

Foundations in Ministry with Children J-Term 2015

Course Number: CED 515 Course Credit: 3
Course Mode and Time: Daily for 14 sessions January 5 – 22, 2015
8:30 a.m. - Noon
Location:
Instructor: Terri Elton
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Course Description

This course explores the lives of children and families and their involvement in the larger life and ministry of the congregation. Course involves direct observation of children, as well as studies of such issues as age-level/faith developmental characteristics, children and worship, first communion instruction, ministry to children in crisis, and faith formation in the home.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will **understand children from various perspectives** and be able to **translate their learnings into ministry**.
2. Students will be able to **articulate the role faith communities** have in ministry with children.
3. Student will **understand the role of families** in ministry with children.
4. Students will **construct their own view of ministry with children**.
5. Students will **gain an understanding of theoretical, theological, and practical resources** for ministry with children.

Required Readings:

Books:

- Beckwith, Ivy, *Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).
- Beckwith, Ivy and David Csinos, *Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013).
- Hinkle, Mary, *Signs of Belonging: Luther's Marks of the Church and the Christian Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2003).
- Mercer, Joyce, *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005)
- Morgenthaler, Shirley, *Exploring Children's Spiritual Formation: Foundational Issues* (River Forest, IL: Pillar Press, 1999).

Essays or Chapters: (e-reserves or links)

- Anderson, David and Paul Hill, *Frogs without Legs Can't Hear: Nurturing Disciples in Home and Congregation*. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2003). Introduction, Chapters 1, 2 and 8.
- Benson, Peter L., "How Igniting Our Children's Sparks Can Support and Save Our Children and Their Future," *LifeLong Faith Journal* (Vol 5.3, Fall 2011), access at: <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/journal.html>.
- Dean, Kenda Creasy, *Almost Christian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). Chapters 1 and 2.

- Elton, Terri, "What is Faith Formation in a Missional Age?" *LifeLong Faith Journal* (vol 7.4, Winter 2013), access at: <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/journal.html>.
- Elton, Terri, "Adolescent Identity in the Midst of Malls and Amazon.com – living in an alternative economy," *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* (January 2012), access at: <http://www.elca.org/JLE/Articles/171>.
- Martinson, Black, and Roberto, *The Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry*, (St. Paul: EYM Publishing, 2010). Chapter 2.
- Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J., *Let the Children Come: Reimagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003). Chapters 1 and 6.
- Miller, Patrick, "That the Children May Know: Children in Deuteronomy" in Bunge, Fretheim, and Roberts Gaventa, eds. *The Child in the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2008).
- Streicher, Debbie, "Milestone Ministry: An Effective Model of Lifelong Faith Formation" *LifeLong Faith Journal* (Fall 2014), access at: <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/journal.html>.

Communities:

- *Prior to class*, attend a community of faith and "read" their interactions with children. In the first class time, students will share three observations with the class.
- *The weekend between the first and second weeks of class* (1/9-11), observe how another community of faith interactions with children or observe how children are engaged in "the public square" (at a store, in a park, at a community function). Students will share their observations in class on Monday, January 12th.

Pedagogical Approach:

Learning commitments of this class: Learning includes, but is more than, sharing information and individuals gaining knowledge. Learning includes, but is more than, the exchange between teacher and students. Learning entails exposure to new ideas, moments of discovery and questioning, times of connecting information to real-life situations and problem-solving, and wondering about implications of ideas on the future. Learning is personal and communal, and its path is hard to chart. Vibrant communities of learning involve individuals joining together in engaging around a subject matter or current reality, sharing power and creating meaningful encounters. There is a healthy mix of information sharing, processing, and connecting ideas to lived experiences.

In an effort to set parameters for a vibrant learning environment, this course will draw on *three streams* of learning as it seeks to create a shared learning experience around the topic of ministry with children. One stream of learning will arise from the *work students do on their own*. (This work takes the form of readings, reflective assignments, and fulfilling the written assignments.) One stream of learning will arise from the *sessions led by the professor* during scheduled class times. (This work takes the form of lectures and professor-facilitated learning exercises.) And one stream is the *work students do for and with other students*. (This work included small group discussions, class presentations, and resource reviews.) All three streams are important and work together to create a learning community that fosters individual and group learning.

