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*Eight Bible Study Sessions
and
Knitting Patterns for Baby Gifts*

knitted together



Julie Stiegemeier and Sara Nordling

A Women's Small-Group Bible Study

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*This study is dedicated with thanksgiving
to my women's Bible study group
at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Elmhurst, Illinois.
I thank God for your support and
love as sisters in Christ.*

*It is also dedicated to all those
who carry on the knitting tradition.*

—J.S. and S.N.



Table of Contents

<i>General Directions for Knitters</i>	8
<i>Suggestions for Small-Group Participants</i>	9
<i>Introduction</i>	11
<i>Session 1: Those Tiny Toenails!</i>	15
<i>Baby Booties</i>	21
<i>Session 2: Wrapped in God's Love</i>	23
<i>Easy Blanket</i>	28
<i>Session 3: Soggy Babies</i>	29
<i>Shell-Stitch Blanket</i>	35
<i>Session 4: Life to the Fullest</i>	37
<i>Sheep Toy</i>	42
<i>Session 5: Shelter from the Storm</i>	46
<i>Easy Hat</i>	53
<i>Session 6: The Ordinary and the Extraordinary</i>	55
<i>Baptism Shell Washcloth</i>	61
<i>Session 7: What Your Hand Finds to Do</i>	65
<i>Bath Mitt</i>	71
<i>Session 8: Numbering the Hairs on Our Heads</i>	73
<i>Difficult Hat</i>	78
<i>Conclusion</i>	81
<i>Leader's Notes</i>	85

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General Directions for
Knitters



This book is, first and foremost, a small-group Bible study developed to direct you to the Scriptures and to give witness to the Gospel in all aspects of life. It's also a little collection of patterns for baby projects. Combining a Bible study with knitting patterns seems like a likely thing to do because both knitters and those who participate in Bible study rarely do so in isolation. We are created for community, after all. And our participation in and appreciation for both activities are deepened when we join with others who share these passions.

The developers of this book assume that you already have some knowledge of knitting techniques, so we have not included step-by-step directions for how to do that. But we offer here some information to help you get started with these projects.

Tools used

Needles: Straight, circular, and double-pointed in varying sizes, and a yarn or tapestry needle for weaving in ends

Crochet hook

Tape measure

Scissors

Stitch markers

Suggested yarns

We suggest that you consider how these items will be used before you begin shopping for yarn. You'll want to use yarns that will be soft and comforting against baby's skin. Equally important, baby items should be made from durable yarn that holds up to laundering. Acrylics and cottons work well. Wools, silks,

and novelty yarns do not. Two of the items (baby bath mitt and washcloth) must be made from cotton yarn. Yarn weight depends on the pattern and size of needles, of course, but all of these items are made with fingering- and sport-weight yarns. These patterns are for useful, even utilitarian, baby items and not heirloom or keepsake gifts. Brands and weights are suggested for each pattern.

Stitch terms used

- Cast on
- Bind off
- K = Knit
- P = Purl
- YO = Yarn over (to increase)
- M1 = Make one (to increase)
- K2tog = Knit two stitches together
(to decrease)
- P2tog = Purl two stitches together
(to decrease)
- S1 = Slip one stitch
- SSK = Slip, slip, knit
- PSSO = Pass slipped stitch over
- DPN = Double pointed needle(s)
- Garter stitch = knit all stitches
- Stockinette stitch = knit on the front
side of the item,
and purl on the
back side
- * = indicates the beginning of a series
of stitches to repeat
- Turn = Literally, to turn your knitting
around so you begin knitting
the next row

About gauge

All of these patterns provide a gauge to ensure that your finished piece is similar in size and shape to the designer's original. The gauge is not as important for items such as the blankets or washcloth, but it is very important when making the other items. Always be on the safe side and knit a gauge swatch.

When you need help

If you get stuck, we recommend that you consult with your sister knitters, turn to a good knitting book, or search online for knitting tips. While we don't endorse a specific book or site, there are many helpful resources available to you.

