



# EQUIPPING FOR... **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Produced by Canadian Ministries

## **Canada Youth – A time and a place to celebrate youth and youth ministry in The Presbyterian Church in Canada**

*“Joined together as God’s dwelling place, we are home.” — Ephesians 2:20-22*

**S**ince 2000, Canada Youth has been a gathering place for Presbyterian youth, young adults and youth leaders from across the country and with guests from around the world. Together for five days they worship, play, create, learn, dance, act, make new friends, study scripture, share joy, laugh, discover, play crazy games, reflect, pray, sing and share. They experience soul-satisfying worship, recreation, small group discussions, workshops, faith exploration and joyful celebration!

Canada Youth 2016 – CY2016 – took place July 5-10 at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. More than 400 young people and youth leaders

attended. The five days were woven together by the Ephesians 2:20-22 passage (above), providing many opportunities for participants to explore their sense of “home” in their relationships with God, their families, the CY2016 community, and beyond into local and global communities. This issue of *Equipping for Christian Education* celebrates CY2016, our church’s biennial national youth event.

### **Canada Youth Schedule**

**Canada Youth 2016 had something for everyone.**

**The Youth Track** participants met in groups.

Combining Bible study time with community building and fun recreation activities, they explored the four chapters of the book of Ruth to make connections with the CY theme of being home in God. Activity options rounded out each day and included everything from workshops on poverty and peace-making to basketball and henna designs.

**The Discipleship Track** program offered young adults a broad range of presentations, workshops and activities that focused on vocation exploration, community connections and spiritual practices.

**The Youth Ministry Training Track** provided opportunities for youth leaders to hear keynote

### **Did youth in your congregation attend CY2016?**

If “yes”, then consider ways you can help reach out to support these youth so that they reflect on their time at CY and find ways to share their experiences. Encourage them to share something from their days at CY2016 by participating in upcoming worship services and congregational events.

### **Was your congregation unable to sponsor youth to the 2016 event?**

If “yes”, then consider the reasons for this and start planning for CY2018. On the last page of this resource is a letter that some people may find helpful as the first step to making future participation a reality.

addresses from Dr. Amanda Drury, professor of Practical Theology from Indiana Wesleyan, and then chose from a variety of workshops focusing on practical, congregation-friendly programming.

**A Day in the Life of CY** took place on Thursday, July 7. Many local congregations accepted the invitation to send representatives to this “open house”, experiencing a taste of a CY event.

**A Long Way from Home** was a theme day set aside on Friday, July 8. The whole CY community participated, exploring faithful responses to the current refugee crisis.

**Every evening** the CY community engaged in meaningful community worship followed by large group recreation activities.

### From Youth Ministry Training Track: Excerpts from two workshops

#### At Home with Scripture: The Bible and youth ministry

Presenter: Matthew Ruttan, minister, Westminster PC, Barrie, ON, matthew@matthewruttan.com

#### i) Understand the role of church and family in the faith development of young people

Research clearly shows that family has the biggest role to play in the faith development of young people, suggesting that churches include outreach to families in addition to their CE programming with children and youth. Helpful websites with ideas for faith formation and young people are [www.StickyFaith.org](http://www.StickyFaith.org) and [www.Orange.com](http://www.Orange.com) and these books:

*Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide* by Reggie Joiner, 2009.

*Growing up Christian: Why Young People Stay in Church, Leave Church, and (Sometimes) Come Back to Church* by John P. Bowen, 2010.

*Faith Begins at Home: The Family Makeover with Christ at the Center* by Mark Holmen, 2005.

*I Don't Want to Go to Church: Practical Ways to Deal with Kids and Religion* by Scott Cooper, 2007.