Class sessions typically have three components:

1. *Student-led discussions* engage the readings and personal reflections on the topic of the day.
2. *Professor-led teaching* on the topic of the day.
3. *Practitioner or Student-led teaching* on the topic of the day.

There are three movements in this course. The *first movement* raises two questions around ministry with children: 1) Where are we (the church)? And 2) What are we (the church) up to? The *second*

movement is a step back from the present and offers various lenses for rethinking ministry with children and the church's role in their spiritual formation. The *third movement* is a constructive one addressing current realities with an eye to the future. In this movement students construct their own understanding of ministry with children, articulate the role faith communities have in this formation, and name Christian practices critical for embodying such an understanding.

Required Assignments:

1. **Daily Readings and Small Group Participation:** Each class session focuses a particular topic within one of the three movements named above. As part of preparing for each class session, students are assigned readings. The primary way readings will be engaged is in the daily small group discussion time. It is critical for classroom engagement, group discussion, and completing written assignments that student engage the readings. Readings are to be integrated into written assignments. Communal learning experiences are a key learning stream for this course. Therefore students are expected to be active participants in each session. If students cannot attend class or participate in their small group, they should contact the instructor. More than two unexcused absences will result in a deduction of participation points. 14-13 classes (or excused absence) – 10 points; 12-11 classes – 8 points; 10-9 classes – 6 points; 8 or below – 4 points. **10% of grade**
2. **Course Contribution:** Each student contributes to the learning process of the class in two formal ways.
 - a. **Small Group Leadership:** Twelve (of the 14) sessions have small group time as portion of the class time. Students share in the leadership of the small group time. Small groups will be created in the first session and in that session students sign-up for the session/s they will lead. The leadership of small group discussions contributes to the student's final grade. Students create a plan for the discussion which is to be written-up and turned into the instructor, along with a 2-page summary of the discussion. Lesson plans and summaries are turned in the day after the student leads the discussion. Samples are provided in Appendix A. (If students lead the discussion more than one time, only one lesson plan and Summary have to be turned in.) Discussion plan = 6 points. (Creativity = 2 points; Connecting Reading to Topic – 4 points.) Summary = 4 points. (All points will be given if reflection is 2 pages in length and free of grammatical errors.) **10% of grade**
 - b. **Resource Review:** Each student reads and reviews a book or curriculum related to ministry with children. Reviews are written up, as well as presented to the class in the session in which it is topic. *Written reviews* are 3-5 pages in length and address four areas: background of the author/organization, overview of the content, appreciative critique of the resource, and suggestions on ways this resource would be used by a congregational leader. *Class presentations* are 15-20 minutes in length and are intended to introduce the resources and compliment the written review. Each student works with a different resource and students choose from the list provided in Appendix B. Due on the say assigned and posted in class site. Written reviews are worth 16 points (each section is worth 4 points) and class presentations are worth 4 points (3 points for covering content and 1 for creativity). **20% of grade**
3. **Ministry framework for Ministry with Children and Ministry with Children Matrix:** The course is designed to help students construct their own framework for ministry with children. Two assignments, both due the final week of the course, are the ways students integrate their learnings from class and their own experience with an eye toward their future ministry leadership and vocational goals.

- a. **Ministry with Children Framework** – In this course students construct their own framework for ministry. This framework for ministry with children is articulated in a 5-7 page paper. The following elements are to be addressed in the paper: Biblical and theological foundation, clearly articulated definition of ministry, what this framework means for ministry with children, integration of course readings (be they direct quotes or general ideas), and ministry practices which embody this ministry framework. Papers are turned into the instructor at class on **Tuesday, January 20th**. Each element of the paper is worth 7 points. **35% of grade**
- b. **Ministry with Children Matrix** – As a supplement to the framework for ministry with children paper, students also summarize their learnings by creating a ministry with children matrix. The matrix (found in Appendix C) captures developmental issues, biblical stories, theological ideas, Christian practices, and missional opportunities connected to specific age groups and family life. This grid is intended to be a resource for students as they lead ministry with children both now and in the future. Therefore offer citations of resources or books for further investigation. Matrix are due the final day of class, **Thursday, January 22nd**. Each area (developmental issues, etc.) is worth 5 points. Noting 5 or more ideas in each age group with citations = 5 point. Noting 3-5 ideas in each age group with citations = 4 points. Noting 3-5 ideas in each age group with some citations = 3 points. Noting 3-5 ideas in each age group with no citations = 2 points. Less than 3 ideas in each age group = 1 point. **25% of grade**

