

Associates of Godly Play UK

The Magazine

Issue 12 March 2023



At the threshold



Hello! If you are reading this, you have probably decided that you are ready to leave aside the other things you might be doing, to come and see what's in this issue of magazine. And we have some powerful stories to share with you, from Godly Players across the UK and further afield. As in any Godly Play circle, our contributors come from diverse backgrounds and bring particular life experiences, some recent and others reaching further back. Each reflects in different ways on what it means to be hospitable to others, to listen well and be open to learn more.

Alison Seaman describes her work as a spiritual director and explores the similarities and differences between Godly Play and the spiritual accompaniment of adults. Gill Ambrose reflects on the deep roots of research, reflection and practice with children which have fed Godly Play. The Godly Play session – and indeed this magazine – is structured around a shape formed by traditional Christian liturgy; and yet the people we invite into our circles are less and less familiar with the rituals of the Church, as the pandemic has accelerated changes to our patterns of worship.

The last few months have seen catastrophic change and destruction in many parts of the world, and with the people of Turkey and Ukraine very much in our thoughts, we are privileged to have reflections from Mine Yildirim who offers Godly Play in a Turkish-speaking community in North London, and Sheila Whittenberg who has trained Godly Players in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, and recently facilitated Godly Play circles enabling deep reflection about the ongoing war.

Whatever is on your mind today, we hope you will be enriched and provoked to wonder further about Godly Play, as you respond to our contributors' reflections on what it means to cross the threshold and enter a safe space, where together we may encounter God.

In this issue

Building the circle	2	Taking your wondering further ...	
Feature articles		Book reviews	16
Cross-cultural settings	3	The Feast	
Godly Play and Ukraine	4	A chance to meet	18
Spiritual Accompaniment	6	Bite-size news	20
A Godly Play journey	9	Sending out	
Deep roots	12	Events and courses	22

Building the circle

As we continue to rebuild after Covid's assault on us all, we are grateful, again, to our Associates who help us to square the circle. Your donations helped us to get through the pandemic and are now supporting us as we create a new programme and new opportunities. We did a good deal of learning when we couldn't meet in person and discovered that online Introductions to Godly Play enable wider participation in this first stage of familiarity with the method. Of course, we hope that people will not stop there, but it makes a start more available.

A renewed opportunity to meet together in person last October saw the development of new working groups among the Godly Play trainers and we hope this will allow us to be more responsive to enquiries and requests. We have now initiated a small group of experienced trainers to monitor and lead this work, as it was all too clear that this responsibility was simply too burdensome for one pretty-well volunteering individual. As 2023 goes forward, we shall hope to offer a greater diversity of learning and enrichment opportunities. We are also planning a conference for 2024 – so please save 29 June 2024 in your diary. (Godly Play Scotland is hosting a conference this year at the Edinburgh seaside on 2-3 June. See page 15.)

Godly Play UK welcomed four new trainers in 2022. We also said some goodbyes. Kate Cornwall and Katherine Lyddon have moved on to new spheres of work, and we thank them for all their contributions to our training programme and our thinking.

Rebecca Nye will be familiar to most of our readers, through her writing if not through her many, many contributions to training, conferences and as relentless advocate for the importance of children's spirituality. It is no longer possible for Rebecca to continue in the trainer role, but we are in no doubt that we shall benefit from her enormous wisdom and experience in many other ways. Rebecca was essentially the founder of Godly Play in the UK and it is impossible to quantify the impact of this, though we see its effects all around us. Trainers and Trustees said thank you to Rebecca at our residential meeting in October, but we didn't say goodbye, for we know she will continue in other ways to be a friend and teacher to each of us.

Feature articles

Godly Play in cross-cultural settings: the native languages of story and play

By Mine Yildirim



Mine is an accredited Godly Play Trainer in Turkey and the UK. She has practised Godly Play – in English and Turkish – in several churches for over seven years, and now offers a Godly Play lunchtime club in a local school in London.

Whenever we sit in circles with children as Godly Players, we speak the languages of story and play, and find that we speak the native languages of children. This has been my experience as a migrant in the UK sitting together with children born in the UK, as well as first-generation migrant children from different backgrounds, in churches and a primary school. Whether I use Turkish or English or use them

consecutively to tell a story, the children are open, captured by the story and responsive to the safe space that is integral to the Godly Play method. Of course, translation of story scripts and translation in the circle as well as sensitivity to cultural issues are critical. However, since Godly Play speaks the native languages of children, if we speak Godly Play, we are already in a very good place to offer Godly Play in cross-cultural settings.

In Turkey

My journey may be helpful in illustrating some of the opportunities and challenges. The first Godly Play story I heard was the Parable of the Good Shepherd delivered in English. I was captured by it. About a decade later, I heard that Di Pagel, a Godly Play trainer from the US, was coming to Turkey to offer a Godly Play training. Joy!! Three of us from my Turkish church in Istanbul took the training and decided to go for it and start a Godly Play program. This meant translating stories into Turkish, learning them by heart, making materials, creating a sacred space and explaining to sceptics what Godly Play is all about; all of this with little experience and knowledge. Starting with a team and having the full support of our church leadership have been amazing. The Pera Resurrection Church has a wonderful Godly Play room in the heart of Istanbul and we did our first core training here, in Turkish, last summer.

A move to London

A few years after we started the Godly Play program in Istanbul, I moved to London with my family. I had no Godly Play circle, no materials, no camaraderie. The church I attended did not have a children's ministry. This has been a time to learn anew to be with God, with people and with myself. Then I heard that there was going to be a London Godly Play network meeting in Harrow, at St Jérôme Bilingual Primary School. This meeting was critical for me. As soon as I entered the Godly Play room, I felt at home. I met Jeanny Wang, an advocate at the time, and she has been a sparring partner and supporter since. She lent me two parables to help get me started. This time I had to learn

the stories in English. I started offering occasional stories in English at St. Michael-at-Bowes Church in North London and at Messy Church events that we organised.

Since 2018, I have also been part of an emerging Turkish-speaking church where I lead the children's programme. In this context, making, buying, borrowing materials, and creating a sacred space in a hall every week have been challenging. I started presenting Godly Play stories not knowing if there would be a team. I prayed and hoped for door persons and story tellers. In time, God provided.

The language and culture have not been insurmountable challenges. Because the languages of story and play are universal, in many ways Godly Play transcends culture. In our Turkish church we have 7 to 9 children who regularly join the circle. Cross-cultural settings may vary significantly, and one needs to be open to be very flexible. Since some of our children are second-generation migrants their command of English is better than their Turkish. Some children do not speak Turkish at all, while others who have arrived in the UK more recently understand Turkish better. The stories are told in English and Turkish, line by line. It is a stretch for the brain, for sure! One of our story tellers sometimes does not feel confident in telling the story in English so a teenager who speaks both languages assists her, which has worked well. Of course, being able to use the scripts already translated for Godly Play in Turkey has been a great advantage.

Perhaps for me personally, the cross-cultural setting is telling the stories in a Church of England parish and at a primary school, in English. I have had to learn about culturally sensitive issues, and I am still learning. But the school and the children have been incredibly welcoming and accepting. I offer a lunchtime Godly Play club at a nearby school in North London two days a week. Here, most of the children are also new to this country and for many of them English is not their first language. The language of play and story, however, transcend culture and as long as we are willing to speak these languages, we have a common language.

