



UNIVERSITY OF
ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

CALL FOR PAPERS

October 23–24, 2026

Children, Literature, and the Christian Imagination

An International Conference

Keynote Speaker: Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Screenwriter, Novelist, and Children's Laureate (UK)

The University of St. Michael's College invites proposals of individual papers or panels for a conference on the theme of **Children, Literature, and the Christian Imagination**. The keynote will take place on the evening of October 23 and the conference will take place the following day, October 24, 2026.

This conference invites scholars to explore the rich, multi-faceted, and diverse engagement – across centuries, traditions, and literary genres – with Christian faith in literature written for or about children. Many literary histories identify the origins of a distinct genre of children's literature in the overtly didactic rhymes, short tales, and instructional narratives of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That understanding of genre, readership, and literary imagination has evolved and been challenged in numerous ways in various traditions and forms – as have assumptions of a prevailing moral or religious framework through which to engage the reading child.

In recent years, scholars have noted an increasing (and sometimes renewed) interest in exploring religious themes and images within works for young readers. This resurgence has arguably been complemented by a growing willingness within the field of children's literature studies itself to engage directly with more contemporary questions of faith and spirituality.

We invite participants to explore the boundaries and/or existing definitions of the field(s), and to consider the possibilities and challenges of writing or writing about children's literature and the Christian imagination in an era shaped by pluralism, globalism, and polarization. We also invite participants to engage more broadly, particularly in this “age of AI,” in explorations of the relationship between literary imagination, creativity, and religious or spiritual conceptions of the human.

Proposals are welcome on all genres and forms, including:

- Fiction
- Non-fiction
- Poetry and verse (including hymns)
- Drama
- Picture books
- Comics and graphic novels

We encourage submissions that approach the topic from diverse disciplinary, historical, and methodological perspectives. Papers on single authors and/or works are welcome, as are papers that are more multi-ranging in thematic, historical, or cultural focus.

We welcome submissions of individual papers and pre-formed panels with three papers. Papers are 20 minutes long.

Completed panel proposals should be submitted by the panel chair and include:

- Chair's name, affiliation, and a brief biography (100 word max)
- Panel Title
- Summary of Panel (250 word max)
- Individual paper abstracts (250 word max each)
- Panelist names, email addresses, and affiliations
- A/V requirements

Individual paper proposals should include:

- Presenter's name and affiliation
- A/V requirements
- Abstract (250 word max)

Deadline for Submissions: March 31, 2026

Contact: usmc.principalsoffice@utoronto.ca

Conference organizers: Professor Irene Morra, Professor Michael O'Connor