Grading:

A word on grading. To pass the course, students must *turn in all assignments*. It is the expectation of the instructor that all written assignments are *free of grammatical errors and sources are cited properly*. Deductions will be given if sources are not sited and/or grammatical errors are problematic. *Late assignments* will be accepted only if the student gets permission and makes alternative arrangements with the instructor before the due date. For further instruction on expectations, see specific assignments.

Grades will be determined by the following percentage:

Participation	10%
Small Group Leadership	10%
Resource Review	20%
Matrix	25%
Paper	35%

Course Outline:

Getting Started

Day 1	Who are we? and What are we up to?	Assignments
January 5, 2015	A review of syllabus and assignments. Getting to know each other.	Read: How a community of faith engages the children in their midst. Bring three observations to class. Other: Bring a picture of a child who is important to you.

Ministry with Children: Where Are We? and What Are We Up To?

Day 2	Where are we?	Assignments
Tuesday, January 6, 2015	A look at the church today around faith formation.	Read: Dean, <i>Almost Christian</i> – Chapters 1 and 2. Beckwith, <i>Postmodern Children’s Ministry</i> , introduction and Chapter 1. Resource Review: Dean, <i>Almost Christian</i> .
Day 3	What are we up to?	Assignments
Wednesday, January 7, 2015	What is the call of ministry with children?	Read: Morgenthaler, <i>Exploring Children’s Spiritual Formation</i> , introduction, Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Beckwith, <i>Postmodern Children’s Ministry</i> , Chapters 2 and 3. Resource Review: none.
Day 4	What is the role of the faith community?	Assignments
Thursday, January 8, 2015	Congregations have often taken on the role of being the primary leader in forming faith in children. What role should faith communities play and why?	Read: Morgenthaler, <i>Exploring Children’s Spiritual Formation</i> , introduction, Chapters 17, 18, and 19. Mercer, <i>Welcoming Children</i> , Chapter 5. Beckwith, <i>Postmodern Children’s Ministry</i> , Chapters 4 and 5. Martinson, Black, Roberto, <i>Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry</i> , Chapter 2. Resource Review: Martinson, Black, Roberto, <i>Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry</i> .
Day 5	Where do we go from here?	Assignments
Friday, January 9, 2015	Communities are at a crossroads. What’s next?	Read: Beckwith, <i>Postmodern Children’s Ministry</i> , Chapter 9. Csinos and Beckwith, <i>Children’s Ministry in the Way of Jesus</i> , Chapters Forward, Introduction, and Chapter 1. Elton, “What is Faith Formation in a Missional Age?” <i>Lifelong Faith</i> . Resource Review: none.

Stepping Back: Rethinking Ministry with Children

Day 6	Rethinking Childhood	Assignments
Monday, January 12, 2015	Let’s start rethinking, by rethinking childhood itself. Are children problems to care for? Are they consumers in training? Are they adults in training?	Read: Marty, <i>The Mystery of the Child</i> , Chapter 4. Mercer, <i>Welcoming Children</i> , Chapter 3. Morgenthaler, <i>Exploring Children’s Spiritual Formation</i> , Chapters 4 and 12. Be prepared to share observations from another community of faith or from the public square. Resource Review: Martin Marty, <i>The Mystery of the Child</i> .

