Godly Play

Godly Play is a method that uses a slow, reflective storytelling style. It uses simple objects to portray the story as you tell it. You can collect and use your own objects to tell the story, or purchase materials through the *Godly Play* Foundation website.

For example, in our 12 Spies Godly Play-style story (video below), we used sand, rocks, and shells to tell the story. What materials could you use? What do you already have? You can be as creative as you like!

In addition to reflection, *Godly Play* also allows children time to respond through art.





The *Godly Play* approach understands that children have an awareness of God at a young age, but aren't often taught or given a chance to express that awareness. Through *Godly Play* storytelling, children get to wonder together about God and who He is, and what He might be saying to them through the story.

To watch an example of *Godly Play* Style Storytelling, click here:

Materials:

- Items to tell the story with
- A script or way you have decided to tell the story
- Space for the children to sit with you and listen to the story
- Art supplies for the children to use during the response time after the story (optional)

Preparation:

- First, choose a Bible story you want to tell. Read this Bible story in the Bible.
- Next, you need a script to use as you tell the Bible Story.
  - You can see examples of our Godly Play story scripts here. Feel free to write your own scripts in the style of *Godly Play* using our examples as a guide.

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- Alternatively, you can buy any of *Godly Play*'s books, which include scripts. For books, scripts, and other materials, visit https://www.godlyplayfoundation.org
- Examples of other people telling stories with *Godly Play* can be found on the *Godly Play* YouTube channel.

- Finally, before you teach, practice telling the story in the style of *Godly Play* with your materials. By practising, you will be able to tell the story more naturally.

Instructions:

1. Welcome the children into a circle on the floor. Sit in the circle with them.
2. Tell the story using your chosen materials.
3. After telling the story, spend time wondering together. Start this time by asking one of the four wondering questions below, and let the children respond. Let the children ask their own wondering questions, and let people share their thoughts. Wondering questions start with "I wonder…" and do not have one correct answer. You can ask your own wondering questions, but four good ones to ask are:
   - I wonder what part of the story you like best?
   - I wonder what part of the story is most important?
   - I wonder where you are in the story? I wonder what part is about you?
   - I wonder if there is any part of the story we can leave out and still have all we need?
4. After wondering together, have the children leave the circle one at a time to do something in response to God or the story. The children can respond by doing any kind of art, or by playing with the materials you used to tell the Bible Story. If you only want to tell the story in *Godly Play* style, but not do the response time, that is okay, but we recommend you try it! This response time could take the place of other activities you'd do in a typical Bible class.

Adaptations:

- You can use any kind of materials available to you, as long as they are simple and not distracting. Some examples of things you could use to tell the story include, but are not limited to: sand, fabric, paper, rocks and shells, sticks, banana leaves, bamboo, mats, blocks, string, plastic, bottle caps, silverware, etc.

Helpful Hints:

- Wondering: Wondering questions should be open-ended. If there is only one answer, it is not a wondering question. Wondering questions help people think freely about God and explore the meaning He might be revealing to them through the Bible story.
- If you are doing *Godly Play*-style Bible stories for the first time, you may want to explain how to ask a wondering question. Lead the children by saying, 'Let's wonder together. I'll start by saying 'I wonder…' and you can think, answer, or ask another wondering question by starting with 'I wonder…'.'
- Allow the children to make comments and ask questions as you tell the story. Show them that you've heard them, but avoid having long conversations that pull the children out of the story experience. You can say things like, "That's a good question," or "Yes, I can see that," or gently repeat back what they said, then continue the story.

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Date

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