Godly Play

the complete guide to

Jerome W. Berryman

An imaginative method for nurturing the spiritual lives of children
Welcome to the Parent Pages for *The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Volume 3, Revised and Expanded.* As a Godly Play mentor, you now have the opportunity to extend the Godly Play experience into the homes of the children who gather for your Godly Play presentations.

The *Godly Play Parent Pages* have been designed to accomplish two things:

- First, using the Parent Pages, parents help children recall—and in a sense relive—the Godly Play presentation at home. With this in mind, each Parent Page begins with suggestions for encouraging this sharing, then offers a condensed retelling of the Godly Play lesson.

- Second, each Parent Page gives parents information to help them understand Godly Play’s methodology and purpose.

The chart below indicates which presentations in *Godly Play, Volume 3, Revised and Expanded,* have corresponding Parent Pages in this booklet. Note that not all of the lessons have a related Parent Page; we have omitted those for which the retelling of the lesson was simply too long or too complex to be contained in the simple format of the Parent Pages.

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Advent I

Today’s lesson, together with the next three, helps children anticipate the Mystery of Christmas. Together we journey toward Bethlehem, guided by the prophets (in today’s lesson), and then joined by the Holy Family, the shepherds and the Magi (in the next three lessons). Finally, we arrive at the birth of Jesus, when the light of Christ is lit. For this lesson, and the three that follow, you can use the pictures on this page, but you might want to use a Nativity set if your family owns one.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about the picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way.

You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. If you retell the presentation, you will need:

- five candles (three purple, one pink and one white, or four blue and one white, depending on your church’s custom)
- optional: candle snuffer
- optional: You might like to use the home version of the Godly Play Advent materials, called “Mini Advent,” available from Godly Play Resources. (To order, call 1-800-445-4390 or visit www.godlyplayresources.com.)

Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

A king is coming, but not the kind of king that people thought was coming. This king had no army, no great house, and no riches. This king was a baby who is born in a barn.

The coming of this King is a mystery. A mystery is sometimes hard to enter. That is why this time is important—the time of Advent. Sometimes people walk right through this mystery and don’t even know it is there.
Christmas is such a great mystery that it takes four weeks to get ready to enter it. During this time, we are on the way to Bethlehem with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, the angels, the Magi, and more. This journey was not just back then or there; it is also here and now.

Today we remember the prophets. They came so close to God and God came so close to them that they knew something important was going to happen in Bethlehem.

They pointed the way to Bethlehem. They didn’t know exactly what was going to happen there, but they knew this was the place.

Today we remember the prophets. *(Light one of the purple candles.)*

This is the light of the prophets. Let’s enjoy the light.

Look. Do you see how the flame is in just one place? It is right here. When I “change” the light, it will no longer be in just one place. *(Gently snuff or blow out the candle.)*

Watch. Do you see it? It is spreading out, getting thinner and thinner as it fills up the room with the light of the prophets. Anywhere you go here you will be close to the prophets.

Prophets can be boys, and prophets can be girls. Any of us here might be a prophet too.

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**Godly Play**  
**Understanding Play (Part 1)**

*In every Parent Page,* we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. To fully enter into Godly Play, we need to be deeply aware of what makes real play and what distracts or detracts from it.

So many activities that we choose for leisure aren’t really play but *working* at play. For your own personal exploration, choose an activity that feels like wasting time.

That’s right. Set aside about thirty minutes and “waste” it. That idea runs counter to everything our busy, pragmatic culture believes in, so don’t multitask and don’t do anything you feel you “should” do. No product, just deep concentration.

You may discover that “wasting time” this way draws you into your own creative process. You may connect with language in a new way, and you may not even want to use language at all.

When you make “room” in your day for something like this, it is an invitation for God, the Creator, to come and play too. It also opens you up again to what you did by nature as a child. Play, then, is an experience you, God, and children have in common.

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This lesson—the second in Advent—continues to prepare children for the Mystery of Christmas. We move toward Bethlehem, guided by the pointing prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the Magi. We arrive at the birth of Jesus, when the light of Christ is lit. This week’s presentation focuses on the Holy Family. For this lesson you can use the pictures as you retell it, and you might want to use a Nativity set if your family owns one.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way.

You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. If you retell the presentation, you will need:

- five candles (three purple, one pink and one white, or four blue and one white, depending on your church’s custom)
- Nativity figures of Mary, Joseph and the donkey
- optional: candle snuffer
- optional: You might like to use the home version of the Godly Play Advent materials, called “Mini Advent,” available from Godly Play Resources. (To order, call 1-800-445-4390 or visit www.godlyplayresources.com.)

Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

On the first Sunday in Advent we remembered the prophets. Today we remember the Holy Family and we light two candles. The Holy Family is on the way to Bethlehem and we are going with them.

Here is the Mother Mary. (Gently touch each figure as you name it or bring them to the story.) Here is the Father Joseph. Here is the donkey.
In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. To fully enter into Godly Play, we need to be deeply aware of what makes real play and what distracts or detracts from it.

