

ONE STEP AT A TIME

TAKING IT FURTHER PASSING ON GODLY PLAY TO OTHERS

Drawing the support of others is an important challenge...your church leadership, parents, the church council etc.

Moving towards Godly Play can involve a lot of change.

Feelings about this will range from

- ❖ INDIFFERENCE - you just get on with it, what goes on in the Sunday school is not a church council concern
- ❖ To HOSTILITY and FEAR - 'Are you saying what we were doing wasn't good enough?' or 'This is going to cost a lot, how can you prove that it will be worth it?'
'You mean my son won't have anything to take home each week – so how will we know that he's been doing anything worthwhile?'

You need to find ways to communicate effectively about what Godly Play is and why you think the change it involves is worth trying for.

List what kinds of change you might like to see: e.g.

- ❖ Change of materials and resources?
- ❖ Change in accommodation needs?
- ❖ Change of teaching approach?
- ❖ Change of timing – need longer session, need to spend two weeks per story?
- ❖ Change in focus and purpose of work with children?
- ❖ Change in who helps as well as how they help?
- ❖ Change in how children will 'work' and interact?
- ❖ Other changes...

Now consider why these changes are valuable in your opinion, and you will have a 'pocket sized' account of a vision of Godly Play for your community.

HAZARD WARNING!

There is a really big process of change embedded here. It's about much more than the method itself, but about how we regard and respect children's spiritual needs and gifts, and how we see ourselves and our faith. At heart, it's about a vision for the whole Church, for the kingdom, our relationships to God, each other and our religious inheritance.

You can't take on all of this at once, but perhaps by doing Godly play, you can begin to SHOW how this matters, and what a difference could be made if we work towards all this 'right from the start' with the young.

Some Tactics

A baby steps approach to change is often wise in Church settings (

Be clear about your long-term intentions, don't give up on the deeper need for change.

Set dates, maybe...

- ❖ by February we'll abandon the chairs and have a story on the floor and wonder..
- ❖ by May we'll have free art response periods..
- ❖ by June I want to have six boxed stories...
- ❖ by September the other helpers will have received training ...

Demonstrate a Godly Play story to parents and others - without children present. It usually works better than just talking about it. Instead of opening a meeting with prayer or Bible reading – do Godly Play. Spend time hearing what they liked about it that way and ask what might be good or problematic about doing that with children.

Look at ways of framing what a Godly Play type session involves under structures familiar to adults – e.g. the liturgy headings. So, free (art) response is seen as part of Ministry of the Word, in particular, as time to form a personal understanding and response to the reading of the day.

Keep a memo book. It will be important for you and for others to collect evidence of the fruit of doing things in a Godly Play way. The memo book is not just about special developments you observe in the children – e.g. comments during wondering, instances of deep concentration and engagement, signs that children were absorbing the language of your session - it's words and gestures, it's care of things, people and space, the value of patterning our time coming closer to God...

Keep memos about YOUR OWN experiences doing this, and your helpers. What are YOU learning, how are YOU growing, what is frustrating and inspiring?

Sharing your experiences with others who are involved in a similar revolution, perhaps in another church, is strongly recommended. Plan in time for informal supports in your local area (we'll gladly help).

Children's work already puts you at the margins, you'll need support from people who share and can refuel your commitment to this work being very central.