



PROVIDENCE  
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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## EM5108 Trends and Problems in Children's and Youth Ministry

3 credit hours

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### Course Description

An advanced study of ministry with children and youth from birth to age 18, including relevant contemporary issues which affect this ministry. Analysis of current children's curricula, programs, organizations and resources will be embedded in practical assignments.

### Required Textbooks

DeVries, Mark and Annette Safstrom. *Sustainable Children's Ministry from Last-minute Scrambling to Long-term Solutions*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2018. (200 pages)

ISBN-978-0-8308-4522-4.

Fitch, David E. *Seven Practices for the Church on Mission*. Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 2018. (132 pages)

ISBN-978-0-8308-4142-4

### Required Readings

Smith, Gordon T. *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion & Authentic Transformation*. Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Press, 2001. (233 pages)

Twenge, Jean. *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood—and What That Means for the Rest of Us*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017. (313 pages)

## Learning Goals:

1. Analyze theological assumptions and practical approaches to children's faith formation, conversion and transformation in various curriculums.
2. Compare student's personal faith journey and milestones to a target set of competencies for children and youth.
3. Create a one-hour lesson plan for specific age group of children.
4. Develop story-telling skills in order to shape a story for a variety of audiences.
5. Become familiar with programming philosophies of both Fitch and DeVries/Safstrom. Incorporate their strategies into your children's ministry plan, and system for evaluation.
6. Understand safe place policy foundations and implement a Plan to Protect safe place policy.

## Course Assignments

ASSIGNMENT	VALUE	DUE DATE
1. Curriculum Assessment and Analysis	30%	Feb 28
2. Children's ministry calendar	25%	April 9
3. Lesson planning	25%	March 20
4. Self-reflection	10%	April 3
5. CNet Children's Ministry Conference attendance and reflection	10%	March 9

## General Guidelines for the Submission of Written Work

### *Formatting Papers*

- Papers should be typed, double-spaced and follow the appropriate formatting guidelines (e.g. 1 inch margins).
- Follow either [Chicago Style](#) or the [Horizon Format Guide](#) consistently.
- Employ gender-inclusive language wherever possible and appropriate.
- Use a standard font (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Georgia, Tahoma, Times New Roman, Verdana).
- Use *italics* rather than underlining (including in the footnotes and bibliography).
- Use footnotes only, not endnotes.
- The length of papers should fall within +/- 10% of the stated length. Papers that fall outside the length guidelines may not be graded and will receive a grade reduction.

Failure to follow these guidelines warrants a grade reduction.

### *Submitting Your Assignments*

Assignments should be submitted via [Populi](#). This [video](#) explains how to submit assignments on Populi (the link to the video is also available on the info tab of the Populi course page).

Please contact the professor well in advance if you would like to request an adjustment to any of your due dates. A late penalty will be assessed for all overdue assignments: 1-3 days late, penalty of 10%; 4-6 days late, penalty of 20%. After six days late, an assignment receives a grade of 0.

## ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Curriculum assessment and analysis
  - a) Explore 4 curriculum websites: David C Cook, Meeting House, Orange, and one other that interests you.
  - b) Compare and contrast foundations: (3 pages)
    - i. Statement of faith
    - ii. Mission/vision/values
    - iii. History
    - iv. Scope and sequences
    - v. Lesson Format options
    - vi. Identified audience
  - c) Generate working definitions of the following terms: faith formation, conversion, and transformation. Identify and analyze theological assumptions and practical approaches to faith formation, conversion and transformation in children in these four curriculum sources. Locate the curriculum theologically and demonstrate your thesis with evidence from the curriculum. (2 pages)
  - d) Articulate ways that you see these curriculums addressing or not addressing current issues in children and youth ministries. (2 pages)
  - e) Write a persuasive ½ page rationale for choosing one of these curriculums. Students will engage in conversation with classmates during module, to come to consensus on one curriculum.

Readings: Gordon Smith, *Beginning Well*.

