

Volume 1 | Issue 3  
Summer 2017

# Canadian Circle Godly Play Canada

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It was wonderful to be able to gather with the larger Godly Play circle of trainers and practitioners in Denver, Colorado this past June for the 2017 North American Godly Play Conference (NAGPC)! Canadian Godly Players from BC to Newfoundland came to Denver to celebrate Jerome Berryman's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, to hear about how Godly Play started, to assess what Godly Play looks like now and to wonder where Godly Play will be going next.

The conference was a fabulous opportunity to steep ourselves in the stories again, to hear new stories, and to be reminded of the community of storytellers around the world - original trainers, seasoned veterans, and new storytellers opening to the world of Godly Play. And what a privilege to watch the joy of Jerome in sharing time with us, seeing parts of his life work alive and vibrant, with still more writing coming. It was all so prayerful and important, I continue to wonder.

Maya Landell

Chair, Godly Play Canada Advisory Board

## New Godly Play Books to Read this Fall!

- Jerome Berryman *Becoming like a Child: The Curiosity of Maturity Beyond the Norm*
- Rebecca McClain, *Graceful Nurture: Using Godly Play with Adults*
- John Pridmore and Jerome Berryman, *Playing with Icons: The Spirituality of Recalled Childhood*
- Jerome Berryman, *The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Volume 2, Revised and Expanded*
- Jerome Berryman, *The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Volume 3, Revised and Expanded* (coming Sept. 2017)
- Jerome Berryman, *The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Volume 4, Revised and Expanded* (coming January 2018)
- Jerome Berryman, *Stories of God at Home: A Godly Play Approach* (coming April 2018)

## I Wonder Where You Are Doing Godly Play in Canada? A Look at Alberta and Saskatchewan

Here are churches we're aware of that are currently doing Godly Play in the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. If we've missed anyone, please let us know so that we can update our info!

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*We'll take a look at Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec, next, so if you're doing Godly Play in any of these provinces, send us an email, or even a photo or two – we'd love to include you in our Fall 2018 issue!*

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### *Alberta*

- Scarboro United Church, Calgary
- St. Barnabas Anglican Church, Calgary
- Ralph Connor Memorial United Church, Canmore
- Knox United Church, Drumheller
- Chalmers-Castle Downs United Church, Edmonton
- St. Georges Anglican Church, Edmonton
- St. Paul's United Church, Edmonton
- First United Church, Fort Saskatchewan
- High River United Church, High River
- St. David's United Church, Leduc

- Salisbury United Church, Sherwood Park
- Vulcan United Church, Vulcan
- First United Church, Wetaskiwin

### *Saskatchewan*

- First Baptist Church, Regina



*St. Paul's United Church, Edmonton*

## 2017 North American Godly Play Conference “Drawing the Circle Wider,” Denver, June 23-25, 2017

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*At an estimated \$100 US for a taxi, I was definitely looking for someone to share a ride with!*

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I arrived at the baggage claim area at Denver International Airport mid-afternoon on June 23 from my Victoria-Vancouver-Denver flight, looking for my new Facebook friend, Debbie, from Los Angeles. She had answered my post on the North American Godly Play Conference Facebook page the previous evening about sharing a ride to the conference hotel – at an estimated \$100 US for a taxi, I was definitely looking for someone to share a ride with! We found each other at the luggage carousel through the marvels of Facebook Messenger, and were soon getting into our Uber ride together – a first for me, as Uber is not yet up and running in BC. It was a great way to get to the Hilton

Denver Inverness, and the 45-minute ride passed extremely quickly as we got to know each other and chatted about our Godly Play experiences.

Debbie and I arrived at the conference just as it was starting, so we quickly dumped our luggage in our separate rooms and hurried down to the first plenary – Eric Law from the Kaleidoscope Institute ([www.kscopeinstitute.org](http://www.kscopeinstitute.org)) with a few get-to-know-you activities and some culturally respectful guidelines

for communicating with each other during the weekend. Reminiscent of the first hour of core trainings! Next up was Lee Dickson, Executive Director of the Godly Play Foundation, who told us “The Story of Godly Play,” focusing on where Godly Play started with its Montessori roots, and how Godly Play developed, first as a curriculum and then as an organization. Before we knew it, it was time to get ready for dinner and Jerome Berryman’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration – more on that below!

