Blocks, Dress-ups and Make Believe: The Power of Play in the Faith Formation of Young Children

Presented by Dr. Shauna Adams



What is play?

• Jot down your definition.

Share it with the person next to you.
How do your definitions compare?

What images of play came to mind?













Play is present in all cultures





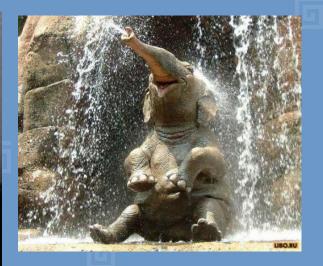




...and many species













Some might say that play is one of God's gifts to childhood













So what is play?

- Play places children in the present
- It is fun
- It is usually active, flexible and allows children to make choices
- It often includes cool stuff
- It is often social and builds language
- It can be teacher-directed but is usually most effective when child-directed

So what happened....

- We become adults and "poof" the power of play is lost.
- We keep looking for the "real" learning experience.





<u>90 Second Lecture</u>



What does this mean for faith formation for young children?

What we know-

- That play is how young children learn best.
- That positive emotions grow the brain.
- That strong emotional memories last a lifetime.
- Shouldn't we be helping young children lay a strong foundation for faith formation?
- Play is how we can achieve this.

Why is using play as a teaching strategy so hard?

- Watch this video. Are the children playing? (see the next slide)
- <u>The Apple Experiment</u>



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Child-Directed What child-directed activities could Miss Lucy include in her environment?

What child-directed play activities could be added?



Haim Ginott

Children are like wet cement.
 Everything that falls on them makes an impression.



Ultimately the impression that we must leave is one that

- Allows them to feel God's love in a respectful classroom environment
- Allows them learn about God's love by making connections to their own lives.
- Creates a sense of awe and wonder about the gifts that God has given us.



Go to the link www.go.udayton.edu/earlylearning

Email me at sadams1@udayton.edu

I will be at the RCL Benziger Booth following this presentation if you would like to speak with me individually

Theory and Research Base

- Copple, C. & Bredekamp, S. (2009). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood.programs serving children from birth through age 8. (3rd ed.)Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
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- Shonkoff, J.P., & Phillips, D.A. (Eds). (2000). From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development National Academies' Press. Retrieved from http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9824.html
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