



Date: _____
Series: The Early Church
Spring Year 1, Lesson 52

The Infant Church

Take Home Point: *Don't be a big baby. Grow up in Jesus!

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Acts 2:42-47

Key Verse: Hebrews 5:13-14 "All those who live on milk lack the experience to talk about what is right. They are still babies. However, solid food is for mature people, whose minds are trained by practice to know the difference between good and evil."

We will help kids know:

- The early church grew as they dedicated themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.
- God also wants us to grow into mature Christians.

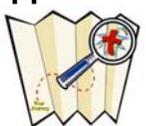
We will help kids feel:

- Uncomfortable about staying baby Christians.
- Awed at what God can do in their lives as they grow.

We will help kids do:

- Identify those things needed to grow spiritually.
- Pray for those they can lead to the Lord.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids discuss what it is like to be a baby and correlate that with what an infant church might look like.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any baby-related object <i>optional</i>: pictures of individuals as infants
Large Group 	4 8-9 10-14 14 14	<p>Overview</p> <p>Puppet Presentation: “Gordy Tries to Be a Big Baby”---Gordy remembers that being a baby was fun.</p> <p>Dramatic Presentation: “The Growing Up Machine” A baby is put into the machine. The baby emerges as a spiritual baby in a grown up body. He returns to the machine and receives ingredients necessary to grow spiritually.</p> <p>Video: <i>The Visual Bible: Acts: 2:42-47</i>---The Early Christian Church</p> <p>Puppet Presentation Conclusion: “Gordy Tries to Be a Big Baby”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gordy with baby clothes or hat candy bar jar of baby food video, <i>The Visual Bible: Acts</i> Visual Bible International, Inc. (1995) a real baby with an adult an adult costumed as a baby (see lesson) Growing Up Machine: a large box or a special curtained area with an entrance to get inside (Add lights, buzzers, noises, or whistles) table next to the machine two boxes on the table: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> label one: “Helps for Physical Growth” and the other: “Helps for Spiritual Growth” (details – pg 12) set of five signs for physical growth: <i>Air, Food, Love, Friends, Exercise</i> set of five signs for spiritual growth: <i>Holy Spirit, Bible, Prayer, Worship & Fellowship, Service</i>
Small Group Application 	4-7	Kids use stir sticks (representing the Holy Spirit) to eat Cheerios (representing spiritual food). Discuss how one needs the power of the Holy Spirit to feed on spiritual food (the Word of God) to grow into mature believers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coffee stirrer for each child baggie full of Cheerios for each group a cup for the table a small wad of paper for each group

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

Use a baby-related object such as a pacifier, a bottle, or a rattle to help kids picture the developmental stage of an infant.

Last week we learned that Jesus had already gone into heaven and then the Holy Spirit came down to the disciples. Soon many people heard the good news of Jesus and became believers. The church had just started. We might call it an “infant” church.

Show the baby object.

Who can tell me what an infant is? That’s right, it’s a baby. So what do you think an “infant” church would be? (A young church, a group of people just learning.) It was not a church of infants. It was a church with people who had just begun to trust Jesus and were baptized. They were baby believers and just ready to grow.

What is it like to be a baby? Let’s think about that for a while and have some fun. Tell us a funny story about when you were a baby, or tell us what your favorite toy was when you were a baby.

Keep the discussion moving so one child does not monopolize this time.

What is something you can do this year that you could not do last year?

What’s better about being a third grader (use the appropriate grade) than being a baby?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

The whole point of this is to get them see how they change and mature as they grow. It also helps the children open up and share about themselves with one another, and will allow you time to get to know each child a little more personally.

During this time, watch for children who struggle with sharing in a group and encourage them. Also, keep the reactions of other children flowing in a positive way.

Today we will learn **don’t be a big baby. Grow up in Jesus.*

Large Group: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible Event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Overview:

Puppet Presentation: “Gordy Tries to Be a Big Baby”----Gordy remembers that being a baby was fun and pretends to be a baby again to get what he wants.

