

The Holy Family

The Holy Family holds significance for the entire cycle of Godly Play lessons—and the Church year. The Holy Family is the *matrix*—the Latin word for womb—out of which new life comes. Christ's incarnation changes everything. Most especially, it changes the way we understand ourselves, each other, the Creator and the created world around us.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustrations below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today's Godly Play presentation. Invite your child to respond to the drawings. You might say, for example:

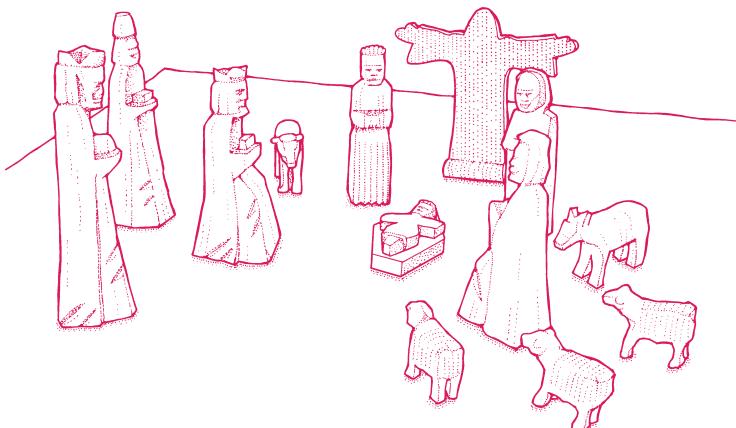
- I wonder what you can tell me about these pictures?
- I wonder what these pictures have to do with today's story?

Just listen. This is *not* a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or

her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to *listen*. Listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today's presentation offered below. Whether you read the lesson or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today's lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the presentation can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying "Amen."

The Presentation



This is the Holy Family.

This is the Christ Child. He is holding out his arms to give you a hug. (Point to each figure as you talk about it.)

Here is the Mother Mary. Here is the father, Joseph. Here is the donkey that Mary rode when she and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be counted by the Roman soldiers. Mary was about to have a baby, so it was hard for her to walk.

Wondering

● **I wonder** what part of the Holy Family you like best?

● **I wonder** what part of the Holy Family is the most important part?

● **I wonder** if there is any of the Holy Family we can leave out and still have all we need?

Sometimes she rode on the donkey. It is also hard to ride on a donkey when you are about to have a baby. Sometimes she got down and walked.

Here is the cow that was in the stable when the baby was born. She was surprised to find a baby in the feed box, the manger, where she usually found her breakfast.

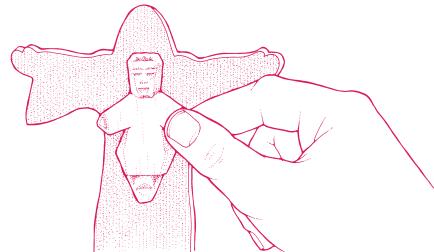
Here is a shepherd who saw the great light in the sky at night. Here are some of the sheep.

When the shepherds saw the light in the darkness, they were afraid. Then they heard singing. The angels sang that they came to bring peace on earth and good will to all people. The shepherds were to go to Bethlehem, and they did.

Here are the three magi, the wise ones. One day they saw the wild star. They knew where all the stars were supposed to be in the sky, but this star moved. They were curious and followed it. It led them to the stable where the Christ Child was.

The wise ones brought with them gifts for the Christ Child: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Here is the little baby reaching out to give you a hug. He grew up to be a man...and died on the cross. That is very sad, but it is also wonderful, in an Easter kind of way.



Now he can reach out and give the whole world a hug. He is not just back then, in this place or that place. He is everywhere, and in every time.

Godly Play Why Godly Play? (Part I)

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. In this and the next few Parent Pages, we list several of the many reasons why we believe in and use Godly Play in our church:

■ Godly Play reminds us of the sacredness of the everyday things of the world, such as bread, wine, candles, oil, wood, linens, and clay. Godly Play teaches a sacramental worldview in a society that is so often utilitarian and materialistic.

■ Godly Play teaches children and adults that being quiet and deliberate about their work can be as satisfying as being noisy, busy and pushy, and delivers this counter-cultural message in a comforting and consistent way.

■ Godly Play allows children to work with materials that engage all the senses in a safe, stimulating environment. In this way, Godly Play combines and integrates the two primary gateways to knowing for young children—language (the verbal system) and play (the nonverbal system).