

# CM204 Understanding Today's Child

## Course Syllabus for CMI Online

### I. Course description

This course provides a study in child development and behavior from ages two through thirteen in relation to the unique problems faced in today's society. Emphasis is placed on the role of the parent/teacher in helping children to develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. In addition, the student will develop greater sensitivity toward today's child and his needs, taking into consideration his family life as well as religious background.

This course challenges the student to examine child development and behavior from birth to adolescence in addition to the particular needs of children from troubled home situations and different religious backgrounds to help them minister more effectively to today's child.

### II. Rationale

Today's child is growing up in a world that is incredibly complex and ever-changing. The days of carefree childhood are history. In order to effectively minister to the child of today, the children's ministry leader must have insight into the child's unique problems and an understanding of how to meet his needs through teaching situations as well as one on one.

Understanding Today's Child should broaden the children's workers' perspective on the nature of childhood and provide some practical insights for relating to children according to their level of physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual development.

### III. Prerequisites

Born-again Christian

Minimum age of 18 (for a CMI Online course)

### IV. Course Objectives

By the conclusion of this course, you will:

1. Interview three children from the 3-5, 6-9, and 10-13 age groups (a total of nine interviews) using the questionnaires provided. You will share your interview findings with your classmates in the Forum Discussions.
2. Write a three-page Observation Paper describing the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual characteristics observed during the interview sessions conducted.
3. Summarize research related to at-risk children and construct an individual project that will minister to at-risk children and/or their families based on the principles shared in this course.
4. Summarize basic foundational beliefs along with practical ways to relate biblical truths to children of different religious backgrounds, compiling information in an individual project.

5. Describe your growth progress with classmates in a forum discussion.

## V. Instructional procedures

Individual assignments along with community forum discussions allow students to interact with the curriculum on both a personal and interpersonal level. As well, project assignments provide the students with practical tools that can be directly used in ministry.

## VI. Course materials

- A. *Understanding Today's Child*, Student Manual
- B. *Wholly Kids* – LifeWay Press, Kids Ministry Publishing, Nashville (2012 or later), ISBN 978-1-4158-7319-9

## VII. Participation policies

Students should anticipate spending about 10-12 hours per week on course activities and assignments. All assignments must be posted or submitted by midnight Central Standard Time (CST) of the day the assignment is due. It is expected that all assignments including forum posts will be submitted on time.

Due to the fact that this is an interactive course requiring feedback from other students, submitting assignments late affects not only that student but the other classmates and their learning as well. Failure to submit any assignment on time will result in a reduction in the grade for each day late. In cases where the student consistently misses assignment due dates, the student may be withdrawn from the course without remuneration.

In the case of an emergency or other extenuating circumstance, students should contact their online instructor before the assignment is due and make arrangements for late submission of an assignment.

Participation on the forum and in live chats should be characterized by Christian courtesy. You may disagree with another student's (or instructor's) point of view, but please do so with respect for one another. Please read the Communication section of the student handbook for more details about communication expectations.

This course will require three groups of observation interviews of children between the ages of 3-5, 6-11, and 12-17. These interviews will enable the student to immediately experience the characteristics and behavior of children learned about during the course. See the Real-world Observation Interviews section in the course for more details. If you have problems accessing the website or the forum during the first week, promptly contact the CMI Online Administrator at 1-800-300-4033 ext. 1313.

## VIII. Grading policies and information

During each week, there will be activities and assignments that must be completed. The text reading and activities are designed to provide the information needed to complete the assignments. Students will need to do additional research as well.

All assignments will be graded. Each assignment will earn points that will determine the final course grade. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Assignment	Percentage	Point Value
Forums	15%	150
Real-world Observation Interviews	30%	300
Age Group Characteristics Observation Paper	15%	150
Children at Risk Summary	10%	100
Children at Risk Project	10%	100
Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds Summary	10%	100
Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds Project	10%	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,000</b>

## IX. Learning outcomes and activities for each week

The following information can serve as your checklist as you navigate through the course. Printing this sequential checklist and checking off each activity or assignment as they are completed will help keep you on track throughout the course.

### Week 1

This first week of Understanding Today's Child will help you become familiar with the characteristics and needs common to children enabling you to become more effective in teaching according to their needs. You will begin by posting a brief introduction about yourself to the other students following the guidelines in the assignment. This "getting to know you" exercise will help you begin to feel connected to other students participating in the learning community. This discussion requires responses to at least two other students. Be sure to respond to comments to your own post as well.