Dramatic Presentation: “The Growing Up Machine” A baby is put into the Growing Up Machine and the ingredients to grow up physically are added. But the baby emerges as a spiritual baby in a grown up body. He then returns to the machine and receives the ingredients necessary to grow up spiritually.

Video: *The Visual Bible: Acts 2:42-47*---The Early Christian Church

Puppet Presentation Conclusion: “Gordy Tries to Be a Big Baby”

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Have kids refer to Acts 2:42-47 in their Bibles.

When the early church first started, they had lots of baby Christians. Did they grow up? What did the people do when they got together? *(Acts 2:42-47. Had fellowship, broke bread, prayed, studied the Word, shared everything, praised God.)*

How do we know they were growing? Check verse 47. *(God was saving people and their number was growing.)*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

In verse 46, it says they had a single purpose. What do you think that was? *(They were committed to serving Jesus and leading others to him.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

This next section will use some objects to help discussion. The object is not as important as the discussion. Don't feel you have to complete all of the questions. Discuss those that work best for your group.

Application Activity:

Supplies needed: a coffee stirrer for each child, baggie full of Cheerios, a cup in the center of the group, and small wad of paper

Do you remember the things Mr. Baby Christian needed to grow up spiritually? We need the same things in our lives so we can grow spiritually. How many can you name? *(The Holy Spirit, reading the Bible, prayer and worship, friends and fellowship, service and witness.)*

Pass out a coffee stirrer to each child.

1) *Holy Spirit discussion:*

Let's talk about how the Holy Spirit works in our lives. The wind reminds us of the Holy Spirit. You can't see the wind but you can feel its power. The same is true of the Holy Spirit. You can't see him, but you can sure feel his power. He gives you the power to trust Jesus as your Savior and to grow up in him.

After you answer the following question about the Holy Spirit, take your tiny straw and blow this tiny ball of paper across the table so it is in front of another person. It will then be that person's turn to talk.

Here's the question. In the last week or so, how has the Holy Spirit helped you choose to do the right thing when you were tempted to do something wrong? Tell what happened.

Here's another question option.

I can remember a time when it seemed hard to trust God that everything would work out okay. But I trusted God anyway because the Holy Spirit helped me. This is what happened....

2) *Bible discussion:*

The next thing we need to grow is the Word of God.

Ask each child to tell you his favorite Bible event or verse as follows. Be sensitive about unchurched children who do not know any Bible events.

What is your favorite food? Just as you like this food and it helps you grow, God wants to give you spiritual food to help you grow. That spiritual food is the Bible. The Bible helps you grow because it tells you how to have a friendship with God. It also tells you what is important and how to obey. What is one of your favorite Bible verses or Bible events?

As each child shares, give him a couple of Cheerios to put in the cup in the center of the table. This reminds the kids that the word of God feeds them.

God wants us to read the Bible and listen to him every day. How many of you have home devotions? How many use the “God Talk at Home” sheets?

3) *Prayer and Worship discussion:*

The early Christians also knew they needed to pray so they could continue to grow. Let’s stop and pray right now. Can you think of a concern you have that you would like to tell God about? Let’s also think of something to praise God for this morning.

4) *Fellowship discussion:*

Fellowship, or friendship with other Christians, is also very important. The early church knew this.

I want you to take your coffee stirrer and pick up a Cheerio out of the cup that’s in the middle of the table. Remember that the coffee stirrer reminds us of the breath of life, the Holy Spirit. He wants us to grow with other Christians. Give the Cheerio that is on your coffee stirrer to the person who is on your right and tell him something you think is special about him. What makes that person so special in our family?

5) *Witness and Service discussion:*

Finally, the early church knew they needed to exercise their faith. They needed to do something with it, so they served others. They talked to people about Jesus. Is there someone you can serve this week or tell about Jesus?

The Bible says in Hebrews 5:13-14, “All those who live on milk lack the experience to talk about what is right. They are still babies. However, solid food is for mature people, whose minds are trained by practice to know the difference between good and evil.”