Suggestions for Small-Group Participants

1. Begin small-group time with prayer.
2. Everyone should feel free to express her thoughts. Comments shared in the small group should remain confidential unless you have received permission to share them outside your group.
3. If your meeting time does not allow you to discuss all of the questions for the week, the leader should choose the questions most meaningful to the group.
4. Close by sharing concerns and prayer requests, then praying together.

"O LORD, You have searched me and known me!"

In these very few words at the opening of Psalm 139, we discover some extraordinary things about God.

Look at the verse again. What does it tell you? What is God saying to you today in these few words?

One thing we learn about is God's knowledge. What does He know? These words show us that God is omnipotent: He knows all. This verse describes God's knowledge of every person. He has "searched" and "known" us.

What else? Look at the verse again.

Whom does God know? He knows us. God is personal. He shows His interest in individuals and, even further, He is interested in each one of us. This is unusual when you consider people in the past and their experience with other (false) gods. Think of the priests of Baal who on Mount Carmel slashed their skin and bled to try to get the attention of their false god. Think of the endless wheels of prayer that Buddhists spin hour upon hour to try to elicit the answer to their petition. But in these very few words from Psalm 139, we find something very different. We find that we have a Father in heaven who is infinitely interested in each one of us, who cares enough to search and know us, who sees us as worthy to be knowable.

One other thing from these few words stands out. Does this verse show people reaching up to God, seeking His attention, searching Him out? No. It shows us that God takes the initiative; He reaches down to us, searches us and knows us.

We can learn so much from just a few words in Scripture, can't we? Some things we maybe never thought about before; other things we've known but have taken for granted.

About a year ago, I went to a short workshop on interpersonal communication. The college professor who was leading the talk gave the group a task. We had to pair up and listen—really listen—to our partner talk about an event in the past that had made a big impact on him or her. We had to listen so carefully, in fact, that then we would repeat the highlights of the other's experience to the group. While we were listening, we could only ask clarifying questions and not interject any of our own thoughts or experiences.

It was a fascinating exercise because it taught me to “zip the lip,” if only for a few minutes. Whenever I talk to people, I love to share something similar in my own life. But is that really listening? Maybe it's just an example of me liking the sound of my own voice or enjoying my own experiences again while not really listening to the other person. Through this activity, though, by consciously and care-

fully listening to each other, a strong connection was formed between a stranger and me. We shared an important moment, listened, and really connected.

Our human connections are always tainted by sin. We have to be taught how to listen and, at least on occasion, zip it. There's nothing wrong with sharing similar experiences; this is how we connect. But what usually happens is that we are too wrapped up in our own thoughts to concentrate on another individual.

But God is not that way. He searches us. He knows us, individually, personally. He wants to hear the sound of our voice, the concerns that weigh on us, the burdens and the joys of whatever may be in our hearts.

Psalms 139 goes on to show just how intimately God knows us: “For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well” (vv. 13–14). God not only knows us, but He also made us, intricately, delicately, intimately.

I took up knitting a couple of years ago and was taught by Sara Nordling, who created the patterns for this study. I fumbled around with my needles and yarn for my first couple of projects and then, as time went on, I started to see some beautiful patterns emerge from my hands.

What I find fascinating about knitting is that there are no knots in the patterns. It's really just one piece of yarn, turned and twisted and looped and tucked into beautiful patterns. From this one strand of yarn, a garment is created, loop by loop and row by row. And at the end, when I finally ease the last loops off the needle, I know this project inside and out. I made it, humble though it may be. I see the mistakes, the details, the colors, and the pattern in a way no one else will ever see it.

This is, perhaps, a small glimpse into the way God knit us together. He formed us. He shaped us. And He continues to use experiences in our daily lives to recreate us into His disciples and reassure us of His grace and favor. He knows the details, the hopes, the fears, the loves, and the hurts better than anyone else ever could.

This Bible study is unique in that, along with the Bible readings and questions and answers, your group also can work together to create some beautiful projects to give away to a local crisis pregnancy center or use as Baptism gifts in your congregation or in some other way you might choose. We women are great multitaskers, so this should be no sweat. Through each project and each week of your study, learn and trust that God knows you as your Maker, your Redeemer, and your closest friend and advocate. God knows you intimately, as the One who made you and shaped you into the wonderful creation you are today. And even better than that, He has recreated you in the redeeming work of Christ.

