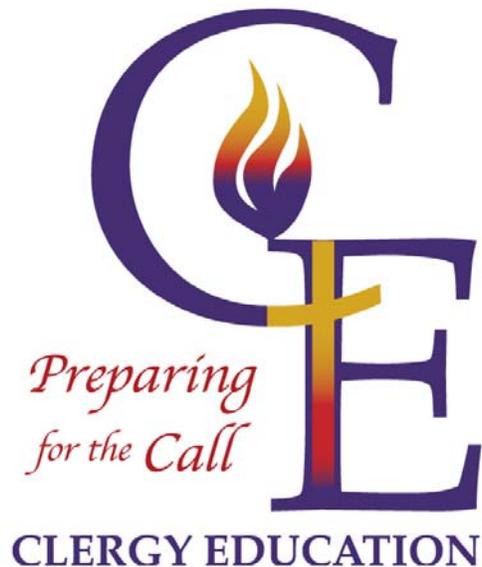

Faculty Guide

Developing Children's Ministry



Clergy Development
Church of the Nazarene
Kansas City, Missouri
816-333-7000 ext. 2468; 800-306-7651 (USA)
2008

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The **Modular Course of Study** is an outcome-based curriculum designed to implement the educational paradigm defined by the Breckenridge Consultations. Clergy Development is responsible for maintaining and distributing the Modular Course of Study for the Church of the Nazarene.

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Series Foreword

A Vision for Christian Ministry: Clergy Education in the Church of the Nazarene

The chief purpose of all persons—indeed, of all creation—is to worship, love, and serve God. God has made himself known in His deeds of creation and redemption. As the Redeemer, God has called into existence a people, the Church, who embody, celebrate, and declare His name and His ways. The life of God with His people and the world constitutes the Story of God. That story is recorded principally in the Old and New Testaments, and continues to be told by the resurrected Christ who lives and reigns as Head of His Church. The Church lives to declare the whole Story of God. This it does in many ways—in the lives of its members who are even now being transformed by Christ, through preaching, the sacraments, in oral testimony, and in mission. All members of the Body of Christ are called to exercise a ministry of witness and service. No one is excluded.

In God's own wisdom He calls some persons to fulfill the ministry of proclaiming the gospel and caring for God's people in a form that is referred to as the ordained ministry. God is the initial actor in this call, not humans. In the Church of the Nazarene we believe that God calls and that persons respond. They do not elect the Christian ministry. All persons whom God calls to the ordained ministry continue to be amazed that He would call them. They should continue to be humbled and amazed by God's call. The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene states, "we recognize and hold that the Head of the Church calls some men and women to the more official and public work of the ministry." It adds, "The church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, will recognize the Lord's call" (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 400).

An ordained Christian minister has as his or her chief responsibility to declare in many ways the whole Story of God as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. His or her charge is to "tend the flock of God . . . not under compulsion, but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:2-3, NRSV). The minister fulfills this charge under the supervision of Christ, the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). Such ministry can be fulfilled only after a period of careful

preparation. Indeed, given the ever-changing demands placed upon the minister, "preparation" never ceases.

A person who enters the Christian ministry becomes in a distinct sense a steward of the gospel of God (Titus 1:7). A steward is one who is entrusted to care for what belongs to another. A steward may be one who takes care of another person or who manages the property of someone else. All Christians are stewards of the grace of God. But in addition, in a peculiar sense a Christian minister is a steward of the "mystery of God," which is Christ, the Redeemer, the Messiah of God. In all faithfulness, the minister is called to "make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6:19, NRSV). Like Paul, he or she must faithfully preach "the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph 3:8-10, NRSV).

In fulfilling this commission, there is plenty of room for diligence and alertness, but no room for laziness or privilege (Titus 1:5-9). Good stewards recognize that they are stewards only, not the owners, and that they will give an account of their stewardship to the master. Faithfulness to one's charge and to the Lord who issued it is the steward's principal passion. When properly understood, the Christian ministry should never be thought of as a "job." It is ministry—uniquely Christian ministry. No higher responsibility or joy can be known than to become a steward of the Story of God in Christ's Church. The person who embraces God's call to the ordained ministry will stand in the company of the apostles, the Early Fathers of the Church, the Reformers of the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformers, and many persons around the world today who joyfully serve as stewards of the gospel of God.

Obviously, one who does not recognize, or who understands but rejects, just how complete and inclusive a minister's stewardship must be should not start down the path that leads to ordination. In a peculiar sense, a Christian minister must in all respects model the gospel of God. He or she is to "shun" the love of money. Instead, the minister must "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness." He or she must "fight the good fight of the faith" and "take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called" (1 Tim 6:11-12, NRSV).

Hence, the Church of the Nazarene believes that “the minister of Christ is to be in all things a pattern to the flock—in punctuality, discretion, diligence, earnestness; ‘in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left’ (2 Cor 6:6-7)” (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 401.1). The minister of Christ “must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching . . . able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (Titus 1:7-9, NASB).

In order to be a good steward of God’s Story one must, among other things, give oneself to careful and systematic study, both before and after ordination. This will occur not because he or she is forced to do so, but out of a love for God and His people, the world that He is working to redeem, and out of an inescapable sense of responsibility. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the attitude one brings to preparation for the ministry reveals much about what he or she thinks of God, the gospel, and Christ’s Church. The God who became incarnate in Jesus and who made a way of salvation for all gave His very best in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. In order to be a good steward, a Christian minister must respond in kind. Jesus told numerous parables about stewards who did not recognize the importance of what had been entrusted to them (Mt 21:33-44; 25:14-30; Mk 13:34-37; Lk 12:35-40; 19:11-27; 20:9-18).

Preparation—one’s education in all its dimensions—for ministry in Christ’s Church should be pursued in full light of the responsibility before God and His people that the ministry involves. This requires that one take advantage of the best educational resources at his or her disposal.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes how large is the responsibility associated with the ordained Christian ministry and accepts it fully. Part of the way we recognize our responsibility before God is seen in the requirements we make for ordination and the practice of ministry. We believe that the call to and practice of Christian ministry is a gift, not a right or privilege. We believe that God holds a minister to the highest of religious, moral, personal, and professional standards. We are not reluctant to expect that those

standards be observed from the time of one's call until his or her death. We believe that Christian ministry should first be a form of worship. The practice of ministry is both an offering to God and a service to His Church. By the miracle of grace, the work of the ministry can become a means of grace for God's people (Rom 12: 1-3). One's education for ministry is also a form of worship.

The modules that comprise the Course of Study that may lead a person to candidacy for ordination have been carefully designed to prepare one for the kind of ministry we have described. Their common purpose is to provide a holistic preparation for entrance into the ordained Christian ministry. They reflect the Church's wisdom, experience, and responsibility before God. The modules show how highly the Church of the Nazarene regards the gospel, the people of God, the world for which Christ gave His life, and Christian ministry. Completing the modules will normally take three or four years. But no one should feel pressured to meet this schedule.

The careful study for which the modules call should show that before God and His Church one accepts the stewardly responsibility associated with ordained ministry.

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Introduction

Intended Use of This Faculty Guide

This Faculty Guide serves as an instructor's guide for teaching principles of *Developing Children's Ministry* to adult learners who are preparing for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene. The content is based on intended outcomes defined through the collaborative process conducted at Breckenridge, CO, USA, between 1990 and 1997. The materials prepare the pastor-teacher to present the topic by providing background reading, lesson plans, lectures, instructions to the teacher, and teaching resources for each class session. In the lessons complete lectures, questions for guided discussions, and defined learning activities are provided.

The pastor-teacher who will lead this module should hold a master's degree. Ideally, the pastor-teacher should have participated as a student in a module using this material prior to teaching the material to others. This Faculty Guide assumes that the pastor-teacher has some basic understanding of children's ministry.

It is further assumed that learners participating in a module using this material will be high school graduates and be adult learners beyond the traditional college age. Learners are assumed to be motivated to learn, and to have adult life-experiences. No prior college classroom experience is assumed on the part of the learners.

Acknowledgments

Every module is the accumulation of effort by many people. Someone writes the original manuscript, others offer suggestions to strengthen the content and make the material more easily understood, and finally an editor formats the module for publication. This module is not different. Many people have contributed to this module. Every effort has been made to accurately represent the original intent of the principal contributors.

Principal Contributor

The principal contributor for this module is Dr. Bryce Fox—Associate Professor of Christian Education and Youth Ministry at Trevecca Nazarene University.

Responders

Each module was reviewed by at least one content specialist to insure that the content did not represent a single, narrow view or opinion. The responder provided suggestions that the principal contributor could integrate into this module.

Dr. Lori Niles—Associate Professor of Christian Education at MidAmerica Nazarene University.

Dr. Mark York—Director of Education, Colorado Technical University—Kansas City Campus.

Dr. Dean Blevins—Professor of Christian Education Nazarene Theological Seminary.

Revision History

Third Quarter 2008. Revision 1, the current version,

- The Lesson Overview, Introduction, Body, Close format was established.

Intended Outcomes for the Module

The *Manual*, Church of the Nazarene and the *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination* define educational preparation for ordination. Additionally, each region of the International Church of the Nazarene has developed educational guidelines to qualify educational programs for ordination offered within their region.

The USA Region *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* defines outcomes for the overall ministerial development program. The module assists candidates in developing these skills. Other modules in the program may also address the same outcomes. The specific outcomes that relate to this module are:

Program Outcomes

- CP25 Ability to prepare, organize and deliver a biblically sound basic scheme of teaching and discipleship formation using age-appropriate techniques and skill, in culturally appropriate ways
- CP26 Ability to develop and utilize existing age appropriate ministry forms by with individuals, families, and congregations may be formed into Christlikeness
- CP27 Ability to assess and implement emerging age appropriate ministry approaches to ministry in

light of enduring theological (Bible, doctrine, philosophy) and contextual (history, psychology, sociological) perspectives

About This Module

A module is composed of two major works—a Faculty Guide and a Student Guide. Both are necessary for the whole body of information and learning activities pertaining to the module topic. You will need a copy of both.

We have tried to design this module to be flexible and easy to adapt to your situation. You as the instructor will need to be familiar with the information, activities, questions, and homework that are provided in both works. In some cases you may need to modify the illustrations or questions to meet the needs of your group.

Rationale

Research tells us most people who become Christians take this action while they are children or young teens. It is imperative that pastors know how to reach out to, evangelize, and disciple children. Making children a top priority in any church assures the future of that church. A pastor must be well-informed about the practical side of ministry to children, including the stages of development, effective methods to use, and planning and budgeting procedures. Every pastor needs to know the joys and blessing of ministering to children.

Module Development

One reason for developing this module is for the benefit of extension education. We understand that teachers all over the world are called upon to teach courses that are not in their area of specialty, but they teach them because they want to see pastors trained and leaders developed for the church. Extension education is basic to rapid church growth. We want to provide this as a resource for extension educators. If it helps others along the way, that's fine too.

Another reason for developing this module is to equip indigenous faculty. We believe that a class like this is best taught and contextualized by someone from within the culture of the students. There are many fine teachers who are leaders in our churches around the world who do not have higher degrees in theology but who have the skills to teach a module like this effectively. We want to set them free to do so, and in

so doing, to actually improve the module and make it more dynamic and meaningful for their context than it would have been had we held on to it and insisted on teaching it ourselves.

About This Faculty Guide

Note: It is critical to remember that active participation by the learners will enhance their learning. That means you will not be an information-giver. This module is not about you. The focus of the module is helping students learn. Your role is to design an environment in which your students will learn. Sometimes you will give lectures. At other times you will guide discussions or assign your students to work in groups. These kinds of activities keep the participants actively involved in the learning process. Learning is a team activity.

The Faculty Guide has been written to guide an instructor as he or she prepares to teach this module. It contains complete lesson plans to provide a solid educational design for the topic. You will need to prepare for each lesson well in advance of the meeting time. Often there are background reading suggestions for the instructor or you may know additional reference materials you want to interject into the lesson.

A two-column format was chosen for the Faculty Guide. The right-hand column contains the contents of the lectures, descriptions of activities, and questions to keep students involved. Questions that are intended to be answered or discussed by the students are in italic type. The left-hand column is to give suggested instructions to you, the teacher. It also contains examples you can use to illustrate concepts in the lectures. Whenever possible you should use examples from your own experience and from your students' real-life context.

Large white space has been left in the left column to allow you to write notes and personalize the Faculty Guide.

The Faculty Guide has two major components: the Faculty Guide Introduction, and the Lesson Plans. You are reading the Faculty Guide Introduction now. It provides a teaching philosophy for adult learners, background information for organizing the module, and ideas about conducting the lessons.

Each lesson of the Faculty Guide is numbered with a two-part page number. Page 5 of Lesson 3 would be numbered "3-5." The first number is the lesson number and the second is the page number within the lesson.

The Lesson Plans are complete in themselves. They contain an Overview, Introduction, Body, and Close. The Lesson Overview provides you with a planning tool for preparing and conducting each lesson.

The three lesson elements follow a model presented by Michael Berger from Vanderbilt University. The key to the model is the Motivator and Punctuate the Finish. These two elements bracket the entire lesson just like

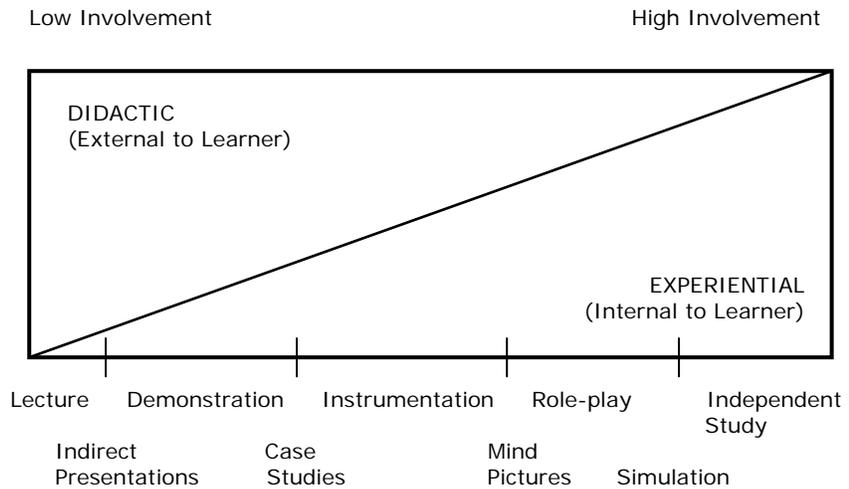
capitalizing the first letter of a sentence and placing a punctuation mark at the end. The Motivator should grab the learner's attention and Punctuate the Finish should seal the main idea of the lesson.

The Lesson Introduction should get participants' attention, bring accountability for homework, orient them to the place this lesson holds in the overall module, define the intended objectives, and prepare them for the learning activities.

The Lesson Body is the core message of the lesson. The key is to keep the learners actively involved. Even in lectures, ask questions that prompt learners to think about the content not just hear the lecture.

The following chart shows a continuum of learner involvement in different teaching methods. Lecture requires the least learner involvement, and independent study requires the most learner involvement.

METHODS CONTINUUM



A variety of learning activities are used to present information and allow learners to experiment with their new knowledge. Each individual has a set of preferred methods of learning and he or she has different life-experiences that can color or filter what he or she actually learns. A variety of learning activities help adults adapt to the learning task—by hearing, by doing, by reading, by discussing, or by combinations of these. The learners should have opportunities to test and clarify their new learning by talking with the

instructor and other participants, and applying new knowledge in real or contrived situations as soon as possible.

The Lesson Close provides a time for answering questions, reviewing the information, connecting this lesson to future lessons, making assignments, and punctuating the finish. The close does not provide any new information but gives a sense of closure to the lesson.

Homework assignments are important learning activities. They provide the student with an opportunity to synthesize classroom learning. Working on these assignments also extends the learning experience beyond the time constraints of class time.

The student—especially the adult student—needs frequent and timely feedback about his or her learning. While interaction with other students helps the learner refine what he or she is learning, feedback from the instructor is also critical to the quality of his or her learning and ultimately to his or her persistence in the Course of Study.

It is your responsibility as the instructor for this module to provide students with timely responses to homework assignments in order to enhance the learning process. Ideally homework should be returned at the beginning of the next lesson. Reviewing and responding to homework will also provide you with critical information about what your students are learning and how well the teaching-learning process is succeeding.

Since these modules are preparing the learner for ordination rather than leading to a university degree, a letter grade may not be appropriate. Your response to the learners' assignments should be thoughtful and in most cases it should be written. Its purpose will always be to refine and enhance the learning of the student.

Letter grades will not be issued at the end of the module as a measure of completion. Completion of the module is based on attendance, participation, completion of all homework, and showing competence in the ability statements.

Recommendations for printing. You may print this Faculty Guide if desired. The introduction and lesson plan segments are formatted for printing on both sides of the paper.

About the Student Guide

The Student Guide for this module contains the series foreword, acknowledgments, syllabus, all resources, lesson objectives, and assignments. The Student Guide should be made available to each student in either hard copy or electronic format.

Each resource sheet in the Student Guide is numbered at the top for the lesson in which the resource is first used. The first resource page for Lesson 2 is numbered "2-1." In the Faculty Guide, in the left-hand column, you will be informed when to refer to the appropriate resource.

The first page for each lesson:

- Reminds the student of the assignments that are due
- States the learner objectives
- Gives the homework assignment instructions
- Sometimes includes relevant quotes

For each lesson, there are several support pieces, which we have called simply "resources." They help guide the flow of the lesson. Some resources are basic outlines that guide the student through a lecture. Others direct small-group activities. For some lessons, data/statistic resources are given. And for some modules homework assignment information resources are included.

You must determine how each resource will be used in your context. If an overhead projector is to be used, then transparencies can be made by replacing the paper in your photocopy machine with special transparency material. They also can be used as part of a PowerPoint presentation or projected directly from your computer.

The instructor may photocopy resources to use for his or her own lecture outlines. There is space to add notes from the Faculty Guide, from a textbook, or from the additional suggested readings. Add in your own illustrations too!

Suggested Meeting Schedule

The module lessons are designed to last 90 minutes each. Each lesson is complete in itself with an opening, a middle, and a closing. They are sequential. Each lesson assumes the learners have mastered material

presented in previous lessons. The lessons can be grouped in a variety of ways to accommodate the schedules of your learners.

When lessons are taught in the same meeting, instructors will need to adjust homework assignments because participants will not have time between lessons to prepare homework. It is very important for the instructor to always be looking ahead and planning for upcoming lessons.

Here are three suggestions—out of many—for ways that the meetings can be organized.

1. Resident campus: The class can meet two days a week for 90 minutes. Present one lesson per meeting time. Total time: 10 weeks.
2. Extension education: The class can meet one day—or evening—each week for 3 to 3½ hours. Present two lessons per meeting with a break period between lessons. Participants will need to travel to a centralized location for meetings, so make it worth their time. Total time: 10 weeks.
3. Intensive module: The class can meet five consecutive days for 7 to 8 hours per day. Present two lessons in the morning with a break period between lessons and two lessons in the afternoon with another break period between the lessons. Participants must complete reading assignments before arriving at the module site, and written assignments can be submitted 30 to 60 days following the class meeting. Total meeting time: 1 week. Elapsed time including reading and written assignments: 2 to 3 months.

The module is divided into 20 units. The progression of these units can be seen in the chart below. Space is given for you to fill in the dates when your class sessions will meet.

Date	Lesson
	1. The Church in the Life of the Child
	2. Children in the Life of the Church
	3. The Child in History and the Life of the Church
	4. Children in Today's Social Context
	5. The Spirituality of Children
	6. Understanding the Development of Children
	7. How Children Learn
	8. Spiritual Formation
	9. Interaction with Staff and Others
	10. Pastoral Care

	11. Programming for Children's Ministry
	12. Developing a Strategic Plan, Calendar, and Ministries Budget
	13. The Church—a Safe Environment
	14. Evaluating Curriculum, Events, and Programs
	15. Storytelling, Spiritual Formation, and Biblical Interpretation
	16. Salvation of Children and Follow-up Activities
	17. Leading Children in Worship
	18. A Philosophy of Ministry
	19. Discipline and Classroom Management
	20. Ready to Minister

Recommended Textbooks

Each module within the Modular Course of Study is intended to be textbook independent. This does not imply that the modules are textbook irrelevant or that the module content cannot be enriched by selecting and requiring that students study a textbook along with the lessons provided in this faculty guide.

If these modules are adapted for use outside of the English-speaking countries of North America, a specific textbook may not be available in the language of the students. Therefore, the module does not rely on one textbook. The instructor may select any doctrinally sound textbook that is available to the students.

A Hidden Agenda

Hidden curriculum issues . . . because the way we teach teaches

In each session, there are certain methodological and environmental things to consider.

First, consider the classroom arrangement. Whenever possible, the room should be arranged to encourage a sense of community. The group should sit either in a circle or around a table. If the group is very large, chairs can be arranged for easily moving into clusters for discussion.