As we grow spiritually and we do the things we talked about today we can learn to know the difference between good and evil.

Remember our point for today is **don't* be a big baby. Grow up in Jesus.*

Closing Prayer:

Let's pray about growing up in Jesus and not just being big spiritual babies. Let's especially pray that God will prepare the hearts of those whom we can tell about Jesus.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

Large Group Presentation

“Gordy Tries to Be a Big Baby”

Puppet Presentation

Take Home Point: *Don’t be a big baby. Grow up in Jesus!

Gordy enters wearing some type of baby clothes or hat.

Gordy: *(In a whiney voice.)* Mr. King! Mr. King! Mr. King! Come here quick!

Mr. King: Hi, Gordy. What is it?

Gordy: *(Still whining.)* Don’t call me Gordy! My name is Gordy Baby!

Mr. King: That’s a switch. Since when do you want to be called Gordy Baby?

Gordy: Since I remembered how much fun it was to be a baby. And I’m such a cute baby.

Mr. King: Well, I guess you are but...

Gordy: *(Crying.)* Waaaaaaaaah! What do you mean you *guess* I’m a cute baby? Of course I’m a cute baby. Now I want a candy bar!

Mr. King: I thought babies wanted their bottles, not candy bars.

Gordy: Waaaaaaaaah! Gordy Baby wants a candy bar and wants it now! Waaaaaaaaah!

Mr. King: Okay, okay. Let me see what I have. *(Reaching for a candy bar.)*

Gordy: C’mon, c’mon, c’mon. Waaaaaaaaaaaaah!

Mr. King: Now just a minute, Gordy Baby. I mean, Gordy!

Gordy: *(In a whiney voice.)* Where’s my candy bar?

Mr. King: Gordy, I’m not going to give you a candy bar.

Gordy: Why not? I’ll cry!

Mr. King: That’s exactly why not. You are not a baby!

Gordy: But I like being a baby and getting whatever I want!

Mr. King: Gordy, first of all, babies don't just get whatever they want...like candy bars. If they did, they would be spoiled rotten. They would only think of themselves and never grow up.

Gordy: Sounds good to me!

Mr. King: Gordy!

Gordy: Gordy Baby to you.

Mr. King: Gordy, it wouldn't be good for you. If you only thought of yourself and never did anything for anyone else, you would be spoiled and miserable. And you certainly wouldn't grow up spiritually like God would want you to!

Gordy: What do you mean grow up spiritually?

Mr. King: We not only grow in our bodies, we also grow in our spirits. We grow by trusting Jesus and doing what he wants. I tell you what. How about I show you with my new Growing Up Machine?

Gordy: Great! How about handing me that candy bar for a snack while I watch.

Mr. King: But Gordy Baby, if you are a baby, I have something much better than a candy bar. Here's some baby food. It's squashed beets. Yummy!

Gordy: Yuck! I would hate to eat baby food like that.

Mr. King: That's because you are growing up and don't have to eat baby food. Unless, of course, you still insist on being treated like a baby.

Gordy: Okay, no more Gordy Baby. Let's see the Growing Up Machine.

Mr. King: Okay. Here we go!

During the drama, "The Growing Up Machine," Gordy can stay and watch while adding comments as the puppeteer would deem to be entertaining and useful in connecting the teaching points. Often questions posed by Gordy help repeat and clarify the points. However, Gordy should only be a background role and not upstage the teaching.

After the drama, conclude with the following puppet presentation.

“The Growing Up Machine”

Dramatic Presentation

Characters:

- large group presenter, Mr. King
- real live baby held by an adult
- an adult costumed as a baby being carted in a wagon or over-sized baby buggy or carried by a strong-man. (If it is too complicated to costume an adult as a baby, simply give the adult actor some props such as baby bottle, pacifier, baby blanket etc.)