Godly Play and the war in Ukraine

By Sheila Whittenberg

Sheila Whittenberg is a Godly Play Trainer in Berlin, Germany. She lives with her husband, William, their two teenagers, and an adorable Cockerpoo. Sheila serves as the Director of Children and Family at a local church, Berlinprojekt, and works part-time as an artist.

On 24 February 2022, the world order shifted. I was in Istanbul, Turkey staring at CNN in shock, unable to fully believe what I was seeing. Russia had invaded Ukraine. Hours



At a training in Lviv

later, my cell phone began exploding with messages from friends and acquaintances in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia - people in complete shock trying to process what this could mean for their lives.

My roots with all three countries are deep. I lived and worked in Russia in the early 1990s, and when I discovered Godly Play in 2009, I was able to introduce it to a friend in Moscow who is now a Godly Play trainer. Between 2012 and 2019, I had the opportunity to lead several trainings in

both Russia and Belarus. Those visits opened the door for a Core Training in Lviv, Ukraine in September 2021. I'd never have imagined that a war would start six months later.



Training in Krygyzstan in January near Lake Issyk-

Shortly after the war started, literally thousands of women and children began pouring into Berlin's main train station. I immediately started volunteering there and was overwhelmed by the panic, anger, sorrow, hopelessness and urgency of the situation. How to begin to deal with a tragedy of such immense proportions?

Well, one goes instinctively to what one knows. As a dear friend, the late David Pritchard (Godly Play Trainer in Spain), once said, 'Pushing wooden figures around on a felt underlay may not seem, at

first glance, like high impact ministry.' But Godly Play is, of course, not simply a clever way to tell stories, but rather a way of seeing the world. And I began to think about how Godly Play could play a role in supporting these people.

When our church was asked to set up a temporary shelter for refugees ten days after the war started, we quickly bonded with the many children staying there. And the opportunity arose to tell the children a story. After asking their mothers and making sure that it was okay to tell them a story from the Bible, I shared the Parable of the Good Shepherd. I'll never forget the curiosity in their eyes as I pulled out the golden box and their delight in seeing the Good Shepherd place himself between the wolf and the sheep. And I prayed that those images of the Good Shepherd would stay with them always.

The thousands of refugees that came to Berlin were relocated to other places throughout Germany, and my Godly Play colleagues began writing and asking for stories in Ukrainian and Russian as Ukrainian children began to fill the preschools, churches and schools in their cities. And so Godly Play has been able to support children in the midst of so much uncertainty.

In January 2023, I travelled to Kyrgyzstan with Andrew Sheldon and Amy Crawford of Godly Play Canada for a Core Training that had been postponed for three years due to the pandemic. There we sat in a room with both Ukrainians and Russians from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. And unbelievably, some of the Russians supported the war in Ukraine. Through Godly Play, we were able to have some very difficult conversations about the war and share our grief and the suffering of our Ukrainian friends. Godly Play helped us to find some common ground though our love for children.



At a training in Krygystan

Through it all, I am thankful for the gift of Godly Play, that we can be bearers of God's hope and light in dark times.

Spiritual Accompaniment and Godly Play

By Alison Seaman



Alison has had a long career in education as a teacher, religious education adviser and a Godly play trainer and practitioner. Since retiring from professional life she has maintained her interest in education as a coach, mentor and spiritual director.

In my professional life as teacher and a religious education adviser, I discovered Godly Play and was strongly influenced by its underlying principals and methodology. It compelled me to rethink not only the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of teaching but also to ask deeper questions about the purpose of education and the role of the teacher; how can we ensure we educate the whole child, head and heart? What might the role of the teacher be in this process?

At the same time as pursuing these explorations in my professional life, Godly Play was also working its influence on my personal religious journey. I shared this with a wise mentor who suggested it might be helpful to articulate some of these thoughts with a spiritual director. I had come across the ministry of spiritual direction, and I found the idea of being able to meet with a good listener and explore the ups and downs of my spiritual life quite attractive. I was, however, wary of it, too. It sounded very pious and serious. Wasn't this something for ordained clergy, or members of religious orders? I decided to dip my toes in the water and meet with a spiritual director and the rest, as they say, is history. Through this encounter, I clarified my understanding of spiritual direction and worked through some of my preconceptions, not least about the name. (I wonder if there might be a parallel here with some people's suspicion and discomfort with the name ‘Godly Play’?). After some years of meeting with a spiritual

director, I decided to join a three-year formation course called ‘The Art of Spiritual Direction’ at the London Centre for Spiritual Direction and I began to practise the art of spiritual direction.

What's in a name?

In contemporary life, attempts have been made for some time now to demystify this age-old Christian practice of spiritual direction, to take it out of the cloisters and ground it in everyday life. It is often now referred to as spiritual accompaniment or soul friendship, as a way of demonstrating this process and making it more accessible to people from all walks of life. In this article, I will use the term ‘spiritual accompaniment’, as this is the one most widely used, and offer some of my experiences and learnings of both receiving and offering spiritual accompaniment. What I have noticed, over time, is the way my understanding of Godly Play has enriched my practice of spiritual accompaniment and vice versa. There are similarities and differences between the two fields, but I believe each can learn from the other in many fruitful ways. I shall explore some of the principles of spiritual accompaniment and consider how they might complement and enhance our understanding of the work of Godly Play.

What are you looking for?

Come and see.

There are many reasons why individuals seek spiritual accompaniment. Some may have been encouraged to try it, some might be wanting to explore their vocation. Some may be undergoing some sort of training or formation, for example, for public ministry within one of the Christian denominations. For many, however, it is not this clear cut. They might



be facing changes or transitions in their life, experiencing losses, or be searching for answers to those big, unanswerable questions. Some may feel disenchanting with their faith community or have questions about their faith. Some experience falling in, or out, of love with God. They may well not know what they want but perhaps feel some sort of itch to do some digging around, some questioning, some seeking. We often do not know how to grapple with our own questions let alone those of others. We can struggle to explain, lack confidence in trusting our own experiences, or we simply do not have the words.

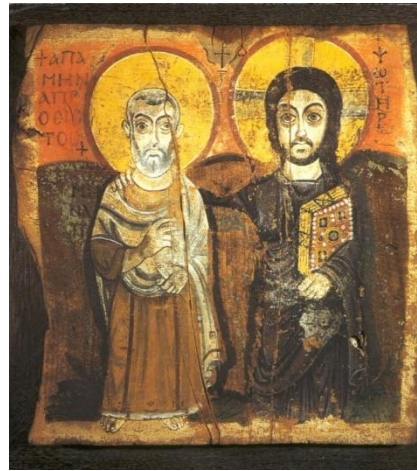
At the beginning of John's Gospel, Jesus poses this question to some followers, 'What are you looking for?' (John 1:38). It is, quite possibly, one of the most challenging spiritual questions we face in our lives. A little later in that passage from John's Gospel, Jesus offers an invitation: 'Come and see' (John 1:39). In spiritual accompaniment, I suggest, this is the invitation that is being offered.