Second, consider how you present yourself as teacher. Standing behind a lectern with your students facing you in rows says that you are above the students and have something to give them—although in a very large group this standing to teach may be unavoidable. Sitting as part of the circle makes the teacher a co-learner at the same level as the students. Speak naturally. Pay close attention to your students, and

value the things they share. Learn their names. Encourage participation. Remember that you are modeling for them, and the way you teach will teach them far more than the words you say.

Third, invite the Holy Spirit's presence in the classroom. Do this each time the class meets.

Fourth, the sharing of stories activity does more than help the students begin to reflect on their own Christian experiences. It is a way to build community between the students. This is more than an exercise to be checked off. It is vital to set the tone of your intentional community.

When meeting times exceed 90 minutes, consider adding break times. The break between segments is an important time for community building. Remain available to the students during this time. Consider offering coffee or tea during this time as a way to encourage fellowship.

Journaling: The Key to Spiritual Formation

Journaling is a major assignment of each module in the Ministerial Preparation Course of Study. It is the integrating element that helps you draw spiritual meaning and ministerial application from the content of each module whether the module concentrates on content, competency, character, or context. It ensures that the "Be" component of "Be, Know, and Do" is present in every module in which you participate. What is journaling and how can it be meaningfully accomplished?

The Syllabus contains this explanation of journaling. Journaling provides the spiritual formation component for the module and is an integral part of the learning experience.

Journaling is an effective way to get students to think beyond the classroom to real-life applications of classroom concepts.

Have students read the journaling section during the Syllabus review in Lesson 1 and emphasize that journaling is an assignment for each lesson in the module.

When giving assignments in each lesson, assign journal writing each time the group meets.

Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration

Participating in the Course of Study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each module you will be required to listen to lectures, read several books, participate in discussions, and write papers. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The module work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritual formation work will

weave all you learn into the fabric of your being, allowing your education to flow freely from your head to your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work to faithfully spend time daily in your journal. Many people confess that this is a practice they tend to push aside when pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, and an ah-ha that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet, family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with

devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave your experiences with the Word, and also with module material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, and aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available. However, as computers become more and more an integral part of our lives the use of a computer for journaling may take on that special bond.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated value of the Word, your module work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration—weaving together faith development and learning. Integration moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: "Why do I do what I do when I do it?"

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

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Lesson 1

The Church in the Life of the Child

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:15	Moral and Spiritual Foundation	Small Groups	Resource 1-1
0:30	Evidence of the Importance of Early Childhood Training	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 1-2 Resource 1-3
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Before the class begins make sure that you are familiar with the module, the syllabus and the requirements.

Modular Course of Study. *Developing Children's Ministry*, Faculty Guide and Student Guide.

Gopnik, Alison; Meltzoff, Andrew; and Kuhl, Patricia. *The Scientist in the Crib: Minds, Brains, and How Children Learn*. William Morrow & Co., 1999.

Lesson Introduction

(15 minutes)

Orientation

Welcome the students and make sure that each of the students have a copy of the Student Guide (hardcopy or electronic).

Introduce yourself to the class and have students introduce themselves.

Have the students fill out a form that includes Name, Phone numbers, and email address. Copies of this should be made available to all the students.

Read through the Syllabus making sure that the students understand the requirements.

Our purpose in meeting today is to begin to investigate characteristics of children and how the characteristics relate to children's ministry. We want to clarify why ministry to children is absolutely vital to the life of the Church, the building of God's kingdom, and the overall development of individuals throughout their lives.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand the importance and necessity of effective children's ministry
- relate developmental windows of opportunity to ministry practices
- articulate the role of the church in the lives of children

Motivator

You are here because God has given you a call to minister in some way to children. God has led you here through different circumstances, but you recognize that ministry to children is important. We are going to discuss some of the reasons ministry to children is so important. There are as many reasons to minister as there are children. In this session, we are going to look specifically at these reasons:

1. Moral and spiritual foundations are formed early in life.
2. There are windows of opportunity in early development that influence how children will think about life later.
3. Most people's relationship to Christ and the church are connected to their early experiences.
4. Children need the church to support them and advocate for their needs in the complicated social climate in which they live. Children are often "the least of these," whom Jesus has called us to protect.
5. Ministering to children is part of the Great Commission. The church cannot fulfill its calling if it leaves out anyone.

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Moral and Spiritual Foundations

(15 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students.

Refer to Resource 1-1 in the Student Guide.

After about 5 minutes ask each group to share their ideas.

In your group read through the two statements—A and B—found in Resource 1-1. Answer questions 1 and 2. Then discuss your ideas about the statements with your group. Give reasons for your ideas.

Look at each phase of development listed in question 3, and tell why it is or is not a good time to *begin* modeling or teaching for moral development.

- Infancy
- Preschool
- Elementary School
- Jr. High School/Middle School
- High School
- Young Adult

Discuss the implications of teaching and modeling morality at each age level. Allow for differences in opinion at this point. Eventually the discussion should lead students to understand that moral education can begin in infancy.

Early experiences influence all later stages of moral development. We continue in moral development throughout our lives, but the foundations are formed early in life.

Lecture/Discussion: Evidence of the Importance of Early Childhood Training

(55 minutes)

God created people in His own image, different from any other created being. Based on that biblical foundation, we must learn what makes people so special and why early experiences in our lives are so critical.

We will start our study of children's ministry by trying to understand the developmental factors God built into

each human being. We call these different areas of development “developmental domains.” This developmental understanding will help us minister to children effectively as whole human beings who have physical, emotional, social, and spiritual characteristics.

As we better understand the opportunities children face, we will come to understand that each of these opportunities influences individuals over the course of their lifetime. It is important to understand there are windows of opportunity—developmental periods in the human life cycle in which people are particularly open to a particular kind of learning—in many different areas of human development. If a person does not have the opportunity to learn what he or she is ready for at the peak time, it may be almost impossible to go back and totally reverse the negative consequences. Yet, there is always hope! We serve the God of the second chance, and through God’s intervention, miracles can happen in human lives.

One objective of this module is to be careful with terminology that can cause confusion and inaccurate thinking. One phrase that has more recently caused concern for theologians is “Word of God.” The phrase is used to refer to both the Bible and to Jesus the Son of God as taught in John chapter 1. The Bible and Jesus Christ are not one and the same. Jesus Christ is part of the Trinity—He is God. The Bible is a tool to lead us and others to God. We dare not worship the Bible—that is idolatry! Therefore, the phrase “Word of God” is avoided in this module. Care should be used when talking to children. We need to make sure they know whether we are referring to Jesus or the Bible.

Refer to Resource 1-2 in the Student Guide.

As we begin to see patterns and consistencies in how humans grow and change, we may begin to wonder if moral and spiritual development follows a similar pattern and similar time frames. It certainly does make sense that if childhood is the greatest time for learning and establishing concepts and ideas and ways of interacting with people that will be relatively permanent throughout their lives, then children are also learning patterns of interacting with God and the world God created in these early years. As we delve into the Bible with this developmental way of looking at things, we will begin to discover that the messages within Scripture will come alive to give us divine insight into how the Bible relates to everyone, including children.

You may use the resource sheet to record significant information from the discussion questions in each section.

As we move into this discussion, let’s start with infancy and how babies come to recognize that they exist. The problem of existence is one that philosophers have discussed throughout history. How do we know that we “are”? How do you know that you exist? While philosophers have done lots of talking and debating, each child has to solve this riddle for himself or herself. Some may have assumed that this takes place at birth, but evidence suggests that this may not take place until later into the second year of life, when children begin to realize they are separate from their mothers and others who nurture them.

Areas of Development

Self-identity

How do babies come to know themselves? We've all watched babies play with their feet in much the same way they play with rattles or other toys, examining them with their mouths, dropping them and picking them back up. Developmentalists Gopnik, Meltzoff, and Kuhl in their book *"The Scientist in the Crib: Minds, Brains, and How Children Learn,"* tell us even newborn babies can be observed imitating an adult sticking out his or her tongue. This shows an ability to actually feel and control their power to change their own bodies to look like someone else. This implies an inborn self-awareness, at least in relating to others.

A three-month-old child listens to the adult cooing at him or her and begins to make sounds that mimic the pitch and tone of the adult, even though they do not yet speak. In fact, all babies start out making the same sounds (like Ma Ma and Da Da) as they "play" with their voices. They begin weeding out sounds that aren't part of the language of their caretakers very early. All these point to the infant's ability to distinguish between himself and others, but it is not until roughly 18 months that babies begin to visually recognize themselves as unique individuals.

This has been demonstrated by a procedure called the "rouge test" in which a researcher holds a child in front of a mirror and places a dab of rouge on the child's nose. At about 18 months of age, children will touch their noses to wipe the rouge off. Children under 18 months will not reach to wipe the red off of their noses. Why? Some researchers believe, before 18 months of age, the child does not fully recognize himself or herself in the mirror.

Around this age, if a child is talking, he or she will begin to say words like, "I," "me," and "mine." Deaf children's sign language reflects the same change in language structure, indicating that children are beginning to recognize themselves not only as imitators, but as actors in life, who can effect change on their own.

Teacher Tip: Use this information to help students understand children imitate before they act independently. This imitation begins at birth, and it becomes further refined until the child's individuality "clicks" to him or her at about eighteen months.

Possible answers:

- *If children imitate behavior before they become aware they can choose behaviors, they should have early opportunities to imitate Christian or Christlike behaviors.*
- *The children's minister will have the opportunity to help children identify themselves as imitators of Christ.*
- *It is never too early to model the love of God.*

What implications does this have for children's ministry?

Moral Development

Studies of infants in newborn nurseries have shown the infants respond to the crying of other infants by crying themselves. For whatever reason, the discomfort of others affects our own sense of well-being from the day we are born. Some theorists claim it is this characteristic of humans that forms the root of moral development. We are emotionally touched by others, and we experience a sympathetic response.

Developmentalists, such as Kohlberg, remind us children also have no ability to see things from any perspective other than their own. This is called *egocentrism*, and it is a natural part of human development.

The way adults can help children grow OUT of egocentrism is to teach the child trust by willingly giving appropriate loving care. In fact, some research indicates stressed babies who are held and whose needs are promptly met are less likely to use violence and anger to get their needs met throughout life.

Kohlberg says this egocentric stage comes before any kind of moral reasoning ability develops. It is not "bad" or "immoral." It is "pre-moral"—a step before early moral reasoning. Some Christians believe this egocentricity is a sign of the sinful nature, while others recognize children are not capable of choosing NOT to be egocentric. Either way, young children need to have loving care modeled to them so they can imitate loving care toward others. This principle of loving care is one of the bases of moral and ethical behavior throughout our lives.

Some researchers have linked moral sense to the child's ability to recognize that something is wrong with an object. For example, a child may become upset by a broken toy or a doll that is missing an arm. This happens about the same time a child visually recognizes something wrong with him or herself, as in

the rouge test described before. A child who is talking will begin to say the words "bad" or "good." This may indicate the child has some understanding of right and wrong. However, the use of these words is also strongly influenced by the words used by caretakers.

Labeling a child good or bad does not contribute to moral development. Instead it may cause a child to feel shame in a way that interferes with his or her ability to make personal judgments about right and wrong. *Actions* and *decisions* can be labeled as right or wrong or good or bad. However, *children should not be labeled*, because these early labels influence how a child perceives himself or herself morally.

As children develop in other areas, their ability to

- think and act in genuinely caring and moral ways
- follow rules for the good of the community
- understand the consequences of their actions
- respond obediently

will grow, especially when these traits are recognized and affirmed by those people who matter to them.

Possible answers:

- *If we want children to love and care for others, we must love and care for them.*
- *God created us to care.*
- *Children can learn about good and bad and right and wrong when they are confident they are loved.*
- *We should not label children.*

What do these facts about early moral development mean for children's ministry?

Brain Development

In recent years, we have acquired much knowledge about brain functioning and brain development. New technology, such as computer assisted tomography (CAT scans) and f-MRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging), can actually show researchers what is happening in the brain under different circumstances.

Here are a few valuable understandings about brain development:

- The brain regulates every single activity of our lives from breathing to decision-making.
- At about two years, the electrical connections in the brain are forming at a faster rate than any other time in life (Do you see any connection to the "terrible twos"?)
- By three years, these connections, called synapses, number about 1000 trillion—about twice the number an adult has! The brain continues to develop at a rapid pace until about the age of ten, with different parts of the brain

- developing at “hyper-speed” at different times.
- The brain “sheds” those connections it doesn’t need. If a connection is used over and over through repetition of words, experiences, or actions, it becomes part of the permanent structure of the brain. If the connections are not used, they disappear. A single brain cell can form connections to as many as 10,000 other cells.
- While we once thought new brain cells could not be generated in the body, we now know that some can. Our brains keep a “plasticity” throughout our lives that allows us to continue to form new electrical pathways as we learn and repeat new activities or information.
- Our brains are constantly taking in information from the environment. At any second, you may have as many as 50,000 bits of information coming into your brain through sight, smell, taste, touch, or hearing. You learn to screen out the stimuli that you don’t need at the moment. Children have less experience screening, so they are often more distractible (or sensorily stressed) than adults.
- Emotional engagement creates chemicals in the brain that promote learning.
- Challenge and emotional security promote learning. Threat and fear inhibit learning.
- Children need a language-rich environment to stimulate brain development.
- Movement actually promotes learning. Sitting still may require attention that is not available for learning.
- Good nutrition, hydration (plenty of water), exercise, and sleep are all necessary for the learning brain to function at its best.

Of all of the developmental aspects presented so far, this one is most critical to long term outcomes. This suggests that children’s ministers can lay some of the foundations for how children’s brains will be organized as they move into the adolescent years when they begin to formulate a stronger image of who they are and are going to be as adults.

In other words, **what a child sees, hears, and feels over and over through a children’s minister may become a relatively permanent part of his or her brain structure.** A child’s thinking processes throughout adolescence and young adulthood and even for the rest of their lives may be affected by what happens at church. Wow! What an opportunity and what a responsibility! But do not forget that negative things will stick with kids as well—and maybe more so

because of the emotional response they generate. If a children's minister or Sunday School teacher communicates to a child over and over that he or she is a troublemaker or a problem, this may shape the child's thinking for years to come.

It should be evident there are incredible developments that take place very early in life, many around the age of 18 months: Some of these are a sense of self, a moral sense, incredible brain expansion, and more.

The phrase "windows of opportunity," helps us to understand better how early childhood is one of the most critical times of learning and development. As we explore the next three developmental areas let's keep this phrase in mind.

An active teaching option for larger groups: Have the students stand in two lines facing each other. After you present the material about one of the windows of opportunity, ask the students to discuss the question at the end of the section with the person standing across from them. For the next section of the material, have the students in one line move one person to their right to switch partners. Ask partners to tell the best idea to the whole group before moving on to the next section of lecture.

Windows of Opportunity/Points of Commitment

In general, windows of opportunity are consistent with the most rapid rate of development in a particular part of the brain. The windows of time are broad-based and vary from individual to individual. But from birth to 24 months is a major opportunity time of visual development, motor development, and emotional development.

Visual Development

Babies are visually stimulated by exposure to high contrast, such as black and white and bright color. They are also stimulated by human faces. In fact, some research states the human face is the most interesting thing babies can look at. We know that different understandings of objects are stored in different parts of the brain. When a two-month-old child looks at a toy, he or she may be identifying something like color. At six months, the same baby will begin to notice something like depth or texture patterns. By the time a child is two years old, he or she has mastered most of the basic visual abilities. However, discrimination skills will continue to develop for several more years. This is why a two-year-old

child may be able to recognize letters, but he or she may not know which letter it is.

Possible answers:

- *Brightly colored pictures of Jesus and Bible characters*
- *Pictures of themselves*
- *The faces of children's workers*

What are some of the things young children should see in the church?

Motor Development

Between the ages of 0-2, a child learns how to hold up parts of the body, sit erect, kick on demand, stand, walk, run, and fall and pick him or herself back up again. The child also learns how to hold large and small objects, pick up items, slide items, and drop items. And, the child learns to do those things at will, not as some kind of random reflex reaction. Basically, all movement skills are established early. Throughout the life cycle, these actions are refined to allow us to skip, run, dance, write and do needlework.

A particularly important part of this development is a sense of balance, which is developed by stimulation of the inner ear. This happens as babies are rocked, swayed, swung, and sometimes tossed into the air by their parents in play.

As children get older, there are times in their development when they are very sensitive to their bodies' need for movement. Sitting for too long can actually seem to a child to cause physical pain at the pressure points. An understanding of this aspect of development can help children's workers understand why some children actually can't sit still.

Possible Answers:

- *Forcing children to sit still might keep them from being able to pay attention.*
- *Children might see church as being for others to worship God but not for them.*
- *Adults might think some of the children's need to move as disobedience and bad, instead of being part of their developmental level.*

How might some of our expectations of children hinder their church experience?

Emotional Intelligence

A developmental researcher, Erik Erikson (who we'll talk more about later) helps us understand emotional development as based on the first task of life: to learn trust. Separation anxiety, becoming emotionally overwhelmed when a caretaker leaves a child, is a normal and appropriate reaction for a child until he or

she discovers that Mommy or Daddy can be trusted to come back. The foundation of trust of Mommy and Daddy help to form a child's view of God as trustworthy.

Children first experience very basic emotions. As they develop, their emotional range becomes more extensive. The three basic emotions—mad, sad, and glad—become expressed in various degrees of intensity, from irritation to rage, from “the blues” to deep mournfulness, from mildly pleased to ecstatic. Other aspects of emotional intelligence rooted in the first two years of development make an enormous difference in how a child becomes able to relate to others. This emotional development is inseparably tied to how children see life and how they envision God.

One very important skill is the ability to self-soothe. This allows children to calm themselves, gain self-control, or go to sleep instead of exploding or lying awake staring at the ceiling.

Another skill is the ability to relate reciprocally to others. This includes smiling when smiled at, calming down when someone else calms down, and responding to invitations to play. This ability is based on learning to interpret subtle social cues and change one's behavior in response to the cues. It is a complicated process but one which even babies can observe. Children need to see approval and encouragement (such as smiling) when they act appropriately. They need gentle disapproval (non-emotional reactions) when they behave inappropriately. Disapproval should include redirection to help children make better choices.

You have seen children explore many ways of getting their needs or desires met, from being cute to throwing a fit. The best way to help a child learn appropriate ways to relate to others is to respect their needs, encourage the use of words, and respond appropriately to what a child tells you. A child who is yelled at learns to yell to be heard. A child who is disciplined through use of physical force will often try to use physical force with others. Children who are touched appropriately and lovingly will grow emotionally.

These patterns of relating are established early in life, and they help children develop an internal working model of how the world operates. An infant who has caregivers who respond promptly and accurately to their signals (crying, screaming, cooing) will develop an internal working model that says, “People are dependable” and “I have what it takes to get what I

need from others." A child who does not have caregivers who give prompt and accurate responses to their signals will develop an internal working model that says, "People are not dependable," and "I do not have what it takes to get what I need from others." The development of an internal working model begins to stabilize as early as 18 months.

Children need loving response as infants, and they need limits as they grow. Children who grow up with inconsistent boundaries are likely to be emotionally unstable. Kids need to know limits in order to function safely within them. But limits must be reinforced through repetition. Limits must be enforced with love and consistency, in an unemotional way, in order for children to feel safe. Children learn better by responding to positive encouragement than by trying to avoid punishment.

Children who feel secure in the presence of God's people are ready to feel secure in the presence of God.

How can we use this information to create safe places for kids to develop emotionally?

Possible Answers:

- *Have predictable people to meet with children each week.*
- *Use gentle disciplinary strategies and lots of encouragement.*
- *Set safe limits for children and help them understand the limits by enforcing them consistently.*

Sound and Language Development

By age one, an individual loses the ability to hear consonant sounds that are not in their native language. That is why some language groups have a difficult time saying certain words in different languages. For example, when attempting to say an "r" sound, it comes out as an "l" sound. They say "blight" instead of "bright". This is because the "r" sound was not in their original language (mother tongue), and they hear it as "l" which is part of the original language.

Children also learn to hear beginning, middle, and end sounds, how words rhyme, the cadence and rhythm of language, how tones of voice signal emotion, how to regulate the volume of the sounds they make and lots of other small parts of language that work together to allow effective communication. These sounds are the precursors of both spoken language and reading. Playing with language during this stage is FUN for children. This is why nursery rhymes and rhyming songs are universal.

A child's vocabulary also expands at an astounding rate; from about 15 words at age one to over 2000 words at age five. They learn to tell stories, tell about what happened to them, and interact with others in give-and-take dialog. It is important to realize children have a greater listening vocabulary than speaking vocabulary. They will not use a greater vocabulary than they hear. While we shouldn't overwhelm children with words they don't understand, we should help them understand the words we use!

Capital "W" will be used in reference to Jesus. Lower case "w" in reference to the Bible.

We have been called "people of the word." Our heritage is preserved in a word-based book, the Bible. We have an interest in helping children learn the words of faith and use words as a tool of faith.

Possible answers:

- *Tell stories in rhyme and interesting language patterns.*
- *Emphasize talking and listening to children.*
- *Explain unfamiliar words.*

How can we encourage sound and language development in the church?

