

Children & Youth Ministry PLMA Fall 2017 Class

This course will be a survey course that exposes students to the key issues regarding ministries with children and youth. Specific aspects to be covered will be faith development; administrative responsibilities, trends in programming—what has worked, what has not; and the role of mission.

Goals:

- Students will explore the theology and practice of Children's and Youth ministry—what models have worked in the past, what isn't working now and what the future holds: issues around Sunday School time, children's Church/Children in Worship, small numbers of children and youth spanning age groups, Confirmation age and camps, VBS and Bible Studies.
- Students will become familiar with Faith and Human development specific to children and youth with regard to teaching and learning, as well as how to accommodate for different learning styles and multi-cultural situations.
- Students will look at the administrative responsibilities for both in-house and out-of-house activities: recruitment, safety policies, shared space vs. private space, Synod & church-wide events, collaboration with full-communion partners and the role of mission/service in the world for children, youth, and families.

Learning Outcomes: Students will become equipped to

- Envision alternative models for ministry with children and youth
- Understand the stages of faith and how that informs our ministries
- Handle the administrative responsibilities that come with ministry to children and youth
- Plan a youth mission trip **OR** formulate a mission/service plan for families in your church.

Expectations of Students:

To come to each class prepared to be active learners and willing administrators, open to the power of the Holy Spirit for inspiration and guidance as we learn how best to facilitate the educational ministry of the church for children and youth.

September: “Gathered to Learn” (Assignments due to instructor by October 17th)

Read: The Preface, Parts 1 & 3, at least one case study in Part 2, and the Postscript of Let’s Kill Sunday School (before it kills the church)

Assignment #1:

Prepare a one-page summary of ONE case study, answering the questions at the end of that study. Be prepared to present to the class your summary including any questions you may have for your classmates (Time frame for presentation, including questions =10 min)

Note: Depending on class size, these case studies may be assigned at the end of class #1.

Read: “*How Our Reformed Faith Informs Our Teaching with Children and Youth*”
(provided by Instructor)

Assignment #2:

The PCUSA and the ELCA are full-communion partners in ministry. Below is the explanation of the characteristics of full communion (from the elca.org website):

For the ELCA, the characteristics of full communion are theological and missiological implications of the gospel that allow variety and flexibility. These characteristics stress that the church act ecumenically for the sake of the world, not for itself alone. They will include at least the following, some of which exist at earlier stages:

- *common confessing of the Christian faith*
- *mutual recognition of Baptism and a sharing of the Lord's Supper, allowing for joint worship and an exchangeability of members*
- *mutual recognition and availability of ordained ministers to the service of all, subject to the disciplinary regulations of other denominations*
- *common commitment to evangelism, witness and service*
- *means of common decision-making on critical common issues of faith and life*
- *mutual lifting of any condemnations that exist between denominations.*

Reflect upon the article *How Our Reformed Faith Informs our Teaching with Children and Youth* and write a 1-2 page reflection about how the author’s points for teaching are informed specifically by the Lutheran faith. Do you agree or disagree with any of her recommendations? Would you rephrase any of her suggestions to incorporate “more Lutheran” theology? If so, how. And, would you add anything to her list based upon your understanding of your Lutheran faith? If you totally agree with all the author suggests, how would you incorporate this information into a teacher training or youth leader workshop?

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October: “Challenged to Grow” (Assignments due to Instructor by November 14th)

Assignment #1:

Based upon notes from class and handouts, you will be given some case studies to read and decide which stage of faith is represented and why.

Assignment #2:

Read: Unbound: The Transformative Power of Youth Mission Trips by Jann Treadwell

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November: “Sent to Serve” (Final Assignment due to Instructor by December 15th)

Final Assignment — please choose from **one** of the following 2 options:

Using Dr. Melheim’s book as your main reference, write a 3-6 page paper that explains how your church might begin to utilize some of the thoughts presented on Gross+Gen environments where the wisdom of the elder and the wonder of the child collide on a weekly basis. How might using Dr. Melheim’s ideas benefit a congregation with only a few children or youth? What specific idea do you think would work as you begin to contemplate this new faith formation model? With this model in mind, give an example of an educational event that you would like to see happen and detail the steps for planning and executing this event. How does your vision show teaching is relational for both learner and teacher? How do you see it as transforming participants? How does it evoke spiritual growth and deeper faith commitment? How could it inspire life-long learning and joyful living and serving in the world?

Using Jann Treadwell’s book as your main reference, write a 3-6 page paper detailing the plan of a youth mission trip for the youth at your church. Include a theme, budget, plans for funding, transportation, communication needed and a timeline. Include at least one paragraph about some aspect of the author’s book that was new or surprising to you. If your congregation has only a few youth, how might you combine efforts with another church or group of churches to make this experience happen? Might you consider an intergenerational approach to a mission trip? Or could there be a service/mission option for families that is local? How does Jann’s book help you in these optional matters?

Required Texts:

Let's Kill Sunday School (before it kills the church) by Dr. Rich Melheim
(Faith Incubators ISBN Pending: www.faithink.com)
\$14.99 (includes shipping)

Unbound: The Transformative Power of Youth Mission Trips by Jann Treadwell
(Huff Publishing Associates, LLC 2014)
\$19.98 (available on amazon.com)

Additional Reading: (provided by Instructor)

How Our Reformed Faith Informs our Teaching of Youth and Children, by Jann Treadwell

Recommended Text:

Stages of Faith, The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning by James W. Fowler
(HarperSanFrancisco Publishing)
\$11.76 (available on amazon.com)