



Volume 1 | Issue 1  
Fall 2016

# Canadian Circle Godly Play Canada

## **In this issue: Welcome to the first edition of our new e-newsletter!**

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Amy Crawford, Andrew Sheldon and Maya Landell brought together a newly reinvigorated Godly Play Canada (GPC) Board in February 2016 with a conference call meeting. The GPC Board decided to meet in person in May, and voted in a new slate of Directors to lead the support and development of Godly Play nationally in Canada over the coming years. Many thanks to the following Trainers who have stepped forward to do this work:

Amy Crawford, ON - GPC Executive Director  
Maya Landell, ON - Chair  
Judson Bridgewater, QC - Vice-Chair  
Adam Hanley, ON - Treasurer  
Erin Arrowsmith, BC - Secretary and Communications  
Lindsay Bradford-Ewart, ON - Communications  
Andrew Sheldon, ON - International Relations Rep  
Ruth Cairns, ON - Trainer Rep  
Geoff Peddle, NL - Member at Large

Priorities for the GPC Board include improving connections with the network of Godly Play Trainers and Practitioners in Canada, providing advanced training options, centralizing training registration and payment online, finding Canadian resources for materials, obtaining charitable status for GPC and establishing centres of excellence for Godly Play in Canada.

I hope you enjoy this first edition of our Godly Play Canada newsletter, Canadian Circle. Look for editions three times a year (fall, winter and spring), to complement the new international publication, *The Circle*, published quarterly by the Godly Play Foundation.

## **I wonder where you are doing Godly Play in Canada?**

As part of the Board's desire to connect Godly Players better in Canada, we would love to hear your news from wherever you are from sea to sea, as well as any suggestions you might have. We would also love to establish a database of churches currently using Godly Play, and collect photos of Godly Play rooms across Canada, if you are interested in sending them to us.

We welcome your feedback and photos at [erin.arrowsmith@gmail.com](mailto:erin.arrowsmith@gmail.com). Please also let us know if you would like to be added to our email database to receive this newsletter in the future.

## Interview with Amy Crawford, Executive Director, Godly Play Canada Board, Toronto, ON

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*Jerome then began to pull stories out of his suitcase... and I was mesmerized.*



In this issue, we introduce you to Amy Crawford, the new Executive Director of Godly Play Canada. Amy is currently Team Leader, Communities in Mission for General Council of the United Church of Canada in Toronto, Ontario. She has a wealth of Godly Play experience, so we wanted to share her story with you.

Q: How were you originally introduced to Godly Play?

A: In the mid-1990s I was working as the Director of Christian Education for Asbury United Methodist Church (UMC) in Prairie Village, Kansas. One of the church members was a teacher at an Episcopal day school in nearby Kansas City. She told me that Godly Play was used during chapel at the school and that the creator of Godly Play was coming to the church associated with the school to do a workshop. She strongly encouraged me to attend because she thought Godly Play was an excellent method. Not used to having a church member give me a recommendation on a workshop, I decided to take her advice and go.

When I arrived at the church, a guy with a beard was seated on the floor in an atrium with a big leather suitcase by his side. He was introduced as Jerome Berryman, the creator of Godly Play. He spoke about the atrium and how it was a perfect place to do Godly Play because Maria Montessori had believed that children should be invited into beautiful, specially-prepared places to meet and worship God.

Jerome then began to pull stories out of his suitcase (were his socks and underwear in there too?) and I was mesmerized. At lunch break, we went into another room where Jerome's brother, Tom, had the storytelling materials on display and for purchase. The afternoon was spent hearing more stories. At the end of the day, I received a three-ring binder with scripts for the Sacred Stories.

Several weeks later I went back to another workshop and this time I had a church member who was a woodworker meet me at lunch time so he could have a look at the materials. I went home with my binder full of Parables that day and eventually returned for a day of storytelling and a binder of Liturgical Action stories. I'm sure Jerome spoke of other things during those workshops, but I just remember story after story appearing from his big leather suitcase.