Musical Development: Birth to 30 months

Musical expression includes singing, listening to music, tapping rhythms, listening for similarities and differences in instruments, and learning to work with others to make pleasing sounds. Music works hand in hand with memory and brain development. Music gives kids a tool for creating and expressing what is important to them. It may help them learn to identify patterns, a skill useful in mathematics and science, as well as art and design. Children also learn to coordinate movements to music, to *feel* the music in their bodies. Music is a kind of language without words, and it helps us to express thoughts and ideas that are beyond words.

Appreciation for music develops as we expose children to the range of styles through listening, singing to children, singing with children, and allowing them to experiment with sounds and rhythms of both everyday objects and musical instruments.

God's people have used music to express praise, encourage one another, carry messages and stories from generation to generation, and express heartfelt feelings in beautiful melodies. Some people have even noted the ability of music to bring people together in harmony, something no one can do alone. The church has an interest in helping children to appreciate the tool of music.

Possible Answers:

- *Make music fun.*
- *Allow children to experience worship music with adults.*
- *Let children "play music" with instruments.*
- *Sing songs to children.*

How can we develop music appreciation in children's ministry?

Thinking Skills: Birth to 48 months

Who hasn't been brought nearly to tears by the constant questions of a child: Why don't dogs have wings? If a dog did have wings, could it fly? Why are some flowers orange and some purple? Why aren't there black flowers? These questions help children form operating rules for the world. How we respond to children as they ask these questions and how we encourage their minds to wonder establishes how they will seek answers in the future. If children learn there are many answers to their questions instead of one right or wrong answer, they learn to explore many possibilities.

Sometimes the best answer to a question is a question—one that causes a child to expand his or her own understandings. Children who learn to question will not accept that what's bad in the world cannot be changed. They will learn to seek better ways to do jobs that could be lost in the mediocre.

While there are some facts we want children to learn, we want them to use their imaginations to apply biblical truths to their lives and visualize themselves as part of God's ongoing story. God has gifted children with inquisitive minds. Our job is to nurture their curiosity so they will become lifelong thinkers who can bring the gospel to life.

Optional Activity: Think of several questions a child might ask and have students practice asking appropriate questions in response.

Example: Question: Do dogs go to heaven?

Possible answers:

- *Why do you ask?*
- *What do you think?*
- *What else do you wonder about heaven?*

Possible answers:

- *They can effectively relate the Bible to life.*
- *They can understand better how to take a stand for Christian values.*
- *They can learn to critically evaluate media influences.*

Why is it important for children in the church to learn to be solid critical thinkers?

TRANSITIONAL QUESTIONS:

- *Looking back at the areas of opportunity, what are some of the reasons the church should be involved with children at early ages?*
- *What difference does knowledge of developmental principles make for ministers in the spiritual development of children?*

Patterns of Childhood Christian Commitment

Refer to Resource 1-3 in the Student Guide.

Barna. Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003, 41-57.

George Barna found the following in his research:

- A person's moral foundations are generally in place by the age of nine.
- A person's response to the meaning and personal value of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection is usually determined before a person reaches eighteen years of age.
- In most cases, people's spiritual beliefs are irrevocably formed by the time they are preteens.
- Those who are adult church leaders usually had serious involvement in church life and training when they were young.

Allow for response.

How do these statistics influence your ministry to children?

How would you connect some of the developmental ideas to the attitudes toward God you hope children will develop?

Even though this is just the tip of the iceberg, there should be a deep sense of urgency and responsibility to make the gospel accessible to children.

Ministering to children requires a great deal of understanding about how children grow. Children's workers should begin to see how misunderstandings of children's development can interfere with children's relationship with God and the church. They should understand the urgency of helping children respond to the gospel, because children's patterns of relation to the world are set so early in life. People who respond to God's invitation to relationship early have more solid, stable, lifelong, spiritual growth into Christlikeness.

Some Thoughts About Children's Spiritual Formation

Some researchers have proposed developmental stage theories for children's spiritual formation. Rather than

learning what these stages are at this point, it may be best to think of a child's spiritual formation as inseparable from all the rest of his or her development.

One prominent educational psychologist, Howard Gardner, has explored whether some children have a "spiritual intelligence." His conclusion is that this is unlikely. Unlike other kinds of intelligence, spirituality cannot be identified in one specific part of the brain in the same way language, visual skills, or even higher level thinking can. Instead, we can say spirituality involves the whole brain, or the whole person, in a unique and mysterious way that can't be fully measured by scientific means. Is this surprising for people who have been told to love the Lord our God with all our heart (emotions), soul (will), mind (cognitive) and strength (physical), and our neighbors as ourselves (social)?

We will talk about spiritual formation throughout the class, but not as something separated from the rest of the person. Our spirituality is about the whole of who we are, rather than a part of our nature, as God's unique creations.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Do you have any questions concerning any of the objectives?

- Understand the importance and necessity of effective children's ministry.
- Relate developmental windows of opportunity to ministry practices.
- State the role of the church in the lives of children.

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will continue to discuss the role of the church in the life of the child.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Write a two-page paper explaining why it is so important to begin in the nursery to teach age-appropriate spiritual concepts.

View either *Jesus in Me* or *Connecting a New Generation*. Both are available at <http://www.connecting.nazarene.org>

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. What is the earliest memory you have of relating to another person? How has this memory influenced you through life?

Punctuate the Finish

From Catherine Stonehouse, Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998, 31-32.

During the time of King Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Chr 20: 1-28), there was a national crisis. "As a great enemy army advanced toward Jerusalem, King Jehoshaphat was afraid. He called for a fast, and all the people gathered at the temple in Jerusalem to seek God's help.

"The children were there too, experiencing the event with their parents. They heard the king's prayer; he proclaimed God's greatness and power and recalled what God had done in the past. He declared their powerlessness in the face of the enemy and confessed,

'We don't know what to do, but our eyes are on You, Lord.'

"As the congregation waited, imagine the fear, anxiety, and desperate hope that charged the atmosphere. Then Jehaziel, a Levite in the crowd, spoke, 'Listen, thus says the Lord. Do not be afraid. The battle is God's. Take your position, stand still, and see God's victory.'

"Early the next morning, the army went out singing praises to God and discovered God had already defeated the enemy. As the king led the procession to the sound of trumpets and harps, all the people returned to the temple rejoicing.

"What a way for children to learn about the God who acts! They were present to sense the human hopelessness and the need for God, to hear God's promise, and to experience the joy and celebration of the promise fulfilled."

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Lesson 2

Children in the Life of the Church

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Children's Ministries in Social Context	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 2-1
0:20	A Church's Perception of Children	Class Activity	Whiteboard, Flip-chart
0:40	Connecting A New Generation to Christ	Lecture	Resource 2-2
0:45	Connecting A New Generation to Christ	Small Groups	Resource 2-3
1:00	Mission, Vision, and Goals	Lecture	Resource 2-4 Resource 2-5
1:10	Mission, Vision, and Goals	Small Groups	Resource 2-6
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

George Barna. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Have students exchange homework papers with another student to read and make one comment.

Collect homework papers. Papers should be evaluated—giving ideas, suggestions, questions, comments and corrections. However, a grade will not be assigned. Completion of the module is dependant on attendance, class participation, and achieving success with the outcomes/ability statements.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to continue to discuss the importance of the church in the life of the child.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- articulate the role of the church in the lives of children
- tell why the Church of the Nazarene has a decadal emphasis on children and youth
- relate ways a local church can minister to children and youth

Motivator

Matthew 28: 19-20 says: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

These verses are known as the Great Commission. The statement of mission for the Church of the Nazarene is "To make Christlike disciples in the nations." Disciples include children, youth, and adults. The Church cannot fulfill its calling if it leaves out any of these age groups.

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: Children's Ministries in Social Context

(15 minutes)

*Read through each fact and allow time for the students to think about each one. **Because these statistics can change from year to year, use the internet to find the most current information.***

These statistics are from the Children's Defense Fund website, www.campaign.childrensdefense.org

The world in which children live can be unstable and hostile. Here are some statistics reflecting this world. As a children's minister, these are some of the areas in which children and families are struggling to cope.

Moments in America for Children:

- Every second a public school student is suspended.
- Every 9 seconds, a high school student drops out.
- Every 13 seconds a public school student is corporally punished.
- Every 20 seconds, a child is arrested.
- Every 22 seconds, a baby is born to an unmarried mother.
- Every 35 seconds, a child is confirmed as abused or neglected.
- Every 35 seconds, a baby is born into poverty.
- Every 38 seconds a baby is born to a mother who is not a high school graduate.
- Every minute, a baby is born to a teen mother.
- Every 2 minutes, a baby is born at low birth weight.
- Every 4 minutes, a child is arrested for drug abuse.
- Every 4 minutes, a baby is born to a mother who received late or no prenatal care.
- Every 8 minutes, a child is arrested for violent crimes.
- Every 19 minutes, a baby dies before his or her first birthday.
- Every 41 minutes, a child or teen dies in an accident.
- Every 3 hours, a child or teen is killed by a firearm.
- Every 6 hours, a child is killed by abuse or neglect.
- Every day, a mother dies in childbirth.

What significance do these statistics have in relation to children's ministry?

Possible answers:

- *We need to minister to children inside and outside the church.*
- *We need to offer help to families as a way of showing the love of Christ.*
- *We need to work with pastors to help them understand the family situations of the children to whom we minister.*

Spiritual Statistics:

George Barna has surveyed teenagers to help us understand how our efforts in children's ministry are bearing fruit. Here are some of the statistics Barna has reported:

Refer to Resource 2-1 in the Student Guide.

Barna, George, Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003, 33-37.

You may want to look at more of the statistics in George Barna's book.

- Of the teens surveyed, 93% claim to be Christian, but having a close relationship with God ranks as the 8th priority. Their first priority was earning a college degree. Having a high paying job, and experiencing a satisfying sex life in marriage ranked ahead of being a deeply committed Christian.
- From the teens, 70% claim to attend church, but only 16% said the church had the greatest influence on their spiritual development.
- 47% of those teens say that their parents are their greatest influence
- 9% of born-again teens believe in moral absolutes.
- Only 3% the nation's 13-year-olds have a biblical world view which serves as the foundation for their decision-making.

The patterns of adult Christian commitment from childhood experiences were:

1. Adults who attended church regularly as a child are nearly three times as likely to be attending a church today as are their peers who avoided the church during childhood.
2. Two-thirds of those who were church-ed as children take their own children to a church, which is double the proportion among adults who were not church-ed and who now take their own kids to church (33%).
3. Adults who attended church as a child are nearly 50% more likely to pray to God during a typical week than are those who did not attend church as children.

Possible answers:

- *Greater care needs to go into the content and accuracy of what we teach children*
- *Attending church as a child influences how you raise your children.*
- *Parents have more influence than the church.*
- *To help children, maybe we need to help parents.*
- *Going to church as a child influences your prayer life*
- *People are influenced by people, not programs.*

What do these statistics tell you about the church, children, and families that might influence your ministry?

Moments for Children World-wide

The needs and lives of children around the world look a little different in some areas and a lot different in others.

Check for current statistics.

According to *UNICEF*:

- Because of poor sanitation, about 40 percent of school-age children suffer from intestinal worms.
- Diarrhea, which is spread easily in areas with poor sanitation, kills 2.2 million persons each year—most are children under the age of five.
- One in five children in the developing world does not have access to safe water.
- One in seven children does not have access to essential health services.
- More than one in three children does not have adequate shelter.
- More than 16 per cent of children under the age of five lack adequate nutrition.
- 13% of all children have never been to school.

Possible answers:

- *We can help children wherever we live to understand the needs of children around the world.*
- *We can help children wherever we live with mission projects to help children around the world.*
- *We can help to educate adults about the needs of children around the world.*

What role does the children's minister play in the global church?

Class Activity: A Church's Perception of Children

(20 minutes)

This activity will help the students discern what their church's attitude is toward children and the role of children in the church.

Divide the students into partners or small groups.

Take time to share with each other how your church tends to see children. Record these responses on the white boards (or flipcharts) so that the whole group will be able to see the answers.

Allow some time for the students to compile responses.

Some answers will not be connected to any of the things you

We are now going to decide into which of these three areas the responses most accurately fall:

have discussed yet. For those you can't label, decide if it is a healthy (H) or unhealthy (UH) perception of children.

You will need to be somewhat flexible with your labeling system.

Allow for response.

- children's development—marked with CD
- social challenges children face—marked with SC
- the George Barna early commitment to Christ survey—marked with GB

How are our churches doing with meeting children's needs?

Are there areas in which we are particularly strong?

Are there areas in which we are weak?

Lecture: Connecting a New Generation to Christ

(5 minutes)

Refer to Resource 2-2 in the Student Guide.

During this section, we are going to be looking at the response of the Church of the Nazarene to some of these needs of children. This material offers us a framework for the remainder of this module.

Carefully read with me the declaration of the Board of General Superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene:

WHEREAS children and youth make up more than one-third of the world's population;

WHEREAS children and youth are being increasingly influenced by forces outside the family and church;

WHEREAS many children and youth live lives increasingly scarred by uprootedness and disruption, resulting in helplessness;

WHEREAS the Church of the Nazarene desires to become an intergenerational faith community where children and youth are loved and valued;

WHEREAS the prime age to win a person to Christ is between the ages of 4 and 14;

THEREFORE THE BOARD OF GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS CALLS THE CHURCH TO A DECADE OF EMPHASIS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH—CONNECTING A NEW GENERATION.

WE HEREBY PROCLAIM JANUARY 2002 THROUGH JANUARY 2012 TO BE A DECADE FOR CONNECTING A NEW GENERATION WITHIN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE.

At the meeting of the Board of General Superintendents in December of 2007, the leaders of the church agreed that this emphasis should continue beyond 2012 and this emphasis should be a continuing part of each local church's DNA. The name of the emphasis was changed to "Connecting a New Generation—Foundation for a Lifetime."

Small Groups: Connecting a New Generation to Christ

(15 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 2-3 in the Student Guide.

Allow about half the time for the groups to report to the class.

Lecture: Mission, Vision, and Goals

(10 minutes)

Mission statements tell what an organization exists to do. The mission of the church of Jesus Christ is found in Scripture. One clear statement of our mission is "The Great Commission" found in Matthew 28: 19-20:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

The mission of the Church of the Nazarene is: "To make Christlike disciples in the nations." While the biblical basis for the church's mission is true of our mission for children, the unique needs of children require some careful application of those basic Scriptural principles. The mission statement of the "Connecting a New Generation" decadal emphasis, which we read, is an attempt to work out HOW we can fulfill the Great Commission when we are dealing with children.

Vision statements tell what our organizations will look like when the mission is being effectively carried out. The vision statement of the Decadal Emphasis tells us what our churches will look like when we are effectively ministering to children.

Refer to Resource 2-4 in the Student Guide. You can call on students to read the statements for the class.

Read through the mission and vision statements for children's ministry with me.

Goals tell an organization how it plans to accomplish the mission and vision. Goals are small steps toward the larger purpose. These goals are not the only way to reach the purpose, but they are some of the ways that local congregations can act to accomplish the greater mission and vision of the church.

Refer to Resource 2-5 in the Student Guide. Read through the goals.

Which goals might require additional training for you to effectively carry out in your own local church? Think about the skills required to meet each goal effectively. These goals will help you to set some personal goals for your learning throughout this module.

Throughout this module, the material will relate back to these goals, the vision, and the mission of our ministry to children.

Small Groups: Mission, Vision, and Goals

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 2-6 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- Articulate the role of the church in the lives of children
- Tell why the Church of the Nazarene has a decadal emphasis on children and youth
- Relate ways a local church can minister to children and youth

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss the child in the life of a church.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Write a two-page paper on how God needs to prepare you physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally to minister to children.

Rewrite the mission and vision statements in your own words.

Read Resource 2-7. Write one key point for each period in history.

Write in your journal. Imagine how the scriptures influence your life as a minister to children:

- Picture the faces of children in good times.
- Picture the faces of children in crisis.
- Try to physically experience the weight of that challenge.

Punctuate the Finish

Rev. D. L. Moody was asked about a service where he preached and people accept the Lord.

"Two and one-half people accepted Christ," he reported.

"Do you mean two adults and one child?"

"No," replied Rev. Moody, "on the contrary. It was two children and one adult. Adults have only half their lives left."

Cited by W. Talmadge Johnson, 2002 General Assembly.

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Lesson 3

The Child in History and in the Life of the Church

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Children in Historical and Theological Perspective	Guided Discussion/Class Activity	Resource 2-7 Paper for drawing pictures, markers
0:30	Children in the Old Testament	Lecture	Resource 3-1
0:45	Children in the New Testament	Lecture	Resource 3-2
0:50	Children in the New Testament	Small Groups	Resource 3-3
1:00	Biblical Truth	Lecture	Resource 3-4
1:05	Connecting Theological Insights to Children's Ministry	Guided Discussion	Resource 3-5 Whiteboard or Flip chart
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Ariès, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. Trans. R. Baldick. New York: Vintage, 1965 [orig. 1960].

Bunge, Marcia, Ed. *The Child in Christian Thought*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.

Ellengsen, M. *Blessed Are the Cynical: How Original Sin Can Make America a Better Place*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2003.

May, Scottie, et.al. *Children Matter*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lesson 5. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001.

Stonehouse, Catherine. *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998.

Roy Zuck. *Precious in His Sight: Childhood and Children in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Have students exchange the one-page homework paper with another student.

Call on a student to read their version of the mission statement.

Call on another student to read their version of the vision statement.

Return and collect homework papers. Papers should be evaluated—giving ideas, suggestions, questions, comments and corrections. However, a grade will not be assigned. Completion of the module is dependant on attendance, class participation, and achieving success with the outcomes/ability statements.

Orientation

Our purpose today is to understand better the role of children throughout history. We will look at cultural and biblical views of children. We will discover what theologians have understood about the needs of children. Based on these ideas, we can understand what children offer the church today.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- identify key thoughts about children in historical context, especially as related to the history of the church
- appreciate important biblical passages and stories that contribute to theological understandings about children
- relate biblical and theological understandings to the role of children in the church
- understand how our biblical and theological understandings influence our ministry to children

Motivator

These numbers could vary depending on the version that is being used.

Roy Zuck in his book *Precious in His Sight* reports the number of biblical references to words concerning babies, children, youth and family.

- Baby, babies, infants—24
- Firstborn—over 100
- Child—121; Children—448; Childhood—4
- Son (s)—2,700 (without Son of God)
- Young, younger, youth—401
- "Family" terms (mom, dad, uncle, aunt as well as households, families—2,300
- Total of family and child-related terms in the Scriptures is over 8,000.

The Bible is not silent about children and family relationships! Some of these references are metaphors, and they do not speak directly about children. However, to understand God's purposes for His people, we must understand the place of children and family relationships in our lives and our churches. You will be one of the tools God uses to proclaim the significance of children and childhood in today's church. You are an advocate for children and adults who need to remember the importance of children among us.

Have students respond on a scratch piece of paper.

Spend a brief time allowing students to share their answers. Record their answers on the board. Let volunteers tell how they developed these ideas.

Respond on a piece of paper with the first thing that comes to your mind to finish the following sentences:
Children are like . . .
Children should always . . .
Children should never . . .

Our ideas are so much a part of us and the world we live in they are almost invisible to us. They are part of our culture. Someone once said that culture to a human being is like water to a fish: you don't even realize it's there until you jump out of it.

Throughout history, people have answered the same questions about children you just answered. At various points in history, something in their answers changed. Usually this was the result of a "jumping out of their cultural water," a scientific discovery, a change in the realm of philosophy, or a change in economic conditions. Let's look at how children have been viewed throughout history.

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion/Class Activity: Children in Historical and Theological Perspective

(20 minutes)

Anytime that there is a discussion or activity involving the students having read a resource for homework you will be evaluating whether the student did the homework.

Have plenty of blank paper for the students to draw on. You might also have some markers available so that the pictures can be easily seen by the group.

*Allow students a few minutes to draw a **quick** representation. Have the students tape their visual representations together in one area of your room. You will be creating a visual timeline as the class goes on.*

Have the students post their drawings to the right of the group of first drawings they posted on the wall. Again telling what the key idea is that they are presenting. Continue on in this manner with each time period.

Allow students to respond to the question as they draw their pictures.

Add these pictures to your timeline.

You read Resource 2-7 as part of your homework. From the key points or ideas that you stated for each time period of history we are going to do something a little creative.

I'd like for you to take a piece of paper and draw something that symbolizes the ancient world of children for you. Something that represents your key idea.

As each of you tapes your picture to the wall tell us what the key idea is.

Let's add to our timeline by drawing a symbol/picture that represents some characteristic of Jewish and early Christian attitudes toward children.

Now let's add our representations from the Middle Ages.

How would you answer Luther's question? ("Indeed, for what purpose do we older folks exist, other than to care for, instruct, and bring up the young?")

How do you see that the church has responded to Luther's question?

Now draw a symbol that represents the changes in thinking about childhood in the Age of Enlightenment.

Draw a symbol of the role the church played in improving the lives of children in the Industrial Revolution.

Add to our timeline an image that represents children in the 20th and early 21st century.

Briefly review the timeline with the class.

Allow for response.

