Children and The Church Workshops (pick one from each session)

Workshop Sessions #1: 12:45 – 2:00 (pick one)

1) Youth Empowerment and Spiritual Growth

Continue a conversation with Kung Jaadee and Martin Brokenleg to learn about their work with youth. How might our spiritual stories and traditions help all young people develop belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity (the four ‘essentials’ that every child needs for healthy development).

See main page for Kung Jaadee and Martin Brokenleg’s biographies.

2) Godly Play Exposure

Godly play is an approach to using biblical story. It was developed for use with children 3-12 years and is now in use with people of all ages. There are a lot of things you can learn from a lecture, but Godly Play has to be learned from the inside out. Join us to experience a simple and exciting approach which honours the power of sacred story, imagination and Spirit!

Cathy Cryder works as Minister with Children, Youth and Families at Dunbar Heights United Church in Vancouver. Cathy was introduced to Godly Play in 2003 and was certified as a Godly Play trainer in 2008. She continues to be moved and inspired by the ways Godly Play creates sacred space and time for children’s encounters with God.

3) Indigenous Methods for Teaching Children

This workshop will explore how Indigenous methods of teaching children might become part of your church’s Children’s time. Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching tools, engaging the whole self in learning, elements of the medicine wheel teachings, and more will be brought to workshop participants as you participate in just such a learning circle together with indigenous elders.

Mary Fontaine is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. She is Cree from the Mistawais First Nation in Saskatchewan and the founding Director of Hummingbird Ministries (HM), a healing and reconciliation ministry in the lower mainland of British Columbia. With the help of Indigenous elders, Mary directs the various circles (branches) and programs of the ministries including the teaching of Indigenous children and youth in Hummingbird's Creative Kids program in Surrey.

Ruth Adams is an elder from the Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) and an elder and member of Hummingbird Ministries Council (HMC). She has been working with Mary at Hummingbird since it was established in 2005. Ruth is the elder and the leader of the TFN Hummingbird Circle. She is the leader of the first HM Circle which began at the TFN.

Dorothy Visser is Cree from the Saddle Lake First Nation in Alberta. Dorothy is an elder of the HMC and the leader of HM's Surrey Creative Kids Circle. She is fluent in her language and is a talented musician, singer and composer who teaches songs, guitar and vocals. She has been a pow wow mom for all her children and she and her son are now teaching dancing at the Creative Kids program.
Workshop Sessions #2: 2:15 – 3:30 (pick one)

1) Youth Empowerment and Spiritual Growth Part 2 (continued from Session #1)

Continue a conversation with Kung Jaadee and Martin Brokenleg to learn about their work with youth. How might our spiritual stories and traditions help all young people develop belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity (the four ‘essentials’ that every child needs for healthy development).

Note: Participants may select this workshop even if they did not participate in session 1

2) Spiritual Practices for Children

Children have a natural ability to connect with God. When cultivated through spiritual practices, children find ways to connect with their inner wisdom, to calm themselves, to open their hearts, and to commune with the Source of their being. Spiritual practices can be an integral part of our children's worship, our outreach to local schools and clubs, and to empowering families to bring Spirit more regularly into their home lives. You will learn the various types of practices that will engage children based on their styles and personalities.

Sophia Ducey is the Coordinator of Children, Youth, Families, and Community at Lynn Valley United Church. Sophia has served with children, youth and families in Canada, U.S., Russia and Ukraine. She has a rich spiritual life, and is passionate about cultivating this in the children, youth and adults in the congregations in which she serves.

Christina Kinch is passionate about helping people of all ages explore their own unique ways of connecting with the sacred. Christina is particularly interested in how ritual and spiritual practice support the mental and emotional health of children, youth and families. A Yoga Therapist, Child and Youth Care Practitioner and Energy Healer, Christina is in the process of launching a Family Wellness business in Vancouver. For more info on this new venture, check out her website, christinakinch.com.

3) Sacred Canopy: A Sunday School Makeover

Ever wondered how to make Bible stories bigger rather than smaller in a child’s imagination and experience of them? In this workshop you will learn how one Church transformed its traditional approach to Sunday School from a place “Bible stories are taught” to a performing arts company where sacred story is experienced first hand. The Eastside Story Guild in east Vancouver draws on the breadth of biblical narrative, the body-engagement of theatre and dance, the creative beauty of world culture, and the relational goodness of an intergenerational cast to discover and share an Age-Old Story retold for a new generation.

Tama Ward Balisky is the founding and artistic director of Sacred Canopy, a non-profit educational performing arts organization that works with children, youth and their adult mentors to tell sacred stories using world arts, drama, and music. The three-fold mandate of Sacred Canopy is to nurture confidence and hope in young people, steward cultural heritage, and promote peace and understanding between peoples of different faith backgrounds.

Carsten Crolow is currently on staff with Sacred Canopy as script writer and curriculum developer. He has been involved with Eastside Story Guild over many years as a dad/volunteer, set designer, lead actor, theatre games instructor, and theological collaborator.