

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

Presented by
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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.



We created this video to inspire a different way of thinking about play

- 90 Second Lecture



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)
- [The Apple Experiment](#)



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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.

To receive this presentation

Go to the link

www.go.udayton.edu/earlylearning

Email me at

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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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Research Base

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- Ramey, C.T. & Ramey, S.L. (2006). *Early learning and school readiness: Can early intervention make a difference?* In N.F. Watt, C.C. Ayoub, R.H. Bradley, J.E. Puma, & W.A. Lebeouf (Eds.). The crisis in youth mental health: Critical issues and effective programs: Vol. 4 Early intervention programs and policies (pp.291-317). Westport: Praeger Press.
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- Thompson, R. A. (2008), *Connecting Neurons, Concepts, and People: Brain Development and Its Implications: Preschool Policy Brief Issue 17* New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers Graduate School of Education. Retrieved from <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/17.pdf>