Based on this overview of history, what are some of the things you might predict for the future of childhood?

Children in Our Future

While we can't know exactly what the future of childhood looks like, there are some factors that indicate children's experience with technology and their role as consumer marketing targets. Their exposure to a variety of forces that are unique to this generation will yet again influence how we understand the nature of children and childhood.

While historically we have broken early life into periods of seven years, we may discover that shorter periods of life can be explored in more depth for greater understanding.

Our ability to study the earliest stages of childhood has blossomed through the technological tools available to us. Scientists currently see the first three years of life as the most formative time in a human being's experience. The pattern of earlier sexual maturity may lead us to think of childhood as a shorter time, and extended adolescence on the other hand could lead us to see childhood as longer!

International emphasis on children's rights may change our perspective on children's degree of dependence on adult support and influence. The balance of responsibility between parents and society for the care and nurture of children continues to be debated in the West. All these factors and more will influence the form ministry to children takes in the future. However, the goal will always be the same: to encourage a lifelong relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Lecture: Children in the Old Testament

(15 minutes)

Children as a Blessing in the Old Testament

Throughout God's story, children have been seen as a blessing. A blessing is a central theme of the Bible, and it involves God's personal approval and provision, often through the giving of a gift. Children were part of the first blessing God gave Adam and Eve at creation, along with their gift of dominion over Creation. This initial blessing spoke of God's satisfaction and value for His very good creation: humanity.

God's blessing is also a token of His work to come. God blesses purposefully as a sign of His value and recognition of the individual. His blessings are to be treasured and cared for appropriately.

We must remember that Adam and Eve received the blessing on behalf of humanity, and fruitfulness and multiplying (children) are given to humanity as a whole in the same way that stewardship of the earth is a task for all humanity, not for a limited few. Nurturing children is part of our lifelong human task.

Call on different students to read the passages and state how children are a blessing according to the passage.

Let's look at a few passages to find how children are a blessing:

Genesis 48:8-16

Psalms 128:1-6

Psalms 113:9

Psalms 127:3-5

Deuteronomy 7:13-14

Refer to Resource 3-1 in the Student Guide.

In addition to these specific references to blessing, the Old Testament portrays children in an interesting light in the day to day context of public Hebrew life. Children were part of the gathered community at important times. Rather than being shuffled off when God's message was given during the Feast of Tabernacles, Moses commanded the people to gather the men, women, children, aliens and children of aliens to hear the words from God. This was an example of God's policy of inclusion of those who would likely not have had respect outside God's community.

Children were also included when Joshua read the Law to the Hebrews at Mt. Ebal (Josh 8:30-35), when the people were called together under King Jehosaphat (2 Chr 20), during the celebration of the rebuilding of the temple under Nehemiah (Neh 12:43), and perhaps in other events as well, where their presence is not noted by the biblical authors since the precedent for their presence was already established. We should not be surprised by "only four" references, but by the amazing fact that in the ancient world, the presence of children in public life is noted at all!

Scripture seems to assume children and parents will be interacting in daily life. Deuteronomy 6 paints a picture of spiritual formation happening in the daily course of life. Teaching and learning the ways of the Lord was to be imbedded in the context of shared life, at the table, through festivals and celebrations, and in experiencing gathered community, even in the midst of very frightening political threat.

All this inclusion should not be interpreted to mean that children and adults were seen as equals in Old Testament society. In fact, Deuteronomy 1:39 tells us that the children who were too young to know good from bad would not be held accountable for the poor choices made by their people. They would inherit The Promised Land, though the adults would not. This indicates that while they may have been present in the community, they were not part of the decision-making process of the community. This may have been in part because of the recognition that children needed direction and discipline before they were capable of acting wisely (Prov 22:15).

Children were not always portrayed in Scripture as sweet and adorable or beyond responsibility for their personal actions, however. In 2 Kings 2:23-25, Elisha had an incident with some rude children who paid for their disrespect with the disciplinary action of a bear-mauling! The realistic picture of children in the Old Testament helps us understand that children are precious and are in need of direction, skills, and basic socialization to help them learn to be productive, contributing members of the community.

We have a description throughout the Old Testament of how children fit into the community, but it is through the stories of individual children in biblical narrative that we learn the most about how God interacts with children.

From Ishmael, we learn that God hears children in their distress—even children who are from less than perfect family situations. God makes provision for them when their families fall short (Gen 21).

From Joseph's earliest dreams at 17, we learn that God speaks directly to children and young people, perhaps even before they are old enough to know what to do with God's message (Gen 37).

From Miriam, we learn that children can carry out God's plans in heroic ways. Imagine how frightening it must have been to hide in the bushes to protect her baby brother from crocodiles, then to stand face to face with one of the most powerful women in the world (Pharaoh's daughter) and volunteer a creative solution to her problem (Ex 2)!

From Samuel, we learn that God speaks directly to children, and children can choose either to ignore God's voice or answer God's call. We learn that God speaks more than once, and He is patient with Samuel's confusion. Furthermore, we learn that God

entrusted this young boy with a message that had national significance, not some trivial information. God gave a child the task of communicating that message to adults who had become distant from God (1 Sam 3).

From David we learn that God can use children's natural giftedness in significant ways (1 Sam 17), and God chooses people with regard to what is inside them, not their social status.

From Naaman's slave girl, we learn that early teaching is long-lasting, and children can put what they know about God to work to carry God's good news from the lowliest of positions, even across cultural boundaries (2 Kings 5).

From Josiah, the boy king, we learn children can overcome bad examples and their personal histories to do the right thing (2 Chr 34).

From Daniel, we learn that early commitment to God can hold a person firm in the face of nearly unbearable pressures from the outside (Dan 1).

As we talk about God in the stories of children in the Bible, we recognize we are part of the ongoing story of God. Think back to your own childhood.

What stories from your early life taught you about God? What happened that shaped your attitude toward God, even if you didn't become a believer until later in your life?

Allow a few minutes for students to share their stories.

Lecture: Children in the New Testament

(5 minutes)

From the stories of Jesus as a child, we learn that childhood is a significant part of life! God sent his Son as a tiny, vulnerable baby, and that fact is celebrated by shepherds and kings alike, not neglected or overlooked by scripture. Jesus does not come to us as a fully formed adult. Baby Jesus' nature and purpose was already in place and was recognized by God's prophets, Simeon and Anna in the Temple at Jesus' first public outing.

Luke tells us that over time Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man, as all children have the potential of doing (Lk 2). Jesus was a model for life in childhood as well as in adulthood. These "increases" or "growing areas" that were identified in Jesus' life help us understand the central tasks of childhood are development of mind, body, spirit, and community.

In His public ministry, Jesus did not take childhood for granted or give children a backseat in the work He was doing. Instead, He took children into His arms and blessed them (Mk 10). From the story of the loaves and fishes (Mt 14, Mk 6, Jn 6), we know children, as well as women and men, were present in the audiences Jesus taught.

This is especially significant if we think back to the historical place of children in Jesus' world. In contrast to the Hebrew understanding of children as a blessing from the Lord, Greco-Roman culture saw children as the property of their fathers. Children were something to be tolerated because of their *potential* to become adults. To be compared to a child was an insult in the Greco-Roman world. Jesus teaches something entirely different. He says, "Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18). To be compared to a child is not an insult. It is a concept that turns ideas about how to please God upside down. Comparing adults to children is one way Jesus is teaching that the "least" is the "greatest" in God's kingdom. Children are not to be overlooked, but adults can learn from them.

Refer to Resource 3-2 in the Student Guide.

In Bunge, Marcia. The Child in Christian Thought. "The Least and the Greatest," 36.

New Testament scholar Judith Gundry-Volf identifies six ways Jesus points out the significance of children.

1. He blessed the children brought to Him.
2. He taught the kingdom of God belongs to children.
3. He made children models of entering the kingdom of God.
4. He made children models of greatness in the kingdom of God.
5. He called His disciples to welcome little children as He does, and He turned the service of children into a sign of greatness in the kingdom of God
6. He gave the service of children ultimate significance as a way of receiving himself and the One who sent Him.

Through His teachings about children, Jesus made the inclusion of children an inseparable part of following Him. When Jesus saw His disciples holding back the children from Him, He expressed indignation (Mk 10: 14). While we see Jesus' anger at several points in the New Testament, this is the only time this particular word is used to describe Jesus' displeasure. It is a word of passion. Instead of being understanding about what the disciples were doing, He passionately told them "Don't stop them!" from coming to Him. He also taught His disciples to observe children, protect them, and

become like them. We cannot do these things if we separate ourselves from children. Jesus made it clear we need children among us to understand discipleship better.

It is obvious children need us to care for and nurture them, and help them develop in the ways that God designed them to develop—in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God and people. It is perhaps less obvious, but no less true, we need children to help *us* grow in our understanding of the kingdom of God and our discipleship.

Small Groups: Children in the New Testament

(10 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 3-3 in the student Guide.

Allow time for the students to work through the resource sheet before asking the questions.

How is this understanding of children like or unlike what you've experienced in the church?

What actions might your church take to integrate this understanding of children?

Lecture: Biblical Truth

(5 minutes)

Refer to Resource 3-4 in the Student Guide.

Children—Who Are They?

Children are not exempt from the basic biblical truths that apply to human nature. They are us! Here are some basic truths that apply to all humanity based on representative scriptures and some applications of these truths to childhood.

We are created in the image of God with physical bodies, and we resemble God in our creativity, ability to know, feel, choose, and relate to others (Gen 1:27).

To help children grow according to the nature given by God, we must recognize all the aspects of their nature: physical, aesthetic (creativity and beauty), spiritual, cognitive, emotional, moral, and social.

We are created to take responsibility for God's world and all that is in it, especially our first blessing—children (Gen 1:28).

Our children also receive God's call of

responsibility to actively engage with the world around us, to care for animals, people, and the environment.

We are separated from God by sin (Ps 51:5; Rom 3:23; 5:12).

Children are born with the unavoidable bent toward choosing wrong or selfish actions and attitudes (sin).

God desires that all people come to Him for forgiveness of sin (Jn 3:16; 2 Pet 3:9), transformation, and restoration of the image of God (Jn 3:3; Rom 12:2).

God does not define an "age of accountability" at which children become morally responsible for their wrong or selfish actions and attitudes.

Through the scriptures and experience, we believe God does speak to children, and God requires obedience based on understanding at any age.

God welcomes children who understand their need for salvation and other works of grace in their lives.

We have dignity as God's beloved creation, even though we are sinners (Rom 5:8).

From conception, God's loving hand is active in our lives (Ps 139:9-10) to the extent that He knows the number of hairs on our heads (Mt 10:30). This shows the inherent value of human life at any stage of development.

Because of Christ, we have equality with one another (Gal 3:28)

God does not see differences in nationality, gender, or social status. Boys and girls of all backgrounds are part of this standard of equality in God's sight.

Scripture also acknowledges these facts about children:

- They are not mature, but have reasoning ability characteristic of childhood (1 Cor 13:11).
- Children are changing rapidly due to many kinds of input (Eph 4:14).
- Children will ask questions and need explanations (Ex 12:26; 13:8).
- Adults are responsible for training children (Deut 6, Prov 22:6).
- Children are under the authority and protection of parents (Ex 20:12; Eph 6:1-4).
- God expects special provision for children who don't have parents to care for them (Deut 10:18; 24:19; Jam 1:27).
- Children need correction (Prov 23:13; 29:15).

Guided Discussion: Connecting Theological Insights to Children's Ministry

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 3-5 in the Student Guide.

Our basic theology of childhood will focus on three main areas of belief:

1. What we believe about children and childhood
2. What we believe about how God sees children
3. What we believe God wants us to do in relation to the children He has entrusted to us

Theology is a daily event, not an academic practice we do in a classroom that never touches our real world. A theology of Children's Ministry is an attempt to understand God in such a way that we can begin to develop an understanding and a model for how we can best help children come to know, love, and serve God.

While we can't fully cover this topic, the answers to the questions will influence how we treat children in our churches and our lives. They will make a difference in the kinds of programming we choose, the way we carry out our programming, and the way we address pastoral care of children and families. It will make a difference in the way we see children and our churches. It will make a difference in what we do in our communities for children and how we vote or make decisions about public policies affecting children. Whether we intentionally take the time to answer these questions or let the questions answer themselves, our behavior will be governed by how we address them.

Either write the responses on a whiteboard or flip chart yourself or have a student be the recorder.

Some possible answers:

- *Children are connected to their families and to the communities they live in.*
- *The early years of childhood make a big difference in how children grow into adulthood.*
- *Children are not small adults.*
- *Children are born with a sinful nature, but they have to learn to understand what sin is.*
- *Children are precious and a blessing.*
- *Children are important for who they are, not who they might become.*
- *Society's idea of childhood changes as the culture changes.*
- *An individual child is influenced by inborn nature, talents, and*

Let's choose to be intentional and discuss and record our answers to these questions:

Thinking back to the information about children you have learned over this class session and the last, what do you believe about children and childhood?

unique experiences.

- *Children are vulnerable to how they are perceived by adults.*
- *Children can learn about and experience God in their lives.*
- *Children can make contributions to the family of God.*
- *Children learn the most about God from real-life interactions in daily circumstances.*
- *Children use their whole beings to learn about God and the world.*

Some possible answers:

- *God sees children as an integral part of the kingdom of God, not as being on the edges waiting to come in.*
- *God sees children as an example of how to live.*
- *God sees children as a blessing to His people.*
- *God sees children as needing adults to help them mature.*
- *God sees and provides for children in need of special protection.*
- *God values children's praise.*
- *God trusts children with His messages and work.*
- *God sees children as capable.*
- *God is passionate about children.*

Some possible answers:

- *Love them.*
- *Watch out for their best interests.*
- *Respect them.*
- *Walk along side them.*
- *Give them boundaries.*
- *Help them listen to and respond to God.*
- *Help them understand how God has worked in others' lives and can work in their lives.*
- *Teach them God's story.*
- *Show them how to live like the people of God.*
- *Understand that God is working in their lives.*
- *Be as passionate about children as He is.*
- *Listen to them and watch them.*
- *Accept them.*
- *Appreciate them.*
- *Help them find ways to serve God and serve others.*

Thinking back to the information about how God sees children that we have discussed in this class session and the last, what do you believe about how God sees children?

Thinking back to the information in the last two class sessions, what do you think God wants us to do in relation to children?

What actions would let us live out those beliefs?

If we really believe children are connected to their families and communities, children's workers would take extra time to get to know the families of the

children in their classes and learn something about the schools they attend. If we really believe God sees children as integral parts of the kingdom of God, a children's minister and the pastor would find ways for children to minister to and with adults in the regular activities of the church.

Allow for response.

Who do you think is responsible for helping children learn to love and serve God?

Why?

Let's rank those people in order of their importance to a child.

Who is NOT responsible for helping a child learn to love and serve God? Why did you answer the question in that way?

How do you think we can help each of those people handle their responsibilities more effectively?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students.

Share one thing you have been challenged by during this class session.

Look Ahead

Next lesson, we will look at the influence of culture on children, at how forces outside of the church influence children, and our ministry to children in light of these influences.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

You may want to select several programs that the students can choose from as representative of children's programming.

Complete Resource 3-6.

Watch an hour of children's commercial television programming (not PBS) and complete Resource 3-7.

Complete Resource 3-8.

Read Resource 3-9.

In your journal, write about one of the following:

- What do you remember thinking about God as a child? What about Jesus? What about the Holy Spirit?
- What do you think adults thought about children when you were a child? Did you feel as though adults understood you well? Were there any adults who seemed to think differently about children?

Punctuate the Finish

You heard today about the history of childhood. You are writing the ongoing history of childhood as you minister in your local churches. What you do with children today will help to determine what those children do with tomorrow. Listen to the words of Psalm 78: 1-7 (NLT):

O my people, listen to my teaching.

Open your ears to what I am saying,
for I will speak to you in a parable.

I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—
stories we have heard and know,
stories our ancestors handed down to us.

We will not hide these truths from our children
but will tell the next generation about the
glorious deeds of the Lord.
We will tell of his power and the mighty miracles
he did.

For he issued his decree to Jacob;
he gave his law to Israel.

He commanded our ancestors
to teach them to their children,
so the next generation might know them—
even the children not yet born—
that they in turn might teach their children.

So each generation can set its hope anew on God,
remembering his glorious miracles
and obeying his commands.

You are part of God's chain of hope, passing from
ancient days into the future. May God richly bless you
as you learn and apply God's truth to ministry in your
local church.

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Lesson 4

Children in Today's Social Context

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	The Big Picture Influences on Children	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 3-9
0:35	Inner-Circle Influences on Children	Lecture/Discussion	Resources 3-7, 3-8, 3-10 Resources 4-1—4-3
1:00	The Rod of the Bible	Small Groups	Resource 4-4
1:15	Inner-Circle Influences on Children (continued)	Guided Discussion	Resource 3-10
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lessons 1 and 2. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Have the students place their homework papers—Resource 3-6—on an altar in the front of the room. If an altar is not available use a chair or table. Have the students gather in a circle around the altar and pray a prayer. A sample prayer is provided.

Collect the papers and hold them for students until the last lesson. In the last class session, you will give the students their papers and ask them to evaluate how they have changed throughout the course.

Return homework. The other homework assignments for today will be collected later in the lesson.

Lord, This is how we understand You and Your will for the children in our care right now. We realize this is only the beginning of our understanding. You will continue to teach us if we keep our hearts and minds open to You, the children, and your word. We commit ourselves to your purposes this day, and look forward to seeing how You will refine us as we continue in this study of ministry to and with children. Amen.

Orientation

Our purpose today is to explore the realities of the culture that influences the daily lives of the children we work with.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- identify characteristics and challenges of a child's layers of social context
- map a strategy for understanding an individual child's culture
- consider effective ways the children's minister can address the child's needs in cultural context

Motivator

Bring to class one of the following: A set of nested Russian dolls, mixing bowls, measuring cups, boxes, or any child's toy that allows for nesting a small object inside several others.

A child's life is resting at the center of many worlds just like our nesting example here. You can't fully understand a child outside of the context the layers that the child lives in.

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: The Big Picture Influences on Children

(25 minutes)

Many books on education or nursery work encourage us to get down on our hands and knees and crawl around the room in order to experience what a child sees. While this strategy changes our perspective and helps us see from the vantage point of the child (and incidentally helps us to identify some potential dangers we may not have seen from our place above the average crawler), it doesn't necessarily help us perceive what the child perceives.

Two-year-old Erin sees gray slacks, and she interprets the leg beside her as her daddy's. Thirty-year-old Mom notices the gray slacks have a stain that she does not recognize.

To really understand Erin's perceptions, we must carefully watch and listen to her to see what she does with the gray slacks. We know when she grabs them with her chubby little fists, she perceives, "There's my daddy." She is reaching out to be picked up.

Similarly, when we see the attributes of the world surrounding a child, we may be tempted to assume that the child sees it in the same way we do. But we have more history and context to interpret the world. To understand how the child perceives and interprets the world, we have to spend time to watch, listen, and make sense of the child's responses. As we watch and listen, we become aware of more influences on the child than the child can possibly be aware of.

In Resource 3-9 we see a diagram that Uri Bronfenbrenner has given us to picture a child's development. His illustration is like the nested items I showed you at the beginning of the class. The child at the center is influenced by things that are going on within him or her—nutrients acting inside the body, continual aging, his or her genetic background, a huge array of chemicals, electrical impulses in the brain, sensory perceptions, and thoughts and feelings that are experienced as personal.

At the same time, the child is always being affected by the systems that surround him or her. The child is

constantly striving to find a place in the whole of the structure—and to discover how he or she affects the systems that surround him or her.

We're going to adapt Bronfenbrenner's idea of the structures that surround the child to help us understand how these cultural forces can be healthy or unhealthy and how the church can work with the child to experience God's presence even amidst challenging circumstances that are often out of the child's control.

Refer to Resource 3-9 that the students read for homework. Anytime that there is a discussion or activity involving the students having read a resource you will be evaluating whether the student did the homework.

Allow for response.

The Child's Self Image

What do you remember from childhood that greatly affected your self image?

Family

What other characteristics have you noticed in healthy families?

What other factors have you noticed that challenge a family's healthy functioning?

Direct Support Structures

How important is it for you to be involved with and know the schools and clubs/organizations in your area, the places children of your church attend?

Indirect Support Structures

What organizations related to schools and churches might indirectly influence a child?

Societal Conditions

What are some factors in the outside ring that you see forming children's culture that particularly concern you, and how do you think the church is responding to these issues?

If this diagram is an accurate representation of a child's development, who do you think has primary responsibility for the well-being of the child? Why?

When you look at this diagram, what does it tell you about the role of the church in the child's life?

Some possible answers might include: school boards, state departments of education, accrediting agencies—these affect schools; district or denominational boards influence churches.

It is interesting to note that the church stands between the family and the larger influences of society, but it does not take the place of the inner circle unless the inner circle fails.

This model of understanding the role of culture in children's lives is very consistent with our Wesleyan heritage. John Wesley has been called "hopelessly optimistic." He recognized Christians had to be involved in direct ways in the inner circles of each other's lives and established intimate groups for accountability and nurture of the spiritual life. He also recognized the big picture issues that individuals are not even aware of.