The third chair

In spiritual accompaniment, the invitation, to 'come and see' is an open one. The accompanier offers a regular time, a safe space and a listening ear. There is no strategic plan, there are no set targets or outcomes. There may be times when it feels very pedestrian, or it might feel like the conversation is going round in circles. At other times there might be flashes of inspiration or moments of insight. In the western world we depend so much on the printed word for information, inspiration, education, and wisdom. This spiritual companionship is person-to-person; the accompanier is offering that precious gift of time, of being there for the other person. What makes this encounter distinctive, however, is the belief that God is present. My first and very dear spiritual accompanier used to say to me, 'Never forget there is a third person in the room with us.' Indeed, she always made sure, in whatever room we met, that there were always three chairs, as a visual reminder that God was present with

us, and even more importantly, doing God's work.

Spiritual accompaniment as holy listening



6th century Icon of Friendship, Krisztus és Menász, Louvre, Paris

The art of listening is at the heart of the relationship between the accompanier and the one seeking accompaniment. For the listener, preparation for this is key and it requires time to set aside their own preoccupations and to be fully present in the room. I'm a great talker and I love debating and conversing with others and so I've had to learn to put my thoughts or ideas to one side and really focus on hearing what is said, and what is unspoken, in the room. There will be times of conversation, times to explore together or clarify what has been said; deluges of words might be followed by times of silence. Some meetings may focus on current events, listening to everyday problems or delighting in joys and blessings, some may feature deep spiritual explorations, 'Where is God in this?', 'Why is my faith being tested?' The space may be safe, but it is not always comfortable for either participant. This is what Margaret Guenther describes as 'holy listening' (Guenther 1992). It requires an earthy, grounded approach to life, the ability to see the funny side of things, an astute eye that can spot the ego at work (in both the accompanier and the accompanied) especially when discernment is being sought. There are pitfalls that must be avoided in holy listening. In a world where people are often seeking the quick fix, a spiritual

accompanier is not responsible for another's life, to remove pain or fix problems. They are not there to make someone better or to become a different person. It is, Guenther says, 'the gift of disinterested, loving attention'.

Spiritual accompaniment as hospitality

Over the years, I've come to value the place of hospitality in the spiritual accompaniment relationship: the importance of clear time boundaries, the need to be fully present and to be authentic, the attention to creating a safe space where what is said in the room, stays in the room. It requires careful preparation and personal investment in the work. It is not that the content of what you do does not matter. It does, but how it's done is vital. What the spiritual accompanier is, is as important as what they know.

It is also necessary in a hospitable relationship to be aware of times when it is appropriate to offer a suggestion, ask a simple, direct question, seek ways to clear away spiritual clutter, a bit like peeling away the layers of an onion. It is not unusual for spiritual accompaniers to suggest a story or biblical passage, for reflection, if it is relevant. For some, however, it might be more helpful to encourage a break from Scripture to allow time to develop trust in life experience.

Spiritual accompaniment and Godly Play

I wonder, if as you read this description of spiritual accompaniment, you are noticing some similarities with Godly Play. There are, of course, differences in the way the two processes work. Adults who seek spiritual accompaniment, come of their own volition, to participate in a one-to-one session. Children participating in a Godly Play session, will most likely be brought by an adult, will be in a group with other children, and will have two adults present in the room. The Godly Play process offers a structured programme of learning about Christianity and the Christian 'language'. I would argue, however, that children and young people bring many of those big questions and those human experiences I outlined earlier, to the

Godly Play circle. They, too, know about unanswerable questions, momentous changes in their lives, and what it is like to feel lonely or excluded. They also know well how it feels not to have the words to talk about these things. In the Godly Play circle, they have a safe, hospitable space in which to explore the Christian story but also to ask, 'What does this mean for me?' They are guided and supported by adults who raise open questions and encourage participants to explore their ideas. The free response time helps children to gain confidence in themselves and to trust their own explorations.

So much of what I do in in spiritual accompaniment, I see at work in Godly Play sessions: how I prepare the meeting place, how I attend to, and clear, my own spiritual clutter, how I offer the open invitation to 'come and see' (I wonder if 'come and play' would be appropriate here?), the importance of offering a safe space with clear boundaries, the challenge I set myself to get out of the way so God can do God's work. These practices have all been, and continue to be honed, with children as my companions, in Godly Play groups and they also form the bedrock of my work in spiritual accompaniment.

Godly Play is widely known as a teaching method, but I would suggest this is only part of the process. Godly Play offers a much wider and richer education which reaches the whole child: body, mind and spirit. It has, in my experience, much to offer children as a process of spiritual accompaniment. In the Godly Play circle, we can help children and young people to learn about and from Christianity. In the way we do this work, I suggest we are inviting them to 'come and see' and supporting them on their quest for spiritual maturity. (Berryman, 2013).

References Berryman, Jerome. *The Spiritual Guidance of Children*, Morehouse Publishing, 2013; Guenther, Margaret. *Holy Listening*, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1992; The London Centre for Spiritual Direction (LCSD), www.lcsd.org.uk

A Godly Play journey

by Viv Hall



Viv is Pastoral Assistant at St James with All Saints and Christ Church, Gloucester. The parish is one of the most culturally rich, but socio-economically deprived, areas in Gloucestershire and 25% of the population are children.

In October 2017, I had been retired for five years, keeping very busy, and I now had a yearning to be free of commitments for a year. So going to a meeting with Juliet, the Vicar, I was determined to say no to anything she was going to suggest (you know the way vicars seem to do). That was until she introduced me to the concept of Godly Play.

I was invited to explore the possibility of running a midweek group for preschool children at St James' Church. Taking words from Godly Play, God came so close to me and I came so close to God that I knew exactly what God wanted me to do. Totally new to me,

totally at the wrong time for me, and yet I was drawn in and said yes. God had work for me to do.

The vision was to be able to offer something on a Sunday as well, as a first steps growing in faith for families who came for baptisms. We also wanted to give an invitation to the wider community. The project was fully supported by the PCC, and, with funding available, planning began. For the next few months, I explored this possibility, visiting other churches in the diocese who offered toddler groups or used Godly Play as part of their children's ministry. And I prayed.

It was decided to focus on the toddler group first. Story Box was conceived, to run once a month, and planning to access Godly Play training, identify a space for a Godly Play room and resource it continued. I was inspired and encouraged by Alison Summerskill at St Andrew's, Churchdown and it is fair to say, blown away by the Godly Play room and all the resources there. I just wanted to get my hands on everything and play. As I left that first meeting my head was spinning. How was I ever going to create anything like that? I remember feeling total overwhelmed.

Prayer and planning continued

In January 2018 our first order was sent to St Michael's Workshop at Bowthorpe, for The Holy Family, People of God, Lenten Cross, Ten Best Ways together with The Good Shepherd and Good Samaritan Parables. Where possible, and to keep costs down, kit packs were ordered and making a desert bag, and bag for the Lenten cross ourselves gave us a range of stories to start with while keeping cost to a minimum. The desert bag and the People of God were a great resource, as many stories could be told for a small investment.

On February 3rd, 2018, I travelled to Abergavenny to attend an introductory course on Godly Play, led by Diana Williams. From the moment I took my place in the circle I felt at home and, listening to the first story, I knew this was for me. There was an instant emotional connection. I was taken back to my own childhood, some sixty years ago, when I used to come home from church on a Sunday, and, using the coffee table, taking the embroidered table runner as my altar cloth, using candle sticks off the mantelpiece, my small Bible and homemade cross, I would play 'church'.

