

Godly Play

Our Curriculum for children ages 3-6

What is Godly Play?

Godly Play is a Montessori-based method of spiritual education. Children hear stories of the Christian tradition presented in particular ways, sit together for a time of imaginative verbal ‘wondering’ about the story, and are then encouraged to choose work that helps them explore that tradition within the context of their own spiritual experiences. Work may be interactive or individual, and typically (although not always) employs either artistic supplies or Godly Play story materials. Godly Play is non-prescriptive, child-focused, and interactive.

How does Godly Play compare to traditional Christian Education approaches?

Godly Play is different from a traditional education approach in several ways.

- 1) Children are trusted to already hold an experience and understanding of God, whether or not they are able to verbalize their experience in a way that makes sense to adults. This is in sharp contrast to the traditional idea that children are empty vessels to be filled, or even sinful beings who must be corrected.
- 2) Because Godly Play assumes that God is accessible to children, the classroom goal is to assist each child in creating verbal and social ways to deepen and communicate their spiritual experiences. By comparison, traditional religious education assumes that the child must hear, memorize, and be convinced of a specific set of doctrines.
- 3) Godly Play honors the intrinsic dignity and intelligence of individual children. Rather than focusing on entertainment, or on ‘right’ answers, children are individually encouraged and assisted to choose work that will help them on their particular part of the spiritual journey.

What will my child learn in Godly Play?

Children in Godly Play learn, first and most importantly, that they are cared for and loved. Godly Play uses a co-teaching system that ensures each child will receive individual care. The classroom is set up to encourage children to form a community, caring for themselves and for each other. The long-term goal of Godly Play is to assist each child recognize, explore, and learn to articulate their spiritual lives within the context of Christian tradition.

How will Godly Play prepare my child for spiritual growth in the future?

Godly Play is NOT focused on answers! Godly Play seeks to develop an articulate awareness of spiritual existence. You could describe Godly Play as a system of spiritual phonics, perhaps, or a technique-focused art class; each child has the support and the opportunity to craft a personally meaningful spiritual foundation.

Children in Godly Play are learning *how* to learn, and how to articulate spiritual questions, not filling in the blanks for a true/false test. This is excellent preparation for the intellectual spiritual exploration of adolescence and adulthood.

What results can I expect from Godly Play?

Children begin Godly Play at a very young age and are not pressured into particular response patterns. This means, practically speaking, that your child may not have a concrete product from his/her class and may not produce expected answers when questioned about the day’s lesson. Your child is likely to be able to ‘show’ you a story long before they can articulate it, and parents are always welcome to come into the room to use it with their children after the Godly Play lesson is over.