**Assignment length: 8 pages**

**Due date: Feb 28**

2. Children's Ministry Calendar. You will build a clear and compelling one-page children's ministry calendar which could be distributed to the congregation at the beginning of the ministry year. Incorporate Sunday morning themes as needed, all volunteer training sessions, mile-stone events, and any other large events tied to the calendar. Do not create weekly mid-week programs for this assignment. Your large events could be scheduled mid-week, however.

The following components will be submitted in addition to the calendar, to document the foundational pieces for the calendar.

- a) Choose one of the core competencies samples from DeVries/Safstrom, page 212-213, Appendix D. Make adjustments if needed, so that you can own it as yours. (1 page max)
- b) Explore the difference in ministry philosophies as you compare Fitch and DeVries/Safstrom. Identify the ways that you are incorporating aspects of both of these approaches into your children's ministry. (2 pages)
- c) Choose a curriculum, and incorporate the themes from the scope and sequence into your planning.
- d) Develop milestone events that will be included as part of the spiritual formation of children and/or youth, and families. (2 pages)
- e) Construct a budget for the year. Excel template will be provided. (1 page)

- f) Design a system for evaluating your ministry, using one of the following evaluation tools: (1 page)
- i. SMART goals
  - ii. 3-year goals and annual benchmarks
- Clearly articulate 2 goals, with measurable benchmarks/ indicators for each goal for your calendar year.

Make sure to incorporate both Fitch's values, and DeVries/Safstrom's measurement strategies, paying particular attention to your core competency list.

**Assignment length: 8 pages**

**Due date: April 9**

3. Demonstrating awareness of developmental stages, and contextual factors, develop a one-hour lesson plan.

Select one target age group for your lesson plan.

- Preschool (3-5 years)
  - Elementary (K-Grade 3)
  - Pre-teen (Grade 4-5)
  - Jr Youth (Grade 6-8)
  - High School (Grade 9-10)
- a) You may choose your own design, or may design your lesson using the outlines of the curriculum chosen in assignment #2 as a guide. Be creative. You may want to include components of drama, storytelling, memory verse activity, art, music, take home papers. Give clear instructions so that you could give this lesson plan to your classmates, and they could teach it to a group of children or youth.
- b) Adapt your story and lesson for two of the listed alternative contexts. Identify where you made your adaptations, and give clear rationale.
- i. You are part of a small church where your target age group is part of a larger audience.
  - ii. You have been invited to lead a Bible lesson for an inner-city Saskatoon street mission.
  - iii. You are invited to teach children/youth whose parents serve in faith-based cross-cultural contexts on a weekend retreat.
  - iv. Suggest another scenario.
- c) Outline effective Plan to Protect practices for one of your contexts, demonstrating a thorough understanding of principles which need to be taken into account.

Take the assessment [plantoprotect.com/en/services/assessment-tool/](http://plantoprotect.com/en/services/assessment-tool/) based on one of these scenarios.

- d) In consultation with the instructor, develop a 30-minute lesson plan for the children's ministry module which you will teach.

Assignment length: 8 pages

**Due date: March 20**

#### 4. Self-reflection

Reflect on your own spiritual formation through early childhood elementary years, youth and young adulthood.

- Identify formative relationships (family/parents, teachers, coaches, friends, camp counsellors, mentors), events, places and routines.
- Describe the stories, images and prayers that demonstrate your early understandings and relationship with God.
- Reflect on how these have contributed to your current knowledge and commitment to God.

After reflecting on your own faith journey, evaluate and adjust the core competencies which were used for assignment #2.

How was the church present in your faith formation? What spiritual longings or questions can you identify, that may be better met through an effective children or youth ministry?

#### Assignment length:

Reflection: 5 pages

Core competencies: ½ - 1 page

**Due date: April 3**

#### 5. Attend the Saskatoon CNET Children's Ministry Conference, March 7, 9am-4:30pm.

Register here: <https://cnetsaskatoon.ca/>

Submit a reflection and evaluation of the conference.

- a) Summarize your experience of the day, including breakout sessions.
- b) Evaluate the conference:
  - i. What was done well?
  - ii. What did you learn? (Identify 3 key take-aways.)
  - iii. What surprised you?
  - iv. What would you change?