After much joyful planning it was decided that the toddler group, Storybox, would start on February 13th 2018 and the nave of St James Church was transformed to a young child's paradise, chairs were moved to reveal a wonderful open space for creative play, relationship, and friendship building. Toys and crafts were provided along with refreshments for families. A Godly Play story was told, and we finished with singing.

In July 2018 I travelled to Llantarnam Abbey along with our vicar, Juliet, to attend a three-day Godly Play training course, led by Diana Williams and Cass Meurig. This was such an amazing experience, and while I had my own anxieties about learning scripts, the moment I knelt on the floor to tell a story, they just disappeared. Returning from the training I was keen to get Godly Play up and running on a Sunday, offering a full Godly Play experience to our children.

Planning in earnest

We began by identifying space we could use in the church. It is blessed with an upper room which just needed a little reorganising and the junk moving out. We managed to find a small coffee table to serve as the focal shelf, brought up wooden shoe racks and an old bookcase for our shelves. Gold gift boxes were handy for parables and The Works sold wooden trays. Charity shops and the local scrap store provided focal table coverings as well as underlays for stories, using sheets and pillowcases with a little alteration. I



attended a 'Making Materials' workshop with Richard Prescott which was a great help in creating plaques for the Creation and Advent stories. What a joy the discovery Mod Podge was, a real game changer! Church members were generous in providing resources for the response time. In October 2018 we launched Godly Play on Sundays once a month, having decided which stories to start with. We knew we couldn't do them all.

Connecting with other Godly Players felt important and, where possible, I attended the Bristol network meetings and during lockdown joined Zoom meetings and a book club exploring *Teaching Godly Play* by Jerome Berryman. It was good to be inspired with new ideas, share progress, and listen to someone else telling a story. It was from this connection that I found out another church was no longer using their Godly Play resources and the opportunity arose for us to acquire some of their materials, that have helped increase the number of stories we can offer.

Once I was a little more confident, I began using Godly Play in church for preparation for Baptism and Holy Communion, discovering that families engaged with the wondering well. We also tried using it in our all-age services, doing a whole session with our congregation (that's another story) and also using the story in place of a Bible reading.

Continuing in Covid

Unfortunately, along with the rest of the world, Covid meant that our groups had to stop meeting. But Godly Play did not stop! I was challenged to do weekly sessions online including Facebook Live and YouTube. Although initially stressful with learning the technology, I loved being on the floor playing with the stories, while my husband wrestled with the camera and equipment. We chuckle at the memories.



I was delighted when we started to meet in person again, this time having more members in the team. Helen, our curate, and Sandie, our church warden did the full story telling course and began taking their turn as storytellers. This has also meant that we can now offer Godly Play for our church children and young people twice a month.

While our small room was adequate before Covid, we are quickly discovering our need for a bigger space as more and more children are joining us. We have a totally mixed group including children aged 4 all the way up to young people aged 13. The response time often makes us smile as we watch the children helping each other with access to the materials and working space.

After school



In Easter 2022 we were able to set up a Godly Play afterschool club with our local C of E Junior School and it ran for two terms. Whole families came and participated, without the preconception that children would not be so free to respond to the wondering questions with their parents accompanying them. Because parents engaged with the wondering, it enabled the children to do the same. We suspect, from the conversations afterwards, that the parents were quite emotionally connected.

Since January this year, we have run the Godly Play Club for children only, recognising that not all parents would be available to support the children who wanted to come along. It has been a joy to be a part of this, sharing the storytelling, the wondering and responding with my fellow colleagues and the children.

Our team is continuing to grow as we now have one of our parents seeing how much their children benefit from the sessions and wanting to be trained as a storyteller. It's exciting! And I still haven't had my year off!

Responses from some Year 7 and 8 students to a Godly Play session at school

I was able to reflect in a creative way

It taught you new lessons about God.

I liked the creative freedom which made it even more interesting.

It let you be free

Deep Roots

By Gill Ambrose



Gill Ambrose is Chair of the Trustees of Godly Play UK and was for some time a member of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission.

Imagine a tree standing tall and strong. Full of life, it is home to birds, small mammals, insects and a myriad of creatures too small to see. Its branches reach out, stretching high and wide, a powerful framework for the leaves and flowers that make it beautiful and assure its ongoing life. Yet what holds it there is unseen. The roots that provide a support structure, an anchor in the ground and a channel for

nurture. In fact, it is only when the tree dies and topples that we can see the awesome extent and strength of the structure that has been its life support.

Jesus' parable of the mustard seed describes a seed sprouting, to become a strong tree that is host to the birds of the air. But he omits any mention of the roots. Similarly, our Godly Play telling of the parable sees a green tree emerge from the storyteller's hand and the little birds arrive to populate it; but there is no room on our yellow circle for the roots.



Of course, parables are not science; they have a completely other purpose, as we shall see.

But I think we might usefully think of a tree, with its roots, as a kind of metaphor to examine what has enabled Godly Play to emerge and flourish, nurtured and tended, as we know, by Jerome Berryman, its founder.

Origins of Godly Play

Jerome didn't work alone. He writes movingly of how he worked in partnership with his late wife, Thea, and a quick read of the account of his work on the Godly Play Foundation website, <https://tinyurl.com/3f5b6k5r>, shows us what a great networker he has been, travelling not just across the USA, but across the world. And the list of Christian denominations with whom he consulted is also impressive. Here is the hidden root system of Godly Play.

Within a tree's root network are some particularly strong and substantial roots that act as anchors, securing it in the ground. Jerome Berryman has written extensively about Godly Play's development, and we need go no further than the first volume of *The Complete Guide to Godly Play* to read about this. In Chapter 6, 'Entering the Tradition', he describes the generations through which what he calls 'The Tradition' evolved. First, Maria Montessori (1870-1952), the Italian doctor turned educator, and then second, E. M. Standing (1887-1967), author of *The Child in the Church: Essays on the Religious*

Education of Children and the Training of Character. Peter Privett has written for us in this magazine about their work and wisdom, and so it is the work of the person described as the 'Third Generation' within the tradition, Sofia Cavalletti, that I would like to explore here.

Sofia Cavalletti

Like Maria Montessori, Sofia Cavalletti was born in Rome and it was there that her work was based, although she, too, travelled widely. She was profoundly influenced by Eugenio Zolli, briefly Chief Rabbi of Rome, who was hidden in churches and institutions throughout the Holocaust and then baptised in 1945. He subsequently taught about the Hebrew Bible at various Roman universities and Sofia Cavalletti became his student, receiving a doctorate in the study of the Hebrew Scriptures. Joining a Montessori school, she soon became celebrated as a teacher and researcher of religious education. It seems that her academic brilliance, alongside a humility that enabled her to listen to children, are the keys to the work, begun in the centre she established in Rome and pursued across many countries of the world, that resulted in the creation of her method, The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Her book, *The Religious Potential of the Child*, published in 1979 describes this work.



A method of signs

She called her approach 'a method of signs'. This is, of course, a translation from Italian, and in English we might find the word 'symbol' more appropriate (though 'sign' connects us to the word used in English translations of John's Gospel to describe revelations of Jesus' nature).

