

Vancouver School of Theology
ED500:
Catechesis and Community in Post-Christendom Canada
Thursdays, 2 pm to 5 pm

Christians are made, not born.

- Tertullian

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Purpose:

Catechesis is the process of transmitting the Gospel in a variety of intercultural contexts, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it and communicates it in many ways. Catechesis, within the Christian community, educates and equips people for missionary discipleship and evangelical witness by building up the Body of Christ in the world. Catechesis, translated from the Greek "to echo the teaching," is an interactive process in which the Word of God speaks to and through the proclaimer, the one receiving the message, and the Holy Spirit. Catechesis is a life-long process of initial call and conversion, formation, and on-going conversion. Through Word, worship, service and community, Catechesis seeks to lead all God's people missionally to an ever-deepening relationship with God the Father revealed in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Catechesis takes many forms and includes the initiation of adults, youth and children as well as the intentional and systematic effort to enable all to grow in faith and discipleship through sanctification. This course will explore models of catechesis and community in post-Christendom Canada for leaders exercising a teaching ministry.

Competence Objectives:

1. Students will *analyze and identify* issues of educational ministry in the church and society today;
2. Students will *develop reflective skills* to integrate theology and learning theory for a teaching ministry;
3. Students will *form attitudes, habits and character* needed for mature teaching ministry with all ages;

4. Students will *practice skills* for teaching ministry and group facilitation for use in future faith communities.
5. Students will *describe* their own educational vision and philosophy for future educational ministry.
6. Students will *demonstrate* conscientiousness and willingness to take personal responsibility for learning, honesty and personal integrity in leadership.

Format:

This class meets weekly for three hours throughout the term. The primary format will be lecture and discussion based on the reading of the assigned texts.

Assignments:

1. Class Participation and Expectations

Consistent and timely attendance is required. If a student is unable to attend a class the Instructor is to be informed by email. Smart Phones can be disruptive to the learning experience of other students. Please set all phones to silent or turn them off during class. Exceptions can always be made for medical or family issues that require being in constant contact. Laptops may be used during class but for note taking only. Surfing the internet is not permitted while class is in session unless it is part of a small group activity. Sending texts and emails will be limited to break time.

10% of total grade

2. Reflection Paper

Students will submit a personal non-research reflection paper of 2,000 words in which they share what they understand catechesis to mean in the church and how they see themselves engaged in a future teaching ministry. Included in this paper should be:

- A personal philosophy of Christian education (epistemology of Gospel instruction) (2 pages suggested)
- How catechesis would be incorporated into the student's future ministry (2 pages suggested)
- An assessment of personal strengths and weaknesses that the student brings to the teaching ministry (2 pages suggested)

- A plan that the student might employ to continue to develop his or her skills in this area (1 page)
- The area in teaching that the student will most need to work on in the first five years of ministry (1 page)

DUE DATE: October 31st at the beginning of class. 25% of total grade

3. In Class Presentation

Students will make a presentation in class, developing a Christian education lesson according to a schedule offered in the first class. Students will make a 20-minute presentation on a topic selected in consultation with the Instructor. Research, writing and presentation of the lesson will be assessed for creativity and ability to communicate the Christian faith for the specific age category identified in the assignment.

DUE DATE: According to the schedule developed in class. 25% of total grade

4. Research Paper

Students will submit an academic research paper of 3,000 words based on a selection of case studies provided by the Instructor. These scenarios will be provided in class and the students will draw on learning from lectures, course readings and further research on the Christian Education scenario provided.

DUE DATE: December 12th 40% of total grade

Deadlines:

Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus for each course. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.

Required Texts:

Dawn, Maggi. *The Accidental Pilgrim: Modern Journeys on Ancient Pathways*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2011.

Duckworth, Jessica. *Wide Welcome: How the Unsettling Presence of Newcomers can Save the Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.