Research suggests that about 20% of the energy of young mammals in the wild is spent purely in “play,” activity that serves no observable purpose. Why would nature favor the use of so much biological energy in the service of seemingly useless activity? Perhaps it is not as “useless” as it seems.

As a culture, we struggle with the purpose and meaning of play. Ancient views of play related it to power (status, victory), to fate (magic, luck), to community identity (festivals, cooperation), or to frivolity (nonsense as opposed to work). The modern view sees play as involving progress (adaptation, growth), the imaginary (creativity, fantasy), or the concerns of the self (peak experiences, leisure). Our view is that play involves all of this. That is why it is so hard to define.

The first thing to acknowledge, then, as we struggle to understand play, is its ambiguity. It is tough to define! Could it be that play, by its very nature, cannot be captured using precise language, but rather through the language of poetry, overflowing with energy and life?

Mary was about to have a baby. It is very hard to walk when you are about to have a baby. Sometimes she could not take another step. Then she rode on the donkey.

It is also hard to ride on a donkey when you are about to have a baby. When she couldn’t ride another step, she got down, and walked. She rode and she walked.

They must have been the last people coming up the road to Bethlehem that night.

Here is the light of the prophets. (Light the purple candle lit for Advent I.)

Here is the light of the Mother Mary and the Father Joseph as they make their way to Bethlehem. (Light a second purple candle.)

Let’s enjoy the light.

Now watch. I am going to change the light. Do you see how the light of the prophets is just in one place? I am going to change the light so that it can be in every place. (Gently snuff or blow out the prophet candle.)

Watch. Do you see how the light of the mother Mary and the father Joseph is just in this one place? I am going to change the light so that it can be in every place. (Gently snuff or blow out the Holy Family candle.)

Do you see how the light is not gone? It is changed. It is not in one place. Now it is spreading out, getting thinner and thinner, to fill up the whole room. The room is filling up with the light of the prophets and with the light of the mother Mary and the father Joseph. Anywhere you go in this room you can come close to them today.
Advent III

This lesson—the third in Advent—continues to prepare children for the Mystery of Christmas. We continue moving toward Bethlehem, guided by the pointing prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the Magi. Finally, we arrive at the birth of Jesus, when the light of Christ is lit. This week’s presentation focuses on the shepherds. For this lesson you can use the pictures on this page and/or use a Nativity set if your family owns one.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:
  ■ I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
  ■ I wonder what this picture has to do with today's story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way.

You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. If you retell the presentation, you will need:
  ■ five candles (three purple, one pink and one white, or four blue and one white, depending on your church’s custom)
  ■ Nativity figures of Mary, Joseph, the donkey, shepherd(s), and sheep.
  ■ optional: candle snuffer
  ■ optional: You might like to use the home version of the Godly Play Advent materials, called “Mini Advent” available from Godly Play Resources. (To order, call 1-800-445-4390 or visit www.godlyplay.com.)

Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

On the first Sunday in Advent we remembered the prophets. On the second Sunday we remembered the Holy Family. (Touch the Holy Family or bring them to the story.) On the third Sunday in Advent we remember the shepherds who were standing in the fields around Bethlehem keeping their sheep and we light three candles. They were trying to stay awake so the wolf could not come and get the sheep. Suddenly there was so much light in the sky that it hurt their eyes.
They were afraid. Then they heard singing in the sky! Angels were singing, “Don’t be afraid. We bring you tidings of great joy. Peace on earth and good will to everyone. A child is born. Go. Hurry. Run to Bethlehem to see the child who will change everything.”

Here is the candle of the prophets. *(Light the candle for Advent I.)* Here is the candle of the Holy Family. *(Light the candle for Advent II.)* Here is the candle of the shepherds. *(Light the pink candle.)*

Look—there is something different about this candle. It is the color of roses. This is to remind us of the great joy the angels sang of. It also helps us remember that even if it is very serious to get ready to come close to a great mystery like Christmas, you can’t be serious all of the time. This is the Sunday when it is time for a little celebration.

There is one more thing about the color of roses. It is also one of the colors for the Mother Mary. We remember her again, for without the Mother Mary, there would be no baby.

Let’s enjoy the light.

Now I am going to change the light. Do you see how the light of the prophets is just in one place? Watch. *(Gently snuff or blow out the prophet candle.)*

Now it is changed, and the light that was in just one place is spreading out. It gets more invisible as it spreads out. Soon it will fill up the whole room.

Here is the light of the Holy Family. Now watch; I am going to change the light. *(Gently snuff or blow out the Holy Family candle.)* Look. It is spreading out and filling up the whole room. Just because it is hard to see doesn’t mean that it isn’t there.