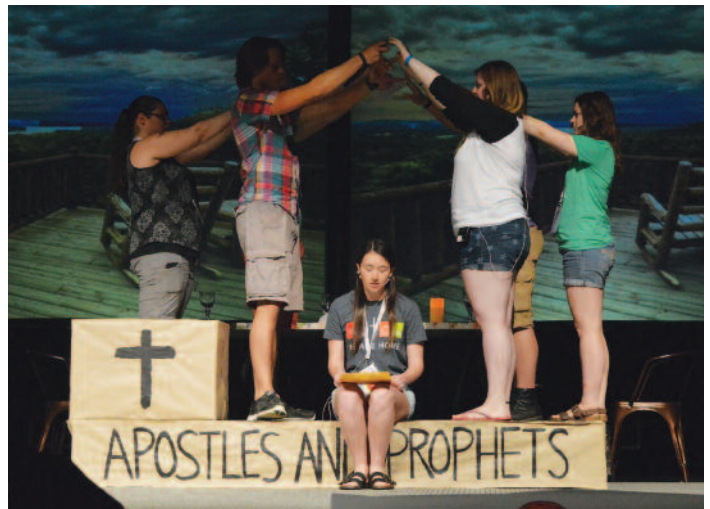


Photo: Presbyterian Record

#### ii) Understand the developmental phases of youth

An important part of this presentation was a focus on the different developmental phases. Detailed information on these have been compiled and made available online by Reggie Joiner and Kristen Ivy at <http://justaphase.com/> See also:

*It's Just A Phase, So Don't Miss It: Why Every Life Stage of A Kid Matters And at Least 13 Things Your Church Should Do About It* by Reggie Joiner and Kristen Ivy, 2015.

*Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids* by Dr. Kara E. Powell and Dr. Chap Clark, 2011.

Based on how young people develop, “don't prioritize your content based on how adults feel. Prioritize based on how kids learn.” Following this tip can mean the difference between engaging youth or not.

#### iii) The Bible is an essential resource for growing faith in youth

Whether your focus is children, youth or adult ministry, the Bible is the first and most critical resource. Youth are curious about the Bible. They have questions and they want to ask them and discuss them. Based on current involvement in youth ministry, Matthew recommended a range of Bible resources for leaders and young people.

#### Helpful Bible Translations

*New International Version*

*New Living Translation*

*New Revised Standard Version*

*English Standard Version*

Share the video  
of CY 2016  
with your  
congregation!

<http://presbyterian.ca/2016/07/20/photos-canada-youth-2016/>



### Good Study Bibles

*New Living Translation*

*New International Version Life Application Study Bibles*

### Bible Resources for children and youth

*The Action Bible: God's Redemptive Story* (a graphic book), David C. Cook, 2010

*The Story for Children: A Storybook Bible* (print and audio read by Max Lucado), Zonderkidz, 2011

### Online

*YouVersion* – a free app with multiple Bible translations/versions

*BibleGateway* – a website of the Bible with multiple translations/versions

*Bible for Kids* – a free app/game for kids taking them through many of the main Bible stories

*RightNowMedia* – an online learning platform with thousands of topics, Bible studies for various ages and conferences. (A church must subscribe; rates depend on Sunday worship size.)

### Blog Article

*Out of the Gate: Where to Start When You Read The Bible* by Matthew Ruttan, May 2015. Available from [www.MatthewRuttan.com](http://www.MatthewRuttan.com); go to the “Resources” tab for this and other articles.

### Making A Home in the PCC: Confirmation

Presenter: Anne Miller, Christian educator and lay worship leader, [info@seedsofgraceresources.ca](mailto:info@seedsofgraceresources.ca) and [www.seedsofgraceresources.ca](http://www.seedsofgraceresources.ca)

This workshop drew on the results of a survey Anne conducted for Canadian Ministries in the fall of 2015 of leaders and youth participants of past confirmation programs. The results showed a range of resources and experiences. See *Equipping for Christian Education*

“Confirmation Programs in the PCC” available at <http://presbyterian.ca/resources-ef/>. Based on the results, Anne made suggestions on how to determine what is needed in your particular context and how to proceed with designing and implementing the program. In closing, Anne offered the following final advice for leaders of confirmation programs:

#### 1. Breathe

This is not the only opportunity young people will have to make this decision. They may need more than one run at it. They may never join the church. We are just asked to remind them of how loved they are by God and to share how important our faith is to us. God is far bigger than their unbelief.

