

Weekly Fetal Development of Gabriela 2016

*Tradition teaches us Christ was conceived on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25.
Follow the development of Gabriela in the womb beginning on the Feast of the Annunciation
through Christmas Day, December 25.*

April 3 (Week 1)

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. (Jeremiah 1: 5)

The Miracle of Life! At conception the gender of the child is determined by the father's sperm. We are going to name this tiny new human being Gabriela. Gabriela has not yet implanted into the wall of the uterus so no one but God knows of her existence. God has known us and loved us from all eternity.

April 10 (Week 2)

For nothing will be impossible for God. (Luke 1:37)

Gabriela has implanted in the wall of her mother's uterus which typically takes place about 6 days after conception. Immediately, physical changes start taking place with her mother. The placenta starts to form, which will protect Gabriella and provide nutrients to her. Mom's uterus will increase its capacity by 1000 times during pregnancy.

April 17 (Week 3)

*I praise you, so wonderfully you made me . . . my bones were not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret, fashioned as in the depths of the earth. (Psalm 139)*

Multiplying and developing rapidly, Gabriela's cells are separating into those that will form her body and organ systems. Before the second week is over, her cells have separated into those that will give rise to her brain, nervous system, skin, digestive system, muscles, bones, and circulatory system.

April 24 (Week 4)

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation...
all things were created through him and for him. (Colossians 1:15-16)*

Gabriela's heart started beating 18 days after conception. She may have a different blood type than her mother's. Already Gabriela has the foundation for thought, senses, feeling and more. The amniotic sac is now formed and the fluid will cushion Gabriela throughout the pregnancy. Gabriela has a yolk sac which supplies blood and nutrients until the placenta has developed and is ready to take over.

May 1 (Week 5)

*You did form my inward parts, you did knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for you are
fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are your works! You know me right well. (Psalm 139[138]: 13-14)*

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Gabriela's heart is now pumping blood. All four chambers of the heart are working. Her lungs are starting to appear along with her brain. Arm and leg buds appear. Soon she will be doing somersaults in the spacious world of the womb. Mom is probably tired and may experience morning sickness as her body adjusts to the baby.

May 8 (Week 6)

*Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid.
You are worth more than many sparrows. (Luke 12:7)*

Gabriela is now 10,000 times larger than the original fertilized egg and she is developing rapidly. Her heart is pumping and increasing quantities of blood through her body. The placenta forms a unique barrier between Mom and Gabriella. The baby likely has a different blood type, different DNA, and is not part of the mother's body.

May 15 (Week 7)

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

Gabriela's brain waves can now be detected. Over the next few months her brain will develop over 100 billion neurons. Her brain begins to control movement of muscles and organs. Her nose is also developing. Her mother probably has confirmed that she is pregnant. Happy Mother's Day!

May 22 (Week 8)

How sweet to my tongue is your promise, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Psalm 119:103)

Baby Gabriela begins to move. At 8 weeks her arms are bending and flexing. Fingers are developing and Gabriela is now swimming. She may be practicing for the 2032 Olympics!

May 29 (Week 9)

Every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. (James 1:17a)

Gabriela is 9 weeks old and just under an inch long, and she now changes from embryo to fetus. Everything is present that will be found in a fully developed adult. If Gabriela continued to grow all nine months as fast as she has the second month, she would be born as large as two overfed elephants! Thankfully, development slows down.

June 5 (Week 10)

Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward. (Psalm 127:3)

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Gabriela has fingerprints at 10 weeks. The fingers can curve around an object placed in the palm. She can now feel pain. She is having a wonderful time shifting, dancing and playing in the womb. Her mother is coping with many changes as well; nurturing a baby is hard work.

June 12 (Week 11)

For nothing will be impossible for God. (Luke 1:37)

The most critical part of Gabriela's development is now complete. Gabriela enters into a period of rapid growth. Her eyelids fuse close and will not open again until about 26 weeks. Her eye color is already determined, and Gabriela can squint and even swallow. She is over an inch long and is moving around in her home, the womb. Mom's uterus will increase its capacity by 1000 times during pregnancy.

