

Christian Education with Children

Louisville Seminary: CE 304 (3 hours)
Fall Semester, 2010, Wednesdays 1:30-4:20; Gardencourt 206
Instructor: J. Bradley Wigger, Ph.D.

Course Description

This course explores the church's educational ministry with children. Insights from the human sciences, theology, biblical studies, and the arts will be used to help address such questions and concerns as: How is the life of faith passed on from one generation to the next? What is a family's role in Christian nurture? What is a congregation's role? How do children think and learn? How do spirituality and raising children relate to one another? What is going on in childhood cognitively, developmentally, morally, socially, or culturally? These questions, among others, will be pursued with particular attention to the educational and formational dimensions of ministry.

Primary Resources

Armstrong, Thomas Armstrong. *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* (3rd edition)
Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD, 2009.

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education*.
Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.

Coles, Robert. *The Spiritual Life of Children*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

Edelman, Marian Wright. *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*.
Boston: Beacon, 1992.

Alison Gopnik, *The Philosophical Baby*, New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009.

Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia*. Harperten, 1977.

Wigger, J. Bradley. *The Power of God at Home: Nurturing Our Children in Love & Grace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.

Articles

Henig, Robin Marantz. "Taking Play Seriously," *New York Times Magazine*. 2/17/2008.
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9404E7DA1339F934A25751C0A96E9C8B63>

Wigger, J. Bradley. "See-through Knowing: Learning from Children and Their Invisible Friends," under review with *Journal of Childhood and Religion*.

Wigger, J. Bradley. "Multiple Intelligences: Understanding the Many Ways We Learn, *The Thoughtful Christian*. On CAMS

Other Resources:

Edelman, Marian Wright. *Faith, Families & Congregations Conference Plenary Address* (VHS/audiocassette). Louisville: Center for Congregations and Family Ministries, November 14, 1997.

Listening to Children: A Moral Journey with Robert Coles (VHS). PBS Home Video, 1995.

Morris, Van Cleve, and Pai, Young. *Philosophy and the American School (Second Edition)*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.

Moss, Otis III. *That Was Then, This Is Now* (DVD). Washington: Children's Defense Fund, July 20, 2005.

The National Observance of Children's Sabbaths (VHS). Children's Defense Fund, 1998.

Phelan, Thomas W. *1-2-3 Magic: Managing Difficult Behavior in Children 2-12* (DVD). Glen Ellyn, IL: ParentMagic Inc., 2004.

Paterson, Katherine. *Growing Up as a Spiritual Journey I and II* (VHS/audiocassette). Louisville: Center for Congregations and Family Ministries, November 12-13, 1999.

Ruby Bridges (VHS). Walt Disney Home Video, 1998.

Sasso, Sandy. "The Role of Narrative in the Spiritual Formation of Children." *Family Ministry* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 13-26.

_____. *Adam & Eve's First Sunset: God's New Day*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 2003.

_____. *Cain & Abel: Finding the Fruits of Peace*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 2001.

_____. *In God's Name*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 1994.

_____. *Noah's Wife: The Story of Naamah*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Light Publishing, 2002.

Supplemental Websites

www.terabithia.com (questions/answers with Katharine Paterson)

www.childrensdefense.com (Children's Defense Fund)

www.flooritime.org (The Floortime Foundation, resource for autism and related issues)

http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm (Armstrong on MI)

<http://www.scottlondon.com/articles/coles.html> (bibliographic essay on Robert Coles' work)

Requirements

This seminar focuses heavily upon class discussions of readings, reflective exercises, students' writing, presentations, and some audio-visual materials. Accordingly, class participation and preparation are crucial. Guidance for weekly assignments and the final project will be given in class. Additional assignments not listed in the syllabus may be required but will be given class time and will count towards the class participation grade.

Grading

Weekly assignments/class participation 50%

Final project 50%

Weekly Assignments

Every week, students will turn in reflections upon the reading. These will be short 1 page assignments (ordinarily, 1 page, approximately 300 words, hard copy—feel free to use the reverse side of scrap paper), or the equivalent in some cases, answering questions or completing tasks provided by the teacher. These assignments should demonstrate a thorough understanding

of the reading and express thoughtful reflection upon the reading and the task/question. Late papers will not ordinarily be accepted—in rare cases they may be, with prior permission, but the grade will be lowered at the teacher's discretion.