Saturday focused on the full extent of the Godly Play curriculum – what we have at present. Rev. Canon Dr. Andrew Sheldon, Godly Play Advocate for International Development and Godly Play Canada Trainer, began the day with a plenary entitled “Godly Play: A Way for Today,” about the gifts that the Godly Play curriculum provides to children. Andrew talked about how the Godly Play philosophy is an approach to Christian education that holds children as central and capable, listens to what children have to say, and provides a way to make meaning through the stories of our faith. Then we were finally set loose to play in workshop rotations!



My first stop was to hear Kathy Peddle and Donna Ronan, Godly Play Canada Trainers from Newfoundland and Labrador, present their workshop on “Godly Play Large: Using Godly Play in Worship Settings.” Kathy and Donna presented ideas on how they have successfully used Godly Play with large materials suitable for worship with the whole congregation at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Mt. Pearl, an Anglican parish near St. John’s, Newfoundland. Kathy and Donna have found that the best approach is a large frame with a felt background at the front of the sanctuary, onto which the coloured underlay and story materials can be placed. They have told the stories of Creation, Faces of Easter, Paul’s Discovery and the Holy Trinity, as well as many parables, in intergenerational worship. If you’re interested in trying this approach at your church, patterns and directions can be obtained by emailing [donnaronan54@gmail.com](mailto:donnaronan54@gmail.com).

My second stop was to watch Lee Dickson tell the story of “Jesus and Jerusalem,” which enriches the Faces of Easter series. We were lucky enough to have this story donated to our church this past year and I had told it to our circle of children for the first time during Lent, so I was interested to see how Lee told it to compare to what I had done. Then I watched Christine Erskine tell the stories of Creation and Parable of the Good Shepherd side-by-side. I have always wanted to tell stories side-by-side, but I have never tried it. Christine led us through the process beautifully, first telling Creation, then telling the Parable of the Good Shepherd, and then helping us wonder where each of the gifts of Creation fit into the parable. It was rich wondering, with lots of play about where the gifts should be and moving the parts of the parable around, which would be so interesting to do with older children and youth! The revised

Volume 3 of the *Complete Guide to Godly Play* (out in Sept. 2017) will include a side-by-side Parables story, leading you through how to tell the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Great Pearl side-by-side.



After lunch, it was work time. We could respond through workshops or working on ourselves (swimming, golfing, walking, spa, etc.). I presented a workshop in which I told the Godly Play “Easter Eggs” story, showed the designs and process of Ukrainian Easter Eggs, and led a quiet, contemplative art response painting paper mache Easter Eggs. I received \$100 US off of my conference fee as a thank you for leading a workshop, as well as an awesome Godly Play “I Wonder” t-shirt. Teika Arnold from Godly Play Resources in Kansas presented a workshop making do-it-yourself banners for each of the liturgical seasons - a new product that Godly Play now offers. The banners were beautiful!

After work time, we came back together for a second plenary by Eric Law on cultural sensitivity, entitled “Spirituality for Playing in God’s Diverse Community,” and then it was time for a few more workshops before dinner. As I work in a large Coast Salish community in Duncan, BC, my first stop was a workshop on “Godly Play and Indigenous Ways of Knowing,” by Anne Pirie, Godly Play Canada Trainer from Sackville, NB. Anne shared a Godly Play style story that she created to acknowledge Indigenous territory when her circle of children was learning about reconciliation. With some research, Anne was able to adapt her story to the Denver area and it could be adapted to the geography and Indigenous peoples in your region of Canada. If you’re interested, email Anne at [anne.pirie001@gmail.com](mailto:anne.pirie001@gmail.com).

Anne Pirie telling her Godly Play style story acknowledging Indigenous territory



Acknowledgement of Indigenous territory story materials



Caryl Menkhus-Creswell, story about the mystery of God’s presence



Peter Privett, Godly Play UK, “Spiritual Maturity: Prayer through Liturgical Action”



The second workshop I attended was led by Jeffrey Creswell and Caryl Menkhus-Creswell. Caryl Menkhus-Creswell has adopted the Godly Play stories for the Quakers for a program known as Faith and Play (<https://www.fgcquaker.org/faith-and-play>). The workshop focused on work that Jeffrey had done to match up courage touchstones with Godly Play practice to create safe space for training purposes, as well as a Godly Play-style story that Caryl created about listening for God’s presence, which could also be used in non-Christian settings by using the wording “listening for mystery.” Lastly, I attended a spirited workshop led by the enthusiastic Peter Privett, Godly Play UK, that explored liturgical actions such as standing (“stand with beauty and reverence”), sitting, kneeling and praying.

