



MESSY ONE-YEAR-OLDS

By Sherry Surratt

I'm not sure what captivates me more . . . the spontaneous belly laugh or the drool-mouthed wonder on their angelic face. I can fall in love with a one-year-old faster than they can stink up a room with a saggy diaper. The cherub cheeks and adorable fat thighs draw me in, almost enough to make me overlook their incessantly snotty nose and the jelly they just smeared in their wispy new hair. Almost.

It's the mess that gets me. Their little fingers are drawn like magnets to anything breakable. The moment their hands become sticky-gooey, an internal signal screams somewhere in their little bodies, "Wipe yourself on something clean and white. Right now."

Sitting at the dinner table, I see the same look on my granddaughter Mollie's face that I saw on her daddy's face so many years ago. It's the look of curiosity that drives a toddler to snatch and smear, squish, then shriek with delight.

Sweet discovery is what this phase is made of. It's what makes patience and endurance such prized commodities for the parents of this age. You're helping your one-year-old navigate the mess of discovery. During this phase, your brilliant bundle of exhausted energy will climb her first stairs, say her first sentence, and test her independence—

independence illustrated with piercing shrieks, and that vehemently spoken word: "No!"

But within the mess is an indescribable joy. He just toddled his first Frankenstein steps, three in a row, boasting the proud look of an astronaut landing on the moon. She just grabbed a crayon and scribbled her first work of art. Your darling can identify his nose and eyes and ears on command, and you're certain he has the makings of a brain surgeon.

Sweet joy and pride so big it hurts—this is what wells up in the hearts of moms and dads as they watch their one-year-old develop into a little person with opinions and intellect and personality. And as you gaze, you begin to realize what this really means. Not only do you get to watch the beauty of potential form right before your eyes, but you get to help influence, train, and build who your child will become. Just remember: There will come a day when your once-helpless baby bathes and dresses and feeds himself, but the journey to get there comes with a little mess along the way.

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BIBLE STORY

GENESIS 8:1-9:17

God keeps Noah and his family safe and then gives the rainbow as a sign of a new promise.

SAY THIS

**WHO KEEPS HIS PROMISES?
GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES.**

DO THIS



MORNING TIME

When you go into your child's room this month, say, "Good morning, [child's name]! Let me see that big boy/girl smile. There it is! God loves that smile, and so do I!"



DRIVE TIME

As you drive, sing the following to the tune of "A Sailor Went to Sea": "God hears me when I pray, pray, pray. God hears me when I pray, pray, pray. God hears me when I pray, pray, pray. 'Cause He loves me all the day, day, day."



CUDDLE TIME

Cuddle up with your child this month and pray, "Dear God, Your love for us is SO big. I pray [child's name] will always remember that You love him/her and nothing will ever change that. Help us both to trust Your plans for us. We love You, God. In Jesus' name, amen."



BATH TIME

While bathing your child, soap up half of his/her leg. Ask, "Is ALL of your leg soapy or just some of your leg?" Do this with other parts of their body, asking each time, "Is ALL of your [body part] soapy or just some of it?" Say the memory verse together. "Trust the Lord with ALL your heart," Proverbs 3:5. God wants us to trust Him with ALL our heart.

**BASIC
TRUTH**

GOD LOVES ME.