

APRIL NEWSLETTER

Great Idea!



A word from the project director...

As we continue our theme of infants and toddlers, I'd love to know how you navigate worship in spaces like church nurseries.

Who staffs your space? Is it paid workers or volunteers or a combination of both? Is their explicit faith nurture going on in this space or is it mainly implicitly taught through the actions of the caregivers? Do the nursery caregivers have access to the main worship service either in audio or video form? How is communion handled in the nursery on those times when it is offered in worship?

As you see I have lots of questions and would love to hear your responses. I can share these in next month's newsletter, if you would care to reach out. You can contact me at wow@ctsnet.edu.

Kathy Dawson, WoW Project Director



Godly Play Training

There are still five remaining spaces for our upcoming Godly Play training on the Columbia Theological Seminary campus. The dates are April 14-16, 2026. This is fully funded by Wonder of Worship (housing, food, registration, and materials). The only thing you will need to pay for is your travel to campus. We welcome individuals or small groups from churches.

Here's the link for registration: <https://bit.ly/4k4IXvo>

Children's Ministry Refresh

On Thursday, April 30 we will hold our next online Children's Ministry Refresh from 2:00-3:15. Our leader this time will be Dr. Christine Hong, Associate Professor of Educational Ministries at Columbia Theological Seminary. We will gather for worship, a spiritual practice and to have conversation together in break out rooms. Here is the link for registration: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/x098mByAFT>



Coming this Summer...

This August we will be offering a virtual event on Infants and Toddlers in Worship. For those of you who have attended our virtual events in the past, you know that we provide a box of goodies on the topic at hand. Stay tuned to the May newsletter for the date of this event. It will be fully funded by Wonder of Worship.



Resource: The 4th Trimester

Supporting Families in the First Three Months and Beyond



What is the 4th Trimester? The 4th Trimester refers to the first three months after birth, when babies and parents are adjusting to major physical, emotional, and spiritual changes. Churches can offer gentle, nonjudgmental support that honors each family's unique transition. Check in with the family regularly, provide meals or practical help, welcome babies fully in worship, and connect families with community resources.



Parents

Parents are recovering physically from birth when applicable, adjusting to new roles and responsibilities, and navigating emotional changes from joy to anxiety and everything in between. Together, families are building routines, bonding, and forming healthy attachment during this tender stage.



The church can be a source of grace, reminding new parents they are not alone and that their faith community walks with them.



What are Families Balancing?

Infants

During this time, babies are learning to regulate their bodies outside the womb, and parents are navigating recovery, bonding, feeding, sleep, and new identities. Infants are getting acclimated to life outside the womb! They are developing their digestive system & feeding patterns, regulating sleep-wake cycles, and gradually increasing alertness, even exhibiting early social cues.



Ideas to Try

Although we say it is 12 weeks, we know these shifts last much longer, and so should the support families receive! Strong support during this period lays the foundation for healthy attachment and long term family well being.

- Provide meals, such as frozen items that families can heat up anytime, or small bites that can be easily eaten on the go; bonus points if they can be eaten with one hand! Another option would be to offer a volunteer-led meal train.
- Provide a resource folder with a referral list for community resources such as lactation support, postpartum mental health services, and local pediatric providers.
- Start small groups or mentoring programs that connect new parents with experienced ones for support and community.
- Share prayer cards and books that offer grounding and encouragement during quiet or challenging moments—like late night feedings or times when extra reassurance is needed.
- Create a welcoming worship environment where parents and babies feel comfortable and included. Make sure they know what spaces are available for them to nurse/feed/change ahead of time.



Colleen Catania, MSN is a mom of three and an experienced pediatric nurse with a passion for the patient and family experience. She serves as the Parish Nurse at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, where she finds joy in building relationships and caring for families at every stage of life.