

Summaries of Godly Play Stories
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Denver
Church of Our Saviour, Mill Valley

Volume 2

Circle of the Church Year:

Our worship today centered on the Circle of the Church Year story. This story is from the Liturgical Action shelf and whose stories help us all understand why we do the things we do in church. This particular story explains the “Three Great Days” (Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas), the times we use right before them to get-ready both personally and communally (Lent, Eastertide, and Advent). The colors change in church for very good reasons – just ask your child! Here are some hints: White is the color of pure celebration, Green is the color of growing times, purple is the color of royalty and is very serious in nature, while red is HOT and signals the appearance of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Family:

Our worship today centered on the story of the Holy Family. We entered into the story of the Mother Mary, the Father Joseph, and Jesus who we met both as a baby and a risen savior. In both forms, Jesus was, as he has been since, “reaching out to give the whole world a hug.”

You can support your child by furthering the discussion during the week. Stories of Jesus' birth and resurrection from your family's Bible, children's Bible, or the resources suggested at the end of this email would be great places to start the conversation.

Creation (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

“In the beginning...” The story today was our first story of Creation from the very first line of Genesis. Our bible has 2 Creation stories – the other is about Adam and Eve and a certain serpent. With the gift of each day, God said, “It is good.” Remember with your child what was created on those first six days, perhaps reading the story from a bible or bible storybook. Spend some time thinking about the 7th day when even God rested and gave us the gift of a day to remember all the gifts from the

other days. “I don’t know where you go to remember... only you and God know that place that is just right for you.”

The Great Flood (Genesis 6:5-9:17)

We heard the story of The Great Flood today. The Flood Story is believed to be a myth by most scholars – a way for ancient people to understand the world around them. God’s beautiful creation had changed a great deal before the flood and God chose Noah and his family to build the ark and preserve the creatures while the earth was washed clean. After the rain stopped and the earth was dry enough to depart the ark, God made a covenant with all people that this would never happen again. The sign he gave was a “bow in the sky” which we think of as a rainbow. (We made one today using a prism!)

When one of our daughters was very small, she must have really been thinking about this story after she heard it in Godly Play because a few days later she became very worried about all the people who were not on the ark when the flood happened. This may be a troubling story for you or your child, especially in light of our recent disaster. Our tradition is full of stories that are challenging; some of them linked to a God who seems punitive or capricious at times. I remember responding to her that the God who was in the Flood Story was not the God that I know and we talked about the God that we experience in our lives and in our family. Open wondering together by simply asking, “Tell me about the Story of the Great Flood that you heard” and see where the discussion goes!



The Great Family (Genesis: 12-15, 24)

This story is told in the beloved Desert Box! The story yesterday was about Abram and Sarai (who God later renamed Abraham and Sarah) who left their home and family for a place that God would show them. They found God was with them everywhere they went, not just in this place or that place. God promised that he would make of them a "Great Family" but they were far too old to have children so they laughed when God told them this. But they laughed again when God blessed them with a child in their old age and named their baby 'Laughter' (Isaac in their language)! And God did keep God's promise and made of them a great family of many generations including us. "As many as the grains of sand in the desert, as many as the stars in the sky."

In the Bible, you can find this story in Genesis 12-15, 24

Wonder together about the story. A good place to start is always by sharing the parts each of you liked best. Another great question to share is how is the world we

live in different for people who believe in one God or many gods or no G/god at all?
Have you experienced 'all of God everywhere' like Abraham and Sarah?



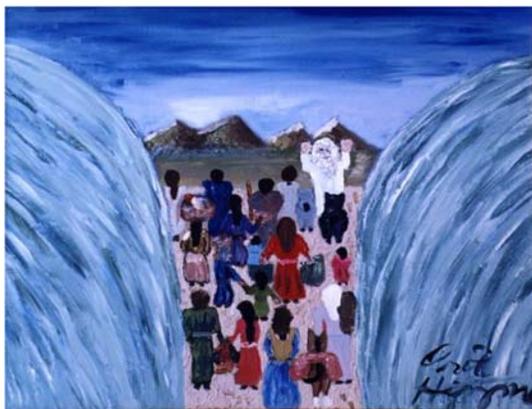
Abraham and Sarah by Marc Chagall

Exodus (Exodus 11:1-15, 21)

Today, we heard the story of the Exodus and we tell this story in the Desert Box. The People of God found their way to Egypt where there were food and jobs because there was no rain where they were living. But when they got to Egypt, Pharaoh trapped them and they became slaves. One of the People, Moses, went to Pharaoh and demanded, "Let my people go!" but each time Pharaoh said "NO." Bad things happened over and over in the land but each time Moses asked to let his people go,

Pharaoh always said no. Finally, something happened that was so awful it is hard to talk about. The Angel of Death took the oldest son of each Egyptian family, even Pharaoh's oldest son, but passed over the Hebrew homes because they had marked their doors with the blood of a lamb. (This is where the celebration of Passover gets its name.) This time Pharaoh said "yes" and the Hebrews quickly packed their things, not even waiting for their bread - matzo - to rise and fled. Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army after the fleeing Hebrews but the sea opened up and let them through, closing again on Pharaoh's army. The People were free and danced in celebration. We "tasted this story" as we ate matzo together and wondered what it would be like to pack everything you owned and flee so fast that your bread had no time to rise and get fluffy like the bread we eat today.

In the Bible, you can find this story in Exodus 11:1-15:21



[The 10 Best Ways to Live](#) (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-21; Matthew 22:36-40)

In the Godly Play Sanctuary, we heard the story of the 10 Best Ways to Live. We talked together about how hard these rules are to keep all the time but God asks us

to try. The first four are about loving God while the last six are ways to help people love one another. The middle one, Remember the Sabbath, is a bridge between Loving God and Loving People, isn't it?

The 10 Best Ways are found in the Old Testament and were given to Moses but Jesus simplified what we are called to do in the New Testament. In Matthew 22:36-40 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Today, our gospel passage was from Luke (6:31) and closed with Jesus call "to do to others as you would have them do to you."

It is fun to try and name all the 10 Best Ways when children are older and to try and name the ways your family shows love towards God and love towards people with children of any age.

Your family might enjoy this [You-Tube video about the Ten Commandments](#) ... (it reminds me of School House Rock if you remember that!) Blessings on your wondering about this story together and wherever it leads you.





Marc Chagall: From Lithographs for The Story of Exodus (1966)

The Ark and The Tent (Exodus 25-31, 35-40)

How do people of God come close to something precious? We need a way to get ready. That was true of the People of God after Moses brought down the Ten Best Ways to Live, too. First there was an ark (a special box) to hold the stone tablets but that was not enough... then the evocative smell and smoke of incense but that was not enough... then tables and candles and walls and places for washing and sacrifice... special vestments... only certain people could enter... Remember this story together as a family and wonder – What helps you come close to precious things or to enter worship. How do you get ready? How is it different from other members of your family? What sorts of things do we have in our church for getting ready? How do we get ready for Godly Play? Is that different than church? Interesting how people's practices differ... in ways that make things just right for them!