June 19 (Week 12)

You did form my inward parts; you did knit me together in my mother's womb. (Psalm 139)

Gabriela is almost 2 inches long. Fingers and toes are separated. Gabriela could easily stand on her daddy's little fingernail. Her feet are the size of the Precious Feet pins that have become a symbol of the pro-life movement. Fingernails and hair are starting to grow.

June 26 (Week 13)

Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything. (Ecclesiastes 11:5)

Gabriela now sleeps and exercises her muscles energetically. She is able to turn her head, curl her toes, make a fist, and open and close her mouth while breathing the amniotic fluid to help develop the respiratory system. While Gabriela is active, she is very small, weighing about one ounce.

July 3 (Week 14)

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him. (Luke 2:40)

Baby Gabriela is almost three inches long and growing very fast. She will continue to grow until about 23 years of age. Her vocal cords are beginning to form. Mom is feeling better and has more energy.

July 10 (Week 15)

God [had] from my mother's womb set me apart and called me through his grace... (Galatians 1:15)

Gabriela's taste buds are working! She drinks more amniotic fluid and it tastes sweet. Her skin is transparent and is very sensitive to pain except for her back and

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the top of her head. She may be small, but she's growing fast! This week, Mom will enjoy fireworks and celebrate the birth of our nation, but Gabriela won't hear anything – yet.

July 17 (Week 16)

They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. (Isaiah 35:2)

Soon Gabriela will be able to grasp with her hands. What will she grasp? Her other hand! She has her own unique fingerprints now. Her fingernails and toenails are growing. She also has an adult's taste buds. Her eyebrows and hair on her head are sprouting, but it will probably change color and texture after birth. She is kicking, twisting, and flailing really hard. But Mom can't feel Gabriela moving in the womb – yet.

July 24 (Week 17)

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. (Jeremiah 1: 5)

I'm getting a little baby fat under my skin. My heart is pumping as much as 6 gallons a day at a rate about double my mom's. I can swim and kick and do somersaults! I'm the same size as my placenta now. I'm not a lightweight anymore – I weigh almost six ounces and I am about three inches long. Mom might be able to hear tiny thumps of my heartbeat with an external monitor now.

July 31 (Week 18)

Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything. (Ecclesiastes 11:5)

When I'm sleeping, I have REM (rapid eye movements), which means I'm dreaming, but I can't remember my dreams. My vocal cords have formed but I don't make a sound – must be because there's no air in here. Isn't it amazing that I'm able to breathe underwater, inhaling and exhaling small amounts of amniotic fluid? I'm working on developing great lungs. Mom may start to feel me as a flutter in her lower abdomen.

August 7 (Week 19)

I can hear my mother's heartbeat and some other funny noises she makes. I'm beginning to know her voice. My umbilical cord (that's where I get my food from) is really awesome – engineering marvel! My umbilical cord transports 300 quarts of fluid per day and completes a round-trip of fluids every 30 seconds. Wow! I like sucking my thumb. Mom is probably starting to show now.

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August 14 (Week 20)

If you were to shine a very bright light on Mom's abdomen, I may slowly move my hand in front of my eyes. If you make a very loud noise, I may cover my ears with my hands. But I can also hear my mom's voice, and when she sings a lullaby, it soothes me and helps me sleep. My private parts are clearly visible now, and Mom may be able to feel my kicks now. Don't forget those prenatal vitamins!

August 21 (Week 21)

For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled. (Luke 1:44- 45)

Hair is starting to grow on my head; I wonder what color is it? I'm 20 weeks old now, and in another 20 weeks I will be born! My legs are getting stronger, so soon Mom will really feel my kicks. I like sleeping in the same position now. I'm over 6 inches tall when I stretch out, and I weigh over 10 ounces. Mom can distinguish two heartbeats if she lies quietly and flat on her back, locates her own heartbeat by finding her pulse, then lays her hand on her belly. My heart pumps about six gallons of blood every day.