Parables



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Cavalletti's research persuaded her that in the context of Christian teaching with young children, it is helpful to start with the person of Christ and 'the central element of the proclamation we give to younger children consists in the parable-allegory of the Good Shepherd (John 10).'¹ We discover that he calls each of his sheep by name and they learn to know his voice. 'A thread of love binds the sheep always more closely to their shepherd.'² Cavalletti identifies different kinds of parables in the Gospels, but all have a common purpose, concealing what they want to teach, so as to invite meditation,

engagement with a mystery, exploration, seeking 'the revelation of a hidden reality'.³ This will mean using imagination and intuition. It invites play: playing with what we already know in order to know more, playing with story, playing with language, delving into mystery. This is active engagement, participation.

¹ Sofia Cavalletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child: The Description of an Experience with Children from Ages Three to Six*, translated by Patricia and Julie Coulter, 1983, Paulist Press, p.63

² Ibid, p.65

³ Ibid, p.161

Liturgy

Another aspect of the method of signs is the structure offered by liturgy. Some people are uncomfortable with this word, preferring to substitute 'worship', but I think there is a subtle difference: worship is the praise and devotion that we offer to God, whereas liturgy is perhaps the way that we do this – the structure of what we do. This will vary in different traditions, but there are accepted patterns and customs in all churches. Cavalletti's references are to her own tradition, Catholicism, and in learning from her writing and what it might mean for our own practice, we will need to determine how to reference our own tradition. That is big work and it needs partnership and co-operation.



In the chapter entitled 'Why Liturgy' in *The Religious Potential of the Child, 6-12 Years*, she begins by examining the value of celebration, 'moments of life in concentrated form', a vital expression of relationship. She notes that there are many descriptions of liturgy in Scripture, but she also suggests that it is within the liturgy, within worship, that Scripture is most authentically proclaimed. This is where we hear and examine the Bible together. We hear it time and again, as the circle of the church year turns, and the seasons determine what we read: Advent, Christmas; Lent and Easter; and the great green growing season. 'The biblical text is like a mine; over time, the depths of its contents are revealed. It is also like a river that departs from its source, and then continues to grow as tributaries flow into it.'⁴ And 'What the Bible and tradition proclaim needs to be completed through celebration.'⁵ What we read in the Bible becomes, if you like, visible in the worship we offer and the way that we express it.

Our present challenges

It is here that I want to reflect on the challenges of our contemporary situation. In Issue 4 of this magazine, in an article about 'Liturgy and Godly Play', I wrote confidently about the strong foundation offered by liturgy in faith nurture. But now I find the ground shifting, and it leaves me wondering. There is no doubt that the pandemic has had a significant impact on the life of the Church. Many weeks of confinement meant that we worshipped alone, or not at all. And while some found comfort and satisfaction in joining with others online, it was very evident that this did not help children very much, if at all. And the worship to which we returned, if indeed we did return, has often been sparser, pared down, less often and with fewer participants. Research by two academics at York St John University investigated the reduction in church attendance resulting from the pandemic. 'This was a sample of people who were generally very frequent churchgoers before the pandemic, so probably the least likely to make a permanent break because they got out of the habit of worshipping. They show us that, for some, the quality of worship is important, and they will vote with their feet, or screens, if it does not give them what they are looking for. The efforts that so many devote weekly to creating worship that can touch hearts and minds are important and worthy of support.'⁶

There have, of course, been new developments: the most obvious is probably outdoor church, in its varied forms. These tend to be more sporadic, less frequent, which reflects

⁴ Sofia Cavalletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child 6-12 years*, 2002, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Publications, p.60

⁵ Ibid, p.60

⁶ 'COVID-19 and Church-21 Survey to research the impact of lockdown on churchgoers' by Andrew Village and Leslie Francis, as reported in the *Church Times* 24.02.23

the hectic lives that we find ourselves living. Frequently they seem to be less structured, less patterned, less consistent.

New questions

Although distinct, and developed to serve different traditions and communities, Godly Play evolved via Sofia Cavalletti's work and draws deeply upon it. The shape of a Godly Play sessions mirrors the shape of traditional acts of worship; the curriculum and the way we offer it is shaped by the nature of the Church year. So as our relation to liturgical celebration adapts and changes, what does this mean for our practice and the way that we shape our programmes? What will it mean for a greater focus on home-based catechesis? Is this liturgical root still a strong anchor in the ground? Do we need to identify and tend new roots?

The Godly Play Foundation in the USA has recently won a substantial grant to launch a project called 'Everyday Godly Play' <https://tinyurl.com/y9mrhbnc>. This will be based on some research they were able to do last year with families, some of whom were part of church communities and some who were more on the edge. It looks as though this will be a big project and the prospect is exciting, though it is ongoing work and we do not yet know what it will entail.

What is gained and what is lost if we move the focus of Christian nurture from the community liturgical celebration to the home? Cavalletti's assertion that it is in worship, in community, that the Bible is most authentically proclaimed has a strong basis in historical experience and has probably held true until now, but maybe our current circumstances require a real rethinking. What will work for us now? On the other hand, isn't there a danger that faith encountered only in a household might be rather privatised. Is it not in wondering together, in challenging one another, that we challenge and are challenged, and faith grows? Maybe we need to talk to Jewish friends (www.torahgodlyplay.com/) for a perspective on home-based celebration, for they will speak from millennia of experience.

I have no answer to this, only questions. But I sense that in seeking answers we must build on the sure foundations that we already have, so that whatever we grow will have the capacity and the food to flourish.

Are you ready? Godly Play Scotland's Conference Portobello and Joppa Parish Church in Edinburgh 2 and 3 June 2023

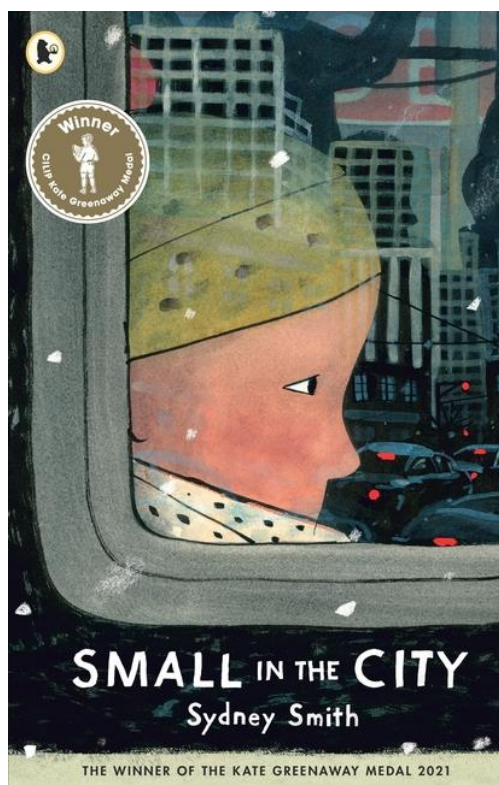
Andrew Sheldon, Godly Play Advocate for International Development, will be exploring what it means for Godly Play practitioners to be 'ready'. Alongside Andrew's talks, there will be workshops, story circles and a marketplace.

More at www.godlyplayscotland.co.uk
or on the Godly Play Scotland Facebook page.

Taking your wondering further...