Class participation

Because of the seminar style of this course, weekly attendance and class preparation are very important. In addition, we will begin each class session with a brief devotion led by students (5 minutes maximum). Each student will lead at least once.

Weekly assignments will be combined with overall class engagement for 50% of the grade. Attendance and active participation are assumed. Unexcused absences and other manners of nonparticipation (e.g. checking email/websites in class) will result in a lowering of the course grade at the professor's discretion.

Final project

Students will need to have a congregation with which to work (for example: field placement, where you worship, home church, a friend's church). The final project will involve an **interview** with a child and parent(s). All students will also do a **curriculum inventory**, and an **interview** with someone who chooses curriculum materials. Guidance for these projects will be given in class.

Students will turn brief progress reports on October 20th and November 24th. Some students may present the interview portion to the class. Final projects are due December 17th.

Master of Theology/Doctor of Ministry Students

For those taking this course for Th.M. or D.Min. level credit, required is an additional 500 pages of reading, or an additional 300 pages plus an additional project to be negotiated with the instructor. This project could be extra writing each week, a classroom presentation, or an additional dimension to the final project. The instructor will have some suggestions for extra reading. A plan is to be submitted by October 6th.

Email

All students are responsible for email communications regarding the course.

School Policies

Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the

Bible's images for God. See for further assistance,
http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source.

Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, based on these guides:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Missing 1/4 of the course or more may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

From the Dean's Office:

Plagiarism and Documentation Policy

"According to the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, plagiarism is defined as using 'another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source' (Gibaldi, MLA Handbook, Fourth ed., p. 26). Students in this course are required to abide by the Seminary's academic honesty policy and are directed to observe the guidelines cited

in the above-mentioned MLA Handbook which include matters of proper documentation and citation, use of work from a previous course, and collaborative work (pp. 26-29).” ... “where citations are required, they shall follow the form of the latest edition of **Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style**, except in Pastoral Care and Counseling courses, for which students may use APA form.”

Calendar (subject to minor changes)

September 15

Course introduction

Assignments and expectations

Final project

Ruby Bridges viewing

Who is God to Ruby Bridges?

Who is God to her parents?

Who is God to her church?

Hereafter, the homework is listed on the right.

September 22

Childhood as Pilgrimage

Bridge to Terabithia, discussion

Insights from children’s literature

Growing up and the challenges of existence

Devotion sign up

For this session read Paterson (all); Sasso, 2005

Write: 2-3 discussion questions per ch. Plus 3 overall questions

September 29

Listening to Children

The Spiritual Life of Children

Psychological and philosophical insights

Attending to children well

Representations

Coles, Intro., chs. 5-8

Assignment

October 6

Educational Ministry

The Creative Word

Canonical dynamics

Law, Prophets, and Wisdom

Curriculum as “The course to be run”

Brueggemann, chs. 1-4

Assignment

October 13

Cognition

Theories of cognitive development

Do children think like we think they think?

Imagination, play, and learning

Gopnik, Intro, chs. 1-4; Wigger, 2010

Assignment

October 20

Learning Love

The ethical life of children

Empathy and more

Gopnik, chs. 5-9

Assignment

Progress Report

October 27
Research and Study

November 3 The Formative Power of Home Formation, education and attention The liturgy and everyday life Parenting by grace	Wigger, all assignment
November 10 Advocating for Children <i>Children's Sabbath</i> Justice, righteousness, redemption What do children need to thrive?	Edelman, all assignment
November 17 Classrooms Teaching and Learning Strategies and Models	Armstrong, TBA; Wigger MI assignment
November 24 Multiple Intelligences Preparing Teachers Talking to children	Armstrong, TBA Assignment Progress Report
December 1 Interviews and Stories The power of children's literature Sharing interviews	Morris and Pai, ch. 1 Coles, chs. 9-11 Interviews/Assignment
December 8 Seeing Face to Face Sharing interviews Wrapping up	Coles, ch. 3 Interviews/Assignment
December 17	Final projects due