

Newborn Year:

An Invitation To Peace

Anyone who's experienced bringing a newborn home from the hospital knows at some point you ask yourself, "What am I supposed to do with this child on my own?" Maybe you've read every book imaginable on parenting a newborn, maybe you are just naturally gifted to soothe a baby, but no matter where you are on the continuum, we all have moments of stress with a newborn.

We want to help you identify a time of peace with your newborn and create a daily rhythm for that time that includes a prayer, song, story, or scripture.

Kickstarter 1: Cuddle Time

We all have those special moments of cuddle time with our baby. For some parents feeding time is incredibly peaceful, for others it's extremely difficult. Maybe you're a proponent of rocking your baby to sleep, maybe you have strict beliefs and believe rocking a child to sleep is wrong. If you're a first time parent you may enjoy a daily nap with your newborn, and that's your true rest during your 24 hour day.

We all create habits or rhythms with our children. Think through the natural times when you're cuddling with your newborn. What are those times? Is it rocking, feeding, nursing, napping?

Formulate in your mind what that time of peace looks like for you and your newborn.

Isaiah 41:13 says,

*3For I, the Lord your God,
hold your right hand;
it is I who say to you, "Fear not,
I am the one who helps you."*

This is such a beautiful picture of how God holds our hand. As a parent we think of how sweet it is to touch a newborn's hand; to feel the vulnerability and reliance that this little creation has. This child needs us. They can't care for themselves and meet their own needs. It's up to us to make sure they grow. It's the same with us and God. We can't be the people God has called us to be on our own. We can't be the best parent for our child in our own power. He hold our hand. He is our help.

What a great verse to help us know that as parents we're not alone. If you haven't experienced yet a time when you felt helpless as a parent, a time when you just didn't know what to do, eventually you will. In those moments realize that God holds your hand. He is present to guide and help you. As you cuddle your newborn during a recognized peaceful time, hold his or her hand. Whisper to them, just as God has to you, that you hold their hand, they can fear not, because you're the one who'll help them.

Kickstarter 2: Bath Time

Is your child old enough yet to enjoy bath time. There's nothing sweeter the smell of a newly washed baby. When you think of snuggling that fresh squishy baby you can almost smell the fragrance "newborn." Bathing a child can be a precious moment that we can capitalize on as a parent. It's something we have to do, and lots of children enjoy it, so why not be more intentional with bath time.

Thinking about bath time brings about the story of Jesus calming the storm. You may remember Mark 4:35-41 well, but Jesus is clearly exhausted as he tells the disciples to get in a boat and head to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. As he snoozes a huge storm comes upon them, one that clearly terrified the disciples. They do what any manly man would do, run like babies and ask why he isn't doing something about this crazy storm. Jesus responds by telling the storm to stop, and it does.

Take a moment to read Mark 4:35-41. Take a moment to read Mark 4:35-41. Jesus brings peace in the midst of chaos. Do you ever feel like parenting a newborn can be chaotic? Ever tried getting somewhere on time, being pressed for time, knowing you need to feed the baby, pack the diaper bag, have extra clothes. In that moment just when you're FINALLY ready to walk out the door, your baby spits up on you, now you have to change. Needless to say, YOU'RE LATE!

Parenting a newborn can feel chaotic at times. But there are also times of sweet peacefulness. Bath time can be one of those times. A time to splash in the water, inhale the scent of baby, and thank God for times of peace that help us be a better parent in times of chaos.

Kickstarter 3: Sleep Time

The first year of parenting brings major changes in sleep habits. From the beginning with a newborn when everyone is operating from sleep in 2 hour spurts all the way to an older baby who's sleeping 8 hours straight, the amount of sleep we get during the first year of a baby's life can be less than desired. No matter how much sleep you're getting, or not getting, there's something beautifully peaceful about watching a baby sleep.

For some parents getting to the baby sleeping part is hard work. You tiptoe to lay them down, attempting to let your baby gracefully roll from your arms to the mattress. You know if you do it seamlessly enough and hold your breath at the same time, maybe they'll stay asleep!!

The Bible has some beautiful words that articulate the peacefulness that accompanies sleep.

Psalm 4:8,

*In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.*

Proverbs 3:24

*If you lie down, you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.*

Clearly God's design for sleep is for it to be sweet and restful. So if it comes in 2 hour spurts, or you're at a point where you can get almost 8 hours straight, know God created sleep as a way for us to truly rest. This is His intent for us and for our children. That sleep would be sweet as we dwell in His safety.