

Dr. David Csinos
Vancouver School of Theology Visiting Instructor
dcsinos@astheology.ns.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION
PT5/723 — RE-IMAGINING MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH
SUMMER 2018

PURPOSE:

This course will explore the spirituality, theology, and practices surrounding holistic faith formation of children and youth. By digging deep into the purposes, goals, and presuppositions we carry with us into our experiences of children's and youth ministry, students will learn about and generate best practices for walking alongside young people on the adventure of discipleship. In particular, this course will help students re-imagine children's and youth ministry by exploring fresh perspectives and sharing innovative ideas. Topics include the spiritual life of young people, children, youth, and the Bible, the role of doubts and questions in faith formation, worshipping with young people, creating spaces of radical hospitality, fostering intergenerational relationships, and nurturing a thirst for justice among children and youth.

EXPECTATIONS COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:

The course is designed to investigate faith formation with children and youth in faith communities. Having completed this course with competence, each student will be able to:

1. Articulate an understanding of the role the faith community plays in the Christian formation of young people that is informed by scripture, tradition, and contemporary research.
2. Discuss the ways in which theologies of childhood and adolescence and views of spirituality affect practices of ministry with children and youth.
3. Understand the contextual nature of ministry with young people and describe their own ministerial call and context.
4. Articulate an awareness of best practices for faith formation, including the use of story, questions, participation, intergenerational community, hospitality, and social justice.

REQUIRED READINGS

Csinos, David M. and Ivy Beckwith. *Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013.

Csinos, David M. and Melvin Bray, eds. *Faith Forward, Volume 2: Re-Imagining Children's and Youth Ministry*. Kelowna, BC: CopperHouse, 2015.

Root, Andrew and Kenda Creasy Dean. *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011. (selected chapters)

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Readings and Class Participation:** Students are expected to participate in class discussions, and do adequate preparation of in-class discussion exercises and readings.
2. **Theology of Childhood/Adolescence Paper (Due 31 August):** Write a 5-6 page paper in which you articulate your personal (working) theology of childhood/adolescence. Material from this course, additional academic sources (see bibliography), your faith tradition, your engagement with scripture, and your personal experiences should be used as resources for this assignment. Remember, this is a *working* theology—your theology of childhood/adolescence may change over time, but I am interested in what it is at this moment.
3. **Reflection paper:** During the week of class, spend a minimum of one hour reflecting and journaling on your faith formation experience as a child and teenager. This reflection might be about your experiences in church or outside of church. Some questions to think about include: *How did you experience God as a young person? What was your view of church as a child/teen? Who were the most influential people on your faith journey in childhood and adolescence? What was it about these experiences that led you to deeper faith as a child/teen?* Capture the highlights of your reflections in a 3-4 page reflection paper.
4. **Curriculum Analysis:** Write a 7-8 page paper that offers a thoughtful and thorough analysis of a curriculum for children's ministry, youth ministry, or intergenerational ministry. It can be a curriculum intended for Sunday schools, a weekly youth group, vacation Bible schools, children's/youth worship, intergenerational activities, or another context altogether. Choose a full unit of the curriculum and analyze it using the rubric provided in class.

Audit students are required to do all the reading and participate in the class discussions and activities.

Certificate students are required to do all the reading, participate in the class discussions and, and complete the "Theology of Childhood/Adolescence" paper (100% of final mark).

Basic degree students are required to do all the reading, participate in the class discussions and, and complete the "Theology of Childhood/Adolescence" (65%) and "Reflection" (35%) papers.

Advanced degree students are required to do all the reading, participate in the class discussions and, and complete the "Theology of Childhood/Adolescence" (30%), "Reflection" (25%), and "Curriculum Analysis" (45%) papers.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Some of the readings below may be used as required texts, while others are recommended for research and ongoing learning.

Berryman, Jerome W. *Becoming Like a Child: The Curiosity of Maturity beyond the Norm*. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.

Bibby, Reginald W. with Sarah Russell and Ron Rolheiser. *The Emerging Millennials: How Canada's Newest Generation is Responding to Change and Choice*. Lethbridge, AB: Project Canada, 2009.

- Csinos, David M. and Ivy Beckwith. *Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013.
- Csinos, David M. and Melvin Bray, eds. *Faith Forward: A Dialogue on Children, Youth, and a New Kind of Christianity*. Kelowna, BC: CopperHouse, 2013.
- Csinos, David M. and Melvin Bray, eds. *Faith Forward, Volume 2: Re-Imagining Children's and Youth Ministry*. Kelowna, BC: CopperHouse, 2015.
- Csinos, David M. and Melvin Bray, eds. *Faith Forward, Volume 3: Launching a Revolution through Ministry with Children, Youth, and Families*. Kelowna, BC: CopperHouse, 2018 (forthcoming).
- Dean, Kenda Creasy. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- May, Scottie, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannell. *Children Matter: Celebrating their Place in the Church, Family, and Community*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Nye, Rebecca. *Children's Spirituality: What it is and Why it Matters*. London: Church House Publishing, 2009.
- Root, Andrew. *Exploding Stars, Dead Dinosaurs, and Zombies: Youth Ministry in the Age of Science*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018.
- Westerhoff, John H, III. *Will Our Children Have Faith?*, 3rd ed. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2012.