And here is the light of the shepherds. I am going to change the light. Do you see how it is in one place? *(Gently snuff or blow out the shepherd candle.)* Look. It is filling up the room with the shepherds and mixing with the Holy Family and the prophets. Anywhere you go in the room today they will all be there.
This lesson—the fourth in Advent—continues to prepare children for the Mystery of Christmas. We continue moving toward Bethlehem, guided by the pointing prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds and the Magi. Finally, we arrive at the birth of Jesus, when the light of Christ is lit. This week’s lesson focuses on the wise ones and the celebration of Christmas.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. If you retell the presentation, you will need:

- five candles (three purple, one pink and one white, or four blue and one white, depending on your church’s custom)
- Nativity figures of Mary, Joseph, the donkey, shepherd(s), sheep, the three magi, Jesus and the manger
- optional: candle snuffer
- optional: You might like to use the home version of the Godly Play Advent materials, called “Mini Advent,” available from Godly Play Resources. (To order, call 1-800-445-4390 or visit www.godlyplayresources.com.)

Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

On the first Sunday in Advent we remembered the Prophets. On the second Sunday, the Holy Family. (Touch Mary, Joseph and the Donkey or bring them to the story.) And on the third Sunday we remembered the shepherds. (Touch the shepherd(s) and sheep or bring them to the story.)

On the fourth Sunday in Advent we remember the three kings, the wise ones, the Magi, and we light four candles. They came from far in the East, and of all the things they knew, they knew the most about the stars. They knew where each star was supposed to be at each time of the year, so they could tell people when it was time to plant their crops or take a trip on the ocean in a boat, or cross the high mountains.

Suddenly they saw the wild star. It was not on any of their star maps. It went where it wanted to go. It did not stay put. They decided to follow the wild star to see where it was going and what it wanted to show them.
In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. To fully enter into Godly Play, we need to be deeply aware of what makes real play and what distracts or detracts from it.

In the previous Parent Page, we discovered that play is the opposite of emptiness, that real play involves fullness, connection, engagement, vitality. To build on what we’ve already discussed:

- Play is pleasurable.
- Play has no extrinsic goal but engages us for its own sake.
- Play happens spontaneously, energizing us instead of depleting us. It is voluntary.
- Play involves deep concentration.
- Play nourishes creativity, problem-solving, language-learning and learning social roles.

In theological language, we might say that true players are aware of God’s image as the Creator within them. Play is graceful.

They followed the star all the way to Bethlehem, but they came from so far away that they got there after the baby was born. Every year they arrive on January 6th, but we remember them now anyway, because, like us, they too are on the way to Bethlehem.

Here is the candle of the prophets. (Light the candle for Advent I.) This is the candle of the Holy Family. (Light the candle for Advent II.) Here is the candle of the shepherds. (Light the candle for Advent III.) Here is the candle of the wise ones. (Light the third purple candle.) Let’s enjoy the light.

Now we come to the Mystery of Christmas. This is when the baby is born, the one we have been waiting for.

Here is the Christ Child, the Mystery of Christmas. (Gently touch the figure of Jesus in the manger or bring him to the story.) And here is the cow who was so surprised to find a baby in the feed box on Christmas morning. (Gently touch the cow or bring to the story.)

Wait. Something is missing! I wonder what it could be?

This is the Christ candle. (Show them the white candle). On Christmas Eve we will light it.

Now watch. I am going to change the light. (Gently snuff or blow out the prophet candle.) The light that was in just one place is now spreading out. Soon it will fill up the whole room.

(Repeat for the Holy Family candle, the shepherd candle, and the three kings candle.) On Christmas Eve you can light all the candles.
Epiphany is a Greek word that means “showing forth.” The date of its celebration is January 6th. It was originally concerned with the commemoration of the Baptism of Christ and later became associated with the Magi. Today it is often thought of as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way.

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Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. If you retell the presentation, you will need:

- five candles (three purple, one pink and one white, or four blue and one white, depending on your church’s custom)
- Nativity figures of Jesus, the manger, Mary, Joseph, donkey, sheep, shepherd and wise ones
- optional: candle snuffer
- optional: You might like to use the home version of the Godly Play Advent materials, called “Mini Advent,” available from Godly Play Resources. (To order, call 1-800-445-4390 or visit www.godlyplayresources.com.)

Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

On Epiphany we remember the three kings. They followed the star all the way to Bethlehem, but they came from so far away that they got there after the baby was born. Every year they arrive on January 6th, but we remember them at Christmas anyway, because, like us, they too are on the way to Bethlehem.

Here is the candle of the prophets. (Light the candle for Advent I.) This is the candle of the Holy Family. (Touch Mary, Joseph and the donkey or bring them to the story. Then light the candle for Advent II.) Here is the candle of the shepherds. (Touch the shepherds and sheep or bring them to the story. Then light the candle for Advent III.) Here is the candle of the wise ones. (Touch the three magi or bring them to the story. Then light the candle for Advent IV.) Here is the Christ candle. (Touch the Christ child and the cow or bring them to the story, then light the white candle.) Let’s enjoy the light.