His response to the big issues of his day was advocacy—to stand up for the good of those who were powerless to change their situations alone. **Wesley understood that to influence the outer rings of a person's life—the society we live in—IS to influence the individual.** To work for right changes in the world (social justice) is to work for the good of the individual, and particularly, we realize today, for the good of the developing child.

Let's look at just one example of a social condition—an outer ring issue—that affects children dramatically. That is poverty. One disclaimer: any time we talk about social issues that affect children, we talk in generalities of statistical probabilities, not about specific children. Specific children are influenced by specific gifts that may protect them from the statistical probabilities. It is part of what ministry to children is all about. We invest in specific children in the hope they will come to a relationship with God that will cause their lives to defy the odds. That is our "hopeless optimism" in the power of God to redeem His children from the pit!

With that in mind, poverty has certain documented effects on children. Children who live below the poverty level today have statistically:

- Lower cognitive skills.
- Lower school achievement.
- Lower graduation rates.
- Higher rates of exposure to
 - Environmental toxins.
 - Inadequate nutrition.
 - Parental depression.
 - Substance abuse.
 - Physical abuse and neglect.
- Higher probability of engaging in
 - Smoking.

- Drinking.
- Early sexual activity.
- Violence.
- Crime.

It is easy to get overwhelmed by the vastness of the forces of society that impact children. Perhaps these are the kinds of challenges Paul spoke of when he said to the Ephesians: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph 6:12).

You can tell this story or one of your own.

Let's look at a story:

There was once a man who, after a day of climbing, stood by a mountain river, overlooking the dangerous white water that culminated in an enormous waterfall. As he was appreciating the power and force of the rapids and thinking about their capacity to generate enough electricity to power a small city or to crush massive rocks into sand over time, the man heard screams for help. He looked into the distance and saw the form of a young woman clinging to a vine. Just then, the vine gave way, and the woman was pulled into the river's rapid advance.

The man began running upstream as he dialed for emergency help from his cell phone. The woman then used something that looked like a belt to hold herself to a rock, but she was being pummeled by the constant assault of the raging water. The man was able to use his climbing gear to anchor himself to a tree and reach the woman.

Assistance arrived just as he pulled the woman from the river's fury, but not before she had stopped breathing. Emergency workers took over and skillfully revived the woman. The ambulance took her off to safety, and he stood telling his story to police officers as he towel-dried his hair.

The man remained on the shore after the officers left, thinking about the incident and how grateful he was that he had been able to hold on to the young woman's limp body until help arrived, and she was delivered to safety. He thought about what the consequences might have been if he had not been climbing that day, he had not had his cell phone, and all the pieces had not been in place.

As he sat there thinking, he began to hear the echoes of the woman's panicked cries for help, a common after-effect of stress. He glanced upstream and

realized it was not echoes. Another woman was trapped in the foaming water. Frantically, the man dialed again for help. This time, he was not able to reach her before the forces of nature overtook her.

By the time emergency workers arrived, it was too late. There was nothing left to do but to initiate a search effort. Officers were hesitant, not knowing if the man was a reliable informant, given what had happened earlier in the day.

As the team discussed their plan at the river's edge, once again cries for help rang out above the voice of the river. This time, 15 rescue workers raced to the woman's aid.

The man summoned all his energy and began running upstream. Three women! Suddenly it became clear to him. This was no coincidence. Someone or something upstream was endangering these women! He could either remain there to rescue drowning damsels, or he could direct his energy to find the source of the problem.

Adapted from a story told by Brian McLaren, Ministry Resource Center, MidAmerica Nazarene University, October, 2005.

Note: Sometimes a story stands on its own. Sometimes it helps to ask questions to help students make the connections you hope they will get. Use your own judgment about whether questions will "make or break" the story.

Lecture/Discussion: Inner-Circle Influences on Children

(25 minutes)

In this section, we will look at the systems that the child is aware of. We have two goals:

- to help you understand how you can better understand a child's world
- how you can be aware of some of the indicators that a particular child might be "at-risk"—this is a term often used to describe children who are in danger of not becoming all they are capable of becoming because of the circumstances they are living with.

One image that has been used for making connections to children is bridge building. The bridges we build to children are suspension bridges. We are suspended in love between the faith foundations of the past and the hope of faith firmly planted in the future. A master bridge builder knows each steel line of the design should contribute to the strength and integrity of the bridge. No line should pull the bridge in a way that compromises its strength and integrity.

As we think about ministering to children, we want to add strong and safe lifelines and do everything we can to get rid of lines that might jeopardize their path to faith in the future.

One of your homework assignments for this lesson involved watching television programs designed for children.

Refer to the homework assignment Resource 3-7.

How did your observations compare to your expectations?

Allow time for the students to share what they observed.

What observation (s) surprised you?

Collect the homework. You will not be giving feedback as much as recording that the assignment was completed.

What did you learn from this experience?

Watching the television shows children watch is one way to begin to understand the unique culture of kids. The culture for kids changes rapidly! Animation, like other art forms, is in a constant state of change. Marketing agencies spend millions of dollars each year to keep current on what's hot and what's not for kids. If we are going to minister effectively to children, we must at least be aware of what's important to kids in our communities.

Refer to Resource 3-8 that the students did as a homework assignment.

As part of your homework you filled in a chart on Culture Watching. We are going to score your responses to see how you are doing.

- Give yourself 10 points for each check in column 1
- Give yourself 8 points for each check in column 2
- Give yourself 5 points for each check in column 3
- Give yourself 2 points for each check in column 4

Scoring:

120—160: You SIZZLE! You may know more about kid culture than they do!

80—120: You're GREAT! You may be blindsided by kids occasionally, but usually you can talk intelligently about anything that's important to them.

40—80: You're getting WARMER, but may frequently get left out in the cold when kids start talking to each other.

Under 40: You FIZZLED . . . and kids may see you more like a wet blanket than a firecracker. But there's hope! Dry off and get out there.

After completing and scoring the survey, allow the participants to comment on the experience. It's highly likely that parents of young children will score higher than anyone else on this survey!

Collect homework to verify that the students did the assignment.

Some people might feel as though this is a good place to apply Jesus' warning to be in the world and not of it. We certainly don't need to let any of our "research" sway us from our mission and purpose as Christians. You will use it to build effective bridges. We can know what materials kids are watching, so we can gain the

Spirit's direction for which to use and which to avoid, and how to talk knowledgeably to kids about what could be damaging to their spiritual growth.

It doesn't take long to look at society and its emerging generation to get an idea of what a child is experiencing. The only warning I have is you must be prepared for what you are going to discover. It is not all lighthearted. When we start listening carefully and watching children closely, it can often be overwhelming—especially to those who have been raised in the church and have been somewhat sheltered—to see what some children are facing.

Child Abuse

Refer to Resource 3-10 in the Student Guide that the students read for homework.

The first time you look into a young child's face who is shaking, crying, and fearful as he or she confesses being sexually abused, your world will be opened up to a dark, evil side of life that will impact you forever. If you, the adult simply looking on can never get that experience out of your mind, imagine the horror to a young child.

As pastors of children, we must become adept at understanding not only what children say to us, but also what they don't have either the courage or words to say to us.

Abuse of children comes in many forms. Children can be abused sexually, physically, emotionally, and even spiritually. In addition to abuse, many children face neglect that interferes with normal development. Sometimes this neglect is intentional. At other times, neglect is the result of inadequate understanding of the responsibilities of parenting. We will look at each of these abuses separately.

Sexual Abuse

Refer to Resources 4-1 and 4-2 in the Student Guide.

Do you have anything that should be added to the list in Resource 4-1?

Have you made this kind of list available to parents in your church?

What caught your attention in Resource 4-2?

How do we help children/families with so many tricks being used?

Physical Abuse

Allow for response.

What do you think of the definition of physical abuse?

Resource 3-10 gave a list of resources parents need to prevent child abuse. Name one way the church can partner with parents in each of these areas.

Refer to Resource 4-3 in the Student Guide.

Small Groups: The Rod of the Bible

(15 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 4-4 in the Student Guide.

Allow time for the groups to report on their responses.

You may want to use this as a Bible study with parents.

Guided Discussion: Inner-Circle Influences on Children (continuation)

(10 minutes)

Return to the discussion of Resource 3-10 that the students read for homework.

*Discipline: the on-going molding and training to reach the desired end goal.
Punishment: inflicting pain, suffering, or undesirable consequences for bad behavior or choices.*

Emotional Abuse

What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

Which one is a positive healthy approach to working with children?

Spiritual Abuse

How does the idea of spiritual abuse connect or not connect to your experiences in the church?

Do we really pay attention and realize what is happening or how children are perceiving the things we say or do?

Neglect

How often do we add to the neglect by an attitude of feeling sorry for a child but doing nothing to help the child?

What is the reason that we don't get involved?

What frightens you about dealing with children in sensitive situations?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on each student.

Name one key idea from this lesson that will impact your ministry.

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss the child as a spiritual being, and the integration of children into the life of the church.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Do two of the activities from Resource 3-8 that you know you need to be more familiar with. Include a child with one of the activities. Write a one-page paper about what you learned and experienced. Include in the paper your plan to incorporate some activities each week into you schedule.

Complete Resource 4-6.

Read Resource 4-7.

Read Resource 4-8.

Read Resource 4-9.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a section on what you learned about a child's culture and the appropriate response of a children's pastor.

Punctuate the Finish

Refer to resource 4-5 in the Student Guide.

This is to be done quickly—first impressions.

Write five observations about the wheelbarrow that first come to your mind.

How many negative statements did you make? How many were positive?

Most people will make negative statements like the following, "It is top heavy." "The handle is too wide and too short." "It can't even stand on its own." These are accurate predictions based on appearances. The statements are predictions that this wheelbarrow is at-risk for serious problems.

After seeing all of the difficulties that children face in our world, it may be tempting to begin to visualize children as we see this wheelbarrow. Because of all the problems they bring to the table, they are odd, imperfect, troublesome and tiresome. They are not what you imagine children should be, and they certainly are not what you had hoped they would be.

However, this wheelbarrow has some positive qualities. It has at least one strong wheel and a deep bed that is clean and free of unnecessary clutter. Your personal expectations will have a great impact on how you see and experience this unique wheelbarrow. The same is true of the children and families you serve. You must be careful of the expectations you bring with you to children's ministry. This is not to imply that you should not have developmentally appropriate high expectations of behavior, but children come to you with many different background needs that leave them in need of more or less help in order to become all they are capable of becoming.

It may be easy to begin to label some children as trouble makers or problem children and others as easy or special. You may have some children who test your patience and challenge your authority. You'll have others that seem too good to be true. Even so, until you get close enough to get inside a child's life, you have no concept of what he or she must go home and face. Children should never have to experience unkind, negative observations and comments—or unrealistic expectations—in the name of Jesus Christ. We are responsible to welcome all children as though we were welcoming Christ himself. This is our ministry and mission.

Culture is always changing. As much as we would like to relive "the good old days" of our past and have our children grow up in an ideal world, the hard truth is that times are changing, sometimes faster than we want. The only thing that remains constant in society is change. If we are not careful, we can miss what is happening around us. If we focus on what is bad in society, we can miss the positive support structures available in our communities. We can also become part of the negative culture that misses the power of God to redeem and restore in miraculous ways.

A great reminder for those who work with kids: "You only have a problem if the problem you have is bigger than the God you serve."

Lesson 5

The Spirituality of Children

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Understanding Childhood Spirituality	Class Activity	Resource 4-7 Resources 5-1, 5-2
0:30	Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Development	Guided Discussion	Resource 4-8
0:45	Welcoming Children as Part of the Church	Discussion/ Small Groups	Resource 4-9 Resources 5-3, 5-4
1:10	Families	Lecture	Resource 5-5
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

May, Scottie; Beth Posterski; Catherine Stonehouse; and Linda Cannell. *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lessons 3, 4, and 12. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001.

Ratcliff, Donald (Senior Ed.). *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications*. Eugene, OR: Cascade/Wipf and Stock, 2004.

Roehlkepartain, Eugene; King, Pamela; Wagener, Linda; Benson, Peter (editors). *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005.

Stonehouse, Catherine. *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Have each student tell about one of the activities that they did for homework.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to examine the spirituality of children and how those who care for children can nurture a child's natural hunger for God, keeping alive the sense of wonder at the mysteries of life.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- articulate a definition of Christian childhood spirituality
- list four key perspectives of Christian spiritual development of children
- evaluate methods of integrating children into the life and ministry of the church
- describe the appropriate partnership between the church and family to nurture children's spiritual formation

Motivator

Carson, Rachel. The Sense of Wonder. Harper and Row, 1988, 65.

If a child is to keep alive his or her inborn sense of wonder, the child needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with the child the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.

—Rachel Carson

Who is one adult who served that purpose in your life?

Lesson Body

Class Activity: Understanding Childhood Spirituality

(25 minutes)

Refer to Resource 4-7 in the Student Guide that the students read for homework.

Anytime that there is a discussion or activity involving the students having read a resource you will be evaluating whether the student did the homework.

Refer to Resource 5-1 in the Student Guide.

Allow students to respond to each statement and question. Challenge them to support their responses.

Teacher Tip: You may want to construct a glossary of terms using your own words for the definitions for your class. Or, have a dictionary available, depending on the class's vocabulary level, because some of these terms may be unfamiliar.

Refer to Resource 5-2 in the Student Guide.

Allow for response.

Allow a few minutes for the students to work independently and then bring the class together to construct a single definition.

Refer to Resource 4-7.

Encourage students to list traditional spiritual formation strategies such as going to Sunday School every week, doing family

As part of your homework you read about Understanding Childhood Spirituality. We are going to look at what Benson, Roehlkepartain and Rude said about the nature of spirituality.

We will look at each statement presented in Resource 5-1—one at a time—and answer each of the four questions.

The reading assignment contained two definitions for children's spirituality that we need to explore. One from Benson, Roehlkepartain, and Rude, the other from The Children's Spirituality Conference.

What similarities and differences do you see between the two definitions?

What do you think should be added or subtracted from these definitions?

With these two definitions as models and your own understanding of spirituality, construct your own working definition of children's Christian spirituality.

Let's now turn to what Don Ratcliff and Scottie May have to say about children's spirituality.

What do you think are elements of the common formulas we use for children's spiritual formation?

devotions, memorizing Scripture, teaching children standards of right and wrong.

Given a broader definition of children's spirituality, what are some things we are not addressing as effectively as we could?

Stop for a moment and think about your ministry to children. What percent of your effort would you say is directed toward intentional teaching through the traditional strategies?

What percentage of your ministry efforts would you say is devoted to intentionally including children in shared personal experiences of God?

Guided Discussion: Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Development

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 4-8 in the Student Guide. This was to be read for homework.

Let's briefly review Resource 4-8.

Perspective 1 is represented by Gary A. Buzzelli and Kevin Walsh in chapter 7 of the book, *Handbook of Children's Religious Education*.

Briefly stated: Morality and spirituality are closely interconnected. Children develop spiritually as they interact morally with others. This "social conscience" becomes the core of spiritual development.

Perspective 2 comes from psychologist and author Dr. James Dobson. In his book *Hide or Seek*, Dr. Dobson lays out a value system based on six biblical principles he believes are foundational for a child's spiritual development.

Briefly stated: Spiritual development occurs in an environment that is filled with a consistent balance of love and discipline, and develops a proper submission to authority.

Perspective 3 is derived from Catherine Stonehouse's book *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith*. There are three categories of overlapping contributions to children's spiritual formation:

- Parents involved as primary influences
- Intergenerational religious/spiritual experiences
- Involvement in congregational life

Briefly stated: Spiritual development is a result of significant involvement in the family of God, which is

first represented to children through the building of a trusting, nurturing relationship with parents.

Perspective 4 is drawn from a diagram developed by Scottie May and presented in the book, *Children Matter*. In this model, encounters with God are the primary means of spiritual development of the child. These encounters may result in

- A sense of awe and wonder
- Knowing God's character and actions
- Knowing and being formed in the character of God's people
- Owning an identity as part of the people of God—Involvement in service and mission.

The values and behaviors may also facilitate encounters with God at the initiation of the Holy Spirit.

Briefly stated: Spiritual development is the result of encounters with God at the initiation of the Holy Spirit, and these encounters happen as the child responds to the Holy Spirit in his or her own unique way. This process can be assisted in and interpreted by caring spiritual adults, but doesn't necessarily HAVE to be.

Allow students to respond and discuss these questions.

Which perspective most closely resembles the one you were raised with? How?

Which of the perspectives most closely resembles the perspective you have had in the past? Why?

Which perspective is the most unfamiliar to you? Why?

Which perspectives are you most challenged to integrate into your ministry? How might you do that?

Is there a perspective not covered in the reading that you feel should be considered?

The important aspect of this exercise is to begin to formalize your approach to the spiritual development of children. Your perspective and application will be an evolving process. This is the first step in clarifying how the spiritual development process is inspired in children.

Discussion/Small Groups: Welcoming Children as Part of the Church

(25 minutes)

Allow for response.

What was your first reaction to Resource 4-9?

Give the students about 2-3 minutes to write their lists.

Let a few volunteers share their list.

Take out a piece of paper and list challenges to changing what you or your church does in children's ministry.

If you are open to a more integrated ministry approach to worship, where do you begin?

The first place to start may be in helping others see the vision for it.

According to Wes Haystead, *Children's Ministry that Works: The Basics and Beyond, "Worship with the Whole Church."* Group Publishing, 1991:

Allowing families to worship together is a critical component of integration for the following reasons:

- Children feel a sense of belonging to the church family.
- Children get to know church leaders and members of the congregation.
- It brings family members together instead of separating them.
- Children learn how your church worships by observing parents and other adults.
- Children enjoy participating in meaningful worship.
- Children learn more about God.

Small Groups

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each. Refer to Resource 5-3 in the Student Guide. Allow students about 7-8 minutes to work on this activity.

This story has elements we believe are important for children in age-segregated experiences, too. It is multi-sensory. Guidance is happening. Learning occurs. There is attention to the child's cultural framework. There is an encounter with God, but it happens in an intergenerational setting with an involved, skilled parent instead of a teacher leading the experience. This quality of experience may not happen if there is not an adult journeying along with a child in a sensitive way.

Since all churches do not have a paid, full-time children's minister, not all churches can integrate children inter-generationally in the same way. But this story shows it is possible! One common struggle in true integration is having parents who are available, prepared, and skilled at being responsible for their children in a corporate gathering. Each church should evaluate their children, families, and lay volunteers to see how this process might work best.

Anticipated difficulties may arise in the attention-span difference between adults and children. For example, most adults have a longer attention span, most adults have better control over sitting still in church, and there are differences in vocabularies, interests and needs. These differences will have to be bridged in order to provide a meaningful worship time for both children and adults.

Here are a few ways Haystead suggests that churches can help integrate children into worship:

- Welcome the children into church. Ushers should be careful not to overlook children while they are greeting. Train ushers to let children know how exciting it is that they are there and what their participation will do for the life and spirit of the church.
- Allow children to assist an usher or greeter passing out the bulletins.
- If a children's sermon is given, make it child-friendly. It is not unusual for a pastor to use illustrations adults think are cute, but children don't understand. The purpose of a children's sermon is not to prove to the adults how much we love children, but to let the children know their value to God and to their family of believers.
- Children can help to pass the offering plate, pray for the service, sing with a worship group, or assist adults in preparing or clearing up after worship.

Allow for response.

How have you seen children effectively participate in church services?

Refer to Resource 5-4 in the Student Guide.

Here are a few suggestions for what parents can do to assist their children in becoming incorporated in the church.

- Sit near the front so the child can see what is happening. It also sends a signal about the importance of what is taking place. Point out families stand in line for long periods of time and pay much money to get "good seats" for entertainment events.
- Introduce your child to people around you.
- Assist your child in being prepared for the next thing in the bulletin or onscreen, like finding page numbers in the hymnal or the Bible.
- Bring paper and pencils, and ask the child to draw a picture that goes along with what the pastor is preaching about, instead of just random drawing. Then have a discussion about "their notes" on the way home.

Allow for response.

Do you have other ideas that could be added to this list that we could give to parents?

Intergenerational experiences certainly don't have to be limited to shared worship. Nor do intergenerational worship services need to be planned every week for them to be effective. Some churches have changed their schedules to make room for a family service, followed by Sunday School, and then adult worship, children's worship, and youth worship all happening at the same time. Some churches have monthly or fifth Sunday family worship.

Small groups, holiday special events, craft-sharing events, talent-sharing events, work days, elder outreach, family camps, and mission teams are opportunities to share life together. The key is to focus on intergenerational communication as a main goal, with the emphasis on helping children and adults recognize God in the process of life.

Children may have separate age-level instruction and fellowship in order to give them the best opportunities for peer fellowship and learning. However, this must be balanced with genuine integration into the body of the church where the congregation together can experience God, be inter-generationally connected, feel a sense of belonging to the family of God, observe the lifelong habits of faith, and learn to serve.