#### 2. Choose leaders and mentors carefully

Follow *Leading with Care* (available at <http://presbyterian.ca/resource-centre/>) and try to find people who will model a life of faith and who will also not be horrified by questioning and testing of the status quo. Because we are dealing with adolescents, leaders need to be flexible, to truly want to connect with the youth and to be able to commit to seeing the journey through.

#### 3. Think participants, not recipients

Current youth culture can make being passive and entertained a goal in life. Avoid this by involving the youth not only in a variety of activities that will stretch them, but also by getting their input on program design and things they want to explore. Ask what will make this meaningful for them.

#### 4. Think confirming individuals, not indoctrination

Nothing will take the enthusiasm out of this journey like lectures, rote learning and memorization. We shouldn't avoid important pieces of our history and theology, like the Apostles' Creed, but we also want the youth to bring their own voice to the table. How will they shape the church of today and tomorrow with their unique God-given gifts?

#### 5. Focus on relationships over content

These young people are launching into an amazing time in their lives. They need solid and stable relationships where they can share their questions and concerns and become real about who they are and who they are



becoming. What is the church if it doesn't offer loving relationships which remind us of Christ's love for us?

### 6. Bring in the whole community

This should be a celebration of learning and sharing and building relationships. Keep it front and centre in congregational life. Ask for prayer, check in with parents, participants and mentors as you go. Nurture the process by raising its profile within the community. The church needs to embrace and support these young people.

### Youth Ministry and Program Budgeting

The budget of a congregation determines the money available for any program. Refer to your most recent congregational annual report to see how much money your church is budgeting for youth ministry. *The Church Matters: A Board of Managers Handbook* (available at <http://presbyterian.ca/resource-centre/>) suggests that October is a good month in which to hold a joint meeting of the board of managers with the Session (and perhaps inviting a representative from each congregational group) to discuss short- and long-term plans and budget proposals. At such a meeting, the needs of a youth ministry program could be presented. Below is a sample letter (from an individual or congregational group) to help congregations discuss and prepare a budget request for a youth ministry program that might lead to greater support for local youth attending Canada Youth 2018. (**Note:** We thank Matthew Ruttan for this idea and draft letter.)

*Dear Convenor (or Clerk of Session)*

*First I want to thank you for all you do. Being a church leader can be a difficult task. But you are living*

*out a calling to be servants of God; and your work makes a real difference. Thank you!*

*Second, I have a passion for youth ministry. I heard someone say that youth aren't the future of the church – they are the now of the church. I definitely agree with that. No matter what age we are, we are God's people together, today.*

*This past July 5-10, Canada Youth 2016 took place. This is a national gathering of youth, young adults and youth leaders that happens every two years. It was a five-day event with daily worship, small group discussions, workshops, faith exploration and celebration. It was a powerful reminder about how we need to invest in our youth ministries as we help our young people trust and follow Jesus in their day-to-day lives.*

*In the coming weeks, our congregation will be entering budget planning time. I ask that our church consider significantly increasing our youth budget. I hope that this letter is timed to allow conversations to develop about this. I envision that money can be spent on getting some new resources, leveraging some online learning tools, curriculum and youth-friendly Bibles, and even updating some of our facilities. On a longer timeline, I envision our church setting aside money in an event fund that might sponsor three or four young people to attend the next Canada Youth national event.*

*I hope that you will prayerfully consider this request. I think that increasing our youth ministry budget to pay for some of these things will make us more effective at helping young people trust and follow Jesus.*

*If you have any questions, please let me know. Again thank you for your service and time!*

*Blessings,*

### Canadian Ministries wants to hear from YOU!

What parts of this resource are most useful? Share your experiences with building a strong youth ministry in your congregation. Recommend a resource! Make a suggestion or ask a question!

Contact us at [canadianministries@presbyterian.ca](mailto:canadianministries@presbyterian.ca) or call 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301 Ext. 271. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/pconnect](https://www.facebook.com/pconnect).