Day 7	Rethinking Childhood	Assignments
Tuesday, January 13, 2015	And what are children called to be and do? What do we do with the agency of children?	Read: Miller-McLemore, <i>Let the Children Come</i> , Chapters 1 and 6. Bunge, “The Vocation of the Child” in <i>The Vocation of the Child</i> . Resource Review: Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, <i>Let the Children Come</i> .
Day 8	Rethinking Ministry	Assignments
Wednesday, January 14, 2015	Let’s step back and also ask the same of ministry – what is ministry’s primary role? And what does that mean for children?	Read: Morgenthaler, <i>Exploring Children’s Spiritual Formation</i> , Chapter 9. Mercer, <i>Welcoming Children</i> , Chapter 2. Resource Review: Strommen, Merton P., and Dick Hardel. <i>Passing on the Faith</i> .
Day 9	Rethinking Ministry	Assignments
Thursday, January 15, 2015	What resources do our traditions have to help rethink ministry with children?	Read: Csinos and Beckwith, <i>Children’s Ministry in the Way of Jesus</i> , Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Patrick Miller, “That the Children May Know: Children in Deuteronomy” in <i>The Child in the Bible</i> . Hinkle, Mary, <i>Signs of Belonging</i> . Review the Baptismal Service in your denomination. Resource Review: Orange curriculum.
Day 10	Rethinking Family	Assignments
Friday, January 16, 2015	And how do families fit into ministry with children and communities of faith?	Read: Morgenthaler, <i>Exploring Children’s Spiritual Formation</i> , Chapter 20. Beckwith, <i>Postmodern Children’s Ministry</i> , Chapter 6. Anderson, David and Paul Hill, <i>Frogs without Legs Can’t Hear</i> , Introduction, Chapters 1, 2 and 8. Resource Review: Anderson, David. <i>From the Great Omission to Vibrant Faith</i> . Thompson, Marjorie J., <i>Family: The Forming Center</i> .

Ministry with Children Moving Forward

Day 11	Christian Identity, Community and God’s Story	Assignments
Monday, January 19, 2015	What’s at the core? The role of God’s story and Christian community in fostering a Christian identity.	Read: Beckwith, <i>Postmodern Children’s Ministry</i> , Chapter 7. Csinos and Beckwith, <i>Children’s Ministry in the Way of Jesus</i> , Chapters 5, 6, and 7. Elton, “Adolescent Identity in the Midst of Malls and Amazon.com – living in an alternative economy.” Resource Review: Jerome Berryman, <i>Godly Play</i> . Rotation Sunday School.

Day 12	Worship and Connecting the Generations	Assignments
Tuesday, January 20, 2015	Living as Christians – Christian practices and the importance of gathering in Christian community. Clare – 9:40 am	Read: Beckwith, <i>Postmodern Children's Ministry</i> , Chapter 8. Csinos and Beckwith, <i>Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus</i> , Chapters 8 and 9. Streicher, Debbie, "Milestone Ministry" in <i>LifeLong Faith</i> . Resource Review: SparkHouse Resources. Paper: Framework for Ministry with Children paper due. (Bring to class.)
Day 13	Service and Leadership	Assignments
Wednesday, January 21, 2015	Living as Christians in the world - discovering agency and living scattering in the world.	Read: Csinos and Beckwith, <i>Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus</i> , Chapters 10, 11, and 12. Benson, Peter L., "How Igniting Our Children's Sparks Can Support and Save Our Children and Their Future," <i>LifeLong Faith Journal</i> Resource Review: <i>Group Publishing - VBS</i>
Day 14	Sent to Lead	Assignments
Thursday, January 22, 2015	Where are we? Translating our learning into leading communities of faith.	Read: none. Other: Come to class ready to share 1 learning, 1 question, and 1 resource for ministry with children. Matrix: Matrix for Ministry with Children due.

Appendix A – Small Group Leadership Samples

Sample #1

*Hat Full of Quotes*¹

In this exercise the leader (or students) chose quotes from within the reading they find interesting or challenging, ideas that get the group thinking on the topic of the day in a particular way. Before class, the leader has a series of quotes typed out on separate sheets of paper. (Or the leader invites students to each bring two quotes to share.) As the group gathers, place the quotes in a hat. The leader gives the group instructions and offers a framing question. One by one students draw a quote from the hat and offer their thoughts of the quote in relation to the framing question. Space is left for one or two other students to offer their thoughts, and then the hat is given to another student and the process repeated.

