

Godly Play®: The Parables

Entering with Wonder To Live the Question

What is a Parable?

Bernard Brandon Scott in Hear the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1989) gives us a definition:

“A parable is a
 mashal
 that employs
 short
 narrative
 fiction
 to reference
 a transcendent
 symbol.” (p.8ff)

Scott's book was identified by John Dominic Crossan in his The Historical Jesus as the best introduction to the parables to date, a recommendation which puts it in front of Crossan's own several books on the subject.

What is the Godly Play® Approach?

The Godly Play® approach to parables includes six guiding parables in gold boxes, parables about parables, side-by-sides, the parable cards, and the parable games. In addition one can introduce the parabolic self-disclosure statements in John and the sayings of Jesus. The sayings also have games that can be played with their cards.

What are the Wondering Questions?

“I wonder what this could really be?”

Why are Parables Important for Children?

The communication attributed to Jesus in the form of parables on the average takes up one-third of each gospel. Parables are striking and present us with a unique literary form that is hard to forget. They may have prompted the creation of the gospel narratives. Mere lists would not do. Today the narrative text is used to interpret the parables which may have caused their writing. The pattern of communication in the parables is the closest we can come to a sustained example of the actual voice of Jesus. We might (and probably will) debate each one of these assertions, but this curious kind of communication must be included for children so they can hear the best approximation of the voice of Jesus during the time of their language formation.