Reflecting on Godly Play

by Adam Reiser

Saint Mark's Godly Play program benefits not only the children it serves, but also its adult facilitators. Over the past year as a new storyteller, I have found Godly Play to be a profound experience that weaves together threads from my life in unexpectedly meaningful ways.

One such thread is my own formation in the Episcopal Church. I was raised Episcopalian, and my mother—herself a Sunday school teacher—instilled in me a love of stories and an intuitive understanding of many of the same values that underlie Godly Play; thus, returning in this role is both new and deeply familiar.

Another thread is creative wonder. I've taught improv theater to children and teens through the City of Redmond and I mentor young actors at Frighttown Eastside, a community-run haunted house. Both activities use the power of story to create the sense that anything is—just for a moment—possible. It is an experience that can open us up to the sacred, even in a secular space.

While the stories we tell in Godly Play are not improvised, the wondering questions that follow certainly are. These moments are brief and delicate, as the sacredness of the story lingers. The storyteller's words, posture, and tone all matter—are we inviting true reflection, or mere participation? Wondering takes place best when the storyteller is truly wondering as well.

The final thread is the presence of the sacred. In my role as a Eucharistic Visitor, I'm continually learning how to create space for reverence. In Godly Play, the focus is not a physical sacrament, but a story learned by heart and offered with care and trust.