Props:

- *Growing Up Machine.* This might be a large box or a curtained area. It would be especially effective to have lights, buzzers, noises, or whistles that can respond as the baby is placed in the box and the ingredients are added. It needs some entrance so an adult can carry the baby inside the “Growing Up Machine.”
- table next to the Growing Up Machine
- two boxes placed on a table. One is labeled “Helps for Physical Growth.” The other is labeled “Helps for Spiritual Growth.”
- a set of five signs describing what is needed for physical growth and a set of five signs needed for spiritual growth. These signs should be inside the corresponding boxes. It would be helpful if these signs could attach to the outside of the Growing Up Machine so that they might be visible as the active ingredients are put in. The signs correspond to one another in the following way:

<u>Helps for Physical Growth</u>		<u>Helps for Spiritual Growth</u>
Air	-	Holy Spirit
Food	-	Bible
Love	-	Prayer and Worship
Friends	-	Fellowship
Exercise	-	Service

The large group presenter begins by introducing the real baby to the group. The baby can be held by his mother or by the large group presenter. The presenter makes special note of the baby's features.

Mr. King: What are the things a baby can and cannot do? He can goo, smile, wiggle, dirty his diaper, eat, burp up, and look cute. That's pretty much it.

But it's God's design that the baby doesn't stay that way. That baby is supposed to grow up. So let's put the baby in the Growing Up Machine and add our ingredients.

The baby is carried into the Growing Up Machine where his/her mother or other guardian can retrieve him/her.

Signs are taken from *Helps for Physical Growth* box then added or posted on the machine depicting those things that we need to grow.

- Mr. King:**
- 1) **Air. Let's add some air. We all need air to breathe.**
 - 2) **Food. We all need food to grow healthy bodies.**
 - 3) **Love. We all need our parents or someone to care for us and show us love.**
 - 4) **Friends. We all need friends and special people who can help us learn and grow.**
 - 5) **Exercise. We need to exercise our bodies or they won't grow.**

Now let's turn on the machine and see what happens.

After the noise of the machine working (*lights, buzzers, noises, or whistles*), the grown up comes out in a baby costume.

Mr. King: Wait a minute. Did the baby grow up? I think something is wrong with this machine. Now this is a baby who grew and got older and bigger physically, but something is wrong. Let's see if we can find out.

Hello, sir. Are you okay?

Mr. Baby
Christian: Me baby.

Mr. King: Well, yes I can see you're dressed that way. But you have a grown up body.

Mr. Baby
Christian: I grow up on the outside. I don't need to grow up on the inside.

Mr. King: Oh, I get it now. This is a person who has grown up physically but not grown up spiritually. Physical growth is when our bodies grow from being babies to becoming adults. There is another kind of growth—spiritual growth.

Mr. Baby
Christian: Baby don't need spiritual growth. Baby already a Christian.

Mr. King: Ah, I see. Spiritual growth begins when we are born into God's family and we are born spiritually. This happens when we receive the gift of Jesus' life and forgiveness. This happens in baptism and when we trust Jesus as our Savior. Have you done that, Mr. Baby Christian?

Mr. Baby Christian: Goo-goo. Baby knows Jesus loves him. Baby knows Jesus died on the cross for him. That's all baby needs to know.

Mr. King: Have you read your Bible to find out more about how God can work in your life?

Mr. Baby Christian: No! Baby don't wanna! Baby already know all baby wanna know about God.

Mr. King: Have you spent time with other believers so they can encourage and help you follow Jesus?

Mr. Baby Christian: No! Baby only wants his mama!

Mr. King: Have you prayed for other people or told them how Jesus wants to be their forever friend?

Mr. Baby Christian: Boo-boo-ga-ga. Baby keep Jesus just to himself.

Mr. King: Do you go to worship and Kingdom Quest?

Mr. Baby Christian: Baby already say to God once that baby loves him. Don't have to say it again and again every week in church. Baby rather stay home and watch cartoons!

Mr. King Excuse me, Mr. Baby Christian. I need to ask the kids something. *(Facing the kids.)* Kids, would you like to be a baby Christian all your life? Neither would I.