The Ark and The Temple (1Kings 5-8; 2 Chronicles 2-8)

As we heard the story of the Ark and the Temple, we stopped and looked at the Temple and so much was the same as when the People of God built the Ark in the Tabernacle, a structure that they could pack up and take with them wherever they went on their nomadic desert journeys. Both had places for incense, a candle stand, and a table with 12 pieces of bread on top and more. But after King David brought the 10 Best Ways that were inside the special box, the ark, into the great walled city of Jerusalem and his son, King Solomon, built the Temple to hold it in this one location, things shifted for the people. Was God now 'contained' in this place that suddenly filled with a great cloud of light when the ark was first carried inside? King Solomon had prayed that the Temple building would contain the *name of God* and that it could be a place for the people to pray and find justice. Wonder together what it might mean for a place to "contain the name of God?" Is that even possible? If so, are there places that contain the name of God today?

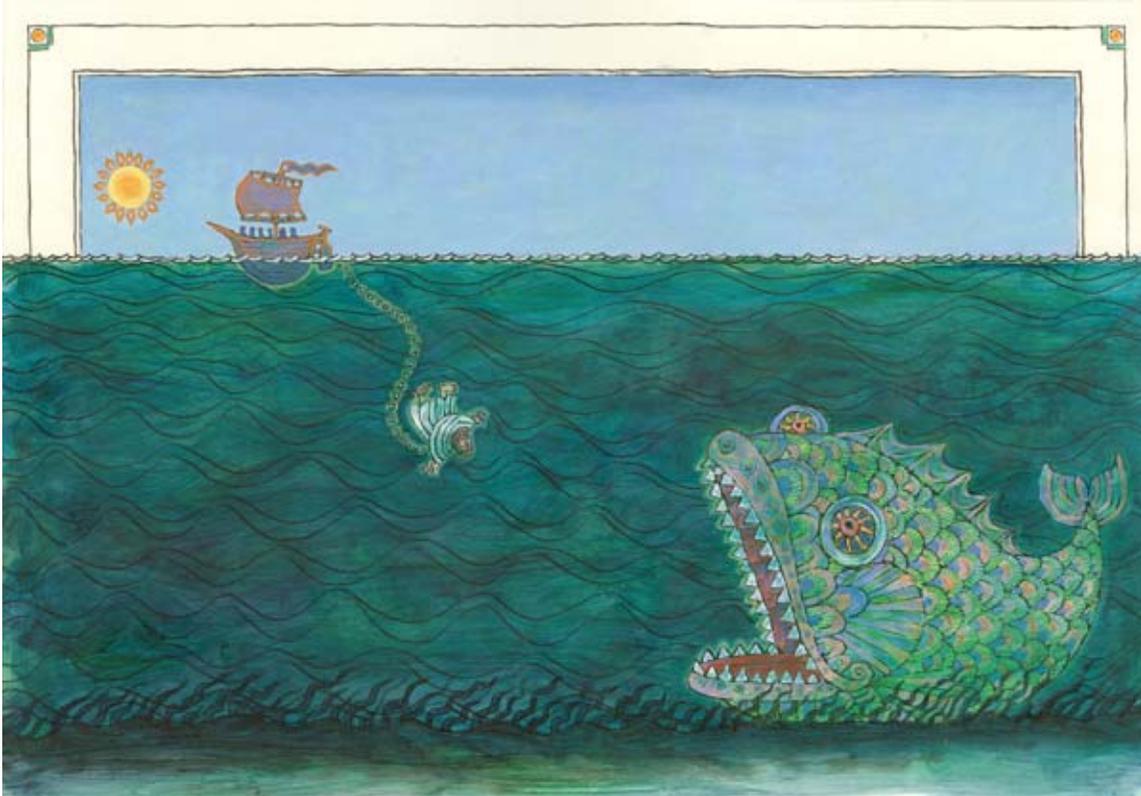


The Exile and the Return (2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 36:13-23; Ezra; Nehemiah)

The story of the Exile and the Return remembers the time after Abraham, Moses, and David but 500 years before Jesus when the Babylonians came and destroyed the Jewish temple and the city of Jerusalem. Many of the Israelites were marched off to Babylon for a long exile. How could they be with God who they believed was back in Jerusalem, in the destroyed temple? They hung their harps in the trees by the rivers of Babylon and they wept. But over time, they realized that God was in this place of captivity, too. When the Persian king took control of Babylon, the people of God were allowed to return home but not all the Jews did. Some stayed for, just like Abraham had discovered, God was not to be found in just one place. All of God was everywhere. Wonder as a family where you and your child see God?

Jonah, The Backwards Prophet (Jonah: 1-4)

We tell the story of Jonah in our Godly Play circle with a sense of mischief for it is one of the Hebrew Bible's 'tall tales,' a way to share wisdom through story. We call Jonah the 'backward prophet' because he always made the choice that was opposite of what a prophet or hero should. For example, when God asked Jonah to go to Nineveh and deliver a message, Jonah got on a boat going in the other direction. When God caused a storm at sea to get Jonah's attention, he tried to sleep through it. And when spit out by that great fish and finally arriving in Nineveh (better late than never!), Jonah sulked on the hill outside the city because God would not destroy the repentant people there. The story is also 'backward' because it has no conclusion. Ask your child to tell you the story they remember (or read it together from a children's Bible) and then ask everyone to share how they feel the story should end and why. Wonder why the ancient teller of this story never gave it a proper ending? Maybe they had a good reason. I wonder what that reason might be?



Books of the Bible

The Bible is not a book... really. It is a volume full of shorter books written by all different people for all different reasons. There is poetry (Psalms and more!) and words of wisdom (Proverbs) and imaginative futuristic stories (Daniel and parts of Isaiah) and stories to comfort people feeling great pain and oppression (Ruth, Job, and Revelation) and stories named after their writers or wannabees (lots of others!) The point is that real people who had stories to share and people they wanted to remember wrote the Bible to share with others in their villages, tribes, and churches. Wonder with your child what they would like to know more about in the Bible and maybe spend some time in *the good book together!*

Volume 3

Advent I

In the Godly Play rooms, we changed our colors on the altar and the calendar to purple, the distinctive color of royalty and of anticipation. The people 2,000 years ago were waiting for a Messiah and we wait today. (That is a challenging part of being a Christian.) On this first Sunday in Advent, we remembered the prophets who

pointed us to Bethlehem, the city where King David had been born 1,000 years earlier. They knew that something special was to happen there. They were not clear what it was but they told the people then to "Pay Attention, for something amazing was to happen in the City of David."