Sample #2

*Sentence Completion*²

Open the session giving students 5-7 minutes to write down the answers to these half sentences. (This can be by giving them a sheet of paper with the questions already written on it or the questions can be written on a white board for everyone to see.)

What most struck me about this reading for the discussion today is...

The question that I'd most like to ask the author of the chapter is...

The idea I most take issue with in the reading is...

The most crucial point in the reading was...

The part of the reading that I felt made the most sense to me was...

The part of the reading that I felt was most confusing was...

After taking time to reflect and write on at least one of the half questions and share your reflections with the group.

Sample #3

*A Quote to Affirm, a Quote to Deny*³

Choose from the assigned reading several quotes – some you wish to affirm and some you wish to challenge. (The leader can offer a collection for the whole group or each student can be invited to bring some in each category.) In small groups present the quotes, allowing each student to offer their perspective on the quotes. A quote may be chosen because it insightful, wrong, or simply confusing. This

¹ This exercise is taken from Stephen Brookfield's *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, p. 83.

² This exercise is adapted from Stephen Brookfield's *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, p. 70-71.

³ This exercise is adapted from Stephen Brookfield's *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, p. 74.

exercise helps students read in a way that doesn't demand they are able to comprehend every element of the argument, but honors ideas that are worth reflecting on more deeply.

Sample #4

*Circular Response Technique*⁴

Students come to class prepared to engage the readings in light of the theme of the day. Begin by forming a circle and ask for a volunteer to start the discussion. This person is asked to speak for two minutes on the theme from an aspect of their choosing from the assigned reading. After two minutes, the first person yields the floor, and the person sitting to the speaker's left speaks for two minutes. The second person must begin his or her remarks by paraphrasing the comments of the first person, and then he or she must show in his or her contributions how what he or she is saying springs from, and is grounded in, the comments of the first person. After two minutes, the second person stops speaking, and the next person to the left becomes the third speaker, and so it goes.

The ground rules are these: 1- No one may be interrupted while speaking, 2- no one may speak out of turn in the circle, 3- each person is allowed only two minutes to speak, 4- each person must begin by paraphrasing the comments of the previous person, and 5- each person, in all comments, must strive to show how his or her remarks spring from, and are grounded in, the comments of the previous person.

After each person has been able to speak, the floor is open for reactions and further discussion.

⁴ This exercise is almost completely taken from Stephen Brookfield's *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, p. 150.

Appendix B – Resource Review List

Anderson, David. *From the Great Omission to Vibrant Faith*. Vibrant Faith Publishing, 2009.

Berryman, Jerome W. *Godly Play: An Imaginative Approach to Religious Education*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1991.

Dean, Kenda Creasy, *Almost Christian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Group Publishing – Vacation Bible School Curriculum and Children’s Ministry Magazine.

Martinson, Black, and Roberto, *The Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry*, (St. Paul: EYM Publishing, 2010).

Marty, Martin E. *The Mystery of the Child*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007).

Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J., *Let the Children Come: Reimagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

Orange Curriculum – whatisorange.org

Rotation Sunday School – rotation.org

SparkHouse Curriculum – Augsburg Fortress – wearesparkhouse.org

Strommen, Merton P., and Dick Hardel. *Passing on the Faith: a Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry*, (Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press/Christian Brothers Publications, 2000).

Thompson, Marjorie J., *Family: The Forming Center. A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*, (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1989).

Appendix C - Ministry with Children Matrix

	Birth – Preschool	Early Elementary (K-2nd)	Late Elementary (3rd - 5th/6th)
Developmental Learnings	(Children)		
	(Parents and families)		
Intersection with God’s Story	(Children)		
	(Parents and families)		
Theological Connection	(Children)		
	(Parents and families)		
Christian Practices	(Children)		
	(Parents and families)		
Missional Engagement/ Connection to the world	(Children)		
	(Parents and families)		