It actually took me a couple of years before I implemented Godly Play at Asbury UMC. I knew it was going to be a big change for the children and the congregation, as well as for me. I wanted to be ready. My woodworker friend got busy making stories and we cleaned out an unused classroom that had a sink in it and washroom across the hall, which I felt would be ideal. We started only with the Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten group and grew from there. I loved going into that room every Sunday, getting everything ready, and greeting the children in the circle with a story to tell them.

Q: How many years have you been a Godly Play storyteller and working with children?

A: I think it would have been 1997 or 1998 when I began using Godly Play with the children at Asbury. In 2003 I moved to Canada and accepted a position as Program Coordinator: Children and Young Teens with the General Council Office of the United Church of Canada. When I arrived in Canada, I discovered that Godly Play wasn't widely used or known, so I wanted to begin introducing it and training people to use it. To become a Trainer, I first had to be accredited as a Teacher, which happened in 2005.

Q: How many years have you been a Godly Play trainer?

A: In 2007, Alison Rennie (British Columbia) and I were both selected to attend a Godly Play “Train the Trainer” event in Dallas, TX. Allison and the Naramata Centre were instrumental in establishing Godly Play in the western provinces.

Q: What are a few of your most memorable Godly Play moments?

A: My most memorable moments include the time when I used a banana leaf and construction sand to create a desert box and tell the story of the Great Family to a group of about 40 children at an orphanage in Uganda. I also remember our January, 2014 trip to India, during which Andrew and I worked double shifts to train 48 storytellers over 3 days, and our decision to stop in Johannesburg, South Africa on our way home from Australia in July, 2012, which started a beautiful friendship with Stan and Joan Truby.

I was extremely pleased with the North American Godly Play Conference that we held in Toronto in 2013. It was a privilege to host so many international, as well as Canadian, Godly Players and to hear stories told in a variety of languages. A wonderful legacy of that conference is the Godly Play Foundation YouTube channel, where we initially posted 12 Godly Play stories told by trainers that could be used as online resources to show how these stories were meant to be told. Further videos were also added to the channel at the North American Conference in Tennessee last year.

I hope that Godly Players in Canada will make use of the YouTube channel and don't forget to mark your calendars now for the next North American Godly Play Conference that will take place in the Inverness Hotel, just south of Denver, CO from June 23-25, 2017. It will be an opportunity to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Jerome Berryman.

Q: What are your hopes and dreams for the future of Godly Play in Canada?

A: I hope for the continued growth of Godly Play in Canada, as there are many regions of the country that still haven't been introduced to it. With the development of a new board, I believe the infrastructure will be there to support more training and trainers. Many people are keen to see Godly Play materials made in Canada for sale. Godly Play Resources in the US is willing to franchise a quality Canadian crafter if we can find the right person or group. Get in touch if you have ideas!

## **Stories for Fall: Focus on the Old Testament and the Desert Box**

**Erin Arrowsmith, Godly Play Trainer, Cowichan Bay, BC**

Fall is one of my favourite times of the year. I always loved “back to school” as a kid – new clothes, new school supplies, new shoes. Inevitably I always wore new cords and a sweater on one of the first days of school when it was still really hot summer weather! It always felt more like New Year's as we got ready to go back to school than it did on January 1.