Lecture: Families

(15 minutes)

We keep circling back to the significance of parents in their children's spiritual development. Parents are the first Bible a child will ever read. They are their children's first teachers. They are the single greatest influence on children's decisions about risky behaviors. Parents have the greatest opportunity to impact their children's spiritual development. Others have influence, and children need support from others in growing up. Both research and Biblical mandates indicate parents are the most significant spiritual resource children have. And grandparents seem to come in a close second.

Call on a student to read these verses.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9, sets a pattern for those people who interact with children on a daily basis in their homes, the family.

This pattern is set so everywhere the children look and everything the children see will remind them of God's

commandments. Parents need to look around their house and listen to their conversations to determine if they are truly living up to the expectations in these verses.

It is not unusual to hear individuals testify about important times in their lives when they were making decisions and they remember a picture on the wall of their home or a note on the refrigerator that gave them courage or instruction. For example, a minister shared that her live-in grandmother always had a plaque on the wall that reminded, "Only one life, 'Twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last." She said this message along with the way her grandmother lived helped her to establish priorities that have guided her decisions in good times and bad.

Call on a student to read this verse.

Proverbs 1:8 is another verse that states mothers and fathers are teaching models for the children.

Call on a student to read this verse.

Ephesians 6:4 speaks directly to family relationships.

It is difficult to read these short verses and not come away with a feeling the parents must be front and center in a child's life in terms of spiritual formation. It is more than just having children in church on Sunday mornings. When parents are teaching, instructing, and impressing their children, this demands a very involved interaction throughout the children's lives. This requires an enormous commitment and great intentionality.

Where does the church fit into such a system? If we were living in a perfect world, parents would know the commandments of God and would teach and instruct their children in the godly way as they had been instructed in their childhoods. Our previous discussions as well as our personal experiences tell us that we can't depend on this.

We have children in our congregations whose parents are not Christians and are not active in the church, even though their children attend the church. You probably have other parents who attend church and are Christians, but they are not skilled in parenting or confident in what they believe. You may have parents who disagree in matters of faith. George Barna states that if parents do not agree on a faith issue, their children probably will never adopt the concept because they will assume that it is negotiable.

You will have single parents who experience many challenges in balancing the everyday expectations of life. You will also be blessed with parents who are in

committed marriages, active in the church, confident in their beliefs, emotionally sound, and completely involved in helping their children establish a vital faith.

Some children and youth ministers have confessed they have given up on including the parents in the process. They focus only on the children or youth. Their argument is there are not enough parents who understand a Christian philosophy of life and how to live a Christian life. Many parents say they do not have the time and interest to be involved. Many pastors say there is a common attitude among some parents that they want the church to be the spiritual leader for their children because they do not feel qualified to lead their children themselves. Because of this, getting families involved can be one of the greatest frustrations of an individual's ministry.

Even though these obstacles exist, the spiritual responsibilities of parenting cannot be passed off to others. The load can be shared, but it is always the parents' load. Neglect of the spiritual task does not relieve the need any more than physical neglect makes physical needs go away.

What can the church do to assist Christian parents in being effective in developing their children's spiritual lives? Traditional approaches have been to teach parents techniques or give them more information. Churches provide seminars, workshops, and other learning opportunities for parents to sharpen their skills and understanding. However, all indications suggest these approaches typically have not been effective.

Parents live in an everyday, moment-by-moment experience with their children. There are patterns that have been established from their own upbringing as well as habits they have developed by repeating what tends to be the simplest or quickest result. Unfortunately these are often not the best for the child. In the heat of the moment, parents are more likely to fall back on these patterns of responses than to search for knowledge they have stored up from a seminar. Parents learn child-rearing practices in a similar fashion to the way teachers learn to teach. Teachers learn from their experiences in the classroom.

The hit television show "Supernanny" that began in 2005 is probably a good example of this phenomenon. If the parents on this show were told how to do the interventions or read it in a book, chances are minimal they could succeed. However, with the watchful care of

Teacher Tip: You could show a short clip from "Supernanny" (See <http://abc.go.com/primetime/supernanny/index.html> for times and dates.) or "Nanny-911" (See

[http://www.fox.com/nanny911/.](http://www.fox.com/nanny911/))
to illustrate how parents learn
through practice and guidance.

This could be an extra scheduled
time for the class to watch and
discuss. This could also be a
homework assignment.

a professional and opportunities to try and succeed,
the parents learn to respond differently.

Stanford psychologist Robert D. Hess has some suggestions that can be applied to the church so the church and families can interact in a way that transforms them both! Hess suggests that parents stay away from strictly knowledge-based approaches or technique teaching. Hess believes this only increases a parent's self-doubt about how well they are doing. These approaches tend to focus on the parent's evaluating *how they are doing* more than evaluating the child's needs and how they are responding. Parents grow from support and interaction with other parents.

Hess, Robert D. "Experts and Amateurs: Some Unintended Consequences of Parent Education" in *Parenting in a Multicultural Society*. New York: Longman, 1980.

Hess states the following:

The wisdom and experience of other parents may be the major resource available for developing competence . . . There is an authenticity that comes from having shared an experience: to realize that another parent has been through the problem gives a sense of confidence in their judgment and advice . . . The realization that other parents have problems they find difficult to solve carries a unique reassurance . . . The fear that one is uniquely incompetent is dissipated by the knowledge that others have similar struggles.

Hess suggests emphasizing how difficult and unique the job of parenting is. If parents always perceive you are promising that if they do ABC, then their children will respond with DEF, they will have a difficult time with their child's individual responses. One-size-fits-all methods reinforce guilt and inadequacy.

Hess argues that the critical factor for parents is the relationship between the parent and child. This is determined by *who a mother or father is*, more than by *what a mother or father does*. In other words, the focus of ministry to the family is most productive when it doesn't focus on parenting techniques but on personal development of the parent. There appears to be a direct correlation between who the parents are and how they relate to their children. If we help parents develop their own faith, deepen their walk with the Lord, and live sanctified holy lives, they will know better how to treat their children according to God's plan.

Hess believes the nuclear family should not be seen as being isolated and self-sufficient in developing the spiritual lives of children. Think back to the diagram in Lesson 4 that shows how children live inside of families, inside of direct support systems, and inside of indirect support systems. This is true for single parent, two-parent, grandparent-led, and other families.

Parents need spiritual connectedness in a faith community as much as children do. This goes far beyond church membership. It is about relationships. It demands belonging and participation where personal relationships continue to deepen. Parents sharing and supporting one another in parenting strategies, personal faith development while praying for one another, sharing in victories, and assisting one another during times of difficulty or crisis will be more effective in helping their children develop spiritually.

What has been the most helpful support you have received in parenting?

How does our list compare with Hess' recommendations?

Make a list on a board or flipchart.

Based on both the lecture and your experience, what do you think the church's responsibilities to parents are?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- articulate a definition of Christian childhood spirituality
- list four key perspectives of Christian spiritual development of children
- evaluate methods of integrating children into the life and ministry of the church
- describe the appropriate partnership between the church and the family to nurture children's spiritual formation

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss the development of children, the needs, characteristics, and developmental stages of children.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Complete Resource 5-5.

Read Resource 5-6.

Interview one child under the age of 5, one child between 7 and 10, and one child over the age of 12. Follow the interview questions provided on Resource 5-7. Record the responses, and be prepared to share the results. You need only to report the children's responses at this point, without your interpretations. Make an extra copy of the responses of each child.

Complete Resource 5-8.

Read Resource 5-9.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Reflect on your own childhood spirituality. How does your own experience reflect the content of the material in today's class? How do you feel about integrating children into the greater church fellowship?

For the two activities involving children, the students may find it helpful to work in pairs so that one person would be asking the questions or running the tests while the other person records the information.

Punctuate the Finish

"Small people become big people through the influence
of big people who care about small people."
— Anonymous

Lesson 6

Understanding the Development of Children

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Children's Perceptions and Development	Guided Discussion	Resource 5-7 Resource 5-8 Whiteboard, Flipchart
0:25	The Development of Children	Guided Discussion	Resource 5-9 Resources 6-1—6-5
1:05	A Holistic Developmental Perspective	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 6-6 Resource 6-7
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Resource 6-8

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lessons 6—9. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Have students exchange with another student their Ordering of Ministry Strategies—Resource 5-5.

Call on 2-3 students to give their thoughts about Resource 5-6.

Return homework. Collect only Resource 5-5 at this time.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to examine the different areas of childhood development as they relate to effective ministry to children.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- reference the Biblical basis for a holistic understanding of human development
- match the developmental areas to ministry considerations
- discuss some age-appropriate expectations
- apply the principles of development into practical applications

Motivator

"Did Eve have a belly button?"

"If God made spiders, why does my mommy squish them?"

"Are there apricots in heaven?"

"Where do ideas come from?"

"How do turtles eat if they don't have teeth?"

"Where was I when you were a little girl?"

"Why do we call kitty paws feet and not hands?"

An average four-year-old child asks 437 questions a day. As we mature, do we stop wondering, or do we just learn not to ask?

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Children's Perceptions and Development

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resources 5-7 that the students were to complete for homework.

You were to complete two homework assignments involving children. We need to share with each other the information that we learned from these two activities.

Read each of the questions from Resource 5-7. Ask what responses they got from each age group. It would be great to have a large chart (flipchart, overhead, whiteboard, PowerPoint) where the answers could be written in.

Did anything surprise you from this assignment?

Refer to Resource 5-8 that the students were to complete for homework.

"Piaget's Test with Children" was more visual in nature and we can learn more information.

Most younger children perceive that the tall skinny glass has more water in it than the short fat glass.

What were your findings from the water glasses test?

Most younger children perceive that the pencil that sticks out further is longer.

What were your findings from the pencils test?

Most younger children perceive that the line of pennies that were spaced out now have more.

What were your findings from the pennies test?

Most younger children perceive that the smashed play dough has more than the ball.

What were your findings from the play dough test?

Most younger children will point to individual cards until they guess the right one—not asking any questions except "Is this the one?"

What were your findings from the card test?

Older children usually try to ask some questions to narrow the options—"Is it red?" "Does it have a picture of a person on it?" or "Is it in the second row?"

What additional questions did you ask the children?

Did anything surprise you from this activity?

What stood out to you from these two activities?

Collect the homework papers. If students worked in pairs there may be only one report from the pair with both students' names.

Guided Discussion: The Development of Children

(40 minutes)

Refer to Resource 5-9 that the students read for homework.

You read about the different areas of development and we want to look at each of these individually.

Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget, a European psychologist has had a tremendous influence on our understanding of children's thinking ability. His work has influenced both schools and churches toward a better knowledge of what children can understand at different ages. The central idea behind Piaget's work is that as children interact with people and objects they develop understandings that allow them to use higher levels of thinking.

As children interact with the environment, they are not passive. They are constantly trying to make sense of how the world works. When something they encounter does not fit with the mental model they have established, Piaget says they do one of two things: they *assimilate* or they *accommodate*.

Assimilation is the process of applying what you already know to new data. For example, a young child knows that boats go in the water. He sees a jet ski on the lake and shouts, "Look! Look! A boat!" He has *assimilated* the jet ski into his mental model of boats.

Accommodation is when the new data does not fit neatly into the existing mental model. The child feels the need to adjust the framework in response to the special characteristics of an object or event. The boy who sees the jet-ski racing across the lake recognizes that it is not really like the other boats he has seen. It looks like a boat, it is in the water, but it has no sails. It is going much faster than the sailboats he has seen. The child then concludes, "This isn't a boat," and shouts, "Mommy, Mommy! What's that?" Once Mom answers, the child can form a new mental model: "Boats are not the only things that go in water. Boats AND jet skis go in the water." He has *accommodated* the new information.

Let's look at a couple of Sunday School examples. You decide whether the child is *assimilating* or *accommodating*.

Sarah has assimilated the new baby into those who are loved by God.

Sarah knows God loves everyone. God loves Daddy. God loves Mommy. God loves Scottie. Sarah decides God loves the new baby, too.

Tommy is accommodating the new information. He could also accommodate the information into a new mental model that says God didn't make lemons because they aren't good to eat.

Tommy knows that God made fruit yummy. Tommy bites into a lemon. Tommy decides that God didn't make ALL fruit yummy.

Allow for some brainstorming ideas.

Can you think of other examples?

Assimilation and accommodation are happening every day in the learning process, but usually we don't express ourselves in the kind of language we used in the examples. Instead our mental models are mostly unconscious, and we act on them without realizing them. This is true for children, and it is true for adults. The more cognitively mature we are, the better we are able to identify our models and modify them intentionally. Meanwhile, we try to "protect" children from misunderstandings that could influence their beliefs negatively. This is one of the major reasons it is important to understand developmental principles.

Refer to Resource 6-1 in the Student Guide.

A quick reference to Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory can be found in Resource 6-1.

Allow for response.

Is there anything there that you think might need to be modified for your context?

Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg presented us with a difficult dilemma for us to contemplate as we think about moral development.

Allow for response.

How would you respond to the situation?

What are the principles that you follow? Why?

Refer to Resource 6-2 in the Student Guide.

Let's look at the six stages in Kohlberg's chart to the justice statements in the homework reading.

At Stage 1, justice is punishing the bad in terms of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

At Stage 2, justice is exchanging favors and goods in an equal manner.

At Stage 3 and 4, justice is treating people as they desire in terms of the conventional rules.

At Stage 5, justice is recognized that all rules and laws flow from justice, from a social contract between the governors and the governed, designed to protect the equal rights of all.

At Stage 6, personally chosen moral principles are also principles of justice, the principles any member of a society would choose for that society if he did not know what his position would be in the society and in which he might be the least advantaged.

Refer to Resource 6-3 in the Student Guide.

Piaget suggests four "sanctions" that are appropriate for shaping moral understanding in children.

1. **Require Restitution.** When children make an error, they must make the error right. For example if a child spills paint, restitution is not accomplished until the child has cleaned up the mess.
2. **Call the children's attention to the consequences of their behavior.** If children are breaking their crayons, the teacher might say, "If you break all of the crayons, you will not have crayons for coloring." Of course, the parent or teacher must be willing to follow through and allow a child to live with the actual consequences.
3. **Deprive the child of what he has misused.** If the child continues to misuse the crayons, the crayons will be removed.
4. **Exclude the child from the group.** This sanction can be used when a child is purposely disrupting a group. The child is asked to leave and may return only when he or she is ready to participate with the group according to the conditions the leader sets.

If attention is directed at the action, children can begin to understand the consequences of their actions and begin to make different choices.

Allow for response.

Would any of these sanctions work better for one age group than another? Explain.

Are there other sanction ideas that you have found helpful?

Psychosocial Development

Refer to Resource 6-4 in the Student Guide.

Resource 6-4 contains all 8 of Erikson's development theory. We are concerned with the first four but we do need to be aware of the other four.

Allow for response.

What insights did you gain from Eric Erikson or John Bowlby?

You might want to be prepared with a few examples of your own.

Do you have any examples—stories—that illustrate what was expressed in this section?

Faith Development

Refer to Resource 6-5 in the Student Guide.

You read an interview scenario between James Fowler and H.K. Straughn in your homework. Resource 6-5 gives us a chart of James Fowler's faith stages.

Spend a little time reading through this chart as the information was not stated this way in the homework reading.

Lecture/Discussion: A Holistic Developmental Perspective

(15 minutes)

Even though individuals are complex and the world we live in is complex, there are patterns that bring some sense of order to life. The patterns of human development are predictable, even though the development of an individual child cannot be confined to a box. We can organize our ministries around certain foundational understandings that will help us meet most children's needs most of the time as we maintain our commitment to each child's individuality.

Refer to Resource 6-6 in the Student Guide.

Let's look at five principles for age appropriate ministry.

1. God is the creator of humanity and is the source of understanding and direction in working with His creation.
2. Every human being was born with the capacity to grow in many different ways.
3. There are patterns of growth that we can identify.
4. Growth is influenced by environmental conditions, relationships, and inborn characteristics and timetables.
5. In order to effectively get the outcomes we desire, we must work with developmental characteristics—not against them.

Refer to Resource 6-7 in the Student Guide.

Using these as guiding principles, we will explore some practical considerations for faith development at each age level. This is only a beginning to your ongoing discovery process of how to minister age-appropriately to children. It establishes a pattern for applying what you know about kids to how you can minister in the church.

Challenge the students to think beyond the quick and simple. Do not limit the students to the suggested ideas.

Possible suggestions:

Infants

- 6 be familiar with each child*
- 7 smile and express lots of love*
- 8 adhere to sanitizing rules*

Toddlers

- 6 don't force children to do the same activity*
- 7 provide consistency and order*
- 8 provide a large area, free of clutter*

Preschoolers

- 6 give individual attention to each child*
- 7 establish a routine, but be flexible*
- 8 do not require the use of pencils, scissors, etc in activities (have things already cut out)*

Early Elementary

- 6 have enough helpers to guide children through new or difficult activities*
- 7 define new words*
- 8 alternate high energy and quiet activities*

Older Elementary

- 6 provide resources that will help them understand the church's basic beliefs*
- 7 within a lesson, plan time for questions and answers*
- 8 use humor and funny illustrations to keep the student's attention*

As we read through the chart we will need to provide some responses of our own.

These are not the only characteristics of children of these age groups, and the suggested responses of the church are not the only answers. Not every developmental characteristic had a biblical or "God-based" response. Yet, each response is sensitive to the developmental needs of children in the context of a loving, biblically-sound, spiritually-obedient congregation. We do not ever want to lose our unique voice in a child's life. If we want a child to develop a life that fully reflects the grace of God, we must speak to every aspect of a child's life. Our goal is to develop people who are thoroughly Christian in their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

You may have heard the story of the little boy in Sunday School whose teacher asked, "What has a bushy tail, eats nuts, and dances circles around trees?"

There was silence . . . and more silence . . . then a boy raised his hand and said, "Teacher, I know the answer is Jesus, but it sure sounds like a squirrel to me!" We want kids to be able to say confidently, "It's a squirrel!" without having to worry about offending Jesus or the teacher in the process.

We have learned about the importance of helping children move through the stages of development, so they successfully resolve the challenges that are part of each age level. Because of the power of God, we are never left without hope for children who struggle developmentally or even for the adults who have developmental gaps. God is constantly at work in the process, and He will be an ever present help. Nevertheless, if we are faithful and skillful as we minister to children and their families, we can make a difference in the world.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Refer to Resource 6-8 in the Student Guide. Give 5 minutes for the students to complete the assignment.

Then allow about 2 minutes for students to compare answers.

You will have about 5 minutes to complete Resource 6-8 on your own. When you have completed your responses, pair up with another student and compare answers.

Did your analysis match in each case? Why do you think that is?

How old do you think Danny is?

Danny is actually an eight-year-old boy who was in the third grade when he wrote the essay. (More than likely the essay was edited for spelling and grammar by an adult.)

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss how children learn.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Using the interviews you conducted last week and your observations, report on how each child shows evidence of each area of development (cognitive, psychosocial, physical, moral, faith). Does the child operate at age-level? How do you know? Are there circumstances in each child's life that influence his or her development for good or may interfere with ongoing development?

Read Resource 6-9.

Complete Resource 6-10.

Read Resource 6-11.

Read Resource 6-12.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Formulate your perspective on different aspects of a child's development and how that will shape your thoughts and ministry to children.

Punctuate the Finish

From Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehous, and Linda Cannell. Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.

“Developmental research and theory help us understand that children think like children, not like adults, and to marvel at the way children learn the language of their family and community—the language in which they can hear the stories of the Scriptures and express with growing confidence what they understand. It reminds us of the importance of loving care in the life of children; this sets the tone for experiencing the grace of God. It helps us to recognize how children are thinking about morality and how their conscience is being grounded.”

Teacher Preparation for the Next Lesson

Before next lesson: You will need two sets of plastic utensils (knife, fork and spoon) for each class member and rubber bands to secure each set together.

Child-sized chairs for each student might also be helpful as they will be bending over from their chairs to work on the floor.

Print out a copy of the “Dear Class” letter found in the second section of the next lesson—page 7-7.

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Lesson 7

How Children Learn

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Principles of Learning	Class Activity	Utensils Resource 6-9
0:35	Setting the Focus	Lecture/Discussion	
0:50	Taking In and Processing Information	Lecture/Discussion	Resources 6-10—6-12 Resources 7-1—7-5
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lesson 6. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students share with each other their analysis from their interviews.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Today we will examine how children—and indeed all of us—learn.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- explain ten key principles of learning
- understand the concept of learning preferences and multiple intelligences
- identify your own preferences as a learner and begin to understand how these preferences affect your teaching

Motivator

www.intime.uni.edu/model/learning/learn-summary.html

"Every student can learn—and does learn all the time—with us or despite us."

—Peter T. Ewell

Think of a time when you learned something *because* of someone. Think of a time when you learned something *despite* someone. Which did you enjoy more?

Lesson Body

Class Activity: Principles of Learning

(30 minutes)

For some teachers, this will be a challenging exercise, but it models a wonderful kind of experiential learning with which we want teachers to be comfortable. While there are key content principles students should know, they may draw important conclusions that are not part of the accompanying lecture. Be open to individual "ah-HA!" moments.