Wonder as a family this week how you as a family pays attention when you believe something amazing is about to happen. How does your family get ready? How does it feel to wait when you are not quite sure what you are waiting for? Will you do anything during Advent to pay attention in a different way?

Advent II

In the Godly Play Sanctuary, we changed our colors on the altar and the calendar to purple last week, the distinctive color of royalty and of anticipation. This is one of the two colors most closely linked with Advent. The other is blue, the color of the Mother Mary, the color of hope, and the color of the night sky just moments before dawn. (Next week the candle color changes to rose - more on that in the weeks to follow!) The people 2,000 years ago were waiting for a Messiah and we wait today. This is a challenging part of being a Christian. The first week of Advent, a blue (or purple) candle is lit and we remember the prophets from the Old Testament who knew something special was to happen in Bethlehem, the city where King David had been born 1,000 years earlier. Prophets know the most important things and these prophets told the people to stop and pay attention as they pointed the way to Bethlehem. For the second week of Advent, we light the second blue (or purple) candle and remember Mary and Joseph and their long and uncomfortable trip to Bethlehem when Mary was heavy with a baby inside. "They must have been the last people to arrive in Bethlehem that night."

- Wonder as a family this week how you as a family pays attention when you believe something amazing is about to happen.
- How does your family get ready?
- How does it feel to wait when you are not quite sure what you are waiting for?
- Will you do anything during Advent to pay attention in a different way?



Advent III

This is the third week in Advent. As we get closer to the mystery that is Christmas, the Advent wreath gives us a little perk in a pink candle for the third week. On the first week of Advent, the prophets point us toward Bethlehem. On the second week we remember the Holy Family's trip to the City of David, Bethlehem. They got there so late, there was only a stable available for them to sleep in that night. On the third Sunday, the shepherds were called by the angels to run to Bethlehem to see the Saviour. The candle is pink today to remind us that amid all this waiting is a special kind of joy. Pink also reminds us of Jesus' mother, Mary. Wonder with your child about which part of Advent is their favorite. Why? And share with them your favorite part and why. Do you remember waiting for Christmas when you were a child? Share those stories with your child!



Advent I-IV and Christmas

We heard the whole story of Christmas as framed by the Advent calendar. Some of it our children had heard earlier in the season and some was fresh today. Just as the readings in church repeat on holy days and the whole cycle of readings (the lectionary) repeats every three years - we repeat some core stories of our faith every year. This Godly Play version of Advent is just such a story.

The first week of Advent, a blue candle is lit and we remember the prophets from the Old Testament who knew something special was to happen in Bethlehem and they told the people to stop and pay attention. To recall the second week of Advent, we light the second blue candle and remember Mary and Joseph and their long and

uncomfortable trip to Bethlehem when Mary was heavy with a baby inside. "They must have been the last people to arrive in Bethlehem that night." We remember the third week of Advent by lighting a rose colored candle. The rose color is one of the colors we have to remember Jesus' mother, Mary. But we also light a rose candle this week to add a little joy to this serious time of waiting in Advent. We remember the angels' announcement to the shepherds that night to get going into Bethlehem for a savior had been born. And run they did! We signal the fourth week in Advent by lighting the final blue candle and remembering the Three Magi who knew all the stars in the sky. When they saw "a wild star" they just knew they had to follow it and so they began the long journey from their homeland in the east. We remember them on the fourth week of Advent but we also acknowledge that they really arrived later, sometime after Jesus was born. Epiphany on January 6th will celebrate their arrival. Finally, we light the white Christ candle. White is the color of pure celebration and so we light this candle for Christmas, the day Christ was born. We wondered together how the cow, who usually found her breakfast in a manger, felt when she saw a baby there! We imagined she looked at the baby with her big brown eyes and was just as amazed as everyone else gathered there that first Christmas morning.

The Mystery of Christmas

In Godly Play, Giotto's Frescoes Meet Madeleine L'Engle

Our Godly Play circle looked at the Christmas story through the eyes of Italian Renaissance artist Giotto di Bondone and his frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, Italy. These beautiful works include Mary's visitation by the angel, the birth in a stable, and the adoration of the Magi (above.) They also include parts of the story that are often left out but are important, too. When the tiny infant Jesus is presented in the Temple by his parents, an old man, Simeon, recognizes the child as the one for whom he has been waiting. His prayer upon seeing Jesus is memorialized in the 'Nunc Dimittis', the Song of Simeon, which you may be familiar with from Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer/Evensong in our Book of Common Prayer. Our story today also included the Massacre of the Innocents. King Herod was so worried that the new Messiah of the Jews would challenge his power that he ordered all boy babies in the land to be killed. Joseph had a dream in which he understood that he was to take his family far away: they had already fled to Egypt by the time of this terrible event. Imagine Egypt, the place that had held the Israelites captive, was now a place of safety! Wonder with your child about this whole story and where they felt most connected. What part do they want to especially tell you about? Ask them to describe that particular picture as they remember it. Why did the artist draw it that way? If your child was the artist, would they paint it differently? Tell them how you

might imagine painting it. This story and the art can be found in a book called The Glorious Impossible by Episcopal theologian Madeleine L'Engle who also wrote A Wrinkle in Time. We have copies to share!

Work of Christmas Begins

Epiphany

The Gifts of the Magi

The 3 Gifts Were More Than Just Presents...

Epiphany is traditionally celebrated on the 12th day of Christmas. It is the day we remember the arrival of the Magi in Bethlehem. We recalled together each piece of Jesus' birth as we had during Advent and gave special attention to the final blue candle, the one that represents the Kings. We wondered about their three gifts and what they symbolize as offerings to a baby who is the Messiah. Gold is not a surprising gift for a king but did you know that frankincense was used in worship thousands of years ago and is still used today? The children experienced a bit of "ahhhh" today for when frankincense burns, the smoke starts as black and then turns to white. Myrrh is a resin that was traditionally burned at funerals. What did the presents of the wise ones foreshadow about this baby that maybe others did not realize - gifts that signify royalty, liturgical temple worship, and the perfume of funerals? Wonder together with your children what they would think if someone brought a baby you know these presents?

"When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with the flocks, then the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal those broken in spirit, to feed the hungry, to release the oppressed, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among all peoples, to make a little music with the heart...

And to radiate the Light of Christ, every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say. Then the work of Christmas begins.

-- Howard Thurman, adapted

Baptism

In our Episcopal tradition, Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into the Church. It is like a gateway of sorts. We baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. We use three white overlapping circles as a way to understand the Trinity. We ask the children to remember the day of their baptism or look forward to it as we light candles from the Christ candle. A good question for you to explore with your child is, “How does the Light change?” “Where does that Light go?” You may be amazed at what they have to say...