You will have the opportunity to meet your instructor and classmates in a virtual setting this week! You will find a link to join the Live Chat Activity in the Week 1 Coursework section of the course.

In addition to reading and video class sessions, you will conduct three interviews this week with children ages 3-5. Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Post in the Week 1 forum (Due Friday)
- Participate in an optional live chat with your instructor and classmates! (See course for details)
- Complete the reading for Week 1
- Watch the "Age Group Characteristics/Personality Development" video class sessions
- Conduct/submit three real-world interviews with children in the 3-5 age group (Due Monday)
- Return to the Week 1 forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

**Week 2**

In Week 2, share the insights you gained during Week 1 from interviewing children in the 3-5 age group. You will then turn your attention to children in the 6-9 age range. Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Post in the Week 2 forum (Due Wednesday)
- Complete the reading for Week 2
- Watch the Session 3 video class session
- Conduct/submit three real-world interviews with children in the 6-9 age group (Due Monday)
- Return to the Week 2 forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

**Week 3**

This week, after sharing insights from your Week 2 interviews, you will turn your attention toward "tweens" in the 10-13 age range. You will interview three young people in this age group. You will also view four video class sessions. Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Post in the Week 3 forum (Due Wednesday)
- Watch the Week 3 video class sessions (Sessions 4-7)
- Conduct/submit three real-world interviews with children in the 10-13 age group (Due Monday)
- Return to the Week 3 forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

**Week 4**

This week, you will continue to learn ways to meet the needs of children you encounter in your ministry. The video class session will focus on ministry to children with special needs in the classroom, and help you consider the importance of helping children recognize their value as individuals made and loved by God. You will share the insights you gained from interviewing young people ages 10-13 in the Forum Discussion. You will also write and submit a three-page Observation Paper that focuses on the age groups you observed during your Week 1-3 real-world interviews. Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

You will have the opportunity to meet your instructor and classmates in a virtual setting this week! You will find a link to join the Live Chat Activity in the Week 4 Coursework section of the course.

- Post in the Week 4 forum (Due Wednesday)
- Participate in an optional live chat with your instructor and classmates! (See course for details)
- Watch the "Adapting for Special Needs and How to Build Self-worth in Children class session
- Watch the "How to Write a Paper" video class session, focusing on the guidelines for writing an Observation Paper

- Write/submit your Age Group Observation Paper (Due Monday)
- Return to the Week 4 forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

### **Week 5**

More and more children live in single-parent or conflict-ridden homes. Because many of these children are attending our church programs, Sunday School, neighborhood Bible clubs, or other ministry events, the children's leader needs to be equipped to identify children from troubled backgrounds and to provide basic helps when possible. This week you will begin the process of becoming equipped to minister to the needs of hurting children. Through reading and research, you will learn to apply the principles and ideas taught in this week. You will also provide an evaluation of your ministry in the forum noting the things that you are doing well and some things that need to change based on the material in this week. Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Watch the video class sessions for "Children at Risk"
- Post in the Week 5 forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the Children at Risk Summary Assignment (Due Monday)
- Return to the Week 5 forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

### **Week 6**

In this week, you will describe three important discoveries about children at risk along with how these discoveries are directly applicable to ministry discussing this information in the forum. You will also construct a project that will minister to at-risk children and/or their families based on the principles shared in this course. Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Post in the Week 6 forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the Children at Risk Project Assignment (Due Monday)
- Return to the Week 6 forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

### **Week 7**

This week, you will begin your study by reading information about Roman Catholicism, secular humanism, and one religion of your choice from the list. You will also compose a summary about a specific religion of your choice. This project will not only help you become familiar with the teachings of different religions as contrasted with Scripture, but you will also learn practical ways to create relationships with children of different religious backgrounds and ways that you can share the Gospel effectively. You will also share in the forum exciting discoveries that you made during your research and how these discoveries can be directly applied in your ministry. Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Complete the reading for Week 7
- Watch the "Children of Different Religious Backgrounds" video class sessions

- Post in the Week 7 forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the Different Religious Backgrounds Summary Assignment (Due Monday)
- Return to the Week 7 forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

**Week 8**

This week, you will continue your study of children of different religious backgrounds. After reading all the assigned texts for each of the different religions, you will complete a project of your choice (Newsletter, Teacher Training or Ministry Plan). You will also have the opportunity to share about your growth during the course. Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Complete the reading for Week 8
- Post in the Week 8 forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the Different Religious Backgrounds Project Assignment (Due Monday)
- Return to the Week 8 forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)
- Complete the End of Course Survey (Due Monday)

**Congratulations on completing Understanding Today's Child!**