Sunday morning began early hearing about where Godly Play is headed, with Cheryl Minor giving a great overview of the revised Volumes 2 through 4 of the *Complete Guide to Godly Play*. It’s been almost 15

years since the Godly Play curriculum was first published, so these volumes have been revised and expanded to look at the whole corpus of stories and lessons through the lens of Volume 8, the most recent publication. The revised Volume 2, published in June 2017, includes some significant revisions to stories, to the introduction and Appendix, as well as a new story, “The Holy Bible” (for a summary of changes, see <http://www.godlyplayfoundation.org/curriculum-updates-and-revisions-in-the-expanded-2nd-edition-of-volume-2/>). The revised Volume 3 will be out in September 2017, and the revised Volume 4 will be out in January 2018, so stay tuned if you want to update your libraries with the latest curriculum, which is also available digitally via Church Publishing.

Once Cheryl had provided the overview of the revisions to Volumes 2-4, it was time to experience them! The workshop rotations provided six opportunities to watch experienced storytellers tell the new and revised stories. My first stop was to watch US Godly Play Trainer Susan Mallison tell the new Volume 2 story, “The “Holy Bible”. She explained that the “Circle of the Church Year” explains how the Church tells its story, while the new “Holy Bible” story fills a gap by explaining where the Church’s story comes from. It is recommended that these first two stories in the revised Volume 2 be told to your circle of children at the beginning of each school year. Any beautiful Bible will work as the story material, in a translation that is appropriate for your tradition, and it is also suggested that you offer blank bookmarks and bookmark-making materials beside the Bible on the transition shelf between Old and New Testament stories in your classroom.



Susan Mallison telling “The Holy Bible”



Rosemary Beales telling “The Prophets”

Next, I headed over to see Rosemary Beales, US Godly Play Trainer and one of the editors of the revised editions, to see the story of “The Prophets.” I’ve only told this story once to my circle of children due to its complexity, so I was interested in hearing the simplified version of this core story, which I would agree has been improved. Rosemary told this story on a low table, an adaptation for a storyteller who cannot sit on the floor. The table was made from 4 Ikea tables with the legs cut down to 18” and put together to make a large square for storytelling. For worktime, children can also work at the tables individually using pillows to sit on.

Unfortunately, I didn’t have enough time to see Cheryl Minor tell the story of the “Good Samaritan,” Linda Clapp tell the “Epiphany” story or Emily Griffin tell the story of the “Symbols of the Holy Eucharist,” (see the picture below for the beautiful materials for this latter story, including the new Godly Play Resources banners for Easter and for the great green growing Sundays). I headed instead to see US Godly Play Trainer Sally Thomas tell the new core story, “Saul Changes,” which will appear in the revised Volume 4. It tells the story of Saul being struck by light that is currently contained in the existing story “Paul’s Discovery.” A new story, “Paul’s Travels and Letters” will provide an extension story to deepen the story of “Saul Changes.” As the materials for this story are not yet finalized, there was lots of discussion as to whether the materials worked or not. The red underlay and road between Jerusalem and Damascus echoed the story of

the Good Samaritan, which provided an interesting dimension to the story of Saul that I had not considered before. Seeing all of these new and revised stories was so useful to my work as both a Godly Play Practitioner and Trainer, and definitely made my trip to the conference in Denver worthwhile!



Emily Griffin with the materials for  
“Symbols of the Holy Eucharist”



Sally Thomas telling “Saul Changes”

After these workshop rotations, we had one final lunchtime keynote presentation by Jerome Berryman, explaining his upcoming book, *Stories of God at Home: A Godly Play Approach*, to be published in April 2018. The book will have six sections, focused on Creation, Advent/Christmas, Faces of Easter, Pentecost, Parable of the Good Shepherd and Circle of the Church Year, and will include discussion about these stories and how they can help families prepare for the inevitable challenges that happen in life. The conference then ended with traditional Episcopalian worship, including the stories of the “Great Family” and the “Good Shepherd and World Communion.” After the conference, the Canadians were able to meet with Cheryl Minor to discuss the Advanced Training currently offered in the US, and also gathered with the US Trainers for a meal and networking on Sunday night before we all went our separate ways on Monday. It was a great weekend and I encourage anyone who wants to deepen their Godly Play knowledge and practice to book their calendars for summer 2019 for the next North American Godly Play Conference!

