



Feed My Sheep

Support for Formation Ministry
in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh

October 2013 Joyce Donadee & Lisa Brown, Editors (jdjdonadee@gmail.com & lcbrown@stpaulspgh.org)

Godly Play... Spoken Here!

A child arrives. An adult seated in a low chair in the doorway, says, "Good Morning" with a welcoming smile and invites the child to join the circle of children. In the center are some wooden figures and a piece of colored felt. The person telling the story picks up a small figure and shows it to the listening children saying, "*This is the Christ Child. He is holding out his arms to give you a hug.*"

This is what a child experiences in a Sunday school where Godly Play is "spoken." Godly Play feels more like worship than it does like school. Godly Play is a discovery model of learning that allows children to experience God in a rich learning environment using beautiful materials to share stories from the bible and to describe the Liturgy of the Church. The children then interact with the materials of the story using all of their senses and the result is that they are able to deeply enter into the reality of God.

Godly Play uses the Montessori methodology of teaching to engage the child and guide the child to a deeper understanding of God. The curriculum was designed over four decades by Jerome Berryman, an Episcopal priest and is known the world over. He has written numerous articles and books. *Godly Play, An Imaginative Approach to Religious Education; 1991, Augsburg* is an introduction to Godly Play, his life work.

If you are excited by the possibility of bringing Godly Play to your parish, and/or to get more information about a rare opportunity to attend a Godly Play Core Training here in the Diocese of Pittsburgh!!!, please contact the following people (Joyce Donadee jdjdonadee@gmail.com or Lorena Ringle lorena.ringle@christchurchnorthhills.org. To discover more on your own, visit the Godly Play website: <http://www.godlyplayfoundation.org/newsite/Main.php>

Diocese of Pittsburgh Hosts Godly Play Training Become a Certified Godly Play Storyteller!

Over the course of three days, participants experience all aspects of the Godly Play method and begin to become fluent in the Godly Play core stories and lessons. This is an exciting way for you to discover and learn how to bring this wonderful experience to the children of your parish!

WHEN: Friday evening, February 21,
Saturday Feb. 22 and Sunday afternoon

WHERE: Christ Episcopal Church North Hills

COST: \$95 for the first five people from our Diocese who register. All others will pay \$295. The cost covers the training, three meals and materials. To register go to the [Godly Play.org](http://www.godlyplay.org) website.

Safeguarding God's Children Online Coming Soon

Watch for details of this program in a future edition of *Grace Happens!*

The Church Pension Group and its affiliate companies offer this online training to supplement and broaden the child abuse awareness and prevention education.

Safeguarding Online has been developed in response to the requests from Episcopal Church clergy and lay leaders for more flexible, easy-to-access, and cost effective training. *Safeguarding Online* provides training in short, focused courses that can normally be completed in 30-45 minutes. These courses can be taken from any location where a high speed Internet connection is available.

What is happening in YOUR parish as far children, youth or families are concerned? Please email Lisa Brown (lcbrown@stpaulspgh.org) or Joyce Donadee (jdjdonadee@gmail.com) - we would love to hear from you!

Forma Conference, Alexandria, Virginia



January 22, 23, 24 2014

Join others from our Diocese and attend this spiritually uplifting and idea-rich conference which is reached with an easy drive from Pittsburgh.

This conference is for anyone who is starting out in Christian education ministry as a children or youth ministry leader or as an adult education leader. If vestry members or rectors want to support your Sunday schools, youth groups, adult education forums, and Diocesan camp leaders, offer to send your leaders who are in this ministry to the Forma Conference. It is an investment in the programs in your parish. The Diocese of Pittsburgh's Children's Ministry Team can help to financially support your attendance at this event.

A small number of people in our Diocese have attended the Forma Convention in the past when it was across the country but now it is not far from Pittsburgh. Our participants and have brought back many ideas that work with the families and children of today.

If we could get a group of people to go from the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, that would be fun! If you have questions or want to know who else is going, please contact Joyce Donadee. (jdjdonadee@gmail.com) Let her know if you are going so that we can give participants each other's contact information. The website for forma is <http://episcoforma.org/> The facebook page is forma and the Pinterest board for forma is Episcoforma.

Vacation Bible School at

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Homestead

St. Matthew's opened its doors to the children of the Homestead community for its annual VBS, August 5 thru 9 from 4:30 to 8:30. Our theme was "Hip-hop Hope – Jesus Makes Me Glad" published by Abington Press and was very appropriate for our children.

Day 1: Glad to Worship: The people of God rejoice when the foundation of the temple is laid. (Ezra 3:10-13).

Day 2: Glad to Give Thanks: The psalmist gives thanks all day long because he sees God working in every situation (Psalm 92:1-4).

Day 3: Glad Teachings: Jesus teaches that true happiness comes from God, even in the midst of hopelessness (Matthew 5:3-12).

Day 4: Glad for Salvation: Zacchaeus was happy to return stolen money, welcome Jesus and receive salvation (Luke 19:1-10).

Day 5: Always Glad: Paul challenges people to be joyful by focusing on excellence (Philippians 4:4-9)

The 23 children who attended were between the ages of 4 and 12 years-old and were divided into three age groups for instruction: 4-6, 7-9, 10-12. Each day included a lesson, a craft, music and dance, games, prayer and dinner. Hugs

were the order of each day both for the children and from the children. At the end of each day, each child went home with a sack breakfast and lunch for the following day. Crafts included: tie-dye shirts, prayer and praise boxes, VBS bracelets with each colored bead having a meaning, i.e., God created the earth and the trees (green), Jesus blood was shed for us (red), VBS magnets and "I Luv VBS" "stained" glass windows. On Friday, the final day, the children were given a "string-bag type" backpack filled with school supplies – pencils, markers, tablets, crayons, pens, glue sticks, scissors, etc. Their smiles upon receiving them made our hearts glad.

We were staffed by eight women and three teens/college students from our small congregation. In addition I had five teen volunteers from my Bethel Park High School Forensic Team (speech and debate).

We at St. Matthew's have always had a heart for children. "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.'" (KJV) Luke 18:16). With our children's ministry to the neighborhood we believe that this is one way of the many ways that we are committed to our mission statement: Bridging the gaps in our community and beyond as we celebrate Jesus, who has bridged the ultimate gap, by living in right relationship with: God, by looking up; Ourselves, by looking in; and Our neighbor, by looking out..

VBS is only one of several activities or events that we have throughout the year for them. Future activities are in the works: a Halloween party and a "Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus" party. Both of these were popular with the children last year.

As a side note: While the children are the focus of these ministries, the families are happy to have their children attend as we provide a safe, healthy, and happy environment for their children. Since a part of our teaching also includes promoting simple hygiene habits as well as learning about nutrition and healthy eating, we feel that we are also benefitting the entire families.

Yummy Fun!

October and November are the months that put "pumpkin" in the spotlight. Below is a recipe that is very child-friendly. Most children like to help in the kitchen. They can make this in church to serve at coffee hour. Here is a link to story and activity that children might enjoy.

http://www.dltk-bible.com/how_a_christian_is_like_a_pumpki.htm

Pumpkin Dip

1 can (15 oz.) of pumpkin
1 box (5 oz.) of vanilla instant pudding
1 small container of Cool Whip
1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
Mix pumpkin, pumpkin pie spice, and pudding mix. Fold in Cool Whip. Chill. Serve with graham crackers, vanilla wafers or apple slices.
Sugar-free pudding and "lite" cool whip can be used.