Parable of the Good Shepherd (Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:1-7)

We heard the Parable of the Good Shepherd, which is found in a gold parable box because parables are gifts that were given to us 2,000 years ago! In the story, The Good Shepherd knows each of his sheep by name and they know the sound of his voice. While he shows them the sheep the way to the good green grass and the cool, clear water, he also goes wherever he needs to when they are in danger. Wonder with your child who the sheep may really be? Who might the Good Shepherd be? Have you ever come close to a place like the one in the story?

Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke: 10:25-37)

Parables are the closest thing we have to the actual words of Jesus. The phrase and concept of The Good Samaritan may be familiar but you might want to watch the video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UccWt6Rx43E>) or check the scripture to get the story straight. In our Godly Play worship today, we heard the story and wondered together why a man whose people (the Samaritans) was part of a culture with a great deal of distrust and enmity towards the Jews (who felt the same about the Samaritans) would stop and help (and really care with his time, money, and concern) when a priest and Levite (both thought to be devout Jews) crossed to the other side of the road and passed by. We spent time wondering how the story might have changed if the hurt person or the helper had been a woman or a child. Who are the Samaritans to your family? Who does your family 'Samaritan' to? Ask your children their thoughts before you offer yours. I bet there will be some surprises!

Parable of the Great Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46)

The Parable of the Great Pearl (also known as “The Pearl of Great Price”) is less than 25 words in the Bible but takes much longer to tell, for in it a merchant sells EVERYTHING he owns, including his house and every possession inside, for the pearl for which he had been searching.

Why something would be so valuable that someone would give up every possession they had to obtain it. What would the Pearl of Great Price be to you? Your child? We bet there will be some surprises!

The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9)

A lot of people think they have this parable all figured out. If you put seeds in good soil they grow, right? Thorny soil is problematic; rocky soil is darn near impossible and skipping the soil makes seeds merely bird food! But Jesus reminds us in the telling of this parable that the seed grows to some extent everywhere. So what exactly is the “seed” he is talking about? How about the “soil”? Does that mean sowing in good soil is paramount or not really important at all? Read this parable together and then start to wonder about what Jesus might be saying to your family on this very day. What are the seeds in your world? Where are they sprouting?

Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33 and Luke 13:20-21)

“Educators take something simple and make it complicated. Communicators take something complicated and make it simple.”

John C. Maxwell

Today we heard the Parable of the Leaven, which is comprised of all of 26 words total in Matthew’s gospel and 23 in Luke’s. Was Jesus an educator or a communicator according to John Maxwell’s description? Was he making something complicated into something simple or vice versa? Pull out your Bible (or read the copy pasted below) for this bit of scripture is accessible to all ages and wonder together how is it possible that the Kingdom of God is like yeast? Your child may tell you that in Jesus’ time, leaven (or yeast) was considered dirty by virtue of the fact that it was fermented, making the question even more provocative. Blessings on both the simple and the complicated – it is the nature of parable and of Jesus!

Luke 13:20-21 The Parable of the Yeast

And again he said, ‘To what should I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.’

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 24:32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19)

Mustard seeds are very, tiny seeds. The ones we use for cooking are actually mustard seedpods! I wonder how something so large could come from something so small? Could it ever go back to the way it was before the mustard bush grew out of the seed? How come?

Parable of Parables

“What’s really inside a parable?” That is the question we played with today when we heard this story to help us play with the concept of what a parable really is and why Jesus offered them to us. Using a series of nesting boxes, we shared together how the story and words that were just right for one generation of hearers needed to be changed to “fit” the next. So parables have been told and retold over hundreds and hundreds of generations since Jesus shared them with us 2,000 years ago. So the question for your family to consider is, “I wonder who is going to make the next parable box?” and “I wonder if you have ever come close to the inside of a parable?”

Parable of the Deep Well (Vol. 3, p. 127)

Perhaps you are wondering why you never heard this parable read in church or referenced? Today in Godly Play we heard the Parable of the Deep Well but it is not one of Jesus’ parables and does not sit inside a gold box as those parables do in our sanctuary. Rather, this is a parable from the Jewish *midrash* tradition which can help us answer the question about what a parable really might be. In this parable a dry and lonely desert holds a well and bucket for the thirsty travelers who pass by but no rope to lower the bucket into the well. For one traveler who stopped long enough, the scattered pieces of golden threads held the answer for him. Wonder with your child about what they remember from this story and think together where are the places in your life today that a dry and scary like the desert. Might you be missing the gift of some “golden threads” scattered there just waiting for you to stop long enough to discover them?

Volume 4

Mystery of Easter (also know as the “Lenten Puzzle”)

Today we heard the story of The Mystery of Lent. We hear this story on the Sunday before Lent starts to remind us a change is coming and that we are about to enter another mystery. This time of waiting is like Advent but it is even longer because the mystery it helps us get ready for is an even bigger mystery - Easter!The 'story' is really a puzzle of 6 pieces in the shape of a cross to represent the 6 weeks of Lent. It is purple on one side, the color of waiting, royalty, and seriousness. On the other

side, the puzzle is white, the color of pure celebration! That is the paradox of the season - it is both serious and somber but promises pure celebration in the resurrection.

The Faces of Easter: I

This is the first in our seven-story series called The Faces of Easter. Over Lent, we remember Jesus' life and ministry over seven stories that we merge into all the Sundays of Godly Play in Lent. The Faces of Easter I is the story of the birth of a baby, born to be a king but not the kind of king that people were expecting - one with riches, an army, and the ability to free the people of Israel from the oppression of the Romans. No, the king who was born was called "The Word" and was born a wordless child - not at all what people expected. We wondered about the story together by bringing pieces of other Godly Play stories that we think are important to "help tell the story." Ask your child what they brought to the story and why?

The Faces of Easter II

In second part of our seven-story series called The Faces of Easter, we remembered how very human and how very divine Jesus was when he was a boy. In this story from Luke, Jesus stayed in Jerusalem after a Passover pilgrimage with his parents and went to the Temple to study with the priests there. His parents, understandably worried and tired after searching for him for three days, couldn't help but ask (and I imagine there might have been shouting involved) "Why did you do this?" Jesus answered, "Didn't you know that I would be in my Father's house?" While they did not understand then, Mary and Joseph did not forget. Spend some time hearing from your child what they thought was important about the story. Was there something from the room that they brought to the circle to help tell the story better.

The Faces of Easter III

We are all on the journey toward the greatest Christian mystery, which we know as Easter. In Godly Play, we spend the six weeks of Lent revisiting pivotal moments in the life of Jesus and his journey to the cross and beyond. We add a little more to the story each week. In the third story of our seven-story series called The Faces of Easter, we remembered the miracle of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, his boyhood adventure in the Temple in Jerusalem, his baptism in the Jordan River by his cousin John the Baptist and a voice from above saying "This is my beloved son with whom I

am well pleased." Spend some time hearing from your child what they thought was important about the story. Was there something from the room that they brought to the circle to help tell the story better.

