

It's been over six months since the Canada Youth 2009 conference

Grandparents take on summer Drama Camp

Paris Presbyterian Sports Camp

Remember to Lead With Care this Summer

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The Vine Helpline: Connecting people, places and programs

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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It's been over six months since the Canada Youth 2009 conference Reuben St Louis, CY'09 Event Coordinator



Youth, young adults and adults have given hundreds of presentations in their congregations across Canada about this life-giving experience. We hope you've seen the pictures and videos of youth living in joyful community and heard the songs that stirred their hearts in worship. These can be seen on our Presbyterian Church in Canada website.

Around this time, though, the excitement begins to fade. The stories are not as fresh as they used to be. The promise of hope and change that once coursed through the veins of participants is now just a glimmer.

But does it have to be this way?

The fact that Canada Youth is over does not mean that its essence has to be packed away for another three years. Here are a few reminders of what Canada Youth is about and how you can integrate that meaning and excitement into your congregations and presbyteries.

Canada Youth is Community

You could not walk 10 feet at Canada Youth without saying "Hi" to someone. The community that was formed was one

EQUIPPING FOR . . . Children & Youth

of love and acceptance. Youth in their small groups could openly share their questions and struggles, feeling safe and loved by their peers. The strong emphasis on community building at Canada Youth fosters an environment based on God's love for us.

However, this community is not a permanent presence in young people's lives. Their congregations play an important role in providing a Christian community that lets them ask tough questions and be who God created them to be.

- **FOLLOW UP:** Build community in your congregation by holding intergenerational events that connect young people with a community that loves them.

Canada Youth is Empowerment

Canada Youth was a showcase of the amazing talent, dedication and leadership of our youth, young adults and adults. The best of what people had to offer was brought out and used to serve God and each other. We, as a church, are blessed to have such wonderful young people, yet we rarely see their potential. We sometimes fail to give them the encouragement to see that potential in themselves.

- **FOLLOW UP:** Invite young people to take leadership roles in your congregation, supporting and encouraging them as they participate in the life and work of the church.

Canada Youth is Missional

Churches, charities and service organizations in St. Catharines, Ontario, benefited from having over 70 young adults come and work with them during Canada Youth. Almost \$3,500 was given by the Canada Youth community to PWS&D for

food security programs in Pakistan. The final worship service was a call to action in the world and in our local communities. This is because we know that, as a flame exists by burning, so the church exists by mission.

- **FOLLOW UP:** Get your youth involved in serving their local community or in planning a short-term mission trip through the PCC's mission partnerships in Canada or internationally.

Canada Youth is Transformational

God's love shown to us in Jesus Christ is transformative. Young people from across Canada experienced that transformational love through worship, study, service, play and prayer. Our hope for Canada Youth is that it does not just transform the individual but that their home congregations would also experience the renewing power of the Spirit.

- **FOLLOW UP:** Ask yourself this question: How can the experiences that our youth had at Canada Youth transform and renew our congregation?

Let's not let this opportunity to learn from Canada Youth 2009 pass us by. Our youth have experienced something powerful that could change us all.



Grandparents Take On Summer Drama Camp

Catherine Held

Last summer our church held its seventh annual Drama Camp. We don't have children at our church, and we wanted to reach out to our grandchildren, great-grandchildren and others in our summer community.

In 2003, St. Columba Presbyterian Church in Parksville, British Columbia, joined forces with our neighbour, the Catholic Church of Ascension, to begin a series of very successful Children's Summer Drama Camps.

Our activities are designed for children from ages six to nine and include drama, music, crafts, prop-making, games and learning-by-doing activities related to the stories. They also include making friends and having fun!

This is how it all started.

Hazel and Iris from St. Columba talked to Father Mike from the Church of Ascension, regretting that, because we have a more mature congregation, there was little Christian Education for the children at St. Columba. When children come, they are usually visiting grandparents or great-grandparents.

Father Mike was a cool, youthful priest who wore his baseball cap sideways, in the lock position. He suggested that Hazel and Iris meet with Shannon, a petite dynamo of a lady who ran all the Christian Education programs at their church, and got things done!



We made the decision to begin planning for the first Drama Camp together.

After choosing the *Veggie Tales* Vacation Bible School package for *Jonah*, our steering committee began planning. We had many meetings that first year, as we set up a framework for each day, working out all the details.

The leaders for each of the areas brought in their teams of helpers. Shannon and Philip worked well together in drama. Hilary teaches music and works wonders with kid-friendly music. Her daughter has been a great helper. I ran the craft and prop area for the first few years, while Hazel took on the snack area. We had a good team for games and a nurse's station set up, which also doubled as a time-out room.

For timekeeper, photocopier, watchman and everything else, we had David, Hazel's husband. He called himself the "Ding-a-Ling," because he walked around with an old-fashioned school bell, ringing it when it was time to change stations. The children called him Grandpa. We really missed him this last year, but the children had fun training his substitutes to do things properly, like Grandpa did!