So, knit away! And enjoy the promise that God, who knit you together, knows you, cares for you, and loves you as His perfect creation!

Julie Stiegemeier

Those Tiny Toenails!

As a young mom,
I marveled at the tiny fingers and toes
of my baby. These perfectly formed hands and
feet in miniature amazed me. The soft half-moon of a
tiny toenail. The spreading, bending, grabbing fingers. The
fingernails, soft but sharp enough to scratch his little face.

Recently, I was looking through my son's baby book and turned
to the page with his footprint. Five toes, an arch, a heel, with ridges
and wrinkles, in a little imprint on the page, representing all those pre-
cious memories of his babyhood. That little baby now is taller than me,
and every day I see glimpses of the man he will soon become. But I will
never forget that overwhelming sense of awe and wonder as I studied
this little one's perfect toes and fingers in the days after he was born.

It amazed me to think of God's perfect creation and my role as
mother and caregiver to this tiny little one.

I remember one afternoon in particular when my son
was maybe a month old. He was still small enough
to be in his bassinet and to stay wrapped
in his tight swaddling cloths



throughout his nap. He lay on his side, one tiny fist near his face, the perfect profile of his face softened against the white flannel sheet. So calm, so at peace, so beautiful. Emotion welled up in me. God had given me this precious treasure to love, to care for, to mother through the changes of life. As a new mom, I felt the overwhelming sense of God's creation, His perfect formation of this tiny child in my care.

In this lesson, we'll begin at the beginning. We'll consider who God is as Creator and Father. We'll look at the specifics of how creation was formed and then draw some applications from this.

Part 1

1. Read **Genesis 1:1–2**. How is the earth described in these verses?

2. Read **Genesis 1:3–27**. Fill in the blanks below:

God created _____ and _____ (vv. 3–5) on the first day.

On the second day, God created an expanse (sometimes referred to as a “vault”), or the _____ (vv. 6–8).

God gathered the waters, and then called the dry land _____ and the gathered waters _____ (vv. 9–10).

And then on the third day, God said, “Let the earth sprout _____” (v. 11).

On the fourth day, God created two lights in the sky, the _____ and the _____ (vv. 14–19).

On the fifth day, God created _____ and _____ (vv. 20–23).

On the sixth day, God created _____, _____, and _____ (v. 24); and last He created _____ in His own image (vv. 26–28).

3. As you review these verses, what is the repeating refrain? In other words, how is the creation described? (See vv. 4a, 10b, 12b, 18b, 21b, 25b.)

4. Compare: How did God create the world and living creatures (see **Genesis 1:20–22, 24–25**), and how did He create humans (see **Genesis 2:7, 21–22**)?
5. What is unique about people (see **Genesis 1:26–27**)?
6. How does this knowledge of God as your Creator change the way you think about yourself? This information is likely not new to you, but how does reconsidering these verses give you a renewed sense of purpose?
7. Even further, how does the fact that God created you *in His own image* change the way you view yourself and your purpose?

Part 2

8. Why is it that some people do not believe in God as the Creator of the world? (See **Hebrews 11:3.**)

When thinking about the origin of the world, everyone must go on faith. No human was there to observe the formation of the world, of course. Even those who cling to the theory of evolution must rely on their beliefs and not hard scientific data. Instead, Christians, by faith, hold to what the Bible teaches—that God formed everything by His mighty, powerful Word.

9. So, who is God, the One who made all of creation? Let's begin by considering His name. What is the name we call God, our Creator? (See **Malachi 2:10; Matthew 5:9.**)

10. Because of sin, we were separated from God and His perfect creation in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3**). This great divide between God and man is described in **Romans 8:7**. Write a summary of it in your own words.

