

# Ready times three

I looked at my calendar one day in early October and realized that my due date was closer than I realized. I felt a rush, but of joy, not panic, even though I had done little to prepare for our new arrival. This time, I knew what being ready truly meant.

With Collin, making way for baby was a different story. He was my first and everything needed to be perfect. Every detail of his farm-themed nursery was in place six weeks before I expected him. Sky blue walls, new carpet, an espresso covered crib with embroidered linens, photographs of livestock I'd taken in Ireland hanging above a well-stocked bookcase. Tiny clothes meticulously organized by size and color lined the closet and dresser. Diapers and wipes were stuffed into baskets around the house. No less than 30 receiving blankets waited to swaddle him. A dozen bottles had been washed and neatly stored. I'd already started filling out the baby book as I stared down the calendar, anxiously waiting to meet my first born child.

With Frank, I had experience, more realistic expectations, and the needs of an almost 3-year-old to guide my preparations. I still spent a lot of time decorating his storybook-themed bedroom, but I brought out less clothing and blankets, had lost a few bottles along the way, and had developed a more practical diaper-management system. I neglected the baby book until one afternoon when he was about 6 months old, and haven't touched it since. I had tremendous anxiety waiting for him to arrive, but once Frank made his appearance, I had everything I really needed -and nothing more- in place.



## *Frank's room*

With my third baby, I found myself overwhelmed with work and duties to the older siblings. I moved the two of them together into a big bed in Frank's room, but the baby's room remained rather bare. We converted the toddler bed back into a crib, but a stripped mattress remains while the pack 'n play is still in use. A cross is the only thing hanging on the still sky-blue walls. The bookcase has been picked through and what's left is a jumbled mess. Most of the clothing was in a laundry basket, only half folded. Five bottles remained and an unopened box of diapers sat in the closet downstairs. The receiving blankets are nowhere to be found. The baby book does not exist. And yet, I'm more prepared for this baby than ever.



## *Baby number three's room*

This time, I know just how little it takes to bring home a new addition to the family. He or she will need clothes, food, diapers, a place to rest. They don't need to be perfectly organized or beautiful, just there. The most important things any baby needs are love and prayers. And in this family there are plenty of those to go around.

Every night at dinner, we ask that God bring us a baby that is happy, healthy, strong, and (Collin's addition) lovely. Hopefully, all those things will come true for us soon. Because we're ready.