

# Five Things to Remember about Wondering

## 1. **WONDERING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE VERBAL.**

Although I initially thought of the Wondering as "the verbal response time", it doesn't have to be verbal. Young children may simply point, for example, to show you what they liked best. (As the storyteller you might choose to name what they point at, but you can also just echo their pointed gesture, or touch or even lift what they've indicated: This? Mm-hmm!) The Faces of Easter lessons encourage non-verbal responses in which children make connections between these lessons and other stories or materials in the room.

## 2. **WONDERING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ALL SERIOUS.**

Wondering can open us up to truly big questions, but it's good to start off with ice-breaking questions, even if they sound silly. I wonder if these sheep have names. Dr Rebecca Nye says, "A facilitator who accepts whatever they say is ...likely to encourage children to feel safe to say more, and to risk saying things that are really hard to express, which is often the nature of deep spiritual material." (Children's Spirituality, p.38) So we do not ridicule, but accept any answer that is earnest or honest.

## 3. **WONDERING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE UPBEAT OR ORTHODOX.**

The question about leaving things out (in particular) makes room for expressing disagreement and discomfort with the story. Our scriptures contain stories of those who wrestle with God, or bargain with God, or sulk about God's actions, or even deny God under pressure. Such doubts need not mean the end of our relationship with God - far from it!

## 4. **WONDERING DOESN'T HAVE TO FOLLOW THE SCRIPT.**

Berryman's advice is to end the Wondering before the circle has spent all its energy, while there is still wonder in the air. What that means is that you don't always get to all the questions recommended in scripts, not even when there are only four of them. The Wondering is a bit like the wind (or Holy Spirit); it can be eddy and swirl and suddenly take off in an unexpected direction and you might find yourself following up on some of what has been raised: I wonder why that is? Entering into the spirit of the activity is far more important than sticking to the script.

5. **WONDERING DOESN'T HAVE AN AGENDA.**

Remember point 4: The Wondering is not a time for review - I wonder who remembers the name of the city Abraham came from? Nor is the Wondering a way to enforce a common interpretation - I wonder what the moral of this story is? Our wondering always has to be genuine. Remember point 1 as well: After you ask a question, leave a little time hanging so that everyone has a chance to consider it. But if nobody seems inclined to respond, go ahead and ask the next question. Look around the circle with interest (sometimes people new to Godly Play are not sure whether they are allowed to speak), but without creating pressure. If you feel the circle members are not engaging with these questions (even inwardly), it is probably time to put the materials away. But remember Mary - sometimes people just need to treasure these things, pondering them in their hearts. Godly Play honours that.