- Lockhart, Ross A. *Beyond Snakes and Shamrocks: St. Patrick's Missional Lessons for Today*. Eugene: Cascade, 2018.
- Osmer, Richard. *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2005.
- Smith, Christopher. *Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2014.
- Sparks, Paul. *The New Parish: How Neighborhood Churches Are Transforming Mission, Discipleship and Community*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2014.

Texts are NOT on order at the UBC Bookstore. Instead, students should order the required reading online as ebooks or hardcopy using sites like Amazon, etc or check with the Regent College Bookstore.

Course Schedule:

Models of Catechism

Week One/September 12:

Big Shoes to Fill - The Teaching Elder
Baby Steps – Catechesis for Children

Week Two/September 19:

Steppin' Out – Catechesis for Teenagers

Please read and come ready to discuss Kenda Dean's article here:
<https://blog.oup.com/2010/09/teen-christian-faith/>

Week Three/September 26:

First Steps – Initial Catechesis for Adults

Please read and come ready to discuss Duckworth's *Wide Welcome*

Week Four/October 3:

Further Steps – Continuing Catechesis for Adults

Please read and come ready to discuss Osmer's *Teaching Ministry*.

Week Five/October 10:

Virtual Steps – Online Catechesis for Adults

Please read and come ready to discuss Ed Stetzer's article on social media and the church: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/february/why-your-church-should-be-on-social-media.html>

Week Six/October 17:

Faithful Footsteps – Pilgrimage as a way of Catechesis for Adults

Please Read *The Accidental Pilgrim* and come ready to discuss.

VST READING WEEK – OCTOBER 21 TO 25 – NO CLASS

Week Seven/October 31:

Final Footsteps? - Catechesis for Sanctified Seniors

Please read and come ready to discuss Osmer's *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* pp. 27 to 56.

Models of Community

Week Eight/November 7:

House Call – Exploring House Church Community and the role of family worship and practice of Christian faith

Week Nine/November 14:

Life Together - New Monasticism and lessons of discipleship through Intentional Christian Community

Please read Sparks *The New Parish* and come ready to discuss.

Week Ten/November 21:

Sanctified Start Ups - Church Planting/Church Replanting

Read and discuss Lockhart's *Beyond Snakes and Shamrocks*.

Week Eleven/November 28:

This Old House - Revitalizing Congregations

Selected Bibliography

- Bass, Dorothy & Craig Dykstra, ed. *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Benedict, Daniel. *Come to the Waters: Baptism & Our Ministry of Welcoming Seekers & Making Disciples*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2003.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. San Francisco: Harper One, 1978.
- Charry, Ellen. *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Foster, Charles. *Educating Congregations: The Future of Christian Education*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.
- Harak, G. Simon. *Virtuous Passions: The Formation of Christian Character*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2001.
- Heath, Elaine. *Missional. Monastic. Mainline: A Guide to Starting Missional Micro-Communities in Mainline Churches*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2014.
- Hersch, Patricia. *A Tribe Apart: A Journey into the Heart of American Adolescence*. New York: Random House, 1998.
- Johnson, Donald. *Praying the Catechumenate. Third Edition*. Kitchener: Augsburg, 2008.
- Kenda, Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, *The God Bearing Life*. Nashville: The Upper Room, 1998.
- Lockhart, Ross A. *Lessons from Laodicea: Missional Leadership in a Culture of Affluence*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016.
- Melchert, Charles F. *Wise Teaching*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998.
- Moore, Mary Elizabeth M. *Teaching as a Sacramental Act*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004.
- Noddings, Nel. *Philosophy of Education*. (2nd Ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2006.
- Paas, Stephen. *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.
- Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998.
- Palmer, Parker J. *To Know as We are Known*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publisher, 1983.
- Pentland, John. *Fishing Tips: How Curiosity Transformed a Community of Faith*. Toronto: UCRD, 2015.
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- Tomberlin, Jim. *Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012.
- Tye, Karen B. *Basics of Christian Education*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.
- Wilson-Hartgrove, Jonathan. *New Monasticism: What It Has to Say to Today's Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008.