**CM204 Understanding Today’s Child**

**On-Campus Course Syllabus**

1. **Course description**

Understanding Today’s Child is a study of child development and behavior from birth through adolescence as related 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. Students will learn how to help children who are impacted by divorce/separation, abuse, and other dysfunctional situations. In addition, students will also learn how to teach children from various religious backgrounds.

1. **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 the 21st century, the children’s worker must have insight into the child’s unique problems   
(home, culture, religious background) and an understanding of how to meet his needs   
through teaching situations as well as one-on-one.

To meet this challenge, the student must understand age group characteristics and personality development from birth through adolescence. Students may choose between   
a more in-depth coverage (four class sessions) of teaching the young child or understanding the adolescent. In addition to classroom instruction, students conduct interviews with different age groups, making observations of the characteristics of the age groups discussed in class.

More and more children live in single-parent or conflict-ridden homes. Because many of these children are attending neighborhood Bible clubs, Sunday school, or other church programs, the children’s worker needs to be equipped to identify children impacted by trauma and to provide basic helps when possible.

Due to the growth of non-Christian religions in the world and various ethnic backgrounds, the well-equipped children’s worker needs a basic understanding of how to teach children from different religious backgrounds. This course provides helps for understanding Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism, and Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Understanding Today’s Child should broaden the children’s workers’ perspective on the nature of childhood (0-17 years of age) and provide some practical insights for relating to children according to their level of physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual development. The worker will also develop greater sensitivity toward today’s child and his needs, taking into consideration his family life as well as religious background.

1. **Prerequisites**

Born-again Christian

High School graduate

No course prerequisites

1. **Course objectives**

# Cognitive

The student will

1. Become familiar with the age group characteristics and personality development of children from birth through adolescence.

2. Evaluate his role as a children’s worker or parent in helping children to develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually in a teaching situation or one-on-one.

3. Be able to identify children from at-risk backgrounds.

4. Become familiar with the foundational beliefs of Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism, and Jehovah's Witnesses for teaching children from these backgrounds.

* 1. **Affective**

The student will

1. Appreciate the different characteristics of child development as a process designed by God.

2. Desire strongly to meet the needs of today’s child in his class and on a personal level.

3. Value the influence he can have on the lives of children, including those impacted by trauma.

4. Desire to be used by God in relating biblical truths to children who may be indoctrinated in other religious beliefs.

* 1. **Performance**

The student will

1. Conduct four interviews with children and write a summary paper based on the interviews of different age groups.

2. Participate in an in-class drama portraying characteristics of an assigned age group.

3. Complete all reading assignments for the course. (*Trauma-Informed Children’s Ministry,* *Teaching the Roman Catholic Child* booklet*,* and *Linger by the Well: Teaching the Muslim Child* booklet*.)*

4. Compile information on one major religion based on class notes and personal research and participate in a group oral report on that religion.

5. Participate in a group discussion on a chapter of your choice from *Trauma-Informed Children's Ministry.* Write a summary based on the discussion.

6. Develop a Trauma-Informed Ministry Plan to be used in a *Child Evangelism Fellowship*®(*CEF*®) ministry setting.

1. **Instructional procedures**

Course objectives will be achieved through a variety of activities. In addition to lectures, students will learn from instructional videos, personal and group research, small group discussions, and oral presentations. Students observe the demonstration of a class designed for preschoolers with children present. Students will conduct interviews with children of different age groups, allowing them to determine if their findings were similar or dissimilar to the age group characteristics learned through reading and classroom instruction.

1. **Course materials**

# Textbooks

1. *Trauma-Informed Children’s Ministry*. 2022. Crosby, Robert G., and Lori A.;   
   Eugene: Cascade Books.
2. *Linger by the Well: Teaching the Muslim Child.* Adapted 2023. Lykke Jensen, Dorthe;   
   Child Evangelism Fellowship of Europe.
3. *Teaching the Roman Catholic Child.* Adapted 2023. Reid, Paul; *CEF* Centre Kilchzimmer.
   1. **Class notes** and supplementary materials as the instructors deem necessary.
4. **Attendance policy**

Regular and punctual attendance is expected of all students due to the progressive nature of the course. No more than **three class periods** may be missed without jeopardizing the satisfactory completion of Understanding Today’s Child.

