



## 1277: Make Them Count Press Release

### National Prayer Day for Parent and Toddler Groups – 1 June 2014

1277 announces the fourth annual National Day of Prayer for Parent and Toddler Groups on Sunday 1 June 2014. Timed to coincide with National Family week, this is a great time to encourage churches to pray for their toddler groups.

For many churches the weekly parent and toddler group is a key outreach opportunity as well as a brilliant way to serve their community. 'For many young children and their parents, the parent and toddler group is a highlight as they meet up with friends to play and chat, but for many it is also the only time they will come into contact with a local church community. It's a fantastic opportunity for the church to serve their community and share the gospel at the same time,' says Alison Clark, Chair of 1277.

Research<sup>1</sup> has shown that over half of the nearly 4 million under-4s in the UK are part of a church-based parent and toddler group, with around 27,000 churches running these groups. Each child comes with at least one adult – mum, dad, grandparent or other carer – so the number of people being served by these church-based groups could be well over 6 million in total, every week. That's a lot of people!

And these groups don't run themselves. Every week thousands of volunteers set up church halls, provide refreshments, design, prepare and organise craft activities, play with children, chat to parents and carers, tell Bible stories, provide tissues and wet wipes, lead singing sessions, listen to people's troubles and joys, pray for and with people and love them.

Joanna Gordon, a member of the 1277 network, says "With toddler groups reaching 52% of the toddlers and carers in this nation, it has the greatest potential of any mission activity of the church.

The volunteers, the families, the communities they are part of need our prayers and support. On 1 June, get your churches praying for your parent and toddler group – for the toddlers, for the parents and carers, and for the team that lead the group. If your church doesn't have a parent and toddler group, why not use this as a time to start praying to see if God wants your church to start one, or pray for all toddler groups!

Resources to help you publicise and prepare for the day are available free to download from 1277's website [www.1277.org.uk](http://www.1277.org.uk)

1277: make them count is an alliance of churches and other agencies that support the work of church-based toddler groups. 1277 exists to develop and implement a National Strategy to support church-based toddler groups and their associated activities. Our vision is to see universal access to excellent, safe, Christian toddler groups which are demonstrating God's love at the heart of their communities.

<sup>1</sup>Children's Work Force Development Council report 'More than Sundays' 2009  
[www.familymatters.org.uk/doc/More\\_than\\_Sundays.pdf](http://www.familymatters.org.uk/doc/More_than_Sundays.pdf)