11. What is the reason we can call ourselves children of God? (See **Galatians 3:26–28** and **John 3:16–18.**)

Digging Deeper, Part 2

12. Jesus, our “go-between” or mediator, brought us back to God. Read **2 Corinthians 5:19** and **1 John 2:2**. How is Jesus, our mediator, described, and what is His work on our behalf?
13. Another image of God is related in **Isaiah 64:8–9**. How is the relationship between the Lord and His people described in these verses?
14. You are God’s own child, created in His image. What impact does this have on how you live?
15. What impact does the knowledge of being God’s own child have on how you treat yourself? how you treat others?

We were made by
God's loving, patient, artistic
hand. He is the potter; we are the clay. He
shaped us into the perfect creation, made in His
own image. We see glimpses of this perfect creation
in a baby's tiny fingers, though we know this world is
tainted by sin. But we trust that God is our Father and
we are His children through the sacrifice of Christ on the
cross for our salvation. We are adopted into God's kingdom
through the washing of Baptism through water and the
Word. These biblical truths not only underpin our under-
standing of creation and the beginning of the world,
but they also shape our thoughts and beliefs about
our eternal condition. Write a prayer of
thanksgiving, with a grateful heart to
God for all of His good gifts.

Verse to remember:

*By faith we understand that the universe was
created by the word of God, so that what is
seen was not made out of things that are visible.*

Hebrews 11:3

Project: Baby Booties

Skill level: Intermediate



Needles: Set of five US size 5 DPNs; one crochet hook size H or similar size; yarn needle for weaving in ends

Yarn: Bernat Softee Baby or similar weight

Gauge: 2" × 2" 12 stitches and 14 rows in stockinette

Begin with a provisional cast on: With crochet hook, chain five stitches in contrasting scrap yarn of same weight. Slip these loops onto one DPN.

Sole

1. Knit 5 stitches across
2. K1, M1 (make one by knitting in the back of the first stitch, then knit in the front of that stitch; this second knit stitch counts as the next knit stitch, or whatever stitch is needed next), K2, M1, K2 (you should now have 7 stitches)
3. K row
4. K2, M1, K2, M1, K3 (9 stitches)

5. K 27 rows
6. K1, K2tog, K3, SSK, K1 (7 stitches)
7. K row
8. K1, K2tog, K1, SSK, K1 (5 stitches)

Sides of foot

1. K 5 across.
2. Pick up and K 16 stitches on side.
3. Remove crochet loops and place 5 stitches on a needle and knit. Pick up and K 16 stitches on side.
4. K around 5 rows.

Top of foot

Work from short end; “SSK” and “P2tog” stitches will be one stitch on working needle and one on the side of the foot.

1. K1, M1, K3, M1, SSK, turn
2. Slip 1 (S1), P5, P2tog, turn
3. S1, M1, K5, M1, SSK, turn
4. S1, P7, P2tog, turn
5. S1, K3, P1, K3, SSK, turn
6. S1, P2, K3, P2, P2tog, turn
7. S1, K1, P5, K1, SSK, turn

8. Repeat row 6

9. Repeat row 5

10. S1, P7, P2tog, turn

Repeat rows 5 through 10 two more times for a total of three repeats.

Cuff

Using the remaining 18 stitches, work in the round.

1. S1 with yarn on the inside of the bootie, K to the end of the round.
2. *K2tog, YO, P2tog, YO. Repeat from * to the end of the round to make eyelets.
3. *K2, P2. Repeat from * to end of the round for a total of 7 rows.

Bind off loosely. Weave in ends.

I-cord

Using one DPN, cast on 2. With another DPN, knit these two stitches, do not turn. Bring the yarn to the back and knit the next row. Repeat until cord measures 14 inches. Weave in ends and thread through eyelet holes. Tie in bow.

