

PREPARING

For Baby

Congratulations on this exciting stage of life! Whether you've recently had a new baby, are counting down to your due date, or preparing to adopt, you've likely noticed that parenthood is an entirely different world. In the midst of all the joy and anticipation comes a whole new level of stretching and character development. You may be wondering if life will ever be the same. In many ways it won't! It will become more fulfilling, more challenging, and more expensive than ever before as you pour your time, talents, and resources into an investment that will certainly yield amazing dividends! Those blessed with the gift of children are called to inspire and nurture the faith of the next generation as life's greatest privilege and priority. So, prepare for this season by taking four intentional steps toward the transition to parenthood.

Step One: Pray Up

As you embark on this incredible journey, set the tone of your parenting by seeking the Lord in prayer. The task of parenting can often seem overwhelming, but remember that if God has called you to it, He will equip you for it! Seek Him for wisdom and cover your child in prayer through each stage.

Step Two: Buckle Up

As new parents, you are on a roller coaster of new adventures - with highs you could have never imagined and lows that will push you to discover abilities and courage you didn't know you had. Along with God's blessing of children comes His calling to lay your life down for your child (Philippians 2:3-11). You will sacrifice things you once took for granted, like sleeping in or enjoying a spontaneous getaway with your spouse. It is a sacrifice well worth making.

Step Three: Give Up

When you give sacrificially as parents, you probably won't get the same kudos you would get in the workplace nor the same recognition you would have given each other for similar efforts before the kids arrived.

You're moving into a time of life when such sacrificial giving is just something you have to do often without fanfare. It's in this aspect of your new mission - losing your life - that you find your life (Matthew 16:24-25). It's here that you develop "servant muscles" through the ongoing exercise of selfless giving. You'll also find that parenting is an arena for Christian discipleship with a "dailiness" and intensity like no other.

Step Four: Team Up

Most couples entering into parenthood discover a sense of shared purpose and accomplishment that pushes their relationship into a greater awareness of partnership and joy. They may face relational strains. Adjusting to less sleep, sex, money, and time for each other can bring a short-term dip in marital satisfaction. Couples often find themselves taking their frustration out on the only other adult in the house. Your marriage can survive this adjustment and experience great joy in parenting if you remain a team. Lay your lives down for each other (Ephesians 5:22-33) and give each other an extra measure of love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) and grace (2 Corinthians 9:8). Commit to work together and continue to "date", even if it means putting your baby to bed and then meeting on the couch for some time to connect.

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GOING FURTHER

RESOURCES

Expectant Parents: Preparing Together for the Journey of Parenthood

by Suzanne Hadley Gosselin

Provides helpful information for couples wanting to prepare for the emotional, physical, and spiritual life changes that come with the arrival of any new child into the family.

The Christian Mama's Guide to Having a Baby: Everything You Need to Know to Survive and Love Your Pregnancy by Erin MacPherson

Offers a detailed guide that takes you through each trimester with helpful tips, humorous accounts, and supportive spiritual advice--all with a girlfriend-to-girlfriend approach that helps moms feel comfortable as they navigate this life-changing time.

And Baby Makes Three: The Six-Step Plan for Preserving Marital Intimacy and Rekindling Romance After Baby Arrives by John Gottman & Julie Schwartz Gottman

Helps new parents positively manage the strain that comes along with their bundle of joy.

WATERLOO ROAD SUPPORT

Childhood Ministries

WRBC offers a variety of programs that come alongside parents in their effort to instill faith in children including age-graded Sunday School classes, Awana, camps, and much more. For more information, visit waterloroad.org/childhood or contact Emily Townley at Emily@waterloroad.org.

Faith Path: Overview

On select birthdays for your child, you can receive a free kit that will train and jump-start you on the age-appropriate strategy for your child's faith formation from birth through age eighteen. Each kit includes a training video, guide, starter ideas and other helpful elements. These free kits are available for download or pick-up at the Childhood Desk. Contact Emily Townley at Emily@waterloroad.org.