The Faces of Easter IV

In forth part of our seven-story series called The Faces of Easter, we remembered Jesus' 40 days in the desert wilderness and the temptations he was subject to there. He gave Satan a stern rebuke after 3 enticing temptations. "I am to be a king but not that kind of king," he said. We wondered about the story together by bringing pieces of other Godly Play stories that we think are important to "help tell the story." Ask your child what they brought to the story and why?

The Faces of Easter V

We are all on the journey toward the greatest Christian mystery, which we know as Easter. In Godly Play, we spend the six weeks of Lent revisiting pivotal moments in the life of Jesus and his journey to the cross and beyond. We add a little more to the story each week. In the fifth story of our seven-story series called The Faces of Easter, we remembered Jesus' healing of blind Bartimaeus. "When you are touched by Christ, you are changed forever." Spend some time hearing from your child what they thought was important about the story. Was there something from the room that they brought to the circle to help tell the story better?

The Faces of Easter VI

In this part of the story we follow Jesus through Holy Week from his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey to his last supper with his disciples. At the table he said to them "whenever you break the bread - I will be there; whenever you drink the wine - I will be there" and they were puzzled by what he meant. That night, Judas signaled for the guards to take Jesus away. We wondered about the story together by bringing pieces of other Godly Play stories that we think are important to "help tell the story." Ask your child what they brought to the story and why?

The Faces of Easter VII

Today we heard the final story in the Faces of Easter series that walks us through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. We remembered Jesus' crucifixion and how he is still with us even though he died on the cross. We saw that the crucifixion and Easter are inextricably linked and how the end of one story is the beginning of another - that is the mystery of Easter!

Quite a lot for little ears in one day you might think. But then again as Christians we spend our whole lives trying to understand the story, don't we? So rejoice in knowing your children are walking down 'The Jesus Road' already. Your job as parents is not to turn away from the story because you struggle with it. We all do! Your job is to ask them what they think. "I wonder how Jesus can still be with us in a new way?" "I wonder how the deep sadness of Friday can turn into the pure celebration of Easter?" Is there a place in the story of Jesus life when you like him best? Why? While you all are talking, share with your child your answers even if the answer is "I don't know" and be open to the possibility that a child, as Jesus told us, is worth our full attention for they will show us the way.

(Luke 9:47-48) But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is greatest."

The Good Shepherd and World Communion is a story that helps us mesh the scripture we hold so dearly in our Bible and our weekly worship together (our Liturgy). As we revisit the Parable of the Good Shepherd and weave it together with all the people around the world who share in the Eucharist at communion tables everywhere, there is a connectedness that goes way beyond our own congregation! I wonder if you have ever come close to this table? I wonder if you have ever heard the words of the Good Shepherd spoken just for you?

Circle of the Holy Eucharist

We played with all the things that happen in our church service and worked them into a circle – the first half of our circle was *The Liturgy of the Word* and the second half was *The Holy Communion*. When you think about it as a circle, all the parts of our worship are important to all the other parts. Hearing and reflecting on scripture with readings and a sermon helps us get ready to be fed at the Communion. And the spiritual food of the bread and wine feeds us to be Christ to others in the world after we leave the table... then we come back to recharge ourselves and the cycle continues... Wonder together about your favorite part of the Circle of the Eucharist. Is there a part that your child thinks could be left out and we would still have all the worship we need? Share your thoughts on this question as well!

Mystery of Pentecost (Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:5-14 and Acts 2:1-12)

Pentecost is all about transformation. We remembered the changes that transformed the disciples to apostles when they received the Holy Spirit. But that

doesn't just happen on Pentecost, does it? We are invited by this elusive presence of God, this spirit that is as close as our breath but hard to "see." Was there a time that you or your child can recall recently when the Holy Spirit transformed you? What was that like? Did other people see it or feel it, too?

Jesus and the 12 (Vol. 4, p.81) Matt 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16, Acts 1:13

We shared the story of Jesus and the Twelve. DaVinci's famous painting of the Last Supper provided a roadmap or framework of sorts and offered us a way to name the twelve disciples (followers of Jesus) who were present with Jesus that night. After Jesus' ascension, disciples became apostles (proclaimers of the new faith in Jesus) and to tell a bit of their stories, we looked at the symbols on each of their saint shields. Of course, Judas was present in the DaVinci painting but was never an apostle. [Link here](#)* to the painting and invite your child to narrate what they see in the painting. What is their favorite part? Where do they sense the most important part of the painting? Linger there together in wonder.

*Need to add link

Paul's Discovery (Vol. 4, p.126)

Who is this person Paul? He had an experience of Jesus but not until after he persecuted Christians and years after Jesus' crucifixion. And yet, he is the author of the earliest and most books in the New Testament (letters called epistles.) Today, we heard the story of Paul's life told in seven episodes beginning with his life as Saul, a Jewish Pharisee and naysayer of Christ until his death as the most prolific apostle to the gentiles for the early church. There is a lot to this story and one way to glimpse into it is to ask ourselves:

1. When is the most recent time I proclaimed myself as a follower of Christ outside the church and why did I do that in that moment?
2. When is the most recent time I denied or shied away from naming myself as a follower of Christ? Why?

The Crosses (Vol. 4, p. 69)

We Christians love crosses! When we think deeply about how a simple "t-shaped" cross defines us, we are often brought up short. Yet, we wear them, decorate with them, and anchor our worship spaces in them so it isn't unusual for children to draw a cross or a whole page full of them in the Godly Play sanctuary during work time.

Over our Christian history, crosses have morphed into differing idiosyncratic shapes for particular reasons. Ever heard of a Celtic cross? A budded cross? How is a crucifix different than a cross? Your child may know from hearing the story of the Crosses in our sanctuary today. Go ahead, draw a simple cross together and see what your child takes it!

Good Shepherd & World Communion (Vol 4)

This is a story that helps us mesh the scripture we hold so dearly in our Bible and our weekly worship together (our Liturgy). As we revisit the Parable of the Good Shepherd and weave it together with all the people around the world who share in the Eucharist at communion tables everywhere, there is a connectedness that goes way beyond our own congregation! I wonder if you have ever come close to this table? I wonder if you have ever heard the words of the Good Shepherd spoken just for you?