Mr. Baby Christian: Mr. King, baby needs help. Baby smell something bad.

Mr. King: What is it...sniff...sniff...Oh no! *(Holds nose.)* I think we have to send this spiritual baby back before he stinks up the whole place. Let's put him back into the Growing Up Machine. This time we better add some things that will help him grow spiritually.

The following signs are taken from the *Helps for Spiritual Growth* box and placed in such a way that the spiritual growth ingredient is placed side by side to the similar physical characteristic.

<i>Air</i>	-	<i>Holy Spirit</i>
<i>Food</i>	-	<i>Bible</i>
<i>Love</i>	-	<i>Prayer and Worship</i>
<i>Friends</i>	-	<i>Fellowship</i>
<i>Exercise</i>	-	<i>Service</i>

Mr. King: Kids, let's put the spiritual ingredient in the Growing Up Machine to help Mr. Baby Christian become a growing Christian. These are the special ingredients.

Take signs from *Spiritual Growth* box as they are described.

- 1) **Holy Spirit**. We remember that we can't see the Holy Spirit like we can't see the wind. But he is very powerful. He comes to us and makes it possible for us to trust Jesus as our Savior. He gives us power to trust and love God.
- 2) **Bible**. The Bible is our food as Christians. Every day we need to read or remember something from the Bible. How many of you read the Bible at home? Do any of you have devotions with your family? Remember to take home your "God Talk at Home" sheet that will help you.
- 3) **Prayer and Worship**. We need to pray to God and talk to him. We also need to sing to him and tell him how much we love him and think he is the greatest!
- 4) **Fellowship**. Fellowship is another word for having Christian friends. We need friends who can pray for each other, encourage each other to trust God and have fun serving God together.
- 5) **Service**. Every growing Christian does something to serve God. This can be the ways we help others...like doing the dishes at home without complaining. Or it could be helping clean up the church or bringing others to church.

Let's learn from the first Christian church that started right after Pentecost. Watch this video. It is God's Word from Acts 2:42-47. Peter and the disciples had just preached to the people in Jerusalem. Thousands received Christ, trusting him as their Savior. They were baby Christians, but then they began to grow up. They were an infant church growing up to be a church of strong believers. See if you can find where it says these believers were doing something that was helping them grow in Jesus.

Show Acts 2:42-47 from the video, *The Visual Bible: Acts*. During the time Mr. Baby Christian was in the box, he has removed the baby costume and, after the video, emerges as a growing Christian.

Mr. King: So how do you feel now, Mr. Baby Christian?

Mr. Baby
Christian:

No more baby Christian here. I feel great! The Holy Spirit is filling my life with his power. I read my Bible every day. I pray for people and talk to them about Jesus. I spend time with other believers and we help each other stay spiritually strong. I am even thinking of others and serving others because Jesus would want me to!

Well, I think I'll go now and see if anyone needs me in Kingdom Quest. Bye, kids! Bye, Mr. King! And thanks for the help growing up!

“Gordy Tries to Be a Big Baby”

Puppet Presentation Conclusion

Gordy: Well, I'm glad I'm no longer Gordy Baby. Did you see that grown-up baby? He was ridiculous!

Mr. King: Yes. But it must look just as silly to God when he sees people who think they don't need to grow up spiritually!

Gordy: Yeah. And I have something I'd like to say to anyone who tries to stay a big spiritual baby.

Mr. King: What's that?

Gordy: **Don't be a big baby. Grow up in Jesus!* And pretending to be a baby doesn't work anyway!

Mr. King: That's right, Gordy. Why don't you close us in prayer.

Gordy: Sure! Dear God, you are so wonderful to us. You are like a patient parent. You never give up on us, even when we whine or pout or pretend to be babies. We want to grow up in Jesus! Please send your Holy Spirit to help us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Mr. King: Bye, kids! Bye, Gordy!

Gordy: Remember—** don't be a big baby. Grow up in Jesus.* Bye!