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The Storyteller

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The Huge Hug that Is Always There

Sometimes adults overlook what these two boys are looking at so intently. It is the work period in a 3-6 year old class at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston and the boys are absorbed in the Holy Family.

When I began teaching Godly Play in the early 1970s I made it a habit to always be sure that the Holy Family was arranged in the same way at the beginning of class. Do you know what I discovered? At the end of class its arrangement is almost always changed. The children have worked with it even when I did not notice.

The Holy Family is in the center of the top shelf of the most important set of

shelves in the classroom for a good reason. The children seem to intuit this. Today children come from all sorts of family configurations, but the Holy Family, complete with the donkey and old cow, remains magnetic.

Have you ever noticed that the Holy Family looks quite different on different colors of the church year? It is always the same and yet it is always different, so it is worth presenting over again, each time you change the color of the season. It shows the transformational core of the whole Christian language system when the baby (who is reaching out to give you a hug) becomes the One who now reaches out to give the whole world a hug.

