



What Is Godly Play?

Godly Play is the product of a lifetime of research and practice by theologian, author and educator the Rev. Dr. Jerome Berryman. It began with the proposition that children have a natural sense of God and that what they lack is the appropriate language to help them identify and express it so it can be explored and strengthened. The Godly Play approach developed by Dr. Berryman teaches classical Christian language in a way that does not block or distort the child's authentic experience of God but enhances it so it can contribute to the creative life of the child and the world. Godly Play teaches children the art of using Christian language—parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action—helping them become more fully aware of the mystery of God's presence in their lives.

When Christian language is learned by the Godly Play approach, it is learned as a means to know God and to make meaning of our lives. This approach is quite different from the traditional model in which the teacher tells the children what they need to know. Godly Play is not about things that are that simple. It is not just about learning lessons or keeping children entertained. It is about locating each lesson in the whole system of Christian language and involving the creative process to discover the depths of meaning in them. It's about understanding how each of the stories of God's people connects with the child's own experience and relationship with God. The goal of Godly Play is to show how to be open to the Holy Spirit, The Creator and the Redeemer all at once and all the time in every place. To achieve this goal is to help children become deeply rooted as Christians and yet at the same time use this powerful language and community to be open and creative.