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# CE 640 Ministering with Children Through the Church

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Syllabus  
January 2001  
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.

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. Meet the needs of 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 **(Continued)**

**Select one of the following:**

*Young Children and Worship*, Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman

*Children in the Worshiping Community*, David Ng and Virginia Thomas

*The Family Friendly Church*, Ben Freudenburg and Rick Lawrence

*Why Nobody Learns Much about Anything at Church*, Thom and Joani Schultz

*Celebrate the Feasts*, Martha Zimmermans.

Reading is to be completed in each of the texts by the dates listed below. Note that you should complete the reading in Stonehouse and Pritchard before class begins January 2. On the due date, submit a card indicating that you have completed the assigned reading. Cards are due on the following dates:

**January 2 – Stonehouse**

**January 2 - Pritchard**

**January 4 - Furnish**

**January 10 - Grosseohme**

**January 10 - Kilbourn**

**January 11 - Selected readings**

**Projects**

**A. Credit - No Credit Projects**

**1. Childhood Reflections:** Each day during the first week of class take a few minutes (at least 10 – 15) to 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: January 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 discussing each book. Your Cooperative Learning Group may choose to also work together on the Panel of Experts project.

## **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 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. 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.
- iv. 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.
- v. Ask the child about prayer.
- vi. Do you pray?
- vii. How do you think God hears your prayers?
- viii. Does God ever talk to you?
- ix. How do you hear God?
- x. Have each child draw you a picture of something that is special about church.
- xi. Ask the child to tell you about his or her picture.
- xii. Ask: have you every felt God close to you? Can you tell me about that?

**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 that 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 January 9.**

**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. Panel of Experts and Paper:** With three other students select a topic of interest from the list below. Each member of the group will research some aspects of the topic and you will become a Panel of Experts in class, to answer our questions on the topic. Plan a creative way of focusing our attention on the topic. This introduction should take no more than 3 – 5 minutes. Ask the panel the first question and then, from insights gained through your research, respond to questions from the class. You will have 30 minute for this discussion of your topic. Panels will be scheduled during the **last two class sessions**.

In a 2-3 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**

|                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ministry with children of divorce | Creative methods for teaching |
| Children and media                | Preparing for adolescence     |
| ADD and ADHD                      | Involving children in service |

Day care & after school programs      Intergenerational experiences, being  
the family of God

### **Final Grade**

Grades for the Basic Beliefs paper, and the Panel of Experts discussion 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**

January 2: AM - Seeing Children Through Jesus' Eyes  
Processes for Spiritual Growth  
January 2: PM - Understanding Child Development  
January 3: AM - The Child's Relationship with God  
Nurture and Evangelism  
January 3: PM - Communicating Theological Concepts to Children  
Children in Worship  
January 4: AM - Story in the Child's Faith Development  
Variations on Tried and True Forms  
January 4: PM - Ministries with Families  
January 5: AM – Creative Ministries  
January 9: AM - Classroom Management  
Preparing for Adolescence  
January 9: PM - A Place for Children with Special Needs  
Working with Gifted Children  
January 10: AM - Pastoral Care with Children  
January 10: PM - Children in Crisis  
Ministry with at Risk Children  
January 11:AM - Children and Abuse  
January 11: PM - Presentations  
January 12: AM - Presentations and Wrap Up