

Godly Play®: The Sacred Stories

Telling the Story So Children Can Become the Story

What is a Sacred Story?

A narrative is **not** a **description** (like describing a table)
a **concept** (like calling a person heroic instead of telling the story)
a **random list** (like a casual shopping list)
an **ordered list** (like a telephone book)
action (add “begat” between the names in the phone book)
plot (energy that “moves” the story, “tic-toc”)
shape (beginning, middle, end) or
an **audience**.

It is easier to say what a story is not than what it is, because stories are so embedded in human experience. Where does a story behind in the above list?

Sacred story is one in which God is a character. The biblical theology for the use of stories in Godly Play® may be found in Samuel Terrien’s The Elusive Presence: The Heart of Biblical Theology (New York: Harper and Row, 1978). Whatever theme one might chose to interpret or organize scripture it is the experience of God’s elusive presence that stands behind and before the theme, so why not use it as the theme?

What is the Godly Play® Approach?

The people of God met God in creation, with the patriarchs, in the Exodus, at Sinai, in the Temple, in prophet’s visions, in psalms of presence, in wisdom, in Sabbath, in The Word, in Annunciation, in Transfiguration, in Resurrection, and elsewhere. Lessons are presented with three-dimensional materials about the events. There are additional materials contained in object boxes (People Boxes) that ate for telling the stories of the individuals.

What are the Wondering Questions?

- “I wonder what part of the story you like the best?”
- “I wonder what the most important part is?”
- “I wonder that part of the story is about you, or who you are in the story?”
- “I wonder if there is any part of the story we can leave out and still have all the story we need?”

Why are Sacred Stories Important for Children?

It is assumed that children have already experience the presence of the mystery of God. What they need is an appropriate language by which to identify, name, value, and express in community what such an event means, to remember, to be aware of it, and to hope for a continuing relationship. Sacred stories help children find their story.