(Indicate again the candle of the wise ones.) The wise ones brought gifts to the Christ child. They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. They brought the gold to give to a king, but because it was a different kind of king, they also brought frankincense. Frankincense is something that was used for worship, and it is still used sometimes
In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. To fully enter into Godly Play, we need to be deeply aware of what makes real play and what distracts or detracts from it.

Godly Play, as a form of religious education, carefully avoids several dangerous yet common religious education “traps”:

- Religious education as compulsion: The best religious education does not use force, but displays deep engagement in a voluntary activity.
- Religious education as entertainment: In this kind of religious education, a teacher creates passive consumers of religion, emptying children of life rather than stimulating them to play and be filled with life.
- Religious education as manipulation: Here the teacher directs activities to produce a product that meets the teacher’s needs, severing the learner’s links to creativity and learning. Godly Play meets the child’s spiritual needs.
- Religious education as competition: In this game the teacher competes with the learners or encourages learners to compete with one another. The product becomes winning and not playing for the play itself. For every winner, there are many losers. Godly Play encourages children to play together on the same team with God, so that everyone wins.

These four traps all block children’s access to real play, which leaves no room for God to be part of the experience.

Today. Frankincense comes from a tree. When it burns, the smoke is black and then turns white. That is when the fragrance, the scent, is released into the air so you can smell it.

Myrrh comes from a tree, too, and it was not a gift for an ordinary king. It was burned at funerals. There was something about this baby King’s death that was going to be important.

Now watch. I am going to change the light. (Gently snuff or blow out the prophet candle.) The light that was in just one place is now spreading out. Soon it will fill up the whole room.

(Repeat for the Holy Family candle, the shepherd candle, and the three kings candle.)

Now I am going to change the light of the Christ candle. (Gently snuff or blow out the Christ candle.) Look. It too is spreading out to fill up the room. As it spreads out, it gets thinner and thinner until you can’t see it at all. That doesn’t mean that it’s gone. It only means that you can’t see it. You can still feel the Christmas light. It is filling up the room with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the three kings. Anywhere you go, you can come close to them.
Holy Baptism

The First Sunday after Epiphany (January 6) is also known as the Baptism of Our Lord. Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into the Church. Because we baptize people in the traditional name of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the material used in the Godly Play baptism presentation is three overlapping white circles, a symbol of the Trinity. We then place images on each of the white circles: the pouring of water for the Creator, the lighting of the Christ Candle for the Redeemer, and the image of the dove and the invisible scent of oil for the Sustainer. If your child has been baptized this is the perfect time to dig out the pictures and other mementos to share.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. If you do read the presentation, invite your child to show you in the illustration what images represent each of the Persons of the Trinity. (Note: The language in this lesson follows the customs of the Episcopal Church; you may wish to substitute your church’s customs and key words.) Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

We baptize people in the name of the Father...the Son... and the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we call the Father the Creator. We call the Son the Redeemer. We call the Holy Spirit the Sustainer.

We remember the Father, the Creator, with water—the water of creation, the dangerous water of the flood, the water the people went through into freedom, the water Jesus was baptized in, the water you were—or will be—baptized in, and so much more.
There was once someone who said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people couldn’t help it—they just had to ask him who he was. One time when they asked him who he was, he said, “I am the Light.” This person was Jesus, the Son, the Redeemer. We remember Jesus with light, like the light of the Christ candle that we lit at Christmastime.

The Holy Spirit, the Sustainer, goes where it will. It rides the invisible wind like a dove and comes to us when we need its comfort and power. It is invisible, but still there, like the scent of oil.

People are baptized when they are babies, or children, or teenagers, or grownups, or when they are very old. We ask the person about to be baptized questions, or we ask the parents or godparents if the baby is too little to answer. We say prayers for them.

We name the child too. Names are very important in baptism. We say the child’s name, and then we say, “I baptize you in the name of the Father...and of the Son...and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Then we say to the child, “You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ’s own forever. Amen.” We use oil, blessed by a Bishop, to make the sign of the cross on the child’s forehead.

This is the day when the child receives her light.

To show this we give the child a candle, lit from the Easter candle called the Paschal candle.
Parable of the Good Shepherd

Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:1-7

Jesus’ story of the shepherd who searches for the one sheep that is lost and leaves the ninety-nine to do so provides the framework for all other references to Jesus as our shepherd. This story, found in both Matthew 18 and Luke 15, was told in today’s lesson, but the presentation also incorporated Jesus’ reference to himself as the Good Shepherd (from John 10) and elements of Psalm 23, perhaps the most familiar—and comforting—of all psalms: “The Lord is my shepherd...”

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. A smaller version of the materials used in today’s Godly Play presentation is available for home use; to order, contact Godly Play Resources (1-800-445-4390 or www.godlyplayresources.com) and ask for the “Mini Good Shepherd Parable.”

Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the parables can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Parables cannot ever be all used up. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

There was once someone who said such amazing things and did such wonderful things that people followed him. They couldn’t help it. They wanted to know who he was, so they just had to ask him.

