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CD 655 Ministering with Children through the Church

Catherine Stonehouse

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CD 655 - Ministering with Children through the Church

Examines the needs of children in contemporary society, biblical perspectives on children and how they were to be involved in the faith community, and characteristics of the child's physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, and faith development. Explores the ministries a church can provide to involve children in the faith community, meeting their needs, nurturing wholeness and faith.

Course Objectives

Having completed this course with competence, the student will:

- Have a basic understanding of the physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, and spiritual development, the potential and needs of children from birth to age 12.
- Identify processes and commitments characteristic of ministries designed to involve children in a faith community and nurture them toward wholeness and a maturing faith.
- Be able to articulate his/her theology of children's ministries based on Scripture and an understanding of child development.
- Have grown in ability to:
  a. Involve children in meaningful worship and learning.
  b. Support families in the nurture of children.
  c. Support children in times of crisis such as illness, divorce, grief, or abuse.
  d. Nurture special children such as the gifted, those with handicaps, or latch key children.
  e. Examine the issues to consider when deciding on schooling for children.
  f. Identify the support and equipping needs of lay volunteers ministering with children in the church.

Course Format

This course is being offered in Distance Learning format. The class will have students on both the Florida and Kentucky campuses, connected through 2 way voice and video technology. You will have opportunity to get acquainted with colleagues from both campuses through class discussions, group projects, and on-line interaction.

On your First Class Client desktop you have an icon for CD655. Regularly check for a flag by the icon, indicating new postings there for you. In the Course Center, you will find some of your reading materials, along with other resources to use with course work. Within the course icon you
will also find Team folders where you will engage in group discussions, planning, and project development.

**Assignments**

**Reading**

*Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, Catherine Stonehouse  
*Children Matter*, Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannell  
(Book Manuscript draft available in class icon Course Center)  
“Historical Perspectives on Children in the Church: Resources for Spiritual Formation and a Theology of Childhood Today,” by Marcia Bunge in *Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Application*, Donald Ratcliff, ed.  
(Available in class icon Course Center)  
*Family the Forming Center*, Marjorie J. Thompson  
*Offering the Gospel to Children*, Gretchen Wolff Pritchard  
*The Pastoral Care of Children*, Daniel H. Grossoehme  
*Children in Crisis: A New Commitment*, Phyllis Kilbourn, ed.  

Select one of the following:  
*Young Children and Worship*, Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman (Read by March 16)  
*Children in the Worshiping Community*, David Ng and Virginia Thomas (Read by March 16)  
*Why Nobody Learns Much about Anything at Church*, Thom and Joani Schultz (Read by March 31)  
*The Family Friendly Church*, Ben Freudenburg and Rick Lawrence (Read by April 7)  
*Nurturing Faith in Families*, Jolene L. Roehlkepartain (Read by April 7)  
*Celebrating Biblical Feasts in Your Home or Church*, Martha Zimmermans (Read by April 7)  
*Exceptional Teaching: A Comprehensive Guide for Including Students with Disabilities*, Jim Pierson (Read by April 21)  
*Bullying: A Spiritual Crisis*, Ronald Hecker Cram (Read by April 28)  
*Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church*, Joy Thomburg (Read by May 5)  

On the date when all reading is to be completed for a given text, submit a Reading Card stating that you have completed the reading in that text.

The course Schedule indicates the material to be read prior to each class session, and the dates when Reading Cards are due.
Projects

Observe Children: During the term be open to learn from children. When they are present, listen to them. Observe them in worship.

1. Mapping the Journey: (20 points)
   Prepare a comprehensive chart that lays out the characteristics of a child’s psychosocial, cognitive, moral, and spiritual development during the various segments of the journey through childhood, infancy, preschool, early elementary, and pre-adolescence. Also include columns for “Family Implications” and “Ministry Implications.”

   **Grading Criteria:**
   1. Comprehensiveness of descriptions
   2. Insightfulness of implications

   **Due:**
   - Part I – February 24
   - Part II – March 3
   - Full Chart – March 10

2. Spiritual Journey Reflections: (5 points)
   Particularly in the early part of the semester, reflect on your spiritual journey, looking more deeply at your childhood and how that part of the journey has influenced the rest. Prepare a 3-5-page report of your reflections that includes the following.
   a. A diagram of your spiritual journey from birth to the present. Picture high points, low points, critical periods, and key people who walked with you.
   b. Tell the story of your spiritual journey from birth to 12 or 14 years of age and how that part of your journey has impacted you later in life. Reflect briefly on how your experience compares to the child development understandings from course readings.

   **I will be looking for:**
   1. Quality of reflection
   2. Insightfulness regarding the relationship between childhood and ongoing journey

   **Due:** March 31

3. Listening to Children: (20 points)
   Interview three children, one from each age group, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. Write a 3-5 page report of your interviews and your reflections on how the children confirmed or challenged material presented in this course. Submit copies of the children’s drawings with your report.
   In your interviews include the following:
   a. Have each child draw you a picture of God (provide paper and markers or crayons.)
Ask the child to tell you about his or her picture. It would be good to record responses to study later.

b. Show the child a page on which you have written a small 7 and a very large 3. Ask the child which number is bigger.

c. Tell the child the story of two children, one who broke one glass while climbing up to reach candy he/she had been told not to eat before dinner. The second child, while getting dishes to set the table for his/her mother, knocked ten glasses off the counter and broke all ten glasses. Ask: which child was naughtiest? Why? Which child deserves most punishment? Why? Listen carefully to the child’s response to the “why” questions.

d. Ask the child about prayer.

