

# Welcome to Godly Play!



*Godly Play* was developed by Episcopal priest, author, and teacher Jerome Berryman. Based on the Montessori method of experiential learning, *Godly Play* uses a careful telling of scripture stories and engaging story figures to encourage children to seek and find their own answers to their faith questions.

This unique approach to religious education invites children to wonder about themselves, God and the world in a way that is playful and meaningful to them.

Each week we invite God's presence and grow in community as we experience a deepening spiral curriculum. In *Godly Play*, we play with the language of God and God's people: our sacred stories, parables, liturgical lessons and silence. Through this powerful language and wondering about the stories, our circle of children hear the deepest invitation of all:

**Come play with God.**



*The Epiphany Pageant is always a big hit for the holidays.*

## Family Events

**SEPTEMBER 21**

Parish Picnic

**SEPTEMBER 26**

Friday Movie Night with PJs, Pillows, and Popcorn

**JANUARY**

Epiphany Pageant

**MARCH**

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Mardi Gras Celebration with Dixieland band

**TBD**

Godly Play Family Night



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**ST. STEPHEN'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

# Godly Play

Information reprinted with permission from the Godly Play Foundation and the Center for the Theology of Childhood, [www.godlyplay.org](http://www.godlyplay.org).

# What Happens In a Godly Play Session?

## At the Threshold

A greeter waits by the door to the *Godly Play* classroom, warmly welcoming children as they arrive.

## Building the Circle

Children make their way into the room and sit in a circle around the storyteller. She/he talks quietly and easily with the children, building a community where each and every participant is warmly welcomed.

When everyone is ready, a prayer is said and the offer-tory box is passed around the circle. A child is chosen to move the arrow ahead on the Circle of the Church Year.

## Presenting the Lesson

The storyteller goes to get the materials for the story and brings them to the circle. Slowly, deliberately, she



*Karen Antos tells the story of Advent to her class.*

brings out the story figures and objects, gently moving and arranging them as she tells the story. The children's eyes and hands focus, on the small wooden figures, painted plaques, or beautifully finished props moving in the circle.

The lesson concludes, and the storyteller sits back and says, "I wonder what part of the story you like best?"

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*"I get it! When the candle is lit, it's like us, right here, but when it is changed it's like when we go to heaven."*

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## Response

The storyteller invites the children to choose the work they would like to do in response to the lesson. What work will keep the story close to their heart? Some children play with story materials, some choose to create with arts and crafts, and older children often search for more information about the story in the Bible.



*Jason Conforti chooses to work with the parable "The Great Pearl" during the response portion of the class.*

## Feast

The children work together to serve a healthy snack. A prayer is said, and the feast is shared.



*Cathy Forest leads the prayer during Feast.*

## Saying Goodbye

Each child is thanked for coming, and the class is brought to the "big church" for Communion.



*Liz Knox walks a labyrinth she created for her classroom.*

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. *Godly Play* sessions take place on Sundays from **9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.** Please help your children be on time. They won't want to miss a minute!
2. The *Godly Play* circle is built slowly and lovingly, to welcome each child, one at a time. When children arrive, they wait outside the door while the teacher helps them get ready to join the circle.
3. Story schedules for each class will be distributed. You may want to discuss the stories with your children, or read them with your child from his/her Bible to enhance the connection at home.
4. We would be happy to welcome you on a visit to the *Godly Play* room outside of session time. Contact us to arrange a visit or to ask any questions you might have about the program.  
**Nancy St. John** – nsj10@comcast.net  
**Lee Dickson** – lee.dickson@statestreet.com  
**Liz Knox** – lizknox@comcast.net
5. *Godly Play* is an important ministry St. Stephen's offers to families. Equally important are the opportunities for children and families to strengthen bonds throughout their individual faith journeys. Please join us for fun and fellowship at the family events listed on the back.