

Godly Play: An Overview for Parents & Care-givers

Godly Play is a process that invites children and adults to engage and play with the language of God and God's people. It encourages children to explore and wonder how they are connected to the stories from the Bible, parables of Jesus, and liturgical actions of the church year.

The Godly Play process invites children to worship. The space is intentionally set up to encourage children to enter into a place where trust and consistency allows them the opportunity to come close to God.

Time in Godly Play is managed much the same way as when we worship in the Cathedral. There is a welcome at the door. Once the circle of children is built, the Word of God is shared. Next, the children are encouraged to "wonder" about the story. Questions such as: "Which part did you like best?" "Which part is about you?" "What else do we need to tell this story?" "Which part of the story can we take out and still have all we need?" Then, the children move to response time with the story. Here, a child can work with the story or explore various art materials in a manner that allows them time with God. Next, the circle comes together for a common feast or communion with one another. This time of breaking bread together affords children the opportunity to share what is going on in their lives. Finally, there is a blessing for each child and dismissal to his/her parents and/or care-giver(s).

As stated above, Godly Play stories are organized into three central themes. These are sacred stories, parables, and liturgical actions.

In sacred stories, we tell the stories of God's People to invite children to become, themselves, part of the story. The story of God and God's People is almost the story of a favorite game of child's play: Hide-and-Seek. God calls people into relationship, who then respond by trying to connect with what they experience as an Elusive Presence. Both words of the phrase are significant: we cannot fully capture our experience of God in any story or rite — yet it is God's presence that invites us endlessly to follow what glimpses we find. In short, as we seek, we find. (*The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Vol. 2, pg. 25*).

In parables, we enter with wonder to live the question. Parables question our everyday view of life. They wake us up to see in life what we have not seen before. Parables question the status quo, the order imposed by tradition, power, or class. That is why Jesus' parables often got him into trouble, and why Christians ever since have sometimes redefined parables in ways that only comfort us rather than challenge us by disrupting our comfortable world views. (*The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Vol. 2, pg. 25*).

In liturgical actions, we mark life, time, and space, so children can know the Holy. Godly Play liturgical actions present a kind of language lesson. Children can learn the language of liturgy and have an appropriate place to practice the language of liturgy so that they can enter more fully into the liturgical experience of their own church. (*The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Vol. 2, pg. 25*).

The Best Ways for Parents and Caregivers

One Godly Play lesson tells children about the “Ten Best Ways” to live. This is the story of the Ten Commandments that God gave to God’s People. Here we offer “Best Ways” for parents – not commandments, but ways we invite you, the parent, to share more fully in your child’s Godly Play experience.

1. Godly Play sessions take place on Sundays from 9:30 to 10:15. Please help your children to be on time. They won’t want to miss a minute!
2. The Godly Play circle is built slowly and lovingly to welcome each child, one at a time. When the children arrive, they wait outside the door while the teacher helps them get ready to enter into the circle.
3. Please say your goodbyes at the door, and know that the teachers are ready to make the next 45 minutes a safe and welcoming time for every child.
4. When you pick up your child, keep in mind that young children will not always be able to tell you what they learned because what they learned was *how* to learn about the powerful language of the Christian people.
5. Also keep in mind that children will not always be able to show you a physical product for their “work” that day, because some of what they’ve learned cannot be put into words, even by adults. In Godly Play, we focus on our relationships with God and the depths of relationships in the community of children.
6. Please don’t come into the room during class because we want the Godly Play room to be a special place for a community of children. Even the teachers keep their profiles low during a Godly Play session!
7. We would be happy to welcome you for a visit to the Godly Play room outside of session time. Call Libby Nicodemus at 214-341-1787 to arrange a visit or to ask any questions you might have about the program.
8. We welcome volunteers to help with the classroom and Godly Play process. If you are interested in being a door person, contact Libby Nicodemus, 214-341-1787.

Godly Play Presentations 2013 – 2014

Fall Semester

Liturgical Actions

9/8 – Circle of the Church Year

9/15 – The Holy Family

Sacred Stories

9/22 – Creation

9/29 – The Flood and the Ark

10/6 – The Great Family

10/13 – The Exodus

10/20 – The 10 Best Ways

10/27 – The Ark and the Tent

11/3 – Work Day

11/10 – The Books of the Bible

11/17 – The Mystery of Christmas

Advent Festival

Liturgical Actions

12/1 – Advent I

12/8 – Advent II

12/15 – Advent III

12/22 – Advent IV

Spring Semester

Liturgical Actions

1/5 - Epiphany

1/12 – Holy Baptism

Parables

1/19 – Parable of the Good Shepherd

1/26 – Parable of the Good Samaritan

2/2 - Parable of the Great Pearl

2/9 – Parable of the Sower

2/17 – Parable of the Leaven

2/23 – Parable of the Sower

Liturgical Actions

3/2 – Mystery of Easter

3/16 – Faces of Easter I, II, III 11/24 – Family

3/23 – Faces of Easter IV, V, VI

4/6 – Faces of Easter V, VI, VII

4/20 – EASTER – NO GODLY PLAY

4/27 – Circle of the Holy Eucharist

4/28 – Work Day

5/4 – Good Shepherd & World

Communion 5/11 – Paul’s Discovery