Once when they asked him who he was, he said, “I am the Good Shepherd. I know each one of the sheep by name. When I take them from the sheepfold they follow me. I walk in front of the sheep to show them the way.

“I show them the way to the good grass and I show them the way to the cool, still, fresh water. When there are places of danger I show them how to go through.
In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. To fully enter into Godly Play, we need to be deeply aware of what makes real play and what distracts or detracts from it.

We conclude our seven-part examination of real play, Godly Play, by looking through the window of play at the theme of love, which Paul so beautifully celebrates in 1 Corinthians 13. Love is entered into freely, is engaging and engaged, is pleasurable, and it is not done for any outside goal. Love also nourishes other aspects of life: it is the creative process that draws two lovers together, and sometimes, when possible, creates new people.

Love is a special kind of play. It participates fully in life at all levels—physical, biological, psychological, social, and spiritual. Love is what is most important in life, because it is life, well lived, and because it can create life.

“I count each one of the sheep when they come back and go inside the sheepfold. If one of the sheep is missing I would go anywhere to look for the lost sheep—in the grass, by the water, even in places of danger.

“And when the lost sheep is found I would put it on my back, even if it is heavy, and carry it back safely to the sheepfold.

“When all the sheep are safe inside I am so happy that I can’t be happy just by myself, so I invite all of my friends and we have a great feast.”

When the wolf comes, the Good Shepherd stays between the wolf and the sheep. The Good Shepherd would even give his life for the sheep, so they can come back safely to the sheepfold.

Wondering

- I wonder if the sheep have names?
- I wonder if you have ever been lost? I wonder if you have ever been found?
- I wonder if the Good Shepherd has ever called your name?
Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:30-35

The parable of the compassionate Samaritan appears only in Luke 10:30–35. Jesus tells the parable in response to a lawyer’s question about the greatest commandment; this question also appears in the Gospels of Mark (12:28–34) and Matthew (22:34–40), though without the story of the Samaritan.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s parable offered below.

Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s presentation, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the parables can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Parables cannot ever be all used up. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

There was once someone who did such amazing things and said such wonderful things that people followed him. As they followed him they heard him speaking of many things. Sometimes people asked him questions.

One day a person asked him what the most important thing in life is. Jesus said, “You already know.”

“That is true. I do. It is to love God and to love people just like they are your neighbors.” The person paused a while and thought. He then asked another question, “But who is my neighbor?”

Jesus then told this parable.

“There was once someone who went from Jerusalem down to Jericho. He was attacked by robbers. They hurt him, took everything that he had, and left him by the side of the road half dead.

Luke 10:30-35

The parable of the compassionate Samaritan appears only in Luke 10:30–35. Jesus tells the parable in response to a lawyer’s question about the greatest commandment; this question also appears in the Gospels of Mark (12:28–34) and Matthew (22:34–40), though without the story of the Samaritan.

The Presentation

One day a person asked him what the most important thing in life is. Jesus said, “You already know.”

“That is true. I do. It is to love God and to love people just like they are your neighbors.” The person paused a while and thought. He then asked another question, “But who is my neighbor?”

Jesus then told this parable.

“There was once someone who went from Jerusalem down to Jericho. He was attacked by robbers. They hurt him, took everything that he had, and left him by the side of the road half dead.
Wondering

- I wonder who is the neighbor to the person who was hurt, had everything taken from him, and was left by the side of the road half dead?
- I wonder what would happen if the people in the parable were women and not men?
- I wonder what would happen if the person finding the injured traveler were a child?

“There was also a priest of the temple who went on the road from Jerusalem down to Jericho. He came upon the person who had been hurt, had everything taken from him, and had been left by the side of the road half dead. But the priest went to the other side and went along his way.

“There was also someone else who worked at the temple who went from Jerusalem down to Jericho. He was one of the people who helped the priests. He was called a Levite. When the Levite came upon the person who had been hurt, had everything taken from him, and had been left half dead, he went to the other side, and he went along his way.

“There also was a person who went on the road who did not live in Jerusalem. He was visiting from a country called Samaria. The people in Samaria did not like the people in Jerusalem, and the people in Jerusalem did not like the people from Samaria.

“When the stranger came upon the person who had been hurt, had everything taken from him, and had been left half dead, the stranger went to him.

“The stranger put medicine on the places where the person was hurt. He put his coat on him. He then put him on his donkey and took him to a place to spend the night. The stranger even stayed with him all the night, and in the morning he gave the innkeeper enough money for him to stay there until he was well.”

Godly Play A Godly Play Moment

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. Occasionally, as in today’s paper, we share a “Godly Play moment” drawn from the Godly Play community.

The violent events of this parable can sometimes disturb children. Di Pagel, an experienced Godly Play storyteller and trainer, recalls a time when one boy turned to another and pushed him hard, saying, “That’s what I’d do.”