Book reviews

For this issue of the magazine, we've selected two recent award-winning children's books for review. Both are written and illustrated by adults – and have been reviewed by adults – but each sets out to tell a story from a child's perspective. We wondered whether reading contemporary books for children can help us, as adult Godly Players, to better understand the world of the children we work with. We also wondered whether 'children's books' which appeal to us as adults necessarily appeal to children! Both these titles were judged by adult-only panels, while each year children are invited to vote on the same shortlisted books. While in 2021 adults and children agreed on October, October as the best work of children's fiction, Small in the City was not the children's favourite picture book.



Small in the city by Sydney Smith,
Walker Books, 2020.

Reviewed by Eona Bell

This picture book, which won the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal in 2021 and is aimed at children aged 4+, divided opinions among our adult reviewers! One person simply didn't like the illustrations, which are painted with broad brushstrokes in a largely wintery palette of greys and yellows. The story is told with few words, and much is left to our imagination as we follow a young child on a solo journey through a noisy, and sometimes frightening, urban landscape, on a quest which is revealed gradually but still leaves questions for us to ponder on the final page.

I liked the book for its evocation of a city viewed from the perspective of someone highly attuned to the sensory experiences of sight, sound, texture and smells. As the main character journeys through bright streets and dark alleys, meeting friendly faces

and scary dogs, I was reminded of the Godly Play parable of the Good Shepherd, and big themes emerge from the story of searching for a way home, of loyal friendship and care. Because there are so few words, this could be a fascinating book to share with a child, allowing space to talk about the pictures and wonder together about what is really going on.

October, October, by Katya Balen,
Bloomsbury, 2021

Reviewed by Andrea Harrison

There's perhaps a feeling, for many of us, that we would like to recapture what it was to be a child. We may have grown up to have children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews; we may have taught children and sat in circles with them; we may have vivid memories of our own childhood, but as adults our sense of what it is like to be a child is partial, at best. I think, however, that good children's literature can help us to glimpse the world of a child and help us to see it through their eyes.

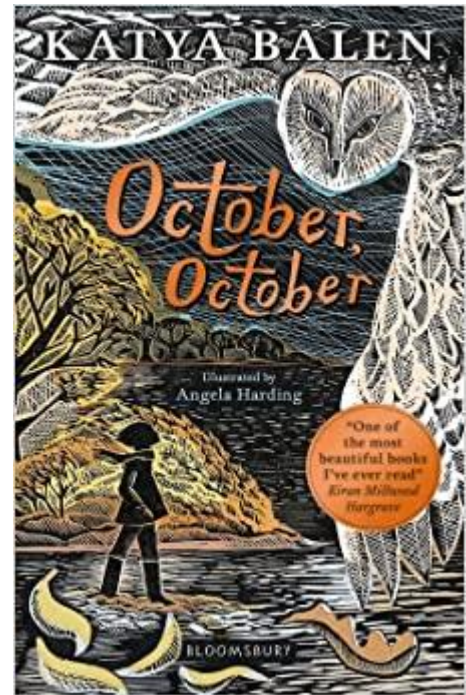
Last year the novel, *October, October* by Katya Balen won the Yoto Carnegie Prize. A deserved win, it is a beautiful, lyrical, insightful story that lets us into the world of eleven-year-old October. The story initially introduces us to October's home in the woods where she and her father live 'wild'. The descriptions are a feast for the senses so that you feel the cold of the lake; smell the woodsmoke; taste the tea 'that plumes its steam like the last breaths of the dragon whose bones are nestled in my treasure chest.' October's life, away from other children and disconnected from most adults, isn't just about managing the natural world around them, it is rich with story. She and her father tell each other stories; she makes up stories and reads any stories that she can lay her hands on.

Their life together is ripped apart by an accident that happens on her eleventh birthday and an angry October has to go and live in London with 'the woman who calls herself my mother'. She has to give up the small owl that she was caring for; be separated from her father who is in hospital and, for the first time, she has to go to school. It might be easy to describe October as neurodivergent and see the relationship with her estranged mother as a 'topical issue', but the novel is so much richer than this. Balen's descriptions of October's feelings surely resonate with us all. At school: 'Their voices bubble around me and there are questions and hisses and shouts and so much noise that it's a wall around me and I can't swim away because they're everywhere and there's nowhere to hide and I am trying to burst through the crowd and through the voices and through the noise.'

And
I
run.'

What saves October are new stories that, with help, she constructs whilst mud-larking on the Thames with her school friend Yusuf.

As an adult why read *October, October*, a novel aimed at 9-12 year olds? To see the world from a child's viewpoint certainly but actually because it's a really lovely read and has the most beautiful cover and illustrations by Angela Harding!



The Feast

A chance to meet ... Andrew Sheldon



Andrew is the Godly Play Advocate for International Development. He describes his introduction to Godly Play in this way: 'It was love at first sight!' Andrew immediately recognized the value of this innovative program and became an early advocate, promoting it in his roles as both priest and professor in the Diocese of Toronto. He was trained as a storyteller in 2006 and became an accredited trainer in 2009, assuming his present role in 2015. Andrew provides support to both the global community, as well as its constituent parts, made up of regional and national Godly Play associations. He is privileged to travel the world to provide training to storytellers and trainers, speak at Godly Play conferences or gatherings, or to engage in

the 'business' of Godly Play. But perhaps his greatest delight is the weekly opportunity to get on the floor with children for stories and wondering.

Godly Play starts with children – so tell us about when you were a child

Sadly, I must say that my childhood was not all that happy. There were certainly periods when I felt settled and content but invariably these were interrupted by a move to a new location where I had to start all over again. (I went to six elementary schools in two countries, and three high schools.) Needless to say, the capacity to build intimate relationships was significantly impaired and I am sure my nascent spirituality suffered because of it. In addition, I was raised in a church that was not so much interested in nurturing my spirituality as it was, quite literally, scaring the hell out of me! And, channelling Wordsworth, the child being the parent of the adult meant I was well into my adult years before I came to peace around being in a relationship with a loving, gracious God. Nonetheless it would be wrong to suggest my childhood was without any redeeming features. I remember long days spent playing in the outdoors, the delight of summer camp with peers, being active in competitive sport, two or three deep friendships, and trips across the pond to reconnect with family in England.

Tell us a bit about your family

I am married to Amy Crawford, and we have four children between us. They live in both the U.S. and Canada and travel is usually involved if we want to visit them or our six grandchildren. But FaceTime and Zoom are also a significant help in that respect!

How did you first come across Godly Play?

Amy was an early practitioner of Godly Play having been trained by Jerome Berryman in the mid-1990s. Some years later we met as part of a programme at Auburn Seminary in New York. As well as visiting New York, participants were also encouraged, and funded, to visit each other to observe the work we were all doing in continuing education for ministry. I visited Amy and another colleague at the seminary in Kansas City where they worked. One afternoon Amy invited me to travel with her to the church where she volunteered in children's ministry. She took me into this lovely space, sat me on the floor, and told me the Godly Play story of The Great Family. I fell in love with Godly Play. I also fell in love with Amy, and the rest is history! When we were married Amy moved to

Toronto and began to build what in time became Godly Play Canada. I was committed to helping her and in time became a storyteller, trainer, Board Member, and then Advocate for International Development.

Why do you think Godly Play makes sense?

