

The Nuts and Bolts of Godly Play

By Amy Schulze

So you have decided to start a Godly Play program at your church, what do you do next? The answer is simple. Pray. Then pray so more. God has a plan for you and your church and Godly Play may not be in His plan. We think it is a wonderful program and felt led to start Godly Play at our church, but every situation is different. Pray for guidance and pray that you are able to submit yourself to His will. Only then will you gain the confidence in knowing you are on the right track.

If Godly Play is for you, there are some practical things to remember as you start. Godly Play will probably be something different for your church. Take time to talk to your rector, vestry, parents and students about Godly Play. You might consider presenting a story to the vestry or the ECW. The more people that understand what you are trying to accomplish, the more support you will have. It is difficult to describe Godly Play. How do you describe “play”? The best way, and the Montessori way, is to have people experience it for themselves.

Enlist as much help as possible. To begin one class you will need to have a story teller and a door person. The class just does not work well with only a story teller. You will need to either purchase the materials from Godly Play Resources at www.godlyplay.com or someone needs to make them. This can include many people. Work Saturdays where people help make parables and book cases can get volunteers across the congregation. Once people have their hand in making the materials, they will defend the program to others. You can also make a list of volunteers to bring in snacks for the response time.

It is best to make a schedule of stories that you would like to tell during the year, but don't be upset if you deviate from the plan. Many times I am prepared and excited to tell a certain story, but once the circle is created, the children have other needs and I end up having a long discussion or telling a different story. Be open for these teachable moments, it is when you can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Read as many books as you can before you begin Godly Play at your church. This is not a typical Sunday school program that you can slap together in a couple of weeks. Godly Play takes work, reading, studying, prayer, and some blood and tears to get off the ground, but if it is God's will for your church, He will take you by the hand and deliver more blessings than you can imagine.

May God bless you in your quest of Godly Play. In the end you may find that the biggest change is what happens to you as you pray to give up your will and to be filled with His. God does not take this invitation lightly, nor should you. The change might be slow at first, but once you can give up your will He will deliver more blessing that your can imagine.