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# CD 655 Ministering with Children Through the Church

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Syllabus  
Fall 2002  
Three Hours

### **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 training needs of lay volunteers ministering with children in the church.

### **Assignments**

#### **Reading**

*Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, Catherine Stonehouse  
*Experiencing the Bible with Children*, Dorothy Jean Furnish.  
*The Pastoral Care of Children*, Daniel H. Grosseohme  
*Children in Crisis: A New Commitment*, Phyllis Kilbourn, ed.  
*Offering the Gospel to Children*, Gretchen Wolff Pritchard  
*Children in the Early Church*, W.A. Strange

**Select one of the following:**

*Young Children and Worship*, Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman (Read by October 3)

*Children in the Worshiping Community*, David Ng and Virginia Thomas (Read by October 3)

*The Family Friendly Church*, Ben Freudenburg and Rick Lawrence (Read by October 22)

*Why Nobody Learns Much about Anything at Church*, Thom and Joani Schultz (Read by October 17)

*Celebrate the Feasts*, Martha Zimmermans (Read by October 17)

Reading is to be completed in each of the texts by the dates listed below. The course Schedule indicates the material to be read prior to each class session. On the completion due date, submit a card indicating that you have completed the assigned reading. Cards are due on the following dates:

**September 12 – Strange**

**October 1 - Stonehouse**

**October 15- Furnish**

**October 22 - Pritchard**

**November 14 - Grosseohme**

**November 19 - Kilbourn**

**As indicated above - Selected readings**

**Projects**

**A. Credit - No Credit Projects**

**1. Childhood Reflections:** As you read and participate in class, reflect on your childhood. Where do you identify? Where were your experiences different from those being presented? Part way through the semester, invest a minimum of an hour reflecting and journaling on the following questions.

How did my relationship with my parents and other significant adults during childhood shape my image of God and relationship with 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?

Where do I see God's prevenient grace at work in my life during childhood?

**Journaling is due: December 5**

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

**3. Cooperative Learning Group:** With 3 other students form a Cooperative Learning Group. Meet early in the first week of class to assign books and decide when to hear

presentations. Each group member will select a different book from the “select one” list of the reading assignment. Group members will read their book and share with the group an outline of the book and key concepts from it. Take a minimum of 30 minutes to present and discuss each book.

## **B. Graded Projects**

**1. Basic Beliefs Paper on Ministry with Children:** 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 interviews include the following:

i. Have each child draw you a picture of God (provide the child with 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.

ii. 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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?

v. Ask: have you every felt God close to you? Can you tell me about that?

vi. 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.

**b. Reflect on the children’s ministries you have seen:** In the light of what you are learning in this course, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the children’s ministries you have seen. If you have had limited experience with children’s ministries you may want to observe a children’s ministry in action. Incorporate your insights from your reflections or observation and analysis into your paper.

**c. Write an 8-10 Page Paper:** Base the paper on material covered in this course, your interviews, and your reflections on children’s ministries.

Discuss what you are coming to believe children need for the nurturing of their faith and how the church can assist in providing those crucial elements.

- i. Discuss how findings from your interviews confirmed or differed with material from readings and class presentations (2-3 pages).
- ii. 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)? Be specific in the plans you suggest for nurturing the faith of children.

**Be sure to document sources of ideas in the paper.**

**Submit pictures with the paper.**

**Paper is due November 5.**

**Grading Criteria**

1. Understanding of children:
  - a. From course material
  - b. From interviews
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:** Select a topic of interest from the list below and prepare a 30-minute presentation on the topic. You may work in pairs on the presentations. Research the topic and plan a creative way of presenting your findings to the class. Dates for the presentations are listed with the topics.

In a 2-4-page paper summarize the research findings that you contributed to the presentation. The paper is **due the day of the presentation**.

**Grading Criteria**

1. Significance of content
2. Effectiveness of presentation

**Presentation Topics**

Creative methods for teaching – October 17  
Nurturing Young Parents – October 22  
Intergenerational experiences, being the family of God – October 24  
ADD and ADHD – October 29  
Preparing for adolescence – October 31  
Schooling – November 12  
Ministry with children of divorce – November 19  
Day care & after school programs – November 21  
Children and media - December 5  
Involving children in service – December 5

**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 when speaking of human beings.**

**Print SPO number on front of papers**

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

September 3	Getting Started
September 5	Children in the Old Testament Reading: Stonehouse chapters 1-2
September 10	Seeing Children Through the Eyes of Jesus Reading: Strange chapters 1-2
September 12	Processes for Spiritual Growth Reading: Strange Chapters 3-5
September 17	Understanding Child Development I Reading: Stonehouse chapters 3-5
September 19	Understanding Child Development II
September 24	Knowing God in Childhood Reading: Stonehouse 6-7
September 26	Nurture and Evangelism
October 1	Communicating Theological Concepts to Children Reading: Stonehouse chapters 8-9
October 3	Children and Worship
October 8	Story in the Child's Faith Development Reading: Furnish chapters 1-3, 6
October 10	Entering Stories with Children
October 15	Variations on Tried and True Forms Reading: Furnish chapters 7-11
October 17	Creative Ministries with Children Reading: Pritchard chapters
October 22	Ministries with Families Reading: Pritchard chapters
October 24	Preparing for Adolescence: Guest Teacher: Dr. Donald M. Joy
October 29	Generations Learning and Growing Together
October 31	An Environment to Nurture Learning and Growth
November 5	Welcoming Special Children

November 7 Walking with Gifted Children  
November 12 Schooling Options  
November 14 Pastoral Care of Children  
Reading: Grosseohme  
November 19 Children in Crisis  
Reading: Kilbourn  
November 21 Ministry with at Risk Children  
December 3 Children and Abuse  
December 5 Presentations  
December 12 1:00 PM Wrap Up