Instead of focusing on the child’s disruption, Di paused in her storytelling, raised her eyes to all the children and said, calmly, “I wonder how it felt for that man to be hurt by the robbers.”
Parable of the Great Pearl

Matthew 13:45

In the Godly Play presentation of this brief parable (found only in Matthew 13:45), the storyteller avoids the temptation to use the largest pearl for the great pearl. Greatness has to do with more than size. Children often regard big things as more important than small; for example, they might feel that adults are more important than children. Furthermore, our culture holds up big things for us to admire, too, from big houses to big cars to big bank accounts. Enjoy the “counter-cultural” undercurrent in today’s story.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s Godly Play presentation. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:
- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s lesson offered below.

Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s presentation, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the parables can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Parables cannot ever be all used up. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

There was once someone who said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people followed him. As they followed him, they heard him talking about a kingdom, but it was not like the kingdom they lived in. It was not like any kingdom they had ever visited. It was not like any kingdom that they had ever even heard of.
Wondering

- I wonder what the great pearl could really be?
- I wonder what could be so precious that a person would exchange everything for it?
- I wonder if you have ever come close to the great pearl?

They couldn’t help it. They had to ask him what the kingdom of heaven was like. One time when they asked him, he said, “The kingdom of heaven is like when a person who buys and sells fine pearls, a merchant, goes to search for the great pearl.

“When he finds the great pearl, he goes and exchanges everything for the great pearl.”

Godly Play

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. A key component of Godly Play is the rediscovery of “deep listening.”

In ancient times, the Bible was not a book. It was stories, often told around a campfire. The children snuggled in with their extended families. The cold and dark were pushed away by the light and warmth of the fire and the community. The children listened, even if half asleep, to the elders’ tales. They learned how to do this by custom.

Today children are more likely to channel surf on a TV set or jump via mouse clicks from website to website. The ability to listen deeply with wonder is becoming lost. Godly Play teaches children once again how to truly listen.

The children, in turn, may teach you.
The Parable of the Sower is found in all three of the synoptic gospels (Mark 4:1–9; Matthew 13:1–9; Luke 8:4–8). The parable, which describes Jesus’ promise of abundant harvest, is followed by an allegory that expresses the concerns of the first century Church.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
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Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s presentation, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the parables can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Parables cannot ever be all used up. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

There was once someone who did such amazing things and said such wonderful things that people followed him. As they followed him, they heard him speaking about a kingdom. The kingdom was not like the one they lived in. It was not like one that anyone had ever visited. It was not like any kingdom anyone had even heard about. So they had to ask him, “What is the kingdom of heaven like?”

One day when they asked him that, he said, “The kingdom of heaven is like when a sower, someone who plants seeds, goes out to sow seeds.

“As the sower sowed seeds some of the seed fell on the path. Then the birds of the air came and ate the seeds.
In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. Today’s Godly Play presentation, the Parable of the Sower, is one of a series of Godly Play lessons on the parables of Jesus.

Why tell parables? 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. They disturb.

This is why Jesus’ parables often got him into trouble, and why Christians ever since have sometimes redefined parables in ways that comfort rather than challenge us.

“Some of the seed also fell among the stones. When the seeds tried to put their little roots down among the stones they could not push their way into the ground. When the sun came out it scorched the seeds and they died.

“Some of the seed also fell among the thorns. When the seeds tried to push their little roots down among the thorns, they could push them part way in, but the thorns choked them, and they died.

“But, when the sower sowed the seed in the good earth the seeds pushed their little roots down into the good earth. They could go all the way in. They grew and grew. When they were all grown up they were ripe for the harvest. Then they were cut off, and gathered up. The harvest was thirty, sixty, and one hundred bushels.”

**Wondering**

- I wonder who the sower could really be?
- I wonder what the harvest was?
- I wonder if the sower was surprised at the harvest?
There was once someone who said such amazing things and did such wonderful things that people followed him. As they followed him, they heard him talking about a kingdom, but it was not like the kingdom they lived in. It was not like any kingdom anyone had ever visited. It was not like any kingdom anyone had ever heard of. They couldn’t help it. They had to ask him what the kingdom of heaven was like.
In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. Godly Play pays careful attention to the environment it provides for children. The Godly Play environment is “open” within a clear structure. Choices then are from among constructive alternatives.

The Godly Play environment is “boundaried” in the sense that Godly Play lovingly manages time, space, and relationships:

- Godly Play manages time the way most Christians organize their worship together, first by building a circle of community, then by hearing and responding to scripture, then by sharing a feast, and finally by saying goodbye and leaving the Godly Play space.

- Godly Play manages space by arranging materials in the Godly Play room in such a way that the arrangement itself communicates—visually and silently—the flow of the biblical story, the centrality of worship, and the importance of community. Everything is at “child level,” accessible and inviting.

- Godly Play manages relationships by emphasizing the importance of teacher preparation and by providing a safe, consistent environment for the community of children. As much as possible, it removes “setups” for misbehavior so each child feels competent, confident and deeply happy.

One time when they asked him this, he said “The kingdom of heaven is like when a woman takes three measures of flour, which is a lot, and mixes them together.