   Do you pray?
   How do you think God hears your prayers?
   Does God ever talk to you?
   How do you hear God?

e. Ask: Have you every felt God close to you? Can you tell me about that?

f. Have each child draw you a picture of something that is special about church. Ask the child to tell you about his or her picture.

**Grading Criteria**

1. Quality of reflection on interviews with children
2. Quality of reflection on course related concepts

**Due: April 14**

4. **Team Project: Church Study and Report: (30 points)**

   Class members will be assigned to one of three teams and each team will study a church with a different approach to ministry with children. Each team will have members from both the Florida and Kentucky campuses, providing the team with insights from two churches.

   **Part I:** Through interviews with children’s ministries leaders and conversations with volunteers in the assigned church, along with observation of the ministries with children, team members will:

   - Get to know the church and its ministries
   - Come to understand the philosophy and theology that guides the ministry
   - Become familiar with the ministries and how children respond to them
   - Discern the place that children have in the life of the faith community
   - Identify ministries offered for families.

   Using templates provided in the Course Center, students will develop an outline describing the ministry with children within the study churches.

   The team will then reflect on these ministries in the light of course content, identifying points of strength and areas where ministry could be enhanced, and develop plans for enhancing the ministries. Throughout the semester class members will contribute insights from their findings to the class discussions.
The team will prepare a 3-5 page paper reporting on their study, the strengths and weaknesses of the ministry, along with plans to enhance the ministry. The data gathering and assessment templates will be included in the appendix. The reports will be submitted and discussed during the final class session.

**Grading Criteria**

1. Depth of understanding of the church’s ministries
2. Insightfulness of assessment in the light of course content
3. Significance of plans for enhancement

**Due:** May 19

**Part II Research Paper:** (10 points) Each team member will select a topic relating to ministry with children, research it, and write up the findings in a 5-page paper. Include reflections on how the findings can be used to enhance the effectiveness of ministry with children. You may cite course materials in the paper, but must also cite at least 3 additional books or articles, and may include insights from Internet resources. Use a standard form of documentation.

This paper is to contribute to your team project, although it will be submitted and graded on its own. The topic chosen should be one that contributes to the enhancement of the ministry your team is studying. Insights from your paper should be represented in the plans for enhancing the ministry of the church.

**Grading Criteria**

1. Significance of findings
2. Insightfulness of application to ministry

**Due:** May 5

All papers are to be typed and double-spaced.

Sources are to be documented using some approved form.

Inclusive language is to be used when speaking of human beings.

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Items Due</th>
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<td>February 10</td>
<td>Getting Started</td>
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<td>February 17</td>
<td>Children in the Bible</td>
<td>Stonehouse Ch. 1-2, May et al Ch. 1, 2, 5</td>
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<td>February 24</td>
<td>Understanding Child Development</td>
<td>Stonehouse Ch. 3-5, May et al Ch. 4</td>
<td>Mapping the Journey - I</td>
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<td>March 3</td>
<td>Knowing God in Childhood</td>
<td>Stonehouse Ch. 6-7, May et al Ch. 3, 7, Bunge</td>
<td>Mapping the Journey - II</td>
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## FINAL DRAFT

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
<th>Related Reading Card</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Communicating Theological Concepts to Children</td>
<td>Stonehouse Ch. 8-9</td>
<td>Mapping the Journey - Complete</td>
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<td>Pritchard Ch. 1-5</td>
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<td>May et al Ch. 11</td>
<td>Stonehouse</td>
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<td>Story in the Child’s Faith Development</td>
<td>Pritchard Ch. 6-10</td>
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<td>May et al Ch. 9</td>
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<td>March 21-25</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
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<td>March 31</td>
<td>Effective Teaching Learning Ministries</td>
<td>May et al Ch. 10, 12</td>
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<td>Reflections</td>
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<td>Ministries with Families</td>
<td>May Ch. 8</td>
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<td>April 14</td>
<td>Generations Learning and Growing Together</td>
<td>May et al Ch. 13</td>
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<td>Schooling Options</td>
<td>Pritchard Ch. 11-18</td>
<td>Children</td>
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<td>Welcoming Special Children Walking with Gifted Children</td>
<td>May et al Ch. 14</td>
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<td>Pastoral Care of Children Preparing for Adolescence</td>
<td>Grossoehme</td>
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<td>Children and Abuse Ministry with at Risk Children</td>
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<td>Leading Ministry with Children</td>
<td>May et al Ch. 15</td>
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<td>Team Reports and Wrap Up</td>
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### Grading

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<tr>
<th>Potential Points</th>
<th>Course Grade Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mapping the Journey</td>
<td>95-100 A 80-82.4 B-</td>
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<td>Spiritual Journey</td>
<td>90-94.9 A- 77.5-19.9 C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening to Children</td>
<td>85-89.9 B+ 75-77.4 C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Church Study</td>
<td>82.5-84.9 B 72.5-74.9 C-</td>
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