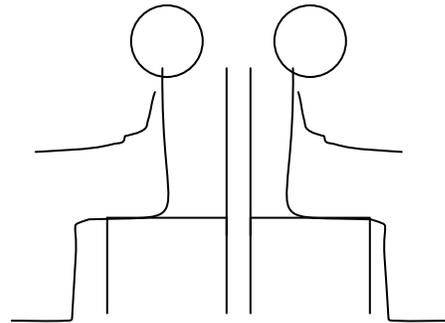
Before class preparation: You will need two sets of plastic utensils (knife, fork and spoon) for each class member and rubber bands to secure each set together.

Give each student a packaged set of 6 utensils.

Have some children's sized chairs available

If you have an odd number of students in your class you may want to invite someone to come and be a partner for this activity. Or one group will have to have three for the activity.

Find a partner and arrange your chairs so you are sitting back-to-back with plenty of space on the floor in front of each of you. You may have to move your chairs to different areas of the room to accomplish this set up. The smaller sized children's chairs may work best for you for this activity or you may sit on the floor, if you prefer, as long as you are back-to-back.



Please listen carefully to my instructions. **DO NOT DO ANYTHING UNTIL I TELL YOU TO.**

Make sure you have two spoons, two forks, and two knives. Remove the rubber band from your utensils.

Choose one person to be the speaker and one person to be the receiver. If you have three in your group, you will have one speaker and two receivers.

When I say, GO!—and not before I say GO—the speaker will hold the utensils approximately one foot off the floor and drop them.

The speaker will then begin to describe exactly how the utensils have fallen to the floor, as carefully and precisely as he or she can.

Those of you who are receivers will try to duplicate the way the utensils fell EXACTLY, relying **only** on what the speaker says. You may NOT look at the fallen utensils. The goal is for you sitting in your seat to understand exactly what the speaker sees—by their words—as he or she sits in his or her seat.

The receiver may **not speak** or ask questions under any circumstances, and neither of you may look at your partner's utensils until the receiver has completed arranging his or her utensils.

Speakers, you must speak clearly and distinctly, because your partner will not be able to ask you for clarification.

Receivers, no moans or groans or words are to be uttered. Listen and follow the speaker's directions exactly.

I will give you a one-minute warning from the time the first pair finishes. Please do not look at your arrangements until I say "Time's up!" Remember, you will do this when you hear me say, GO! And you will stop when you hear me say, "Time's up!"

Clarify any instructions that were not understood,

You may walk around the room to see how the students are doing. You will be able to tell the ones who are frustrated because they can not figure out what their partner is trying to tell them to do. Reassure everyone they are doing just fine. If one team finishes significantly before the others, you may need to wait a bit before giving the one minute warning.

Are there any questions before we begin?

GO!

Time's up!

Trade seats with your partner and evaluate whether your work was successful. Make sure every detail matches—knives pointing in the same direction, curved

Typically the speaker will feel they were doing great until they saw their partner did not understand what they were meaning. They may be shocked if their partner did poorly, or they may have felt frustrated without any immediate feed back to tell how well they were being understood.

Answers are typically feelings of helplessness or frustration at wanting to be able to ask questions and clarify what they heard.

These principles were in the homework reading assignment Resource 6-9.

Follow the same procedure as before.

Most will feel they were glad to get the feed back and most will actually do a little better this time. You will occasionally have people who found that others asking questions made it more difficult for them to focus on their instructions. Some of the communication styles can be so mismatched that they may get on one another's nerves.

Many will find it much more pleasing to be included in the process and found much more confidence in their placement of utensils. Some find that, when they were allowed to ask questions, they did not listen as closely as before.

or flat part of the knives on the correct side, spoons or forks right-side-up or up-side-down.

Those who gave instructions, what did you experienced?

Those of you receiving the instructions, what did you experienced?

You have just identified one of the most important principles of learning. Learning requires loops of feedback between the teacher and the learner. The learner needs opportunity to check for understanding, and the teacher needs opportunity to clarify instruction based on learner feedback.

Learning Principle # 1 is: Learning requires feedback.

The quality of our production should improve with feedback. So let's try our activity again. You decide who will be the speaker and who will be the receiver during the second round.

We will repeat the same steps, EXCEPT this time, the receiver can ask any question he or she feels will help to clarify understanding. In other words, you can talk back and forth as much as you feel is necessary to accomplish the task, but you still cannot look at each other's work.

Any questions? If not GO!

Time's up!

Instruction givers, what did you experienced this time?

Receivers, what did you experienced?

Feedback did indeed improve the quality of production. But it still isn't perfect, is it? We're going to do this exercise two more times to see if we can isolate some other learning principles. Determine who will serve in each role this time and get ready.

Every thing will be the same as last time EXCEPT the speaker will **create** a pattern with his or her utensils instead of dropping them. You can create any design you want. Then describe what you are seeing in such a way that your partner can reproduce the design. Receivers may ask any questions they want.

Any questions? If not GO!

The students should move through this fairly quickly and with great success.

What were your experiences this time?

This should have been a much more satisfying experience for both partners.

What statements about learning can we make based on this part of the experience?

You have identified another important learning principle. **Principle #2: Learners seek patterns.** The mind deals with patterns based on prior experience. You know what a row looks like. You know what a square looks like. These are based on your prior experience and memorable patterns you depend upon.

There is still another learning principle or two we can easily demonstrate with this activity. Like the last time, the speaker will be creating a pattern. When the pattern is completed, the speaker will describe the entire design. Then the speaker will invite the receiver to look at the pattern—only once—before arranging his or her utensils. Questions may be asked.

In this activity, every pair should feel very successful.

What did this section of the experience demonstrate to you?

Principle #3: Modeling is helpful to learning.

Principle#4: Multiple methods of teaching used in combination reach more learners more effectively.

Allow for response.

Do you have any question or comments at this time concerning the other principles that you read about in Resource 6-9?

Lecture/Discussion: Setting the Focus

(15 minutes)

Select someone to read the paper on the desk as you quickly exit the room.

In advance make a copy of this next paragraph and have it facedown on your desk:

Dear Class,

I have been standing in front of you for six lessons, and now for nearly an hour in the seventh session. I have now left your sight. Please write in your notebook everything you can remember about my appearance today. Now be kind and be appropriate! For example: What color is my hair? My eyes? Do I have facial hair at all? Am I wearing glasses? What are the colors or styles of clothing I am wearing? What color and kind of shoes am I wearing? Am I wearing any jewelry? Try to remember all you can, and write it.

After two minutes, please have someone come and get me in the hall.

When you return, have the students share their observations. The students may do well, or they may not. Some may actually be shocked at how they described you.

Allow for response.

Before we begin this section, I must run and get something, I will be right back. While I am out, can one of you read the paper on my desk and move on to the next part of class?

What did you write about my appearance?

This is a training exercise used by banks to train employees to be observant of those coming into the bank, in case of a robbery. It is not uncommon for individuals to look and not really see. We have to be trained to be observant and not take in just the data that is most general and seems most useful at the time.

Can you connect this exercise to any of the principles for learning we've already discussed? Which ones?

Even though they're all connected, this fact is important enough to be stated again. **Principle #10: Learners learn best when there are high expectations, communicated clearly. These expectations must be reasonable.**

We need to help children decide what is important to learn. We are bombarded by things that compete for our attention. Without narrowing down what is important from what is irrelevant, we would literally not be able to maintain our sanity! Look around you and pay attention to the buzzing of the lights, the traffic or nature sounds outdoors, the sounds of activity in the building. Pay attention to the color of the walls, the feel of your clothes against your body, and to the smell of your deodorant.

Listen to the beating of your heart, feel the temperature of your skin, and pay attention to your breathing. If we had to attend to all these things at the same time, we could not take in new information because we would be constantly "busy" with what we already have to deal with.

If we have certain expectations, we can help learners know what they should be paying attention to in order to meet our expectations. One word of warning with young children: If you ask them to pay attention to sitting still, don't expect them to pay attention to the message you are teaching. They will be so busy trying to control their bodies they won't have much attention left to focus on what you are teaching!

The older we get, the more automatic some kinds of screening become to us. You don't have to think about sitting still. You've learned to largely ignore what the chair against your back feels like until you are in significant pain. Children haven't learned to do this yet, and many things are vying for their attention.

If you can direct your students' attention to what is important to notice, to look for, or to remember BEFORE you start to teach, you help them narrow what they need to attend to. You didn't know the color of my shoes would be important today. But if I had told you to pay attention to what I was wearing before I left the room, you would have had a much better chance of being able to notice and remember that detail.

You may have heard of the Pygmalion Effect. It is the theory that people respond according to our expectations. Research done by Rosenthal and Jacobson demonstrated that when teachers had high expectations of children and expected them to "bloom," they did. When teachers had low expectations, students stayed the same or declined from their starting performance.

The researchers' work demonstrated that labels matter and the younger the child, the *more* the labels matter.

If we, in our own minds apply the rules of Philippians 4:8, and think about (expect) “what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise” we will communicate both intentionally and unintentionally the expectations that children can and will respond to the Holy Spirit’s work in their lives by learning how to be the kind of person God wants them to be.

If you are having a difficult time with a child in a learning setting, take time to reflect on what you have come to believe about that child. Are you expecting ongoing misbehavior? Are you expecting him or her not to have anything of value to contribute to the classroom? Are you anticipating that he or she will frustrate you and make you uncomfortable? Our communication cues can be very subtle or very obvious, but children pick up on our expectations for them. Is it time for the Holy Spirit to do something about “that child,” or is it time for the Holy Spirit to do something about you and your expectations?

Lecture/Discussion: Taking In and Processing Information

(35 minutes)

Learners have preferences in the ways they take in and process information—the raw material of learning. You know that from your own experience. Some of you very much enjoy lecture and discussion, while some of you would rather see films, videos, and demonstrations. Others would rather be trying and applying—you’d love to have kids right here alongside us so you could learn by practice. Some of you would like to be outdoors while we’re having class, while others are perfectly content with a more controlled environment.

According to Dunn and Dunn and others expanding on their work, there are five areas in which we exhibit preferences: environmental, social, physical, emotional, and psychological. You filled out a survey—Resource 6-10—as part of your homework. In groups of about three, compare your responses with each other.

Allow students a few minutes to compare preferences.

Did you discover anything about each other? Are you all the same?

You can collect these surveys if you desire.

In addition to these modalities, we have varying **physical preferences** that affect our ability to take in information, including our need for food in order to

think, biological awareness rhythms (night owl vs. early bird), differing needs for amount of movement, different temperature tolerances, and differing ability to shut out distractions.

Emotionally, we are impacted by levels of:

- Motivation (drive or initiative—can be internally or externally motivated. For example, do I do my job because I want to (internal motivation), or because I get a paycheck (external motivation)?
- Persistence (willingness to hang in or to try again in spite of obstacles)
- Responsibility (discipline regardless of desire)
- Need for structure (how much or little direction and support one needs in order to begin and complete a task. Do you want the task clearly defined or left open for your own creative interpretation?)

Personality figures in here, as well. We have different levels of need for fun, different levels of need for space or reflective time. Some people are shy and quiet by nature while others are talkative and expressive.

Psychologically, we have preferences for:

- detailed (analytical) or global (big picture) thinking patterns,
- hemispheric preference (left brain dominant/right brain dominant)
- degree of impulsivity, (ability to attend to outside stimuli)
- readiness (developmental maturity)

Readiness is a developmental feature. We are made ready to learn by both our maturity and the need we perceive for new information or skills.

To review, there are the five arenas in which we have learning preferences and characteristics. All these preferences come together in what we know as learning styles.

There are many different models of learning styles. Each model has been carefully researched and has some valuable things to say about understanding why some people “get it” from a teacher who uses a certain approach, and some people do not. An essay entitled “Matters of Style,” concluded that the particular learning style theory that we use as a model is not as important as the fact that the theory challenges us to balance instructional style to meet all learners in the way they can learn best.

Richard Felder of the University of North Carolina (1996).

One thing worth noting here is there is a distinct difference between learning styles and multiple intelligences. The most notable difference is that learning styles refers to how we take in and work with information and intelligences refer to ways in which we categorize, synthesize, and express information.

Refer to Resource 6-11 that the students read for homework.

Gardner, a Harvard researcher on intelligence, proposes there are at least eight different ways to be "smart." His purpose was not to observe God's image in humanity, but the intelligences reflect attributes of God. Gardner's purpose was to draw attention to the way in which we exhibit biases in our perception of smart based on school behaviors.

Allow for discussion.

What insights did you have from reading this assignment?

In school, we tend to place the highest value on one or two kinds of intelligence (word smart and logic smart). In the real world—all over the world—many kinds of smart are valued. For example, I can be a word smart person and know a lot about a specific kind of poisonous plant in Africa. I could tell you its name, spell the Latin, describe it by color and appearance, and write a lovely poem about it. But all those facts won't help me if I can't identify that it is growing where I am about to walk.

A tribesman in Africa might not know anything about its Latin name, might never have read about it or written about it, but he is nature smart. He knows where the plant grows, what typically grows around it, what time of the year it is bearing fruit, and how it smells when it is flowering. He also knows the difference between the plant's poisonous fruit and the medicinal root, which is similar to many other medicinal roots that can be identified by their unique color and shape.

Which kind of smart is more valuable? Well, that all depends on where you live and what you need to do with the information. If you need to spell it on a test and know the meaning of its Latin root, it may be important to be word smart. But if I needed to avoid stepping on it, I would value the naturalistic intelligence of the tribesman.

Allow for response.

In Christian life, sometimes we value one type of intelligence above others. *Can you think of some ways in which we do that?*

The remainder of our time will be spent describing some of the more common learning style theories.

Kolb's Learning Style Model

Refer to Resource 7-1 in the Student Guide.

This model classifies students as having a preference for:

- *concrete experience* or *abstract conceptualization* (how they take information in)
- *active experimentation* or *reflective observation* (how they internalize information).

The four types of learners in this classification scheme are:

Type 1: concrete, reflective

A characteristic question of this learning type is "*Why?*" Type 1 learners respond well to explanations of how course material relates to their experience, their interests, and their futures. To be effective with Type 1 students, the instructor should function as a *motivator*.

As a teacher attempting to reach a Type 1 child with the story of Noah, you might say: "Have you ever had to decide if you should do what you were told? We are learning about Noah today to help us understand why it is so important to do what God tells us to do."

Type 2: abstract, reflective

A characteristic question of this learning type is "*What?*" Type 2 learners respond to information presented in an organized, logical fashion and benefit if they have time for reflection. To be effective, the instructor should function as an *expert*.

As a teacher attempting to reach a Type 2 child with the story of Noah, you might say: "I wonder what kind of animals Noah had on the ark, and what it smelled like after about a week. What do you think might have been some of the problems Noah and his family faced?" The teacher then might be able to function as the expert on human experiences of being cooped up. Or ask the question, "What do you think gopher wood is like?" if you're more of an expert on carpentry!

Type 3: abstract, active

A characteristic question of this learning type is "*How?*" Type 3 learners respond to having opportunities to work actively on well-defined tasks and to learn by trial-and-error in an environment that allows them to fail safely. To be effective, the instructor should

function as a *coach*, providing guided practice and feedback.

As a teacher attempting to reach a Type 3 child with the story of Noah, you might say: "There are so many kinds of animals in the world! Let's try to figure out how big the ark really was!" *You can actually pace off the size of the ark.* How amazing is that?! How did God know that's how much space His plan would require? What an awesome opportunity to encourage theological reflection at an early age. There is not a single right answer, but there may be many truths that are consistent with Scripture.

Type 4: concrete, active

A characteristic question of this learning type is "*What if?*" Type 4 learners like applying course material in new situations to solve real problems. To be effective, the instructor should stay out of the way, maximizing opportunities for the students to discover things for themselves.

As a teacher attempting to reach a Type 4 child with the story of Noah, you might say: "I have marked a space on the floor where we can try to put two of every kind of animal. Let's see what happens." The children might try stacking animals on top of each other (What would happen if animals were stacked on top of each other for weeks?) They might try putting the lions next to the gazelles (What would happen if the lions and the gazelles were in the same area of the boat?) After the exercise, you could point out to the children that God knew about all those difficulties, and He gave Noah a plan that would allow him to do what God asked him to do. God anticipated every problem, and He had a solution.

Using the story of Noah, we walked through four different ways of connecting children to biblical truths drawn from the story. Let's give you some practice! Those who prefer to work in pairs, find a partner. Those who prefer to work alone may do so. Those who prefer a larger group can gather to work in a group.

Use Resource 7-1 as the guide for the four learning styles. Instead of the story of Noah use the story of the Loaves and Fishes from John 4.

Allow an appropriate time to finish the activity, then have them share their ideas

What struggles did you have in creating strategies?

The main goal was not to judge whether the strategy fit the parameters, but to give you practice in thinking about different approaches to the same goal—the goal

being: Familiarity with the Bible story and understanding what the story teaches us about the character of God and His plans for our lives.

It takes practice to have the ability to think flexibly.

Our preferences can change based on our experiences. **Immediate or concrete experiences** (activities) provide opportunities for **observations and reflections**. These observations and reflections are *assimilated* or *accommodated* into **abstract concepts** (ideas) that can be **actively tested** in turn creating new experiences to observe and reflect on. Let's walk through how we have experienced that in this class setting.

Allow for response.

What concrete experiences have we had today in class?

What observations and reflections have you made or heard your classmates make?

What ideas have these observations given you?

How did you test your ideas in the most recent activity?

What might you want to experience next after today's class? Start your answer with the words, "I'd like to try . . ."

Refer to Resource 6-12 that the students read for homework.

If you compare all of these learning style models—those we have talked about and those that you read about as homework—you will note some similarities across the board.

What do you notice is similar? Different or unique?

The fact that you have preferences or styles does NOT mean that you can't learn—or teach—outside of your preferences. We are adept at learning in a variety of ways. As you learn more about your personal preferences, you are able to be flexible and modify learning activities to suit your style. For example, most highly auditory learners will adapt their reading activities from visual to auditory by reading aloud in their heads. Highly kinesthetic learners may move their lips as they read or may pace the floor as they memorize.

It is incredibly important to recognize and honor the differences God has created within us. It is only by fully appreciating how truly different we are that we

can effectively act as the Body of Christ. We do a disservice to our great and mighty Creator by ministering as though all people learn and think in the same manner. Our God who has infinite depth and who defines creative expression has charged us to reflect Him to the world around us. We can do that only as we allow for, teach for, and minister to the richness of our created natures.

Read Ephesians 4:11-13.

Another theological principle we can refer to is the incarnation. Christ became as we are so He could communicate God's love to broken and fallen humanity. He did not consider it beneath himself to sacrifice His privileges in order to "speak our language." We should be willing to lay aside our preferences for the sake of communicating God's love.

Refer to Resource 7-2 and look through it together discussing the various ideas as time permits.

In Resource 7-2, there are some teaching strategies based on learning styles and preferences taken from the book *Touching Hearts, Changing Lives: Becoming a Treasured Teacher*. As you strive to understand better how to apply learning style principles to your ministry, you can refer back to this resource for specific activities that are learner-sensitive. The activities can be applied to a wide variety of biblical teaching at different age levels.

These are quotes from Jody Capehart and Lori Niles. Touching Hearts, Changing Lives: Becoming a Treasured Teacher. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 1999. Used by permission.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- explain ten key principles of learning
- understand the concepts of learning styles and multiple intelligences
- identify your own preferences as a learner and begin to understand how these preferences affect your teaching

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss the spiritual formation of the children's pastor. How do we become the kind of people who are willing to sacrifice our privileges and claim our strengths to model and minister in Christ's name?

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Arrange with a teacher or children's minister in advance to observe a children's Sunday School classroom or worship service. You will not be teaching so you can be focused on your goals. Observe different children, and determine what their learning style might be. Do not be discouraged if at first the learners' preferences are not apparent. For some it would take several classes to determine this. However, you should be able to spot some obvious characteristics emerging. Take notes on what you see and your perception of how the teaching process fits their learning style. Write a two-page paper on your experience and conclusions.

Read Resource 7-3.

Complete Resource 7-4.

Read Resource 7-5.

Read Resource 7-6.

Read Resource 7-7.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include what you believe your learning style is and how you see this influencing your ministry.

Punctuate the Finish

I hear, I forget.
I see, I remember.
I do, I understand.

—Chinese Proverb

Preparation for Next Lesson

You will need to have a small portion of modeling clay for each student for the next lesson for a class activity.

It would be best if it were modeling clay and not soft play clay. You might also choose to use plastic clay (Fimo™ or Sculpy™).

You will also need a recording of “The Potter’s Hand” or another song that invites reflection on God’s formative work in our lives. Another option is to read Isaiah 45:9-25, NIV.

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Lesson 8

Spiritual Formation

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Lifelong Spiritual Formation	Class Activity	Modeling clay Resource 7-3 Resource 7-4
0:25	Spiritual Disciplines— Scripture Study and Meditation	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 7-5 Resource 8-1 Resource 8-2
0:55	Spiritual Disciplines— Prayer and Sabbath Keeping	Lecture	Resource 8-3 Resource 8-4 Resource 7-6
1:10	How to Choose a Mentor	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 8-5 Resource 7-7
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Modular Course of Study. *Leading the People of God*. Lessons 1, 2, and 7. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2003.

