between a third and a half of all children in this country, aged under 3, regularly attend a church run toddler group."
- 'It's just the Toddler Group', 2019



Who will do what?

- Create a list of what needs doing - for example, advertising, administration, finances, preparation, cleaning, health and safety, play, refreshments, craft, story and music.
- Allocate roles depending on the gifts and abilities in your team
- Review roles and responsibilities regularly
- Health and safety is an important area. You will need to consider insurance, DBS requirements, risk assessments and Safeguarding Policies. We suggest you discuss this with your Incumbent, and Parish Safeguarding Officer.

How will you resource your toddler group?

- Provide a variety of types of toys to meet the needs and interests of different ages and abilities
- Make sure they are clean, of quality and in full working order.
- Consider having a range of sensory toys
- Make sure there is a safe space for babies.
- Does your church have space in its budget for a toddler group, or will you need to do some fundraising?
- Will you charge people to attend, ask for a donation per family, or keep it free for all to attend?

How to start a toddler group

Who will be in your team?

- For any group to be sustainable, teamwork is essential. From the early planning stages, try to draw people together. This may be a team of varied ages, from parents to grandparents.

What will you do?

- Activities could include free play, craft, story time, music, singing, prayer and refreshments
- Remember this is a church group, so don't be apologetic for including a Bible story or prayer activity, embrace those elements and be creative!

For more ideas and resources for working with under 5s in church, check out our guide: <http://tinyurl.com/under5sguide>

Scan the QR code for more advice and guidance from the Go Team