We've had several other changes. Jackie replaced Shannon. I moved to games, since we needed help in that area. Father Mike moved away, and we now have Father Joseph.

Every year we follow the same pattern, starting with assembly at St. Columba. We have a main truth statement and Bible memory verse, and I do a very short object lesson. Robert, our minister, or Father Joseph leads us in prayer. Children move between the two church buildings as they rotate through the activity stations over the course of the day.

Hilary does musical warm-up exercises, and then groups go off with their leaders according to their schedules. Snack comes mid-morning, and there is another session before lunch. The children find their lunch bags, sit on the floor and watch videos in the darkened hall. Sessions end with assembly, reminders and prayer.

The culmination of the week-long camp is the Friday evening Musical Drama that brings a Bible story to life - and how! It is simply amazing to see

how, in five days, children have lines learned, songs polished, scenery and props prepared, costumes ready, and enthusiasm bursting from them!

After *Jonah*, we were a bit ambitious and did two stories, *Josh* and *Noah's Excellent Adventures*. We had *Holy Moses*, then *Time-Stone Travelers*, *Christmas-in-July*, *Fish Tales*, and this last year, *Acorns to Oaks*.

One year we had 80 children, but decided that we would keep it to a more manageable 60, which allows everyone to have a part.

We have church mice who come in when the day's activities are over to make everything clean again. Our movers 'n' shakers put everything back in order before Sunday. No one would ever know that a typhoon of children had been through the place all week.

I have some concern about whether our increasingly senior congregation will be able keep doing the program. It is harder now to get people to commit in the summer, and we have fewer hefty muscle-men to move furnishings and ready our stage for the week. We borrow four very heavy risers from an elementary school several miles away, which necessitates four fit persons and the use of a truck.

On the positive side, we maintain good relationships with our neighbour church, our church continues to minister with children, prayer becomes a high priority - how can we do it otherwise? - and we see real miracles happen every year!

Catherine Held is a member of St. Columba Presbyterian Church in Parksville, British Columbia.



Paris Presbyterian Church Sports Camp

Joel Sherbino



What happens when a congregation shares the good news as they serve their community?

This question was answered this past summer as Paris Presbyterian Church (PPC) held its third annual Sports Camp. The camp was supported by the congregation's donations of time and money and a first-year grant from The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Creative Ministry with Children and Youth Fund.

I encourage all adults to consider being a part of this ministry next year – you will have a blast!”

– Church member after assisting at Canoe Camp week

One hundred young people, ages 8 to 13, improved their skills in basketball, soccer, ball hockey, hiking and canoeing. A number of teenaged Leaders in Training earned volunteer hours and received ORCA

(Ontario Recreational Canoe Association) Level C certification.

“Sports Camp reminds us that Paris Presbyterian Church is truly a community church.”

– Mother of a camper

“It began with a vision to reach out beyond the walls of our church to our surrounding community of Paris,” says The Rev. Joel Sherbino, minister at PPC. “We had noticed that there were many Vacation Bible School programs, but nothing for the older 8- to 13-year-old group.”

The church decided to address this issue by focusing on three primary objectives:

- Offer a high quality sports camp for youth from ages 8 to 13.
- Make the camp affordable for families in the community.

- Share and model our faith in Jesus Christ in appropriate and engaging ways.

“It’s exciting to see how the congregation has caught the vision of this ministry outreach,” said Joel Sherbino. Half of the congregation’s Christmas offering goes to support it and people continue to donate throughout the year. This money and the start-up funding from the Creative Ministry with Children and Youth Fund allowed the camps to offer professional instruction, as well as instruction from the teachers in the congregation.

In addition to a paid director, 22 adults from the congregation gave their time to help the camp in many ways. A number of teachers and retirees offered instruction in the various sports. This allowed families of participants to pay just a fraction of the actual cost of the camp. That made it affordable for most people in Paris, an Ontario town with a population of about 12,000.

The first week focused on ball hockey, basketball, soccer and a surprise sport. “These are all popular sports, so it seemed like a good fit; plus we had teachers who could help,” Joel said. “I love basketball, so I offered my services.”

During the second week, campers canoed, hiked, biked and orienteered. “In Paris, there are two rivers and two conservation areas with small lakes,” Joel explained. “There is also a generous family who owns an outfitting company. They donated canoes, kayaks and the necessary staff.”

In previous years, swimming was included, but the activity had to be skipped this past summer when the community pool closed.

The daily schedule for the first week of camp looked like this:

8:15 a.m.	Leaders in Training arrive
8:45	Campers arrive
9:00 - 10:30	Ball hockey
10:30 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 12:00	Soccer
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch and Christian message
1:00 - 2:30	Basketball
2:30 - 3:15	Surprise sport
3:30	Camp ends for the day

The second week was similar but the schedule a little more flexible, since campers were transported to a

recreation area and time on the water is often dependent on the weather.