**Assignment length** – 1 page

**Due date: March 9**

#### Grading

A+	97-100%	C+	77-79%
A	93-96%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-79%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
		F	<60%

## Bibliography

### 1. General Resources

- Barna, George. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions: Why Children Should Be Your Church's #1 Priority*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 2003.
- Beckwith, Ivy. *Formational Children's Ministry: Shaping Children Using Story, Ritual, and Relationship*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010.
- . *Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Grand Rapids: Youth Specialties, 2004.
- Bibby, Reginald W. *Beyond the Gods & Back: Religion's Demise and Rise and Why It Matters*. UBC Press, 2011.
- . *Resilient Gods: Being Pro-Religious, Low Religious, or No Religious in Canada*. 2017.
- Black, Thom. *Born to Fly*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Chromey, Rick. *Energizing Children's Ministry in the Smaller Church*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 2008.
- Crouch, Andy. *The Tech-Wise Family*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017.
- DeVries, Mark and Annette Safstrom. *Sustainable Children's Ministry from Last-minute Scrambling to Long-term Solutions*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2018.
- Fitch, David E. *Seven Practices for the Church on Mission*. Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 2018.
- Frisk, Natalie. *Raising Disciples*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2019.
- Fowler, James W. *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*. 1987. Theology and Pastoral Care Series. Ed. Don S. Browning. 4 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989.
- James, Steven. *30 Old Testament Quickskits for Kids*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard, 2004.
- . *The Creative Storytelling Guide for Children's Ministry*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard, 2002.
- Jutila, Craig. *The Growing Leader: Healthy Essentials for Children's Ministry*. Loveland, CO: Group Pub., 2004.
- May, Scottie, Posterski, Beth, Stonehouse, Catherine, and Cannell, Linda. *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community*. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Neufeld, Gordon and Gabor Maté. *How to Hold on to Your Kids*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2004.
- Penner, James. Hemorrhaging Faith (<http://hemorrhagingfaith.com/2011>).
- Roehlkepartain, Jolene L. *Children's Ministry That Works: The Basics & Beyond*. Loveland, CO: Group Books, 1991.
- Rath, Tom. *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. New York: Gallup Press, 2007.

Rupp, Anne Neufeld. *Growing Together: Understanding and Nurturing Your Child's Faith Journey*. Winnipeg: Faith & Life Press, 1996.

Smith, Gordon T. *Beginning Well: Christian Conversion and Authentic Transformation*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Twenge, Jean. *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood—and What That Means for the Rest of Us*. Simon and Schuster, 2017.

Westerhoff III, John H. *Will Our Children Have Faith?* New York: The Seabury Press, 1976.

Wideman, Jim. *Children's Ministry Leadership: The You-Can-Do-It Guide*. Loveland, CO: Group Pub., 2003.

———. *Children's Ministry Volunteers That Stick*. Loveland, Colo.: Group, 2004.

## **2. Bibles for Children**

*The Action Bible*. Sergio Cariello. David C. Cook, 2010.

*The Beginner's Bible*, Revised edition. Zonderkidz, 2016.

DeYoung, Kevin. Don Clark, Illus. *The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden*. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2015.

*The Adventure Bible*. New International Reader's Version (NIrV). Biblica, 1995, 2014.

## **3. Online resource destinations:**

### **a) Curriculum**

[thinkorange.com/](http://thinkorange.com/)

[davidccook.org/](http://davidccook.org/)

[themeetinghouse.com/kids-and-youth](http://themeetinghouse.com/kids-and-youth)

[group.com/](http://group.com/)

[hillsong.com/kids/](http://hillsong.com/kids/)

### **b) Additional resources**

[cpyu.org/](http://cpyu.org/)

[illustratedministry.com/](http://illustratedministry.com/)

[childrensbulletins.com/](http://childrensbulletins.com/)

[christianbook.com/page/vbs](http://christianbook.com/page/vbs)

[athletesinaction.ca/sport-camps/](http://athletesinaction.ca/sport-camps/)