The simplest answer I can give is that it makes sense because it works. Godly Play claims to be an imaginative method for the faith formation and spiritual nurture of children. From observing Godly Play in my own parishes, from hearing numerous stories from others, and from my own experience in travelling the world, I can attest to the fact that children and adults can name and evidence how Godly Play has deepened their biblical and ecclesiastical knowledge, has given them a rich vocabulary of religious language, and enriched their spiritual selves.

Godly Play also makes sense because in taking childhood spirituality seriously it is also taking Jesus seriously. I don't believe Jesus was engaging in hyperbole or speaking metaphorically when he said that unless one became like a child one could not enter the kingdom of heaven. Before Jesus 'took' the bread and wine we are told that he 'took' a child, placed the child in the midst of the community and uttered those words. How is it that the one 'taking' on Jesus' part has led to the central act by which Christians gather together, the Holy Eucharist, whereas the other 'taking' has only led to minimising and marginalisation? How is that the one 'taking' on Jesus' part has led us to giving the location where such ritual actions occur the best location and the finest accessories whereas the other 'taking' has been relegated to the church basement? Godly Play makes sense because it follows where Jesus has led.

Do you enjoy what you do?

Very much so! Now, having said that, my work is like that of many. There are good days with enjoyable tasks, and then there are less good days with less enjoyable tasks. But I am aware of my great privilege in connecting with the Godly Play circle throughout the globe. As such, the most enjoyable aspect of my work is the many friendships I have been afforded through these connections. I love the travel. I love visiting with Godly Play folk in their homes, and schools, and churches. I love getting on the floor and telling stories. And above all I am delighted to see how the combined efforts of so many dedicated people have come together to form this global consensus about what Godly Play is and why it matters. That is what is ultimately most fulfilling. And so, thank you Jerome Berryman! Thank you for this wonderful gift that is Godly Play. And thank you for this wonderful privilege: that I can contribute my piece in bringing this gift to the world.

As the world changes post pandemic, what do you think might be Godly Play's potential?

During the pandemic we learned how to do Godly Play in new ways. And post-pandemic we are learning that some of those new ways could and should become part of our practice going forward. But I also believe that Godly Play has a crucial role in remedying something that may have been lost due to the pandemic. And that is in bringing people together. One of the key symbols of Godly Play is the circle. And that circle is embodied when children, and adults gather in physical proximity to one another to hear stories, wonder, do their work, feast, and bless. This must be done safely of course, but in a world where children and adults are increasingly isolated, hunkered down in front of screens, or afraid of human contact, I do believe that the Godly Play circle has the potential to invite all persons into a meaningful and nurturing community.

Bite-sized news

Godly Play UK trainers and trustees meet again in ‘the world we are coming to know’.

Trainers and trustees of Godly Play UK met for two days in October 2022 at High Leigh Conference Centre in Hertfordshire, to reflect on where we are as an organisation and where we might be heading as our communities emerge from the Covid lockdowns. Many of us have experienced huge upheavals over the past few years – personally, professionally and in our churches – and it seemed timely to gather together, in a hybrid form (some of us joined the meeting via Zoom while others were on site) to do this work. High Leigh is on a beautiful site with large lawns and woodland walks, and it was a treat for us to stay in comfortable accommodation with excellent meals provided.

We were invited to prepare for the meeting by talking with one other participant about ‘the world we are coming to know’ – a world which has changed, but in which we remain committed to our calling to nurture the spirituality of children and train others to use Godly Play. What impacts had we observed in churches and society more generally, post-pandemic? What had changed, and what stayed the same for Godly Play? What specific challenges did Godly Play UK need to address? And what could each of us bring to address these challenges?

Working in small groups, we recognised the weariness and sadness that many in the Godly Play community have been feeling, with children’s groups, and relationships with schools and local communities ending so abruptly when Covid arrived, and volunteers and co-workers, for various reasons, not returning after the lockdowns. We recognised a need to acknowledge feelings of loss, while also being thankful for the opportunities which arose to explore new ways of working – not least the online delivery of Introductions to Godly Play which have given people around the country a first experience of the Godly Play process and stories. More people need to experience Godly Play for themselves!

Development plans

With four new trainers joining the team in the past year, we were able to form new working groups to develop the work of Godly Play UK by:

- [Planning a national conference for 2024](#)
- [Reviewing the structure and delivery of our training, identifying the different ‘ways into Godly Play’ and supporting the continuing development of practitioners](#)
- [Setting up local lending libraries of Godly Play material.](#)

Trainers were invited to sign a mutual agreement with the Godly Play UK Trust, setting out clearly the responsibilities and expectations of the freelance trainers, as we work together to nurture and protect the integrity of the Godly Play method.

Lead trainers

A group of freelancers takes some co-ordinating! Since the charity was formed, three trainers have led this work. We are profoundly grateful to Rebecca Nye, Rachel Bainton and Peter Privett who have each in turn served as Lead Trainer. We have discovered that this vital role has demanded more than any one person can or should be expected to bear alone, and we agreed it should now be shared between a small group of Trainers

who will work collaboratively, making the task more manageable and facilitating succession planning. They will be known as the Lead Trainer Group.

Rebecca Nye

Rebecca initiated the research and work that brought Godly Play to birth in the UK about twenty years ago. Her achievement is a legacy which we treasure and must nurture carefully. She has now stepped down from being an active trainer, but we were delighted that she could join the meeting via Zoom, to receive the thanks of the trustees and trainers and be shown gifts of a tree and gardening vouchers which we later delivered to her garden.

Chwarae a Chredu – the launch of the Welsh language resource for Godly Play

Aled Davies, Cyfarwyddwr/Director
Cyngor Ysgolion Sul / Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair

On a cold and blustery evening at the end of October 2022, people gathered together in the Cathedral in Bangor for the launch of 'Chwarae a Chredu', which is now the official and recognised Welsh title for the Godly Play resources. Adapted by Dr Cass Meurig from the resources written by Jerome Berryman, a substantial file of Welsh resources was published, which includes all the scripts from four of the Godly Play titles. People came together from different churches across north Wales to discover more about Godly Play and participate in a session led by Cass. She also gave a presentation on how to run a session and shared some of the thinking behind the scheme. It was also good to welcome Andrew Sheldon from Toronto in Canada, who is a director of the Godly Play Foundation and who oversees this work across the world. Cass Meurig had been busy over several years translating the Godly Play resources into Welsh, and in October it was great to see this work come together in the publishing of the file, and therefore making Godly Play accessible to all Welsh language congregations who wanted to develop a group within their church. Aled Davies from the Welsh Sunday School Council and the publishing house Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair thanked Cass for her work, and formally launched the material through a presentation of Welsh copies to Cass and Andrew.



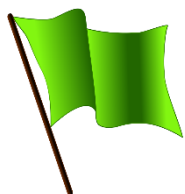
In response, Cass Meurig said: 'I fell in love with the method Godly Play about 12 years ago and since that I have used it in so many different contexts. At the moment I use it in an after-school club in Christ Church, Bala, in all-age Bible study, and as a family resource. I have also taken resources with me to schools and used it in a Religious Education setting. Although it is aimed at children, it also appeals to people of all ages. I have realised that Godly Play is suitable for Sunday School, after-school clubs, and Bible studies with children.'