Volume 6

The Story of Abraham (Genesis 12:24-25:11)

We heard the story of Abraham's life or (more specifically) the key points in what we know of Abraham's story. This trajectory over Abraham's life supplements and enhances the core Godly Play story of The Great Family. We started with the rocks that represented the altars Abraham built when he found that God was everywhere. Then we remembered the sand, stars, and dust that represented how great in size the great family would be. ("As many as the stars in the sky...") Three strangers foretold of the baby, Isaac, who would be born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. A bundle of twigs, a bowl of fire, and a knife helped us understand how God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac when he was a boy but stopped him and a ram was sacrificed instead. Finally, a small cave helped us remember the cave at the Oaks of Mamre where Abraham and his beloved Sarah were buried. Talk with your children about what they liked best and what they might want left out of this story. Are they the same things that you were choosing? Talk about your choices and why you made them. When you do this, you will be sharing a bit of the story of your family and connecting to The Great Family – of which we all are part!

The Story of Sarah (Genesis 12-23)

Like the Abraham Story, the Story of Sarah fills out the core Godly Play story called The Great Family. While all stories in the Bible are important, stories of women are especially important to share, as there are relatively few of them! Sarai means princess and it was Sarah's original name as Abram was Abraham's until God changed them when they were to have The Great Family. At first, the beautiful Sarah and Abraham followed God purely on trust and God always showed them the way. When the time came to seek the security of work and food in Egypt, Pharaoh wanted Sarah for himself until he found out she was married and he turned them out from Egypt. After returning to Canaan and living there for a long time, Sarah still had no children so she offered her maid, Hagar, to Abraham as a wife, which was the custom. Hagar had a boy named Ishmael and years later, Sarah had a baby when she was very old which was unbelievable (so unbelievable that they named the baby *Laughter* which is Isaac in their language.) Seeing the older Ishmael play with the young Isaac made Sarah so jealous that she forced Abraham to send his son, Ishmael, and Ishmael's mother, Hagar, away. But God went with them, as he did with Abraham and Sarah. Ishmael is thought to be the forefather of the Arab people. There is lots of real human emotion in Sarah's story. Talk with your children about what part of the story makes the most sense to you. What are the big feelings that go with that part? Enjoy talking about big feelings! They are a present for us today as they were for people of the Bible and it is one of the greatest things that connect us to *The Great Family*.

The Story of Moses: (Exodus: 1:8-17:7; 19:1-40:38; Deuteronomy 34:8)

We heard more about the life of Moses, the central character in several of our Old Testament stories: the Exodus, the Ten Best Ways, and the Ark and the Tent. We started with the image of Moses as an infant, found in the reeds by the Pharaoh's daughter who gave him an Egyptian name meaning "to draw out" in Hebrew. As a man, Moses "drew out" God's people from their enslavement in Egypt and led them through the wilderness for many years before they found the Promised land. During that time, the people lost their faith in God and Moses as their leader. They received signs from God of his presence, but then lost their faith again later. When the people came to realize the existence of God, they received the Ten Best Ways and at last, the Promised land. Have your children ever waited a long time for something they were promised? How did they deal with the waiting and keeping their belief that it would be fulfilled?

Isaiah – The First of Three Scrolls (Isaiah 1-29)

We heard the story of the book of the prophet Isaiah. This book covers over 400 years and is believed to be three different writers stitched together in one book. The first 'scroll' of Isaiah was written when the Assyrians attacked ancient Jerusalem. Isaiah had a vision of heaven itself and he was a visitor there. Later, Isaiah prophesied about a great Light, born to show the way. This Light, a child, was called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Ring any bells from the New Testament or Handel's Messiah?

Ruth (The Book of Ruth)

Today we heard the story of Ruth from the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) and her story helps us understand more about the wilderness experience of people who must leave their homes – those places where they feel safe and known – in order to find food and work. Ruth's story begins with Naomi, her future mother-in-law, and Naomi's family needing to leave the promised land of Bethlehem and seek food and shelter east of the Jordan River in Moab during a famine. Ruth married one of Naomi's two sons and was forced to choose her true home when Naomi's husband and sons died. Ruth was a Moabite woman but pledged her 'heart home' to Naomi with these words, "Where you go, I will go. Where you live, I will live. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God." (Ruth 1:16) Their return together to Bethlehem, Ruth's subsequent marriage to Boaz, and her place in the lineage of King David as his great grandmother coalesce in a story of faithfulness, kindness, honor, and redemption.

Ask your child to share their favorite part of the story and start your conversation there. You may want to wonder together how home was a place for Ruth at first in Moab but later home was with Naomi and then Boaz and her children. I wonder how home can be a place? I wonder how it can be people?



Volume 8

Mary, Mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-24, 2:1-20, 21-52, 4:16-30; Matthew 1:18-25, 12:46-50; John 2:1-2, 19:25-27)

The beginning of Advent is the perfect time to stop and think about Mary's story. While the birth in Bethlehem is how we usually get introduced to her, there were many other interesting aspects of her life. She had a pretty exciting pregnancy that included a visit by an angel/messenger from God to both herself and Joseph, a pre-teen child 'lost' for three days in the Temple in Jerusalem, and a son who had moments of being very rude to his mother as an adult. And there she was, at the foot of the cross, present to something a parent dares not even imagine.

Let your child share a little of what they remember from the story. You may help them with these story pieces for cues: An angel, a baby, a sword, a bunch of forget-me-nots, a painting of Jesus healing a blind man, a cross, an empty tomb, and a red flame. We remember Mary this time of year by changing some of the colors in church to a 'Marian Blue.'

Knowing Jesus in a New Way I (Mark 16:1-7; Matthew 28:1-8; Luke 24:1-11; John 20:1-10)

Easter is such a big mystery and so amazing that it cannot be contained in just one Sunday. It spills over into six more weeks we call Eastertide. Eastertide is our road to Pentecost. Today in Godly Play we began our journey through Easter to Pentecost by starting a story that helps us remember the appearances Jesus made after his resurrection but before his ascension. Today, we remembered how the 3 'Mary's' were the first to go to the tomb, looking to care for Jesus' body. The tomb was empty but one Mary heard the gardener call her name - but it wasn't the gardener at all - it was Jesus. Peter and John raced one another to see the empty tomb. "They could feel his presence in his absence." Each of us experiences Jesus differently. Wonder with your child how it must have felt for those who went to the tomb and how you would have felt if it was you who were there. Blessings on your wondering together!

Knowing Jesus in a New Way II (Luke 24:13-35)

Our series of stories for this time between Easter and Pentecost is called Knowing Jesus in a New Way. After Jesus had risen on Easter, he appeared among his followers in different ways until the time of his Ascension. Soon after Jesus' ascension, the Holy Spirit came to us on Pentecost.

"Be known to us, Lord Jesus, in the breaking of the bread." Our cantor calls and we respond in song with these words before the Eucharist in our worship. We spent

some time with one of the core stories from the gospel writer Luke. Two men were walking the road to Emmaus and deeply troubled by the crucifixion of Jesus. A fellow traveler joined them and when they reached their destination, the two invited the third to share a meal. It was not until then that they recognized the third man was Jesus. The children are starting to notice in these post-Easter stories of Jesus that people do not recognize him immediately. Wonder with your children if you would recognize Jesus today? Do you know him in the breaking of the bread?

