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# CE 640 Ministering with Children Through the Church

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Course Prospectus  
January 1999  
Three Hours

### **CE 640 - 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 and the 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.

Be learning from children and through reflecting on personal childhood experiences.

Have grown in ability to:

- a. involve children in meaningful worship.
- b. support children in times of crisis such as divorce, grief, or abuse.
- c. meet the needs of special children such as the gifted, those with handicaps, or latch key children.
- d. examine the issues to consider when deciding on schooling for children.
- e. evaluate programs and resources for their appropriateness to the needs of children and effectiveness in providing processes necessary for faith development.
- f. identify the training needs of lay volunteers ministering to children in the church.

#### **Assignments**

##### **Reading**

*Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, Catherine Stonehouse  
*Childhood Education in the Church*, Robert E Clark, Joanne Brubaker, Roy B. Zuck 1986 Revised and Expanded ed. -- chapters 1, 5-13, 17-22, 24, 25, 30-32, 34.

Read 200 pages from the chapters listed or skim all the designated material catching the main ideas.

*Experiencing the Bible with Children*, Dorothy Jean Furnish.

*Young Children and Worship*, Sonya Stewart and Jerome Berryman.

*Children in Crisis: A New Commitment*, Phyllis Kilbourn, ed.

250 pages of selected readings – Select reading on topics you desire to explore more fully. The reading is to include at least one article or book chapter on **the effect of the media on children** and **helping children deal with divorce**. Reading for the class presentation and paper may be counted. Two hours of reviewing video resources for children's ministries may be substituted for 100 pages of reading. **Submit a list of books read or videos reviewed and the total number of pages.**

Note class schedule for dates by which segments of reading should be completed. Hand in a card indicating that you have completed the assigned readings. Cards are due on the following dates:

**Jan. 8 - Furnish**

**Jan. 12 - Stewart**

**Jan. 13 - Stonehouse**

**Jan. 26 - Kilbourn**

**Jan. 27 - Clark, Brubaker, Zuck and selected readings.**

**Jan. 29 - Selected readings.**

## **Projects**

### **A. Credit - No Credit Projects**

**1. Childhood Reflections:** Once in each of the first three weeks of the term reflect and journal on your childhood experiences and how they impacted your spiritual development. The following are questions for possible reflection. You may choose others.

What during childhood gave me the most satisfaction --the greatest sense of specialness or joy?

What made me uncomfortable or caused pain?

How did my early relationship with my parents impact my self-image and the kind of person I am?

How did my relationship with my parents during childhood shape my image of God?

Who were the persons outside my immediate family who most impacted me during childhood?

What of my experiences in the church were most meaningful and formative? What was most painful and destructive?

What memories do I have of prayer?

Were there times when I felt God's presence?

What do I remember from school experiences with pleasure? with pain?

How did my relationships with other children impact who I am?

**Due Dates: January 12, 15, and 26.**

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

## **B. Graded Projects**

- 1. Basic Beliefs on Ministry with Children Paper:** Prepare an 8-10 page paper integrating your insights and learnings from several sources and articulating what you believe the church should offer in ministries with children. Prepare for the writing of the paper by doing the following.
- a. Interview Children:** Interview three children, one from each age group, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. In your interview include the following:
- i) Have each child draw you a picture of God (provide the child with paper and markers or crayons.)
  - ii) Ask the child to tell you about his or her picture. It would be good to record responses to study later.
  - iii) Do Piaget's conservation experiment with each child.
  - iv) Have the children respond to Piaget's moral dilemma about the broken cups.
  - v) Ask the child about prayer.  
Do you pray?  
How do you think God hears our prayers?
  - vi) Have each child draw you a picture of something that is special about church.
  - vii) Ask the child to tell you about his or her picture.
  - viii) Ask: have you every felt God close to you? Can you tell me about that.
- b. Visit a Church Program for Children :** Attend a program for children in a church.
- i) **Observe** the children and those working with them throughout the event.
  - ii) After the event ask to see the curriculum materials used or talk with the leader about the program, its goals, how it is planned, and the resources that are used.
  - iii) In the light of what you are learning in this course, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program's ministry to the children. Incorporate your insights from this observation and analysis into
- c. Write an 8-10 Page Paper:** Base the paper on material covered in the first two weeks of the course, your interviews, your church visit and reflections.
- i) Discuss what you are coming to believe that children need for the nurturing of their faith.
  - ii) Discuss how findings from your interviews confirmed or differed with material from readings and class presentations (2-3 pages).
  - iii) Given what you have learned about children and ministries with children, what do you believe the church should provide to nurture the faith of children, and how might this be provided (5-8 pages)?

**Paper is due January 26.**

**Be sure to document sources from which ideas in the paper are drawn.**

**Submit pictures with the paper. (more on next page)**

Grading criteria:

1. Understanding of children:
  - a. From course material
  - b. From interviews and church visit.
2. Grasp of the essentials for nurturing a child's faith.
3. Ability to envision how the church can minister to children.

**2. Class Presentation and Paper:** With another student in the class select a topic of interest to you related to children's ministries. Research the topic and plan a 30 minute workshop on that topic for teachers of children in the church or for parents.

Present the workshop to the class. The presentation should give classmates significant insight into the topic and should use methodology that would effectively communicate with the target audience.

Summarize the findings of your research in a 5 to 10 page paper. The paper is **due the day of the presentation**. Each person will write their own paper although the presentation will be given as a cooperative effort.

Grading criteria

1. Significance of content
2. Effectiveness of presentation

## **Final Grade**

Grades for the Basic Beliefs paper, and the Class Presentation and Paper will be averaged for the final grade. Failure to complete the assigned reading or credit - no credit projects will impact the final grade.

**Class attendance is expected.**

**All papers are to be typed and double spaced.**

**Sources are to be documented using some approved form.**

**Inclusive language is to be used.**

**Print SPO number on front of papers.**

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Jan. 5 - Seeing Children Through Jesus' Eyes

Processes for Spiritual Growth

Jan. 6 - Understanding Child Development

**Read: Stonehouse chs. 1-5**

**Clark et. al. chs. 1, 5-10**

Jan. 7 - The Child's Relationship with God

Nurture and Evangelism

**Read: Stonehouse chs. 6-7**

**Furnish pp. 1-61**

Jan. 8 - Story in the Child's Faith Development  
Variations on Tried and True Forms

**Read: Furnish pp. 62-137**

**Stonehouse ch. 8**

**Clark et. al. chs. 30-32**

Jan. 12 - Representing Theological Concepts  
Children in Worship

**Read: Clark et. al. chs. 20-22, 24-25**

**Stewart pp. 1-81. Skim: 85-214**

Jan. 13 - Ministries with Families

**Read: Stonehouse ch. 9**

**Material on Children and Media**

Jan. 14 - The Schooling Choice  
Working with Gifted Children

**Read: Clark et. al. ch. 34**

Jan. 15 - Classroom Management  
A Place for Children with Special Needs

**Read: Clark et. al. chs. 17-19**

**No Class Sessions Jan. 19-22**

Jan. 26 - Children in Crisis  
Grief, Divorce, and Abuse

**Read: Kilbourn chs. 1-21**

**Material on Children and Divorce**

Jan. 27 - Presentations

**Read: Clark et. al. chs. 11-13**

Jan. 28 - Presentations

Jan. 29 – Presentations and Wrap Up