

In a Nutshell: The Godly Play Philosophy

About Children

- Even young children today face and wrestle with complex existential issues.
- Young children already have a spiritual life of depth that adults may not understand or honor.
- Young children can discover and use the language of religious narrative and symbol that will allow them to express themselves spiritually and “make meaning.”

About Children’s Work

- Children’s *play* is their work.
- Children are encouraged to choose their own work during each class.
- Children like to work when it is work they have chosen for themselves.
- Teachers do not interfere with the children’s work unless the child asks for help.
- When a child seems unable to ask for assistance, it should be offered by the adult.
- Part of the work of the community of children is the care of their own classroom environment and how they treat one another.
- Children like to feel self-sufficient: it is good to allow them the opportunity to clean up their own spills and put away their own work.

About Teachers and Children

- Teachers are guides. They do not need to have all the answers.
- Children have much to teach adults who will take the time to listen.
- Children are encouraged to do the work of discovering answers.
- When a teacher takes time to listen and observe a child, the teacher can find more effective ways to lead the child into new discoveries.
- Children are treated seriously and with deep respect; they are subjects, not objects.

About the Classroom Environment

- The Godly Play classroom is a place for children:
 - To be themselves
 - To learn how Christians live in community
 - To come closer to the mystery of God’s presence
 - To learn the language of the Christian people
- Respect for the space and for one another is maintained in a Godly Play classroom to help children feel safe.
- A Godly Play classroom should help each child feel successful.

About Enabling a Community of Children to Develop:

- In Godly Play, children are encouraged to form their own community and take care of one another.
- A classroom is not “over-adulted.” This allows children to form a community and empowers them to be responsible for their space. It also keeps the storyteller and doorman focused on the children and their work.