“She then hides the leaven in the mixture, which swells up and is leavened all over.”
The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Matthew 24:32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19

The Parable of the Mustard Seed is found in all three synoptic gospel (Matthew 24:32; Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–19). The mustard in the parable is not the domestic mustard we use for flavoring. The mustard of southwest Asia grew and spread quickly. Farmers did not like it because it could take over a field and ruin its useful production of grain. It is a shrub and not a tree. These historical matters are not interesting to children, but are mentioned to invite you to discover more about this parable as an adult.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s lesson offered below.

Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the parables can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Parables cannot ever be all used up. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

There was once someone who said such wonderful things and did such amazing things that people followed him. As they followed him, they heard him speaking about a kingdom, but it was not like the kingdom they lived in. It was not like any kingdom they had ever visited. It was not like any kingdom anyone had ever heard of.
Wondering

- I wonder if the person who put the tiny seed in the ground has a name?
- I wonder what the nests could really be?
- I wonder if you have ever come close to this kind of tree?

They couldn’t help it. They had to ask him. What is the kingdom of heaven like?

One time when they asked him that he said, “The kingdom of heaven is like when a person took the tiniest of all the seeds, a grain of mustard seed, a seed so small that if I had one on my finger you would not be able to see it.

“The person put the tiny seed in the ground, and it began to grow. The shrub grew up so big it was like a little tree, and the birds of the air came and they made their nests there.”

Godly Play  How Can You Help

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. Here we list a few of the ways in which you, as a parent, can support Godly Play in your church.

Other adults who want to support the work of a Godly Play program can contribute by:
- taking turns providing festive and healthy food for the children to share during their feasts
- keeping the art and supply shelves replenished with fresh materials
- using your creative skills to make the classical materials for Godly Play presentations

As regards this final suggestion, Godly Play Resources provides kits for assembling and finishing many of the materials used in Godly Play lessons. Check with your child’s Godly Play teacher about current needs in the Godly Play room.
The Complete Guide to Godly Play Parent Pages

Parable of Parables

Godly Play includes six “guiding parables” (covered in previous Parent Pages) as well as several “parables about parables” (like today’s). Sometimes during a Godly Play parable presentation, a child will ask, “What’s really inside a parable?” This is a moment Godly Play teachers wait for. Now they can say, “We have a parable about that! A parable about parables!”

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
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Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s lesson offered below. If you choose to tell the presentation, you will need a set of nesting boxes. Godly Play Resources offers such a set; call 1-800-445-4390 or visit www.godlyplayresources.com and ask for the “Parable of Parables.”

Whether you read the presentation or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the parables can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Parables cannot ever be all used up. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

I wonder what really is inside a parable. All we have to do is take off the lid to find out.

What is this? Is it a box inside a box? Oh, no! It’s a parable inside a parable, like a box is inside a box. That is very interesting, but what we really want to know is what is inside a parable. Let’s look in this one to find out.

What is this? Another box inside of a box? Okay. I understand. A parable is inside a parable, like a box is inside a box. I get it. We don’t need any more boxes inside of boxes. Let’s see now what is really inside a parable.
Okay. So there are boxes inside of boxes, like parables are inside of parables. Look, here’s another one. Here’s another one. (*Continue in this way until only one box is left.*)

Now, this must be the last one. This must be the one we have been waiting for. Now, we can see what is really inside of a parable.

(*Pretend to take something tiny out of this smallest box, as shown in the illustration above.*) It’s hard to see, isn’t it. That is why people who loved parables very much put the unseen part in a box, so they could find it and even take it with them. They didn’t want to lose the parable. It was too precious.

The next people who came along also loved parables very much, but the parable box the first people made wasn’t quite right for them, so they made their own.

The next people who came along also loved parables very much, but the box the other people made didn’t agree with them very well. They wanted one that was just right for them, so they made their own.

People kept doing this. Even after a thousand years, this was still going on.

Finally, your grandmothers and grandfathers, who loved parables very much, found the parable box the people who came before them had made. They liked it, but it was not just right for them, so they made their own.

Finally, we come to the time of your mothers and fathers. They love parables very much too, but the box that their mothers and fathers made was not quite right for them. They had to make their very own.

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**Wondering**

- I wonder who is going to make the next parable box?
- I wonder what the whole line of boxes makes?
- I wonder if you have ever come close to the unseen part of a parable?

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**Godly Play The Environment**

A *Godly Play room* is structured to support children’s work in four ways:

- It makes *materials* inviting and available by keeping the room open, clean and well-organized. A useful phrase for a Godly Play room is, “The material is for you. You can touch this and work with it carefully when you want to.”
- It encourages responsible *stewardship* of the materials by helping children learn to take care of the room themselves, repairing, cleaning, and polishing.
- It provides a respectful *place* for children’s work by reserving space in the room for ongoing or finished projects. When a child is still working on a project at the end of work time, he or she is reassured: “This project will be here for you the next time you come. You can take as many weeks as you need to finish it. We never lose work in a Godly Play room.”
- It sets a leisurely *pace* that allows children to engage deeply in their chosen responses, providing them a safe space filled with safe *time.*
**Parable of the Deep Well**

**Godly Play includes** six “guiding parables” (covered in previous Parent Pages) as well as several “parables about parables” (like today’s). From time to time in Godly Play presentations, children ask what parables really are. A Godly Play teacher might say, “We have a parable about that!” and present this parable to the child.