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| **Assignment** | **Percentage** | **Point Value** |
| Interviews and observation summary | 25% | 25 |
| In-class drama (Age Group Characteristics) | 10% | 10 |
| Reading assignments | 15% | 15 |
| Compiling information on one major religion  Group oral report on one major religion | 15%  10% | 15  10 |
| Participating in a group discussion on *Trauma-Informed Children’s Ministry* and writing a group summary | 5% | 5 |
| Creating a Trauma-Informed Children’s Ministry Plan | 20% | 20 |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** | **100** |

1. **Grading system**

All students are encouraged to strive for excellence in every aspect of their training to bring honor to the Lord and to develop to their fullest potential. Therefore, all assignments must be presented on time and will be graded according to the evaluation criteria of the course.

1. **Assignments and activities**

All uploaded homework is due by 7:30 AM Central Time on its due date.

**Monday Assignments**

# Reading Assignments:

**Note:** All reading assignments are due by 8:30 AM Central Time on their due date. Check off the reading that has been completed on the clipboard in the back of the classroom. On the final day of the course, submit the Reading Requirements Completion form on cefcmi.com.

# *Understanding Today’s Adolescents:* (Only those in the Understanding Today’s Adolescents class)

In the Reading Requirements section of the course, click on the link to watch the video, “Gay Girl, Good God: The Story of Who I Was and Who God Has Always Been.” Watch this video before Tuesday at 8:30 AM.

1. **Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds (all)**

Work on researching the major religion you have chosen. Meet with your group to determine how the work will be distributed, how the information will be compiled, when you will meet to discuss your findings, and when the final work must be completed for submission.

1. **Age Group Characteristics**

Work on setting up interviews with children for the final assignment.

**Tuesday**

Check off all reading assignments that have been completed on the clipboard located in the back of the classroom.

**Tuesday Assignments**

1. **Reading**

Continue reading for the different class sessions.

1. **Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds**
2. Continue to work on researching the major religion you have chosen.
3. Begin planning the oral presentation.
4. Complete reading assignments *Teaching the Roman Catholic Child* and *Linger by the Well: Teaching the Muslim Child*.
5. **Children at Risk**
6. Plan when your study group will meet to discuss the chapter you have chosen.
7. Read the chapter your group has chosen.
8. **Age Group Characteristics**

Work on interviewing children for the final assignment.

1. **Testimony**

Prepare and practice your testimony for chapel. You will have two minutes.

**Wednesday**

Check off all reading assignments that have been completed on the clipboard located in the back of the classroom.

Meet in the auditorium by 7:45 AM for final instructions about the testimony chapel.

**Wednesday Assignments**

1. **Reading**

Continue reading for the different class sessions.

1. **Age Group Characteristics**

# Meet with your group to practice for your in-class drama.

# Work on interviewing children for the final assignment.

1. **Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds**
2. Finish researching and compiling the group information on the major religion chosen. Upload your assignment.
3. Prepare for the oral presentation.
4. **Children at Risk**
5. As a group, write a summary of what was discussed from *Trauma-Informed Children’s Ministry* chapter.
6. Work on your Trauma-Informed Children’s Ministry Plan.

**Thursday**

1. Check off all reading assignments that have been completed on the clipboard located in the back of the classroom.
2. Submit Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds Research Assignment.
3. Participate in the in-class drama (Age Group Characteristics).

**Thursday Assignments**

1. Complete and submit any remaining reading assignments.
2. Practice for the 15-minute group oral report for Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds.
3. Complete and upload Children at Risk Discussion Group Summary Assignment.

**Friday**

1. Reading assignment should be uploaded.
2. Submit Children at Risk Discussion Group Summary Assignment.
3. Participate in the oral report for Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds.

**Friday Assignments**

Due Friday by 11:59 PM CT

1. After participating in the Children from Different Religious Backgrounds, go to cefcmi.com to complete the oral report form.
2. Complete the Understanding Today’s Child Course Evaluation.

***Weekend Assignments*** Due Monday of Week 3 by 7:30 AM CT

1. Complete interviews and a two-three-page summary – Age Group Characteristics Interview Assignment – upload.
2. Complete Children at Risk Trauma-Informed Children’s Ministry Plan – upload.