

BIG KID BED

Many times, when a family is welcoming a new baby one of the first supplies they make sure they have is the crib. Of all the baby gear you have, the crib is also one of the last things to go as your child grows. As much as you hate to admit it, your baby is growing up and it is time to move them to a new bed. Regardless of whether you choose a toddler bed, twin bed, rails, no rails, race car bed, whatever... this is a huge milestone in your child's life!

Why?

It is also a major adjustment for you as a parent. We want **to help you to create a Birthday Faith Experience as you transition your child to their big kid bed**. Maybe you have already taken this step and maybe they're not ready yet. Either way, you can still participate. The Birthday Faith Experience leads you in **choosing scripture and prayers for them to literally lay down on each night**. Now that is a wonderful foundation for some really sweet dreams!


How?

Being a big kid is awesome! It's an exciting time for a child to get their new big kid bed. We want to help you make this a memorable experience, for you and your child.

The **three activities** are designed to help you understand what your child's bed will be to them. Their bed is a very special place for them and we want it to be a point of refuge... a safe place.

Once your child's bed is in their room, you will decide how you want to incorporate the Birthday Faith Experience. You can design this however you want. You may want to write on the slats of the bed, or tuck verses under the mattress or in their pillowcase. We will give you some scriptures and samples of prayers to read and that way you can choose the ones that appeal to you and your family. You can keep this a private experience or include others if you wish.

We want the occasion of a new bed to be an exciting milestone for you and your child. We chose this moment in their life because it is a significant turning point. They are not a baby anymore. We feel this Birthday Faith Experience can be a special time of growth, communication and prayer for your family as your child begins their own journey toward being a big kid.



Share Your Hopes for the Coming Year

Our hope for you and your three year old is that they would begin to see how big of a step it is to have a big kid bed, and that it would be something that shapes their future from here on out. As their parent, you know them best. You know the areas in which they need encouragement, encourage them by sharing your hopes and prayers for them in their third year of life.

Activity 1: Dream Time

Neuroscientists believe children begin dreaming when they're able to imagine. Dreaming and imagination go hand in hand. Is your child beginning to make pretend sounds as he/she zooms the car on the floor? Do they talk to their stuffed animals? Are they playing with an imaginary friend? If your child is doing these things, you can guarantee he/she is dreaming.

Some of these dreams are pleasant, and some can be scary for a little one. Even though your child has the ability to imagine, he/she probably is unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy, so that monster they imagine is VERY REAL to them! As a parent how can we encourage "sweet" dreams and help our child deal with the ones that are scary to them?

One of the best ways is to limit exposure to scary things. Think wicked step-mother in Snow White-she's SCARY! Some children are more easily frightened than others. Make sure you know your child's personality to know what it is that scares them. Some kids are terrified of clowns, some are not. Some children think the wolf blowing down the pig's houses is funny, others get freaked out. Know your kiddo well, and take cues from him/her.

An incredible verse to cling to when it comes to praying over a scared child having bad dreams is:

- 2 Timothy 1:7-For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
- Psalm 118:6-The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

Helping a child deal with his/her scary dreams is a great time to help them understand the comfort and love of God. Remind them God will care for them, and NO ONE is bigger or stronger than Him.

Activity 2: Sleep Time

Sleep, glorious sleep! Hopefully if your child is ready to transition to a big kid bed, he/she is sleeping through the night. Let's take a moment to remember what it was like to get up multiple times in one night, living life in that constant state of groggy.

Sleep is a wonderful idea from God for parents and children. We spend 1/3 of our lives sleeping. Maybe you've asked, why did God create sleep? We could get so much more done if we didn't need to spend 7-8 hours in each 24 hour period asleep.

Psalm 127:2

"It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep."

According to this simple verse, God gives us sleep because He loves us. If you look closely at this verse you realize the opposite of sleep is anxiety. We can have incredible sleep and rest when we fully trust that God can handle anything and everything in our lives.

What is it that you anxiously worry about? What keeps you up at night? Let's give those things to God, allowing Him to work out the details that we so often fret over. What about your child? What does he/she worry most about? What causes your child to lose sleep? Spend some time giving these things to God so that you can sleep well, resting completely in His love for you.

Activity 3: Talk Time

Oh, the conversations that will take place over the lifetime of a child in his/her bed! When it's time to tuck your child in, you can guarantee that's when he/she is ready to talk about anything and everything. If you capitalize on this moment, you'll create for yourself an open invitation for honest conversation between you and your child for the rest of his/her life.