August 28 (Week 22)

...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:11)

My tongue is fully formed now. I'm practicing giving people a raspberry! I can hear noises from the outside. Some loud ones scare me. I know Mom's voice and like the music she listens to. I now have fingernails and fingerprints. I'm not as little as I used to be just a few weeks ago...I'm now about 10 inches long if I could stand up straight! Mom is waiting to find out if I'm a boy or girl.

September 4 (Week 23)

Therefore, take these words of mine into your heart and soul....Teach them to your children, speaking of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest. (Deuteronomy 11:18-19)

I can hear Mom's conversations more clearly now. I can hear her read, sing, and talk. I like to kick back, suck my thumb, and listen to her read to me. My eyelids and eyebrows are fully formed. My fingernails have grown to the ends of my fingers. My brain is growing really fast, so I'm going to be very smart. I weigh nearly a pound now. Dad, did you know that low-frequency sounds, like a male

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voice, penetrate the abdomen and uterine wall better than the higher frequencies of the female voice?

September 11 (Week 24)

"Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows." (Luke 12:7)

I have fine hair all over my body that is there to protect my skin. I will lose all this body hair before birth. I'm a little thin at this point, but am putting on more baby fat. My eyes are formed, but the iris does not yet have color – I'd like brown eyes! I now weigh over a pound and am about a foot long. Fifty years ago, a baby born at this age could not have survived. But today, with modern technology, babies born at this age have a fighting chance (about 50%) of survival.

September 18 (Week 25)

"Yet you drew me forth from the womb, made me safe at my mother's breast." (Psalm 22:10)

I'm really beginning to bulk up - I gained 6 ounces this week! I think most of it was muscle, but also some bone mass and some organ development. My taste buds allow me to distinguish bitter, sweet, and sour. My lungs have developed so well, I'm now officially considered viable and could live outside the womb. Each of my parents contributed 15,000 genes that determined not only what I look like, but also how I interpret tastes, my athletic abilities, allergies, health, and much more.

September 25 (Week 26)

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you." (Jeremiah 1:5)

Thousands and thousands of brain cells are growing in my head every day - soon I'll have billions! I can make a fist and grasp things. My spine is beginning to form to protect my spinal cord. I'm covered by a white, cheesy substance that protects my skin... but don't worry, it'll come off right after birth. Mom can tell if I get the hiccups.

October 2 (Week 27)

"How sweet to my tongue is your promise, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103)

My taste buds continue to form; I can taste sweet things now. My mom likes chocolate and so do I! I can now see a bright light through my mommy's tummy. I

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have eyelashes and eyebrows now. My fingerprints are fully formed. My toenails and fingernails are growing and may need to be clipped when I'm born. Mom may be feeling like a "Soccer Mom" now that her uterus is the size of a soccer ball.

October 9 (Week 28)

"Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; cry out to the rock of our salvation." (Psalm 95:1)

Whoa! I've had trouble with my balance, but it's getting better. I'm going to be in my first *Life Chain* today. The cars may not notice me, but Mom will. Not much room to wave in here, but my eyes are opening, so I will practice blinking at everyone. I weigh about 2 pounds. If I were born now, I would have an 85% chance of survival because my lungs have been getting stronger. Mom's talking about different names for me. How about Gabriela?

October 16 (Week 29)

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

I've has doubled in size over the last 4 weeks and it's getting cramped in the womb. I'm about 14 inches tall now and growing really fast. I don't have as much room to do my exercises. I try to stretch out, and Mom can feel me move about. My muscle tone is getting much better, and my body is filling out with baby fat. You can hear my heartbeat if you put your ear on Mom's tummy.

October 23 (Week 31)

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me...whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:35,40)

I must be getting younger. The wrinkles I had everywhere are slowly disappearing as I gain more and more weight. I used to have a big head, but now my body is catching up. Hair is growing on my head – nice fine hair. I can move my eyes, but it is still pretty dark in here. And I can hear my mom. I can't wait to see her! Gabriela takes mom's breath away as she kicks her lungs and ribs. The third trimester is filled with aches and pains and general discomfort for Mom, but she knows that soon she will see her baby.

