



# Playing in the Light: Godly Play®/Faith & Play™ Training for Quakers with Melinda Wenner Bradley



**Ben Lomond Quaker Center**  
**August 29 - September 1, 2025**

*Watch Ben Lomond and Faith & Play Stories websites for registration and info!*

This experiential approach to religious education can transform your program for children and nurture intergenerational spiritual community. Learn and practice a method of storytelling grounded in deep respect for children, that explores the existential limits of their lives through wonder, play, and stories from the Bible and Quaker faith and practice. Discussions include:

- nurturing the spirituality of children
- exploring the “unspoken” lessons of spaces and methodology
- supporting children and families in the meeting community
- working with multiage groups and diverse needs
- weaving Godly Play/Faith & Play stories into a children’s program with other religious education resources available to Friends.

### **Playing in the Light Testimonials from Friends:**

“I remember with gratitude our weekend Playing in the Light training. I think all of us experienced that as a grace filled time with much deep sharing and many openings that are continuing.”

“I have used Godly Play a lot. It has been a wonderful tool for me. I think back to the training workshop as a really deep time of learning and growing.”

“The Playing in the Light training has produced a critical mass of Friends who are lending their time and talent to First Day School. As a result, families are coming and, pleased with what they find, are returning.”

**Melinda Wenner Bradley** is a licensed Godly Play Trainer and the Director of Communications and Training for Faith & Play Stories. A co-author and editor of the Faith & Play publication, since 2005 she has been sharing Godly Play and Faith & Play stories in children's programs, intergenerational worship, school classrooms, teacher workshops, and international gatherings of Friends. Her teaching ministry weaves together interests in children’s spiritual lives, program development, and support for families and teachers in faith communities and schools. Melinda believes we need to shift religious formation away from scholastic models and toward experiential, belonging-focused ways of being with children and inviting them into spiritual community with all ages. The Godly Play method and stories, and for Friends the Faith & Play stories, are vital resources for making that change and nurturing growth in Quaker communities. Melinda holds a MA in Ministry and Leadership from Lancaster Theological Seminary.

# Godly Play® and Faith & Play™

Pairing Godly Play and Faith & Play stories gives children a basic knowledge of a set of core biblical stories, Quaker faith and practice, and the experience and witness of faithful Friends of the past. Each participant hears and responds to the stories in age appropriate ways, making the method ideal for meetings with grade-level classrooms as well as for small meetings where children are in a multi-age religious education program. Although the method clearly involves telling stories in a contemplative and highly visual manner, it is much more. It is creating a safe and welcoming environment that is conducive to wonder and worship. It is building intentional community. It is prayer. It is doing personal work that grows out of collective responses to stories and active wondering with others. It is nurture and blessing.

Godly Play and Faith & Play acknowledge that God is active in children's lives long before they enter the religious education classroom. Both assume that even very young children already have spiritual lives. Both resources:

- are designed for children 3 to 12, but can also be used with teens and adults, and in multigenerational settings,
- are Montessori-inspired and experiential,
- use open ended questions that invite wonder and reflection,
- provide venues for exploring children's experience of God (or the great mystery, the spirit, the divine),
- give children images and language for talking about this experience and practice using this language in community,
- present a collection of stories about other people who have encountered the divine and been shaped or informed by these encounters, and
- are designed to be used with a particular method that requires training to be used effectively.

**Godly Play** was created by Rev. Dr. Jerome Berryman and his wife Thea Berryman.

Its origins are in the Episcopal Church, although its reach today is ecumenical. **Friends use this resource and method to explore stories from the Bible.** Bible material is presented in a way that invites children to experientially find themselves in the stories and makes space for continuous revealing of Truth. This helps many Friends to see this as a welcoming and Quaker-friendly way to approach stories in the Bible.

**Faith & Play is for teaching about Quaker faith, practice and witness.** *Play* is children's practice, hence the name Faith & Play deriving from the title *Faith and Practice*. Faith & Play was created as a Quaker supplement to Godly Play, and is intended for the storyteller trained in the Godly Play method.

"Playing in the Light" training to learn how to use these resources are available for Friends through Faith & Play Stories, Inc. Learn more at: [quakerfaithandplay.org](http://quakerfaithandplay.org)