



The Holding Stage

If you're caring for a child between the ages of **0–4**, you are in the ***Holding Stage***—a foundational season of connection, trust-building, and love. In this stage, you literally *hold* your child—but you also hold the child's developing sense of identity, safety, and value. Your consistent love reflects **God's character** and forms a bridge for your child to one day understand who God is.

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man."

Luke 2:52

Tips for Caregivers

- Just like Jesus grew within a loving family, your child's healthy development is shaped by nurturing relationships.
- Don't underestimate simply holding your child.
- Your child's development is also shaped by faithful routines and practices.
- You mirror God's heart to your child in how you respond and engage.

Growth Model



Plant

Each interaction (touch, voice, play) you have with your child is a seed that helps shape your child's world.



Root

You offer children an opportunity to be seen, heard, and embraced.



Growth

You introduce routines and repetition to reinforce learning and connection.



Fruit

Your child responds with trust, joy, and increased independence.

Activity: Share the Joy of Music

STEP 1 (The Why)

Did you know that...?

- Music has the ability to strengthen bonds and encourage healthy growth.
- Infants can recognize and respond to music even before birth.
- Music helps build strong associations for love, calmness, and joy.
- Children begin to form memories tied to your voice and shared rhythms.

The following activity will help you practice sharing music and singing with your child. And, just a reminder, your voice doesn't need to be perfect—your joyful presence is what matters most!

STEP 2 (Activity Directions)

- 1 Choose a simple, cheerful song you enjoy.
- 2 Sing it or play it during routine activities (e.g., diaper changes, bath time).
- 3 Repeat it often so your child learns to anticipate and enjoy that moment.
- 4 **Bonus:** Create a "clean-up song" for toddlers to use later in the stage.



Encouragement

You don't have to be perfect. You just have to be present.

God designed **family** as the starting place for love, faith, and connection. As you nurture your child, God is also growing something beautiful in you.

Let every lullaby, snuggle, and song be a quiet act of worship—and a seed of Christlikeness planted deep in your child's heart.