Erin Arrowsmith  
Accredited Godly Play Trainer and Practitioner  
Duncan United Church, Duncan, BC

## Jerome Berryman’s 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

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*“The Christian language  
is the language of love  
and needs to be taught  
with love.”*

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On Friday night of the North American Godly Play Conference, we celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and accomplishments of Godly Play founder, Jerome Berryman. Jerome told us his life story, including some key parts of his childhood, and most importantly, how he was disruptive in his Christian formation class in seminary because he did not believe that children were empty vessels waiting to be filled up with knowledge. His professor then asked him to work on a theory of how he thought Christian formation should be done with children, which ultimately became his life’s work. He eventually found the Montessori philosophy and studied with Sofia Calvaletti in Italy, then came back to the US to test his stories with children and develop what we now know as Godly Play.

One of my favourite moments from Jerome’s keynote address was his statement that “The Christian language is the language of love and needs to be taught with love.” Jerome spoke at length about being in the deep river current of the creative process, which God flows into, and flows out of (see chapter five of *Becoming like a Child*, including the river diagram in the section “Maturity Beyond the Norm”). I would highly recommend reading this book, particularly for its discussion of the creative process and how Godly Play takes this creative process into account.

Birthday gifts for Jerome included a history of the US Trainers, a red box of cards from children and practitioners across Canada (presented by Godly Play Canada Trainer and Executive Director, Amy Crawford), gold boxes from Belgium and from international Godly Players (presented by Andrew Sheldon) and a stack of cards from Godly Play UK (presented by Peter Privett). Presentations were also made to retiring Godly Play Foundation Board members Tom Bannerman and Rebecca McClain. And then we all enjoyed a beautiful cake!



Jerome Berryman giving his keynote presentation Friday night



Amy Crawford presenting a box of birthday wishes from across Canada



Peter Privett presenting cards from Godly Play UK



Andrew Sheldon presenting international birthday wishes

## Focus on Godly Play Rooms: Duncan United Church, Duncan, BC

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*Duncan  
United Church  
246 Ingram St.,  
Duncan, BC*

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Erin Arrowsmith fell in love with Godly Play after taking an introductory training with Gaye Sharpe in Victoria in fall 2006. By fall 2007, Duncan United Church started its first Godly Play class and this fall, will be celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Godly Play program. The Godly Play classroom is in a typical dark church basement, made a bit brighter by a Godly Play mural painted in liturgical colours above the Advent, Focal and Lent shelves three years ago.

If you would like to share pictures of your Godly Play classroom in a future issue, please contact us!



Front of  
Classroom



Response  
Shelves



Back of  
Classroom



Focal Shelf



Christmas



Easter



Old Testament Sacred  
Stories

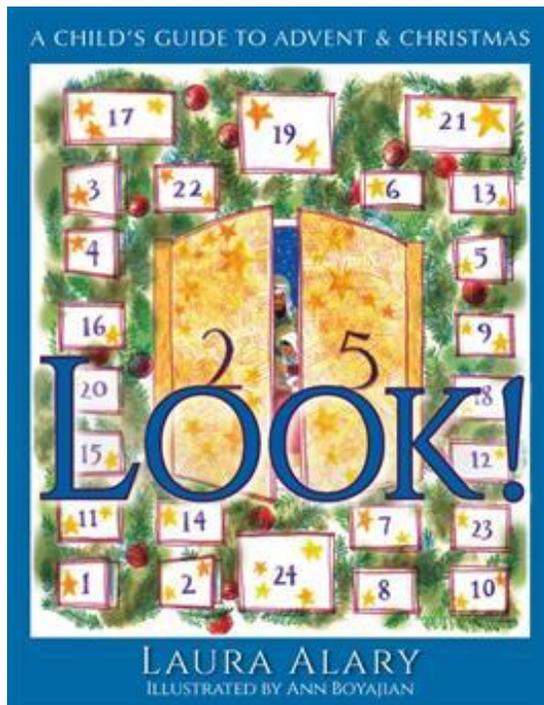


Holy Bible & New  
Testament Sacred  
Stories



Parables & Saints

## New Book for Your Advent / Christmas Shelf!



Advent is an exciting season. There are candles to light, cookies to bake, presents to wrap, and calendars with treats hidden behind their tiny doors. But Advent can also be a baffling time for children. We are waiting—but for what? For Jesus? How can we still be waiting for someone born so long ago? And what do all the things we do to get ready for Christmas really have to do with welcoming the Christ child?