October 30 (Week 32)

"For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for what you hated, you would not have fashioned." (Wisdom 11:24)

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I weigh three pounds now and will gain about a half pound each week until birth. It's really cramped now, so I'm in the fetal position. I can see, but I don't have 20/20 vision and I won't have 20/20 vision until I'm 7 to 9 years old – hopefully. Mom is pretty uncomfortable. Fatigue is her constant companion. Sleeping on her left side may help, as it will remove some pressure on the nerves and blood vessels in her back.

November 6 (Week 33)

“Should there be a prophet among you, in visions will I reveal myself to him, in dreams will I speak to him.” (Numbers 12:6)

I weigh over 3 pounds and may weigh about 7 pounds at birth. My brain is growing very fast. I'm starting to have regular sleep and awake time. I have dreams, but I keep them secret between God and me. I'm using my four senses of vision, hearing, taste, and touch. I try to stretch out but there's not enough room. Mom is planning a baby shower. I don't know why, it's always wet in here.

November 13 (Week 34)

“Whoever humbles himself like a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 8:5)

I'm almost 17 inches long but I'm all curled up so it is hard to see how tall I am. I like to look around when I'm awake, but it is hard to see anything – it's all fuzzy. Ouch! I scratched myself with my long fingernails. My head has started to move head down (96% of babies are born that way). Mom's uterus is stretching and is pushing her organs every which way, causing heartburn, constipation, indigestion, and breathlessness.

November 20 (Week 35)

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation...all things were created through him and for him.” (Colossians 1:15-16)

My immune system is really beefing up, and I'll be ready to fight infections and illnesses right after I'm born. The amniotic fluid that surrounds me has reached its peak, so I now have lots of padding. My skull is pliable and soft, ready for delivery. I'm going to decide when I will be born. Mom feels she has to go to the bathroom frequently – the pressure is on.

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November 27 (Week 36)

"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come." (Matthew 24:42)

I weigh about 5 ½ pounds now. I'm really putting on baby fat, which will help keep me warm after birth. My lungs are almost complete. It may be possible to see some of my body parts as the uterine wall gets thinner – feet, head, and hands. Mom is looking for a pediatrician to examine me after birth. She's getting ready for when I'm ready.

December 4 (Week 37)

"Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God." (Romans 15:7)

I'm absorbing about a gallon of amniotic fluid per day and am now receiving valuable antibodies from Mom to fight off infections. Fat is deposited in my cheeks this week, and the muscles that help me suck are helping to fill my little face. I'm about 6 pounds and over 20 inches in length. I'm still eating leftovers from Thanksgiving! I'm a little plump, but I'm ready for my first picture. Sometimes Mom has cravings: pickles and ice cream make a good snack.

December 11 (Week 38)

"They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God." (Isaiah 35:2)

I'm now considered full-term but continue to gain and grow every day. My lungs are days from completion, and I'm practicing breathing with my amniotic fluid. It's easy to grasp things with my little fingers. Typically, boys weigh more than girls at birth. Only 4% of babies are actually born on their due date. Mom, pack your bags, and don't forget the camera for those all-important pictures of me!

December 18 (Week 39)

"God [had] from my mother's womb set me apart and called me through his grace..." (Galatians 1:15)

I now weigh between 5 and 9 pounds; the average size of a baby is 7 pounds. It's really crowded in here, and it's very hard to move. The umbilical cord doesn't have any nerve endings (which means neither Mom nor I will feel any pain when it's cut!), and it's about ½ inch thick. The good news for Mom is it's easier to breathe because I'm moving down. The bad news is Mom may be running to the bathroom every two minutes.

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December 25 (Week 40)

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (Luke 2:14)

Celebrate - today Gabriela is born! Don't be surprised at how I look after birth. My head may be misshapen and my skin may be discolored with patchy looking rashes. Gabriela, like all babies, is made in the image and likeness of God.