In the therapy world the term "unconditional positive regard" is often used. This simply is the complete acceptance of a person regardless of what the person says or does. In order to assure constant communication with your child one of the best things you can do NOW is decide to have unconditional positive regard for your child. As they struggle through different life stages, the best thing we can do is be present and loving in the moment.

Take a moment to read **1 Corinthians 13**, the love chapter. As you read each verse stating what love is, take a moment to reflect on yourself. Which of these would most likely be the stumbling block between your child having great conversation with you? Are you easily irritated with your child? Do you insist on your own way? (v.5)

In order to have a lifetime of honest conversation with our child we need to LOVINGLY guide them through life. They will make choices that disappoint us, do things that break our hearts, and our response in these moments will determine their willingness to talk with us over the rest of their lives.

You may not be able to think about conversations with your child revolving around boyfriends/girlfriends, a friend hurting their feelings, deciding which college to attend, etc., but if you begin with honest and loving conversation now, you'll set yourself up for success in assuring your child always talks with you about the hard times and the good times.

Birthday Faith Experience

Now that you've gone through the three activities, hopefully you're able to envision the hope and promise held in a child's bed. From sweet dreams to peaceful rest to significant conversations, the big kid bed is the location for some of your child's most precious moments. In order to carry out the big kid ceremony you'll need to take the following steps:

1. Once your child's big kid bed is in place in his/her room decide if you want to write verses or a prayer on slips of paper to:

1. tuck under the mattress
2. write on the wooden slats that go under the mattress
3. write on a pillowcase he'll/she'll sleep on
4. another idea you come up with on your own

2. Select verses or a prayer that you like. See the list below for ideas.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. 2 Timothy 1:7 | 6. Matthew 11:28-30 |
| 2. Psalm 118:63. Proverbs 3:24 | 7. Jeremiah 29:11 |
| 3. Psalm 4:8 | 8. Lamentations 3:22-23 |
| 4. Isaiah 40:28 | 9. Psalm 37:4-5 |
| 5. Romans 8:28 | |

Sample Prayers

Dear God,

We know this bed will be a place where _____ will have sweet dreams, peaceful rest, and a place where we'll have significant conversations. We pray that you will guard his/her dreams and ask that he/she would be able to sleep in peace because he/she grows to trust you. Help us as parents to have conversations in this bed that will honor you and help _____ to know you so that one day he/she can choose to follow you.

-Amen

You can keep this Rites of Passage Experience intimate with just your immediate family. However, if you have very close friends or family you'd like to make part of the experience feel free. During the time you can have them write verses or prayers for your child on the wooden boards, sheets of paper, etc. You also could have your child sit on the bed as you read through the verses or scripture.

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH MY 3-YEAR-OLD?

Hopefully this guide will give you a map into the body, mind, and soul of your new three-year-old and as they continue their development.

RELATIONAL/SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Around this age, children are old enough to understand simple things in the Bible such as the theme God's Creation. Take your children for walks and look at different things in nature and talk about them.

Start out with **Genesis 1:1** and while walking look at all the things in nature. Then ask your child questions like; *Who made that tree? Did daddy make the tree? No. God made the tree. He is the creator. He is the only one who has power to make things live and who can make the world.*

Then sing songs relating to what you are talking about such as, In the Beginning God Made the Earth.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Gross Motor - Movement and Coordination: Show coordination skills while moving around and engaging in play activities. Fling a ball in an attempt to throw it towards target; pushes friend on riding toy; climb steps of slide; walk on broad balance beam or edge of walkway; imitate a variety of movements (runs, walks, gallops, jumps); jump with both feet.

Fine Motor: Demonstrate eye-hand coordination while manipulating and exploring objects. Poke, pound and build with play dough and other sculpting materials; scribble with a variety of instruments beginning to use thumb and fingertips grasp; use wrist rotation to fit puzzle piece into puzzle; unscrew lids to pour from one container to another; pull apart pop beads or connecting blocks with ease; use thumb and forefinger to pick up and hold small objects.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-Concept: Show an emerging sense of self. Has growing sense of separateness; seek and find pride in developing skills that encourage independence (washing own hands, putting on own coat); realize reflection in the mirror is his.

Self-Control: Demonstrate increased skill in identifying and expressing feelings. Verbally state wants and needs ("I want that", "mine", "I'm thirsty"); begin to understand behaviors that hurt self or others (exclaims "no" when another child attempts to hit or bite).

Cooperation: Begin to gain a sense of mastery and achievement. Try new experiences; repeat a newly gained skill and seek positive response for achievements from adult (looks at caregiver after completion of task to see response).