*Look! A Child's Guide to Advent and Christmas* by Laura Alary (Paraclete Press) invites children to explore these questions. As the young narrator makes connections between Advent traditions, Biblical stories, and her own life, she begins to reach her own conclusions about the meaning of this season. "Now I see. Christmas is not just back then. Christmas is now. Christmas is knowing God is with us—always. Christmas is seeing God in other people—not just ourselves. Christmas is when we say yes to God—and God comes into a new place and new time. When will it happen next? I can

This book narrates the nativity within its larger Biblical context—a backdrop of hope and expectation. It also invites children to become Christ-bearers themselves—to share in the holy mystery of making Christ present in the world. *Look!* is far more than an Advent activity book. It weaves together familiar Advent traditions (the Jesse Tree, the nativity or crèche, the Advent wreath), Biblical stories and characters (the exile and prophetic promises of light in the darkness; John the Baptist and his call to repentance and justice; Mary the mother of Jesus and her *yes* to becoming a participant in the divine work of salvation), and reflections on what these stories invite us to do and be. The ideas and activities presented in the book are therefore all the more meaningful for being part of this rich fabric.

Laura Alary has also written a similar book on Lent for Paraclete Press, *Make Room: A Child's Guide to Lent and Easter*. *Look!* employs a similar format to help children wonder about another significant season in the church year. Laura Alary works as a Christian educator, storyteller and writer for children, enabling her to communicate clearly with young readers, and her Ph.D. in New Testament lends credibility to her use of scripture.

**"*Look!* certainly stands alone as an effective and evocative overview of the season of Advent, but I also I think it would be particularly helpful as a guide for families as they make their way together through Advent. The stories could be told, the activities mentioned could be engaged in, and the wondering questions discussed. It is a book that calls out to be played with!"**

**-- Andrew Sheldon, Godly Play Advocate for International Development**

## Upcoming Training Opportunities!

### Core Training – Sackville, NB

Friday to Sunday, September 22-24, 2017 (1 module each day)

Sackville United Church, Sackville

Contact: Fay Cameron – [registrargodlyplaymaritimes@gmail.com](mailto:registrargodlyplaymaritimes@gmail.com)

For more info: <https://godlyplaymaritimes.com/core-training/>

### Core Training – Vancouver, BC

3 Saturdays – Sept. 30, Oct. 14 and Nov. 25, 2017; 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Dunbar Ryerson United Church, Vancouver

Trainers: Anne Clark, Cathy Cryder, Mary Nichol

Contact: Anne Clark - [arbc52@gmail.com](mailto:arbc52@gmail.com)

### Core Training – Toronto, ON

Thursday to Saturday, Oct. 19-21, 2017 (3:30 pm Thursday - 4:00 pm Saturday)

St. George's on-the-Hill Anglican Church, Etobicoke

Trainers: Amy Crawford, Andrew Sheldon, Ruth Cairns

Contact: Andrew Sheldon – [andrew@stgeorgesonthehill.ca](mailto:andrew@stgeorgesonthehill.ca) or by phone: 416.239.2341, ext.103.

### Commuter Core Training – Toronto, ON

3 Saturdays – Feb. 3, March 3, April 21, 2018; 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Islington United Church, Etobicoke

Trainers: Maya Landell and Amy Crawford

Please register online at: [www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca/coned/htm](http://www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca/coned/htm)



Godly Play Core Training, Oak Bay United Church, June 2017

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**Canadian Circle**

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For comments, feedback and submissions, please contact:

**Editor:** Erin Arrowsmith    **Email:** [erin.arrowsmith@gmail.com](mailto:erin.arrowsmith@gmail.com)

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