Fall is also one of my favourite times of the year in my Godly Play classroom at Duncan United Church, in the small town of Duncan, halfway between Victoria and Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, BC. It is a time for cleaning out the shelves and dusting off the materials, preparing space

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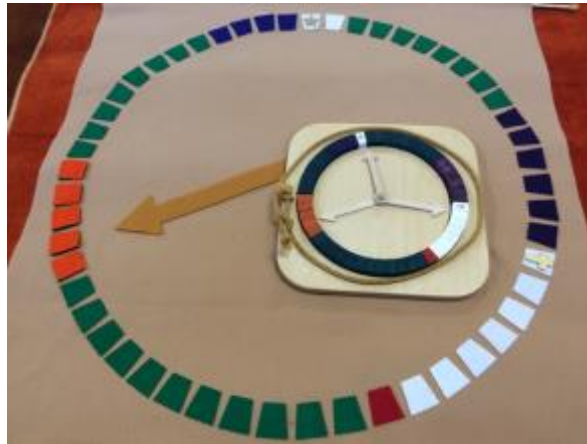
for a new circle of children to leave their unfinished work and wondering what new materials I might have enough budget to be able to purchase or make for the coming year. It is a time to get acquainted again with the desert box and the Old Testament stories that Jerome Berryman suggests for fall.

If it is just the beginning of your Godly Play program at your church, or if you have a lot of new or younger children in your Godly Play class this fall, you would be wise to choose the Volume 2 presentations for your fall schedule. The story of the Circle of the Church Year always makes a good introduction to the Godly Play classroom, and fits well into rhythm of the seasons that the children have already experienced, with the long days of summer turning into the shorter days of fall. It also sets up a good opening routine for the children learning about the seasons of the church year and then being able to move the arrow of the Circle of the Church Year wall hanging for each subsequent Sunday.

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If your congregation is one of the United Church congregations that have added the season of Creation to its liturgical calendar, then make sure that the orange colour that the children see in the sanctuary is reflected in your Godly Play classroom as well. The season of Creation is a time to remember our fragile blue planet and as we say in the New Creed in the United Church, to remember that we need to live with respect in creation. I have written some words to add to the story of the Circle of the Church Year to help the children understand why we celebrate the season of Creation in the United Church (please send me an email if you are interested).

The problem I always run into in choosing the stories for my Godly Play schedule is that there never seems to be enough Sundays to fit them all in! It is lovely to be able to start out with Creation and the Flood and the Ark, then move into the Great Family, Exodus and Ten Best Ways. If your classroom has the Ark and the Tent and the Ark and the Temple, these stories are always favourites, particularly with children who like to build things. Exile and Return and the Prophets again follow well as subsequent desert box stories. But with Thanksgiving being an “Everyone Upstairs” intergenerational service for our congregation, and with another “Everyone Upstairs” service for the children to experience Communion with the congregation in November, suddenly it is time for the Advent stories already! What if you have an older, more experienced circle of children and want to explore some new stories?

As Godly Play practitioners, we often hear from our circles “I’ve heard that story before!” or “Not that one again!” Jerome Berryman tells us that we always hear something different every time we hear a story, but that is sometimes a hard concept for children to grasp! If your circle has heard the core stories a few times already, then it may be time to add something new from Volume 6, or perhaps one of the Volume 7 stories for the fall.



Each of the Volume 6 stories goes deeper into the core stories from Volume 2. For example, Second Creation deepens the Creation story, telling the story of Adam and Eve, and the falling apart and coming back together in a new way. The Great Family story is deepened by the individual stories of Abraham and Sarah, as well as the stories of Jacob and Joseph. Exodus and the Ten Best Ways are deepened by the story of Moses. The core story of the Prophets is deepened by the stories of the individual prophets – Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

We have been building our Godly Play classroom at Duncan United for almost ten years now, and have only added a few of the Volume 6 stories. We started with Second Creation, Joseph, Moses, Ruth and Jeremiah. Perhaps this is the year for the stories of Abraham, Sarah and Jacob!

We were also lucky enough to have a donation a few years ago that allowed us to purchase all of the Volume 7 stories of the Saints. There is a story of a Saint each month of the year, so for the fall you could add the story of Mother Teresa of Calcutta for September, a great modern story of a Saint with whom some children may already be acquainted. Other fall stories of the saints include St. Teresa of Avila for October, St. Margaret of Scotland for November and of course, St. Nicholas for December.