“What excites me is how the camp continues to evolve each year,” Joel said. “Appropriate changes are made, yet we always hold to our three primary objectives. This past year we developed a Leader-in-Training program for youth from ages 14 to 16. We found that they were not interested in being campers, but they loved the opportunity to develop and provide secondary leadership.”

“Thank you for offering such a wonderful opportunity at such an affordable price. There is a great need to reach out to the youth of Paris, and you have succeeded.”

– Mother of camper

PPC Sports Camp doesn’t hide the fact that it is a Christian camp. The leaders are Christians and their faith is the most important part of their lives. Joel reflects, “Each day there is a time for sharing the gospel through story or parable. It is amazing to hear the questions and responses from the campers.” The camp also provides opportunities for sharing faith in a natural and non-confrontational environment.

Following the camp, events are scheduled throughout the year, inviting campers back to stay in touch. And PPC’s reputation is growing in the community. “We are now at a place where the advertising takes care of itself,” Joel said. “An ad in the local paper and a few brochures are all we need. Our registration is filled within two weeks. This is a testimony to the camp’s quality and affordability.”

This is just one example of what can happen when a congregation sees a need in their community. Opportunities surface and the congregation can be equipped to respond. As a result, the gospel is proclaimed as they serve the community.

For more information about the camp or to apply to the Creative Ministry with Children and Youth Fund contact The Vine at 1-800-619-7301, ext. 275 or visit www.presbyterian.ca/webfm_send/3560

Remember to Lead with Care This Summer

Tori Smit & David Phillips



*A Policy for Ensuring a Climate of Safety
for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults
in The Presbyterian Church in Canada*

The summer provides an opportunity to do something outstanding and special in your church. Some congregations offer wonderful annual Vacation Bible School programs; others are adding a Sports or Drama Camp to their children's ministry line-up; still others are trying evening family nights of food, faith and fellowship. Whatever you are planning at your church this summer, don't forget to plan to Lead with Care.

Summer ministries often have new leaders who may be unfamiliar with *Leading with Care*, but cherished leaders can also benefit from an update and re-training. New families will be reassured to know that we have this policy of prevention in place ensuring safety within our congregations.

As the primary leader or volunteer, be sure to conduct programs for children that consider the following:

- Carefully complete the risk factors as outlined on page 21 of the *Leading with Care* policy binder. Be sure, if possible, to have all your check marks in the "No" column. Complete the police records checks well before the event(s). Every church has received a copy of the *Leading with Care* binder. If you do not have one, it can be downloaded at www.presbyterian.ca/resources/online/275 or can be obtained through The Vine at 1-800-619-7301, ext. 275.
- Be sure to check all of the facilities that are used in your summer ministries.
 - Is there an evacuation plan posted and understood by all leaders? Has the evacuation plan been practised?
 - Are all exits clearly marked?

- Is there adequate security within and around the building?
- Are the windows in the classrooms large enough so that someone can see into the room with ease? If not, can the door be left open?
- Is there a well-stocked, easily located first aid kit?
- Is there a washroom procedure for all ages? It may be necessary to have a back-up person when a participant who needs assistance uses the washroom.
- Is there contact information for all participants, including leaders and volunteers?
- Are all leaders aware of the proper use of physical contact?

When training your leadership, plan to take 10 minutes to include the following:

- an overview of the *Leading with Care* policy
- the location of all first aid kits and instruction for use (if there are one or more persons who will be primarily responsible for first aid emergencies, ensure that everyone knows who they are and where they will be at all times)
- evacuation plans
- instruction for safe washroom procedure
- instruction in appropriate and inappropriate touching

There are a series of helpful forms outlining the above, which are included in section #4 of the *Leading with Care* policy. These may be used as they appear or adapted for use in your situation.

Have a wonderful and safe summer.

Information • Leadership • Resources

Looking for help?

The Vine

Connecting people, places and programs

New Number!

1-800-619-7301 ext 275

thevine@presbyterian.ca

Christian Education

- curriculum choices to suit your church
- adult studies
- profession of faith resources
- mid-week program options
- Teacher Leader Courses (TLC)

Leading with Care

- support from a national resource person
- copies of the policy
- checklists for presbyteries

Worship

- services for special days
- baptism and communion resources
- on-line worship planners
- *Prayer partnership*

Evangelism

- links to *Evangelism Connections*
- wide collection of evangelism resources
- resources on growing a hospitable church
- sharing faith through storytelling

Congregational Development

- helping congregations during transition times
- visioning and planning
- resources in times of conflict
- congregational development programs

Ministry with Children and Youth

- *Canada Youth conferences*
- The Creative Ministry with Children and Youth Fund
- easy Christmas concerts
- reaching out to unchurched kids

Elder Training Workshops

- referrals to *Elder's Institute*
- referrals to regional staff in your synod
- reprints of *For Elders*

Referrals

The Vine staff will put you in touch with the people, places and programs you need.



The Vine
www.presbyterian.ca/thevine



The Presbyterian Church in Canada