Knowing Jesus in a New Way III (Luke 20:19-29)

We are still on the journey from Easter to Pentecost and remembering how Jesus appeared before he ascended. We wondered about Thomas, “the doubter.” Jesus had appeared to the disciples but Thomas could not believe which is understandable. Eight days later Jesus came to the disciples again while they were sharing a meal and Thomas was there and seeing Jesus, fell to his knees. “Blessed are those who have not seen and still believe,” Jesus said. Wonder as a family whether you are one who needs to see to believe. What might you have seen (or not seen) that has helped you believe?

Knowing Jesus in a New Way IV (John 21:1-23)

The Eastertide journey continues in Godly Play as we are still finding that Jesus keeps appearing unexpectedly. He had risen on Easter – Alleluia! – but he just kept showing up in surprising ways before his ascension. In this part of the story, Jesus’ disciples made the long trip to Galilee as Jesus had instructed and stopped at the Sea of Galilee, which was home to some of them. Fishing was unsuccessful until someone tending a fire onshore called out to them to throw their nets to the other side. Why not? They filled immediately and they had to drag the nets to shore. John recognized that the man on shore was the Lord and Peter had hopped out of the boat to get to Jesus! Jesus gave Peter special instructions, “Feed my lambs... tend my sheep... feed my sheep.” Wonder at home together what Jesus might have meant. How do you tend or feed any of Jesus’ sheep? How do your children? Listen to one another, as you do you may hear something Jesus has been trying to share with you for some time!

Knowing Jesus in a New Way V (Matthew 28: 16-20; Mark 16:15-18)

Jesus has risen but has not ascended into heaven. His disciples meet him on a mountaintop in Galilee, just as Jesus asked them to do. “Go everywhere. Tell my story, even this part, to everyone. Show everyone how to be good disciples.”

Jesus said more to them, “Tell them the story so they can become part of it.” “Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

This was too far, too much. Then in their dismay they heard him say, “I am with you always to the end of the age.” Then he was gone.

Jesus was always doing strange things – coming and going. And yet, he always seemed to ask his disciples to do challenging but important things. Sometimes they didn’t want to hear Jesus ask them to do one more hard thing! This business of being a Christian was not the easy road then and it is often not the easy way today!

Wonder as a family what hard things are happening in your lives right now. Would they feel harder or easier if you asked God to be with you as you faced them? Why?

Knowing Jesus in a New Way VI (Mark 16: 19-20; Luke 24: 50-53; Acts 1: 9-12)

On the sixth Sunday in the season Eastertide and knowing Jesus in this new, post-Easter way, we remembered how the disciples returned to Jerusalem. They gathered again in their room and Jesus was there.

They were more comfortable now with the new way of knowing him, so they ask many questions, most of them were silly. And then he was gone, withdrawn in a way that is hard to understand or imagine. The disciples waited – what was to happen next?

While they waited they found someone to replace Judas. God helped them choose Mathias, so now they were The Twelve, once more. They waited some more. They waited and waited.

Wonder together in your family about the story. How do people in your family do with waiting? Are some better than others? Have you ever waited and not understood what you are waiting for? Blessings on your conversations at home.

Knowing Jesus in a New Way VII (Acts 2:1-13)

We started to know Jesus through the stories that he told and the stories about him while he lived among us 2,000 years ago. In these past few weeks, we have tried to know Jesus in a new way during the time after Easter and before he ascended to heaven. But this week, we remember how everything changed for the disciples when the Holy Spirit came to them – they could speak languages they never learned... it must have been a crazy scene in Jerusalem!

What has happened is what the prophet Joel wrote about in the Old Testament. He said that God will pour out God's spirit on us so that our sons and daughters will prophesy, the young will see visions, and the old will dream dreams. This has just happened in Jerusalem.

In Godly Play, we sometimes describe the Holy Spirit as being like a fragrant scent or a candle whose flame is out but the essence lingers in the trailing smoke – you cannot see these things but still, somehow, you know they are there.

Wonder as a family if you have ever come close to the Holy Spirit. Is that a feeling you have now? In the past? Hope for? What does it feel like? Anything like the disciples felt?

Blessings on your time of wondering together

Young Children and Worship

Jesus and the Children (Story #38 in YC&W) Matt 19:13-15, Luke 18:15-17, Mark 10:13-16

Today in Godly Play we heard the story called "Jesus and the Children." During Lent, we are paying special attention to how Jesus lived his life not only in words but, more importantly, in his actions. All three of the synoptic gospels tell the story of how Jesus stopped his disciples bickering about who was most important by getting up and bringing a child into the center of the action. Wonder together what the disciples must of thought when Jesus did this? When are the times in your children's lives when they have felt someone or something special make them the center of a circle? How can we remember what Jesus teaches about the most important things?

Jesus and Bartimaeus (Story #33 in YC&W) Matt 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52, Luke 18:35-43

As Jesus headed toward Jerusalem for the last time, a blind beggar called Bartimaeus according to Mark's gospel, called out to Jesus for his help. This was our story today and it has another lesson (or maybe more than one lesson) waiting to be discovered. In Lent, we are paying attention to Jesus' actions as well as his words for they have so much to teach us. Jesus stopped, spoke with Bartimaeus, and cured him. The "underneath lesson" is that Jesus asked the man what he was seeking before curing him – a reminder to us all to be clear about what we need when we speak to Jesus or pray to God, in whatever form. Wonder as a family if what you pray for is really what you desire. If Jesus stopped and offered you a healing, what would you ask to be healed?

Jesus and Zacchaeus (Story #34 in YC&W) Luke 19:1-10

We are still in the season of Lent and today we heard another story about Jesus as he traveled to Jerusalem for the last time. During that time, tax collectors were some of the most hated people as they were known to be greedy, corrupt, and powerful. (The apostle Paul was a former tax collector, too.) Imagine the crowd's response when Jesus called Zaccheus by name down from his viewing post in a tree and Zaccheus responded with a vow to "get right" with all whom he had taken advantage. In Jesus' presence, we are all called to make things right. Ask your child to retell the story as they may recall that Zaccheus was very short, much like a child. What does Jesus inspire you to make right?

Jesus is Risen: Appearance to Mary Magdalene (Story #37 in YC&W) Matt 27:57-28:10, John 20:1-18

At long last, we have entered the season of Easter. It comes every year but every year it feels new. Today in the Godly Play sanctuary, we remembered the faithfulness of Mary Magdalene who was there when the stone was rolled across the tomb and three days later to find the tomb empty. In our telling today, we contemplated Mary's faithfulness and willingness to be present in the hardest of times. In John's version, Mary does not recognize that Jesus has returned in a new way until he calls her by name. The same will be true when Jesus joins followers of his who mourn his death on the road to Emmaus. What does your child recall about today's story. What part of this first story of the risen Jesus do each of you feel most connected?