For more information about Chwarae a Chredu and Godly Play in Wales please contact CassMeurigThomas@cinw.org.uk.

There is also a three-day training course planned for 13-15 July 2023 in Llandudno. Details and booking at www.godlyplay.uk/events/three-day-core-training-llandudno/

Sending out

Events, training opportunities and courses



We are up and running once again, with lots to offer and some new possibilities. Have a look, and tell others!

Online Introduction to Godly Play

Thursdays 20 April to 11 May 10 – 11.30 a.m.

Trainers: Alison Summerskill and Brenton Prigge

Run over 4 x 90-minute sessions, each a week apart. Over the four sessions participants encounter the basics of Godly Play and experience three different types of Godly Play story. The cost is £50 and booking is online.

www.godlyplay.uk/events/online-introduction-to-godly-play-13/

To book by email contact admin@godlyplay.uk



In-person Introduction to Godly Play: Merseyside

Saturday 22 April 2023, 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Trainer: Richard Knott

A whole day, face-to-face Introduction to Godly Play at Peasley Cross United Reformed Church, 4 Beaufort Street, St Helens WA9 3BE

To book, please contact [Steven Mitchell](mailto:Steven.Mitchell@peasleycross.org).

Spiritual Retreat: Shepherds Dene, Northumberland

28 April 2023 (starting at 4 p.m.) – 30 April 2023

Trainers: Mary Cooper, Richard Knott and Alison Summerskill

Time and space to reflect and explore through story, wondering, and silence, with the opportunity to respond through creative resources and in the grounds and the rolling countryside. [Shepherds Dene](https://www.shepherdsdene.co.uk/) is an outstanding example of 'Arts and Crafts' architecture, refurbished in the last few years. It is 1 mile from Riding Mill station, 30 minutes from Newcastle Central. Taxis or lifts can be arranged from the station if you ask in advance. Extra nights' accommodation available.



The total cost of the retreat is £290. Booking www.godlyplay.uk/events/spiritual-retreat-shepherds-dene-northumberland/

Three-day Core Training

Three-day core courses are led by members of the College of Trainers of Godly Play UK. This training enables you to use the Godly Play method and understand its principles. The training follows an action/reflection model of learning, through hands-on experience and reflection, rather than lectures. Costs vary depending on whether the course is residential or not. Places are still available on all these courses.

GLOUCESTER St Mary de Crypt Church
14-16 May 2023; 9.30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Trainers: Sian Hancock and Alison Summerskill
£325 including lunch each day
Booking: www.godlyplay.uk/events/three-day-core-training-gloucester/

WALES Llandudno
Loreto Spirituality Centre, LL30 2EL
13-15 July 2023; 9.15 a.m. - 6.30 p.m.
Trainers: Cass Meurig and Diana Williams
£460 Residential, including two nights' accommodation
Booking: www.godlyplay.uk/events/three-day-core-training-llandudno/

LANCASHIRE 28 - 30 September 2023
More details soon, on the website
www.godlyplay.uk

NORTH TYNESIDE
St Mary's Church, Monkseaton
17-19 October 2023; 9.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Trainers: Mary Cooper and Susie Steel
£325 includes lunches and refreshments
Booking: www.godlyplay.uk/events/three-day-core-training-north-tyneside/

OXFORD Ripon College, Cuddesdon
21-23 October 2023; 9.15 a.m. - 6.30 p.m.
Trainers: Eona Bell and Brenton Prigge
Residential £460 Non-residential £325
Booking: www.godlyplay.uk/events/three-day-core-training-ripon-college-cuddesdon-2/

Making materials day St Andrew's Church, Rugby

Saturday 13 May 2023 10.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m.

Trainers: Peter Privett, Richard Knott, Alison Summerskill

We will supply our expertise, basic tools and the materials you need to make a story. To ensure we have these ready for you, advance booking is essential.

Cost £12 includes lunch and refreshments, plus a charge for the materials you use.

Booking: www.godlyplay.uk/events/making-materials-day-rugby/ Let us know what you would like to make using the extra form [here](#)

Find fuller details and more information on all these events at
www.godlyplay.uk

Enquiries to admin@godlyplay.uk

Associates of Godly Play UK support the work of Godly Play trainers in England and Wales. Associate membership offers the chance to be part of our community and to share our vision in a supportive and meaningful way. We welcome membership from individuals, churches, and organisations from the UK and abroad. New members can join using the direct debit form here:

<https://www.godlyplay.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Godly-Play-UK-Assoates-app-form-and-direct-debit-form-Oct-2020.pdf>

We also welcome online giving via our website:

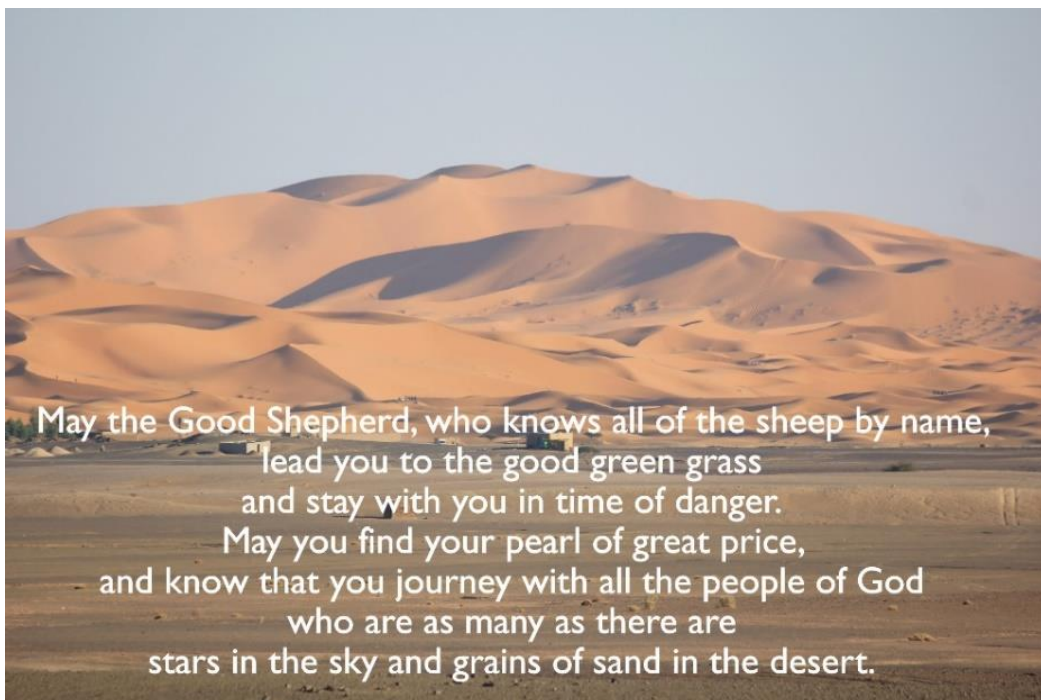
<https://giving.give-star.com/online/godly-play-uk/godly-play-uk>



www.godlyplay.uk

Charity No. 1116846

*A Christian movement centred on childhood spirituality
providing training to transform thinking and practice for the whole of life*



This issue was devised and edited by Eona Bell, Gill Ambrose, Peter Privett and Judy Yeomans.

Copyright © Godly Play UK 2023 *Not to be reproduced without permission.*