The hardest part is deciding which of these stories to add to an already busy fall schedule. Just remember, in Godly Play, we have all the time we need!

Erin Arrowsmith

Godly Play Trainer, Cowichan Bay, BC

Children and Youth Coordinator, Duncan United Church, Duncan, BC

[childrenandyouth@duncanunited.org](mailto:childrenandyouth@duncanunited.org)

# Centre of Excellence: All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church, Godly Play Room

We'll start our tour of Canadian Godly Play rooms with the beautiful Godly Play room at All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church in Toronto. Many core and trainer trainings have been held here, thanks to the work of Amy Crawford, Andrew Sheldon, Lindsay Bradford-Ewart and Ruth Cairns, and I had the pleasure of being welcomed here in October 2014 for my core training and May 2015 for my trainer training. The plain white plaster walls and large windows accent the Godly Play materials beautifully.

*All Saints Kingsway  
Anglican Church  
2850 Bloor St. West,  
Toronto, ON  
Sanctuary*



*Focal Shelf  
Parable Shelf*



*Advent/Christmas Shelf  
Lent/Easter Shelf  
Saints Shelf*



*Sacred Stories – Old  
Testament & Desert Box*



*Sacred Stories – New  
Testament, Church  
Furniture & Response  
Shelves*



**Mark Your  
Calendars – You  
Won't Want to  
Miss This!**

**North American  
Godly Play  
Conference, Denver,  
CO**

**June 23-25, 2017**

A chance to connect with Godly Players from around the world. Godly Play Canada hopes to be able to offer Godly Play Advanced Training with Cheryl Minor for accredited Godly Play Trainers. Stay tuned!

## Upcoming Trainings

### Commuter Core Training – Victoria, BC

3 Saturdays – Oct. 1, Nov. 19 and Dec. 3, 2016; 8:30 am - 5:00 pm  
St. Matthias Anglican Church  
Trainers: Gaye Sharpe and Erin Arrowsmith  
Contact: Erin Arrowsmith - [erin.arrowsmith@gmail.com](mailto:erin.arrowsmith@gmail.com)

### Commuter Core Training – Fort Langley, BC

3 Saturdays – Sept. 24, Oct. 22 and Nov. 5, 2016; 8:30 am - 5:00 pm  
St. George's Anglican Church  
Trainers: Barbara Hansen and Mary Nichol  
Contact: Mary Nichol – [marlynichol@gmail.com](mailto:marlynichol@gmail.com)

### Advent Introductory Workshop – Toronto, ON

Saturday, Nov. 12, 2016; 10:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Emmanuel College, University of Toronto  
Trainers: Amy Crawford and Maya Landell  
Contact: Betsy Anderson, Coordinator of Continuing Education, Emmanuel College  
[betsy.anderson@utoronto.ca](mailto:betsy.anderson@utoronto.ca)

### Core Training – Rosemont, ON

Saturday, Nov. 17-19, 2016; Thursday, 3:30 pm to Saturday, 4:00 pm  
Trinity Centennial United Church, Rosemont, ON  
Trainers: Amy Crawford and Maya Landell  
Contact: [amy@godlyplay.ca](mailto:amy@godlyplay.ca)

### Commuter Core Training – Toronto, ON

3 Saturdays – Jan. 28, Feb. 25 and March 25, 2017; 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Islington United Church  
Trainers: Amy Crawford and Maya Landell  
Contact: Betsy Anderson, Coordinator of Continuing Education, Emmanuel College –  
[betsy.anderson@utoronto.ca](mailto:betsy.anderson@utoronto.ca)

### Introductory Training - Fredericton, New Brunswick

Saturday, Oct. 15, 2016; 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  
Trainers: Cathy Laskey, Cheryl Jacobs  
Contact: [claskey@diofton.ca](mailto:claskey@diofton.ca)

## Godly Play Canada Canadian Circle

Issued three times per year

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