Side by Side Stories:

Parable of Good Shepherd (Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:1-7) told side-by-side with The Good Shepherd and World Communion

How much Good Shepherd can one Sunday morning experience? We heard the story that we know so well and played with it. How would the parable told by Jesus “speak” to us today if we heard/played with/embodyed it in a whole new way. Parables are presents that Jesus gave us 2,000 years ago but they were given to us in such a way as to be timeless and “keep speaking.” Read this parable from a new translation and wonder together how it tries to teach us how to be in the world and what to look for on all the days, not just Sundays.

Try this version from a modern translation called The Message:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John 10:1-21&version=MSG>

Baptism told side-by-side with Faces #4 Jesus Baptism

We shared two stories of Baptism. The first story was about the rite of Baptism in our church today. In our Episcopal tradition, Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into the Church. It is like a gateway of sorts. We baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. We use three white overlapping circles as a way to understand the Trinity. We ask the children to remember the day of their baptism or look forward to it as we light candles from the Christ candle.

The second part of the story was about the Baptism of Jesus by his cousin, John. When John looked into Jesus’ face that day by the Jordan River it was as if he was seeing him for the first time!

Then we wondered together about these two stories side by side. What would they have to say to each other if they could have a conversation?! Please explore this question with your child at home. There is so much more to grapple with than we have time on Sunday morning.

Side by Side Parables of the Good Samaritan & Great Pearl

Parables are the closest thing we have to the actual words of Jesus. The phrase and

concept of The Good Samaritan may be familiar but you might want to watch the video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UccWt6Rx43E>) or check the scripture to get the story straight. The Parable of the Great Pearl is less than 25 words in the Bible but takes much longer to tell for in it a merchant sells EVERYTHING he owns, including his house and every possession inside, for the pearl for which he had been searching. In our Godly Play worship today, we heard both stories and wondered about them individually (why a man whose people (the Samaritans) was part of a culture with a great deal of distrust and enmity towards the Jews (who felt the same about the Samaritans) would stop and help (and really care with his time, money, and concern) when a priest and Levite (both thought to be devout Jews) crossed to the other side of the road and passed by). In the Great Pearl Parable, we wondered what would be so valuable that someone would give up every possession they had. Who are the Samaritans to your family? What would the Pearl of Great Price be to you? Your child? We bet there will be some surprises!

Miscellaneous

A Work Day

Having all the time we need for reflection...

Even though we wish it were always true, we never have all the time we need for the response time or “Work Time” in Godly Play. This week we had a “Work Day” which is a scheduled Sunday every six weeks or so and we take all the time we need and just work. While we do get centered and open in prayer, we don’t have a story. Instead, children are encouraged to really enjoy an art project or story of their choosing for a good, long time... or do more than one thing! Ask your child what they did today... then ask them why they made that particular choice. Chances are those 2 questions will yield way more information about who your child is becoming spiritually than you ever expected!

The All Saints Lesson

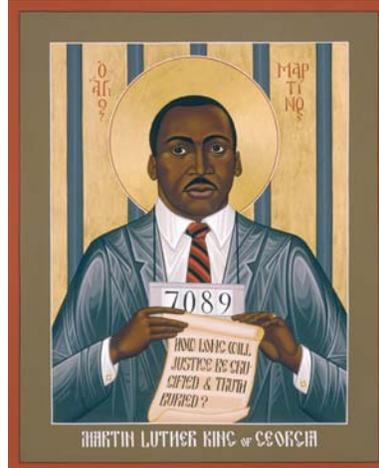
Today we heard the All Saints Story in celebration of All Saints Day (the day that follows All Hallows Eve!) In our Episcopal/Anglican tradition, we trust that each of us is a member of the Communion of Saints just by virtue of being one of God’s children. The symbol in the story is a mirror, an invitation to remember that God loves each of us just the way we are. And yet, we are called to try and be our best

selves in everyday life. Saints in our tradition – St. Patrick, St. Nicholas, St. Valentine and so many more – are only part of the story. Wonder with your children who are the saints they know personally – the choice is theirs. Who do they see as saints? Remember the old hymn, “I sing a song of the Saints of God?” Do you “see them in school or at lanes or at sea ... for the saints of God are just folk like me and I aim to be one, too.”

Traditions of Christmas



The ways the Christian people celebrate Christmas was and is a natural consequence of other traditions and festivities that came in the darkest time of the year - the Winter Solstice. Today, we heard the story of several of the ancient solstice rituals from around the world – the Yule log, the decorated evergreen tree, “Peacesteads”, and random acts of kindness by people like St. Nicholas of Myra in the 4th century. We discovered that people searched for the *sun* to return in the dark days just as we now celebrate the arrival of Jesus, the *Son*, who was born so long ago in those darkest days of the winter as well. With your family, remember together your traditions of Christmas now and those of your childhood. What must it have been like for those people so long ago to wonder and worry whether the light would ever return?



Martin Luther King Jr.

Sometimes we forget that Martin Luther King, Jr. was a minister before he was an activist. Considered a Christian martyr in the Episcopal Church, he was influenced by his parents (his father and grandfather were both Baptist ministers) and his faith was shaped in the Black Church tradition as well as the era in which he lived: Martin Luther King Jr. is a modern Christian role model. Many of his choices were shaped by his childhood experiences as well as by being a father himself. Our story today touched on MLK Jr.'s childhood of church, family dinners, broken friendships over skin color, and love of baseball as well as Rosa Parks, the March on Washington, and his civil rights legacy.

Wonder as a family what parts of Martin Luther King Jr.'s story your child liked best? What part does your child think is the most important? How are those reflections different or similar to yours? Share them!

Almighty God, by the hand of Moses your servant you led your people out of slavery, and made them free at last: Grant that your Church, following the example of your prophet Martin Luther King, may resist oppression in the name of your love, and may secure for all your children the blessed liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

From Holy Men, Holy Women: Celebrating the Saints, 307.

Resurrection Eggs

Hands down this is one of the most popular stories in our Godly Play classrooms. It could be the brightly colored plastic eggs and the tiny surprises inside but we observe a much deeper engagement between children and material. This story has 12 symbols that help us remember the Passion story, the last week in Christ's life – each contained in an egg. As hard a story as it is, it is the crux of our Christian story and children seem to be called back to it. We see this with the desert and the Baptism story as well. Perhaps your child can tell you about one of the parts of this story that they remember. Is that part the one they liked the best? Maybe it was the part they felt was most important? Perhaps it was the part that was closest to their own story?