

Thoughts on Story Materials for Faith & Play and Godly Play

For ideas on how to be practical, creative and imaginative when making story materials, read on!

Collecting materials and fashioning them into items that help us to tell the Godly Play and Faith & Play stories is another way that we really get to know the story deeply. We hope the pictures of story materials (found with the story scripts) will be an inspiration. *Certainly, they are not the only way that one of these stories can be made.* Remember, children have wonderful imaginations! The power of the stories is in the words, the faith that you bring to the story, and the love and trust that you share with your listeners, not specific figures and props.

Godly Play and Faith & Play stories all use an **underlay** – some kind of surface that the story materials are put on, where the story is told. The underlay defines the space of the story. Many Godly Play stories from the Old Testament use a “piece of the desert” (a shallow container or bag of sand), and other stories in both Godly Play and Faith & Play use an underlay that is a piece of cloth. *There are many options for finding these materials.* Felt is not required for underlays; other fabrics in the simple colors the story designates are fine. Use fabric that you have — it could be a towel, scarf, or tablecloth that will spread out smoothly. You could also have a special piece of fabric that is the underlay for all your stories, that designates that this is a Godly Play or Faith & Play story.

People figures are used in many stories. For Godly Play “Sacred Stories” (from the Old Testament of the Bible) that are told in sand (using a desert box or desert bag) three-dimensional figures are used. These can be clothes pins, sticks, or other “figures” that can stand up in the sand. For parables, the figures are two-dimensional and can be made of paper, wood or other materials, but lay flat on the underlay during the story. In Faith & Play stories, the figures are three-dimensional, and will need to be able to stand on the underlay. Stones or wood blocks can symbolize people. Choose different sizes so they can illustrate adults and children. Different colors send the message that people of all different skin colors are welcome in a Friends Church or Meeting.

Materials from nature or ordinary household items can serve. Focus on simplicity of form and image in the items you choose. Contain the story pieces in a basket or small box or even a cloth bag so that as you tell the story you can reveal one piece at a time.

If you are telling a story to a very large group, consider putting a blanket over a clothesline and make the story come to life on the vertical surface rather than flat on the floor or a table. Use larger figures and pictures so everyone can see them. Attach them with safety pins.