**How to Use this Parent Page**

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
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**The Presentation**

There was once a great desert.

In the middle of the desert was a deep well. It was so deep that people could no longer reach the water to drink.

They could not even see the water in the well. Sometimes they could feel the damp coolness rising, but there was no way to taste the water.
People cannot live in the desert without water. It is hot and it is easy to get lost. The wind changes the shape of the sand. There is nothing green to give shade or for people to eat, so everyone hurries across the sand to get away from the danger.

One day a person stopped. There was no hurry. The person looked at the well. The person looked around the well and saw golden strands in the sand.

The person picked up a rusty object, but no one could remember what it was for. It was like a big cup, but there was nothing to put in it.

The person looked again and kicked the golden threads. They seemed out of place. What were they? Other people thought they were silly and passed them by. This person took time.

The person went back to the big cup with the handle and then to the deep well. Then the person began to walk around picking up the golden threads and tying them together.

The person lowered the bucket into the well and drew forth the refreshing water. The person tasted the water and was changed. When the person moved on, the bucket and the many strands tied together were left, so the next person could also taste the water.

Here, you can taste it too.

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Godly Play Using Language

**Godly Play mentors** support children with the language they use. You can do the same at home:

- Choose “open” responses. “Open” responses simply describe what we see, rather than evaluate the children or their work. Open responses invite children’s interaction, but respect children’s choices to simply keep working in silence, too.

  **Examples of open responses:**
  - Hmm. Lots of red.
  - This clay looks so smooth and thin now.
  - Did you know that you’re the only person in the world who would do this just like you did?

- Avoid evaluative responses. Evaluative responses shift the child’s focus from his or her work to your praise. **Examples:**
  - You’re a wonderful painter.
  - This is a great picture.
  - I’m so pleased with what you did.

- Choose empowering responses that emphasize each child’s ability to make choices, solve problems and articulate needs. In a Godly Play room, a frequently heard phrase is, “That’s the way. You can do this.” Offer help when needed, but aim to restore ownership of the problem or situation to the child as soon as possible.
Making Silence

Silence is hard to speak about, because it is wordless. At every stage of a Godly Play session there is silence: entering, the lesson, wondering, art and material responses, the feast, and saying good-bye. A comfort with silence is taught by showing it and the felt assumption that silence is not empty but full, and can be overwhelming.

Why is the practice of silence important for children? We can force children to be silent, but it is stillness (from within) that children need if they are going to learn anything well. We can’t fill a cup that is already full of noise. The ability to contemplate creates the space for filling and it is the foundation for wonder which opens the creative process, which in turn gives us life.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by asking your child about the lesson on making silence. You might say, “I heard you made silence today in Godly Play. I wonder what part of ‘making silence’ you liked best?”

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen.

Listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. Whether you read the lesson or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the presentation can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

I wonder if we can make some silence together? I don’t know, but shall we try? Are you ready?

Let’s start by sitting quietly. Can you keep your hands and your body still, like when the wind stops blowing and the waves on a lake become still? Let’s see if we can be like a lake, and there are no waves.
In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. Today we will discuss why nurturing a child’s spiritual life is crucial to their overall well-being.

Rebecca Nye writes in her book, *Children’s Spirituality: What It Is and Why It Matters* that, “Children present us with so many different needs and challenges. To be told that we must be concerned for children’s spirituality as well might feel like being pushed over the edge—another thing to do, another area where we don’t do well enough. There are so many other compelling priorities after all.

We would argue (and Rebecca Nye would no doubt agree!) that while there are a multitude of things children need, spiritual nurture must be a priority! We often read in the news about the increasing violence and divisions in our world. We firmly believe that this is above all a spiritual crisis. What drives people to do violence to themselves or to others is a feeling that nothing really matters; a spiritual sickness of sorts. If a person has no hope, no sense of meaning and purpose, no relationship with something bigger than themselves, then striking out in anger at people all around them might feel like the only way forward. I firmly believe that Godly Play is one way (if not THE way) that we can make a difference.

Now let’s close our eyes. Yes. I know that feels weird, but I think it will help us to really feel the silence. This is because there is an inside as well as an outside to silence.

*Sit quietly for a moment. When there is really silence you acknowledge it.*

There. We did it. We made some silence. Now let’s open our eyes. We made silence here, but I wonder if we can make it anywhere? Did you make silence in the church too? Where else could we make silence in our house?

*Go to another room in the house and try making silence. Was it easier in the new room or harder?*