**leader's
notes**

Session 1

1. The earth was formless and empty; darkness was over the surface of the deep.
2. Light [Day]; darkness [Night]; sky [Heaven]; Earth; Seas; vegetation; sun; moon; all sea creatures; birds; livestock; creeping things; beasts of the earth; man.
3. Creation is described as very good.
4. God created the world and living creatures with His words, His voice. God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Eve was taken from one of Adam's ribs.
5. We were created in God's own image.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Answers will vary.
8. It is by faith we believe that God created the world. Without faith, people do not believe in God's creative work.
9. Our Father.
10. The mind is hostile to God and does not and cannot submit to God's Law.
11. We can call ourselves children of God because in Christ Jesus we are sons of God through faith and Baptism.
12. Jesus reconciled us to God through His death. As both God and man, Christ Jesus paid for our sins. He is our means of forgiveness, fully and finally satisfying our need for atonement.
13. God is our Father, our potter, our Maker.
14. Answers will vary.
15. Answers will vary.

Session 2

1. Answers will vary. Each of us is uniquely created.
2. God has known us since conception, and even before that. It can be comforting to know that God is our Maker, who has known us from all eternity.
3. Answers will vary.
4. We enter the world with nothing; we leave with nothing.
5. The robe signified the favor that Jacob, their father, showed to Joseph.
6. The brothers strip Joseph of his robe, throw him into a well, and then sell him to Ishmaelites, who in turn sell him into slavery to Egypt.
7. The theme is that of forgiveness, that God can bring good from evil, and that God is always in charge.
8. Jesus gave Himself for us to purify us from all sin.
9. Through Baptism, we are clothed with Christ. We are robed in garments of salvation and in robes of righteousness.
10. Answers will vary. Our perspective sometimes is skewed by our own feelings or emotions; however, God's ways are not our own. We need to view the world—and ourselves—through the lenses of God's grace and mercy.
11. Answers will vary.
12. Answers will vary. God does not condemn us; even more, He graciously wraps a robe of righteousness around us. He does not see the sins we have committed. We can rest in the assurance of God's grace.
13. Answers will vary. Sometimes when there is grievous wrong done to us, we can find it extremely difficult to forgive. It's also more difficult, humanly speaking, when we have been wronged repeatedly by the same person. Especially in these sorts of situations, we need to rely on God's strength. He does not hold our sins against us. Neither should we hold wrongs committed against us.
14. Answers will vary.

Session 3

1. Baptism is receiving the Father (having God as one's gracious Father) and the Son (receiving all of the benefits of the Son's redeeming acts) and the Holy Spirit (receiving the life-giving, life-sustaining power and presence of the Holy Spirit). Baptism is the enacted Gospel of the Trinity.
2. Baptism is the doorway through which we receive salvation.
3. Baptism washes away our sin and gives us a membership into God's family. We become His adopted children.
4. Noah's Ark/Flood: Floodwaters were used to destroy; God sent His judgment on the earth; the ark saved those who believed. Baptism: Used to save us from eternal death; applies the benefits of Jesus' death for our sins; saves us from sins. Noah and his family started a new life after leaving the ark. We are given new life in Baptism and are welcomed into God's family. Also, in Genesis 9:8–17, God establishes a new covenant, entrusts the care of the earth and its creatures to Noah and his family, and gives a sign (rainbow). Baptism is a covenant of sorts between the parents/godparents/congregation and God to support this new believer in his or her walk and help the person "grow" in faith. We are also given the sign of the cross and water in Baptism.
5. The Ethiopian was reading the Old Testament Book of Isaiah, the prophet.
6. The Ethiopian said, "How can I [understand it], unless someone guides me?"
7. The kingdom belongs to all who have a trusting, childlike faith and who receive the kingdom of God as a gift freely given. It is for any believer, near or far.
8. The three drops of water symbolize the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The image of the three drops of water relates to the life-giving gifts of the Holy Trinity, which are applied to us in Baptism. We are adopted into God the Father's family because the Son died on the cross so we could be saved. Finally, we are given the gift of the life-sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit, who helps to guide and nurture us as we grow in faith.
9. This might be a fun discussion for your group. Most families choose to have sponsors or godparents involved who promise to help encourage the newly baptized to continue growing in faith. Other traditions are to have a large family party afterward. Often for infant Baptisms, there may be a special baptismal gown handed down from other family members. These traditions can help you "relive" the blessings that your Baptism continues to bring you as a believer. Luther connected the waters of Baptism to our daily use of water in washing to help us remember and appreciate the blessings of Baptism.