



## Godly Play

Godly Play is an interpretation of Montessori religious education, which means it is more like spiritual guidance than what is typically thought of in the church as children's education. It involves children and adults, as guides, moving together toward fluency in the art of knowing how to use Christian language to nourish their moral and spiritual development.

In Godly Play children are taught how to *enter into* parables, contemplative silence, sacred stories and the liturgical action of the classical Christian language system to discover more about God, themselves, others and God's presence in the creation that surrounds and is within us. [Click here](#) to learn more about Godly Play.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Godly Play

### **What is Godly Play?**

Godly Play offers a creative, child-honoring way of entering into and experiencing the biblical story. In Godly Play, we play with the language of God and God's People: our sacred stories, parables, liturgical actions and silence. Through this powerful language, through our wondering, through the community of players gathered together, we hear the deepest invitation of all: an invitation to come play with God. This approach was

developed and classroom tested for over 25 years by Dr. Jerome Berryman, teacher, author and Episcopal priest. It is currently being used in churches of many denominations throughout the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

### **What Makes Godly Play Distinctive?**

In Godly Play, we tell Bible stories to encourage children to enter the stories and relate them to their personal experience. It is concerned with the spiritual development of each child as an individual and with modeling the appropriate moral behavior expected of people living within the Christian community. In Godly Play, each session follows the pattern of the service for Holy Communion, so children develop a deep understanding and enjoy fuller participation when they attend corporate worship on the first Sunday of the month. The class follows the Order of Worship: Getting ready, listening and responding to the Word (lesson), the Feast (Holy Communion) and Blessing and Dismissal (saying goodbye).

### **When We Arrive on Sunday, what do we do?**

During the 10:00 a.m. Sunday school hour, children go to their class located on the second floor. We treat the Godly Play classroom as a "sacred space." Doorkeepers help each child at the door become ready to enter the room quietly. Children leave the room one at a time after receiving personal words of blessing and affirmation from the teacher.

### **What kinds of projects will my child do in Godly Play?**

After the lesson, the teacher and children wonder together about the story. Then, each child chooses how to respond to the lesson with art or lesson materials. We encourage children to take time on their projects.

### **How will I know if my child is learning anything?**

One of the most important things we teach in this program is how Christian people live and work together in community. This is hard to measure. Many parents find their children begin to retell Bible stories and wonder aloud about the meaning of these stories.

### **What are on the shelves in the classrooms?**

These objects are the lesson materials that make the images of religious language come alive. In Godly Play, the teacher (storyteller) sits in the circle with the children on the floor, literally surrounded by our religious language system. The materials help us tell the story of the day and are placed in the middle of the circle, symbolizing the fact that God is present and accessible to all, children and adults alike. Working in the circle also helps us emphasize many aspects of being together in a Christian community.

**Will my child bring home craft projects?**

The classroom has a good selection of art materials. Children bring different perspectives and responses to the stories they hear and so they choose the art medium they wish to use. Some students may work on one story for several weeks.

**What can I do to support my child in Godly Play?**

There are parent pages supplied for many of the stories we teach in Godly Play each week. These pages can encourage a dialogue between you and your child. They will help you to know something about the Bible stories we share in class.

**Will my child enjoy Godly Play?**

One of the goals of Godly Play is to create a safe space for children a place where their ideas, opinions, and gifts are deeply respected. Because everything in the classroom is designed for children to use and enjoy, most children look forward to coming to Godly Play.