Modular Course of Study. *Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Formation*. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2002.

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lesson 12. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001.

Willard, Dallas and Jan Johnson. *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice: Experiments in Spiritual Transformation*. NavPress Group, 2006.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students read each other's 2-page papers.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose today is to examine the critical role of personal spiritual formation in the life of the minister.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- identify significant characteristics of lifelong spiritual formation
- assume responsibility for pursuing the spiritual disciplines of studying scripture, prayer, and taking a Sabbath, as well as finding other disciplines that are meaningful to their spiritual growth
- explore the role and purpose of a spiritual mentor

Motivator

True spirituality can exhaust us, for it exists not merely for our own edification, but to serve the glory and purposes of God. Jesus' spiritual labors occasionally so fatigued Him that He could fall asleep in an open boat in the middle of a lake during a life-threatening storm (Lk 8:22-25). Likewise, the Apostle Paul knew the depletion of inner resources that results from the willingness to "spend and be spent" for the sake of the souls of others (2 Cor 12:15). All aspects of externalized spirituality—serving people's needs, doing good works, taking the gospel to the spiritually lost, working in church ministries—all expend the reserves of both body and soul.

There's a problem, though, when the inflow of spiritual renewal doesn't replenish the outflow of spiritual ministry. For the spiritual life should also be *the* source of inner recreation and restoration since it is the way we most directly experience the Lord in daily life.

Donald S. Whitney. Simplify Your Spiritual Life. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2003.

Lesson Body

Class Activity: Lifelong Spiritual Formation

(20 minutes)

You will need a lump of modeling clay for each student. For this activity, it is best for students to have actual modeling clay rather than soft play clay. You might also choose to use plastic clay (Fimo™ or Sculpy™).

Choose whether it works best for you to play a recording of “The Potter’s Hand” or another song that invites reflection on God’s formative work in our lives. Another option is to read Isaiah 45:9-25, NIV.)

Play the music or read the passage of scripture as students work with the clay. Allow for silence until you can see that most students have accomplished the assignment.

As we begin class today, take this clay and make something that reminds you of God’s purpose in your life as you currently understand it. While you are working, I will ask you to be listening to what I am about to share with you.

It is not an insignificant thing that God portrays himself to His people as a potter—a sculptor. The same God who *spoke* the earth into existence created Adam and Eve, forming them—and then breathed life into them from His own nostrils. Humanity received the personal touch of the Living God from the first moments of existence. The potter imagery reminds us that God is in the practice of being personal with human beings. He uses “stuff” that is already in existence to form us into His likeness.

Our lives are full of “stuff”—minor frustrations, major disappointments, the simple suffering, and profound losses we face alongside the victories of joy, love, hard work and success. God intends to work all these things for our good as He forms and shapes us.

Let’s analyze carefully the process you just engaged in as a “potter.”

Allow for response. Have someone record the responses on a board or flip chart.

What did you do first? Second? Third? Fourth? Any other steps?

*Possible steps:
1. Vision—a plan for the clay
2. Working the clay (applying pressure, softening it, and*

Is there anything that has been left out?

- preparing it)*
3. *Forming the clay (into one or more basic shapes)*
 4. *Perfecting the clay (getting rid of what wasn't part of the vision, shaping details into the sculpture, and joining the pieces to each other)*
 5. *Enjoying the results or smashing it and starting over from step one, refining each step of the process.*

Allow for response.

How is this process of sculpting like or not like what God has done or is doing in your life?

When you begin to search through all the books on the "How to do Children's Ministry," you begin to notice a big hole. There is every suggestion on how to plan a camp, a program, a worship service, how to talk with parents, raise money and even how to help others spiritually, but many say absolutely nothing about the self-care of the shepherd. Is it just assumed that ministers don't need to care for themselves? Since they are in ministry, will God watch over them differently? Are children's ministers so busy looking for resources they wouldn't have time to read about it anyway? Maybe it's because there are no simple step-by-step plans that work universally to achieve spiritual formation. Whatever the reason, many ministers are over-looking one of the most critical pieces to successful, long-term ministry: self-care through spiritual disciplines or practices!

There are many different aspects of self-care we could consider, but we are going to limit our discussions to the following areas: Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Mentors, and The Sabbath.

Refer to Resource 7-3 in the Student Guide.

As part of your homework you read the story of the king and his two sons.

Allow for response.

What was the message or point of the story?

How does the story relate to spiritual formation?

It is possible to be very well-trained but not have our hearts transformed?

Appearances can be deceptive. Formation affects our very nature. The cat could only deal with one set of circumstances. When temptation came, he was not equipped to deal with it. The tavern owner considered his job done once the cat had been trained; he didn't recognize the need for lifelong reinforcements and neither did the king's son.

Just a note of clarification:

- Animals are trained to do many things—obey, do tricks, work.
- Children can be educated—information and applications that are learned can be transferred, improved upon, and adapted to new situations.

We are committed to the spiritual formation of children. However, our formation never ends. Our completion comes to us on the day of our glorification or our final sanctification when God welcomes us to the home He has prepared for us. Until that day, we are being formed.

We train and educate, and we learn through the training and education process. No amount of training or education can replace the transformation that comes from having your sins forgiven and your heart and life transformed by Jesus Christ. It may seem strange to be talking to a group of committed ministers like this, but there are many who stand in pulpits and in front of classes of children, youth, and adults every Sunday who themselves are living in sin or stagnation. When we come together, we need to encourage each other to live holy lives. Today's class will give you ways to keep the water of your life flowing purely.

I want to say a word of prayer here before we go any further in the lesson.

Dear God,

I pray that You will speak to our hearts during this time together. Encourage us where we need to be encouraged, and convict us where we need to be changed. We can not minister in the power of the Holy Spirit without Your cleansing and indwelling. We are Your vessels. We want to be used by You. And we want Your continual guidance. Speak to our hearts. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Defining Spiritual Formation

So what is spiritual formation? The idea of spiritual formation emerges out of Galatians 4:19 where Paul is describing his desire for the Galatians. He writes, "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until *Christ is formed in you.*" This is not a desire only for an outward change, but a complete transformation. Paul is praying and encouraging the Galatians to experience Christ in such a way their very nature is being changed. They would have Christlike character resulting in Christlike outward behavior due to their formation in the image of Christ.

You may need to spell these words on a board or flip chart.

There are samples of morphed images at this website: http://www.blackbeltsystems.com/bx_wi_mee.html Click on the girl to frog clip or the boy to man clip.

An example that might be useful to us comes from the word that is translated "formed." It is a somewhat unique word used only three times in scripture—Galatians 4:19, Mark 16:12, and Philippians 2:6-7. The Greek word is *morphe*, and it is from the base of the word *meros* connected through the idea of "adjustment of parts." It is a changing of nature and form. You may see a resemblance to the English word *morph*.

You have seen morphed images where women become tigers and rock stars become panthers. The definition of morphing is to change one image gradually to the form of another. This first object is gradually distorted and faded out and the second image, while it starts out hidden, is gradually faded in.

In computer generated morphing, the "how" is a straightforward mathematical formula that allows the artist to complete this change step-by-step. In the spiritual life, there is more mystery involved. We can't depend on a formula. We do, however, know some strategies that help us to be in the right position of humble acceptance that invites the Holy Spirit to "morph us" or change us until we are formed into Christ's likeness.

As Wesleyans, we see this process beginning with prevenient grace that wooed us into a salvation experience. We then sense God's grace leading us to a crisis experience of sanctification as we cooperate with His will and purposes for us. As we use our spiritual gifts, engage in spiritual disciplines and fellowship, and worship together in community, we continue to be transformed into His likeness. We learn what it means to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbors as ourselves.

Call on each of the students to read the definition from Resource 7-4.

Collect these papers if you desire.

You wrote your definition of Spiritual Formation for homework. Let's share our definitions, compare our ideas, and maybe even improve our definition.

Lecture/Discussion: Spiritual Disciplines—Scripture Study and Meditation

(30 minutes)

There are many spiritual disciplines—practices that have proven throughout history to be important ways in which people make themselves available to God and His transformative power.

Students read this resource for homework.

Resource 7-5 lists and describes a number of these disciplines. Some of these disciplines emphasize letting go of rights, privileges, or things that do not reflect the image of Christ. Other disciplines emphasize things we choose to make part of our lives, so we can better reflect the image of Christ. Both kinds of disciplines serve in our Christian formation.

The list on Resource 7-5 is not complete. There may be some disciplines on the list that surprise you. The disciplines are defined not so much by the act itself, as by the motivation of obedience and the purpose of transformation of your heart.

In this lesson, we are focusing on new understanding of three of the most commonly practiced disciplines: Scripture reading, Prayer, and Keeping the Sabbath.

Why is reading the Bible so important? You already know the stories and the big ideas. Isn't that enough?

We need to have a firm and constantly developing grip on the Bible for many reasons.

The Bible guards us from deception. The Bible warns over and over about being deceived. The disciples were warned in Matthew 24:4 concerning deception: "Beware that no one leads you astray."

We should be reminded that if we are deceived in a small way and pass that small deception on to someone else, the deception becomes bigger. It is easy to see how individuals can be lead astray if they do not take personal responsibility for evaluating teachings against the knowledge of scripture. The failure to live holy lives and the seeming ease with which Christians interact with sinfulness is cause for great concern at many levels. It may come from ignorance of what the Bible teaches.

It is not enough to rely on the few verses a pastor brings to the congregation each week. If individual people of God do not reflect on the sermons and solidify the teaching in their minds, what was said can become distorted and even completely disappear. It is the responsibility of every Christian to study and know the *complete* teachings of the Bible.

Is it different for those going into ministry? It is different in this way: *as a minister you are accepting the responsibility for the spiritual care of others!*

We cannot lead others in the way of Christ if we do not know His ways ourselves. The purpose of scripture is to reveal the nature, character, and desires of God. The discipline of study and meditation increases our ability to know God as He is. It prevents us from creating a God "in our own image," which is a danger to anyone under our care.

The Bible helps us develop our minds.

Informational Approach

There are many ways to study the Bible. Tremper Longman offers seven principles of Bible study known as the "Informational approach."

Refer to Resource 8-1 in the Student Guide.

See Mulholland, M. Robert, Jr. Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1986, 49-64.

1. Come to the scriptures with a seeking mind and heart. If you already know a scripture, it is tempting to put your own spin on it. The first important step in informational Bible Study is to discover the author's intended meaning. You must know the author's meaning before attempting to apply the scripture to your life.
2. Read the Bible passage as it was originally intended and in the context of the other passages around it. Is this portion of scripture a summary, a transition, an introduction, or even the second point of a three point argument the author is making to discuss a broader theme? How does it fit into the rest of the passage?
3. What type of writing are you reading? Is it a song, a proverb, or a doom saying like in Micah 3:9-12? Is it history or a warning? Is it a quotation of what God said, or is it a story or parable? What grouping of the Bible is it from? It will help you to understand the purpose if you know the type of literature you are reading. This is one place a broader educational background really helps your spiritual formation.
4. It is important to consider the historical and cultural setting of the people to whom the author was writing. What difference would it make if the people are slaves under Roman oppression or churches in the culturally-mixed port city of Corinth? Ask yourself other questions that will help you understand better the author's audience. Try to understand the times and the expectations of the place in that period of history. Again, broader educational resources will contribute to your understanding of the biblical context.

5. Consider the grammar and structure within the passage. If you run into a “therefore,” see what it is “there for.” Look for “ands,” “buts,” and repeated words or ideas. These serve a purpose.
6. Interpret your personal experiences in the light of Scripture, not the other way around. If you are reading the scripture in the light of your personal experiences or your own cultural observations, you may be shifting your ideas onto the Bible.
7. Always seek to understand what the *entire* Bible says concerning a particular theme. Learn to use Bible concordances, dictionaries, and commentaries to assist you. Computer Bible programs are wonderful tools, and they make your research much quicker. If you cannot get an affordable program, you can access many resources online at sites such as www.biblegateway.com, <http://bible.crosswalk.com>, and <http://www.christianitytoday.com/bible/>. Enter a search term such as “Bible resources online”

The Bible changes our hearts and lives.

Refer to Resource 8-2 in the Student Guide.

Transformational Approach

Reading the Bible must be for more than information. It must be for transformation. If you are reading for “transformation,” you must move from seeking “information” to submitting to the text. There must be a humbled willingness to allow the words of God to cleanse your heart, shape your thoughts, and direct your behavior. Reading for information is “you mastering the text,” whereas reading for transformation is allowing the “text to master you.”

You should understand that you need correct information as a foundation for vital transformation.

The Transformational Approach might include these ways of interacting with Scripture.

1. The Explorer’s Method. Become observant of all the details of the passage. Look at every word. Which are the powerful key words? This exercise with John 3:16 shows what happens when you emphasize different words.

1. For *GOD* so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.
2. For God so love the *WORLD* that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in

- him should not perish but have everlasting life
3. For God so love the world that he *GAVE* his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life
 4. For God so love the world that he gave his *ONLY* begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life
 5. For God so love the world that he gave his only *BEGOTTEN* son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life

Each emphasis leads us to a different treasure found in this single verse.

- The first emphasis tells us that salvation is about what God did.
- The second emphasis tells us God loves all, and His gift is for the world, not a chosen few.
- The third emphasis demonstrates the sacrifice involved in God's act.
- The fourth emphasis indicates there is one Son. Jesus was a unique demonstration of God, more than a prophet.
- The fifth emphasis on begotten leads to a theological inquiry. What does it mean that Jesus is begotten?

Next discover what does the text mean? What is the author trying to tell me? What's the main idea when all the words are understood? What else does the Bible say about this concept?

Next meditate on questions like: Why was it a good thing that I read this passage today?

Finally, apply the passage. Lord, what would You have me do with what I read today?

2. The Being There Method. Imagine being in the scene. Take on the thoughts and experiences with which these individuals might have been dealing. Picture it, feel it, try to look around the scene in your mind, and attempt to use all of your senses. What do you see? What do you feel? What can you touch? Can you smell anything or taste anything? Listen carefully to the dialogue. Who are you identifying with most in the story? Was there any character you resisted the most? Did you get any good insights into the meaning of the passage?

3. The Formational Approach. You ask questions that will lead to transformational and formational experiences.

You may wish to experience the Being There Method with a passage such as Peter walking on the water in Matthew 14.

1. How do I experience God the Father in this passage?
2. How do I experience Jesus Christ in this passage?
3. How do I experience the Holy Spirit in this passage?
4. Is the passage discussing sin to avoid?
5. Are there commands I am to obey?
6. Is there a promise I can hold on to today?
7. Is there something the passage can teach me about myself?
8. Should I memorize this passage?
9. Do I need to share this with anyone else? Who?
10. If I really believed this verse, how would my life be different?

The Bible Brings Ongoing Spiritual Growth. There is only one way to coast and that is down. If we are to be vibrant and victorious Christians, we must be constantly shaped by scripture. If you are not growing, you risk being deceived, because your world keeps changing whether you keep applying scripture to it or not. This is true for any intimate relationship. If you do not work at growing the relationship, it will eventually suffer and die.

The heart of spiritual formation, the reading of the Bible, must be both informational and transformational in order for it to be formational. The equation looks like this:

Informational	+	Transformational	=	Formational
Analytical/Judgmental	+	Cleansing/Purifying	=	Relational/Loving

The Bible does not exist primarily to help you feel better, reduce the stresses of life, or help you find peace, joy, and satisfaction. The Bible records the revelation of God in Christ Jesus and the hope of the gospel that Jesus came to demonstrate. As you are learning to love God with every part of yourself, heart, soul, mind, strength, and neighbor as yourself, you must be constantly applying the challenges of the Bible to the daily process of your life in humble submission to His shaping process.

As you model this kind of thirst for knowing God through the Bible, it becomes contagious to your children.

Lecture: Spiritual Disciplines—Prayer and Sabbath Keeping

(15 minutes)

If you can, show the Trunk Monkey commercial without comment. If not, you can describe the commercial as follows.

Prayer is an amazing resource in the Christian Life. It is a discipline—something we can do to accomplish what we cannot accomplish on our own. Sometimes we find we pray mostly when we are convinced that there is nothing *else* we can do. We pray when there is a crisis, someone we love is ill, a marriage is dissolving, or financial ruin is closing in.

There is a funny auto commercial that is making its way around the internet called the “Trunk Monkey.” In the commercial, a man has been in an auto accident—probably the cause of the accident. A really big, mean-looking man is beating on his window and yelling at him. The man in the car tries to ignore the other man for a moment, but he does not go away. The man reaches up and pushes a red button inside his car. The button is labeled “trunk monkey.”

Out of the trunk climbs a monkey with a crowbar in his hand. The monkey hits the mean-looking guy twice over the head and knocks him out. The monkey waves his arms over his head in victory as the man in the car says, “Hey, get back in the trunk.”

One Christian leader commented: When I saw this, it reminded me how many Christians approach their prayer lives like this driver. They call out for God when they need a crowbar. Then they put Him back in the trunk and go about their lives until they are in a crisis again.

Prayer is not an option for the believer. It is the power of our relationship with God. We must communicate in order to maintain relationship. John Wesley emphasized the importance for ministers to engage in prayer in two separate letters.

On November 30, 1770, Wesley wrote to Joseph Benson, a scholarly theologian, “Let no study swallow up or intrude upon the hours of private prayer, *Nihil Tanti*” (Nothing is of so much importance). In another letter, Wesley wrote to Ann Bolton on August 25, 1771. Ann was busy with the work of the Lord (organizing prayer meetings, small group ministries, and charities for the sick and poor). He said: “Let not your works of mercy rob you of time for private prayer.”

Prayer is not a magic formula for success, but there is very little real success without the work of prayer. Prayer puts us into an attitude of dependence, submission, thankfulness, and openness to the direction of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' gives us a model for prayer in the Lord's Prayer. The elements are so simple, calling out to God, recognizing both His close relationship and His amazing holiness. "Our father in heaven, may your name be honored" (Mt 6:9, NLT).

Refer to Resource 8-3 in the Student Guide. Go through the prayer with the students.

Within and between those words is nearly every situation of our lives. Jesus calls us to prayer so that we might lay everything before the Father.

If I were to give each of you a piece of red construction paper and ask you to create a heart, *how many different variations of a heart do you think that we would have?*

Even though each of you would have received the same raw material for the project you each would have created something just a little different. Jesus gave each of us a simple pattern for prayer. Jesus did not intend for us to memorize it and repeat it mindlessly. He intended us to use it as a pattern to express our own thoughts uniquely, individually, and purposefully.

Many Christians feel ashamed of their prayer lives. Christians know how much they need to pray. They have a hundred reasons why they don't. About fifty of those reasons usually have to do with time. Some people feel there is a certain way we should be praying, and that way doesn't fit them. They give up, and think they are prayer failures.

Manning, Brennan. The Ragamuffin Gospel. Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 2005.

Brennan Manning quotes Don Chapman in a book entitled, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*: "Pray as you can; don't pray as you can't." If you don't want to pray, PRAY for a desire to pray. If you can't pray long, pray often. If you can't pray in public, pray in public privately. If you can't pray without falling asleep, pray until you fall asleep and pray again when you awaken, or pray while you pace the floor to *stay* awake. If you can't think of the words to pray, pray without words, and let the Holy Spirit intercede for you; or pray the prayers of saints that are recorded for all history—like the Prayer of St. Philaret found in Resource 8-4. Whatever you do, don't let what you CAN'T do keep you from what you can do to make prayer the power source behind your ministry. "

Refer to Resource 8-4 in the Student Guide.

The Bible tells of at least ten different types of prayer and at least six different body positions for prayer. Those are given to show there are many different ways to pray, and we can explore many ways of being in God's presence.

Engaging in a variety of prayers helps us model to our students a willingness to meet God in every situation in our lives. If we are willing to model fun, engaging, real-life prayer to children, we help them to see themselves as effective communicators with God from their earliest days.

You read Resource 7-6 for homework. There were some great ideas for using prayer with children.

Allow for response.

Did you try any of them? What did you experience?

So, what about the time issues? The discipline of Sabbath may help with that. The Sabbath is not as much a day as an attitude. For ministers, Sunday is a work day. Does that release us from our obligation to rest? Have you ever even thought about rest as a spiritual obligation?

When God gave the commandment to remember the Sabbath, He didn't say anything about what day that should be. Sunday Sabbath is more of a Christian tradition than a rule.

What God did say was we need to work six days and set aside—keep holy—one day. In that one day, we are not bound to legalistic rules. We are bound to “not work.”

Allow for response.

What does “not work” mean to you?

By laying aside our desire to be productive, we have opportunity to consider things that are beyond material concerns—things that are eternal, like our relationship with God.

This “not work” seems to be one of the most significantly protective gifts God has given to us. Scientists confirm that people who intentionally learn to “not work” learn to be more creative and are healthier.

While we usually associate the Sabbath with the Ten Commandments, there is another biblical basis for its observance.

Keep the Sabbath day holy.
Don't pursue your own interests on that day, but
enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as
the LORD's holy day.
Honor the LORD in everything you do, and don't
follow your own desires or talk idly.
If you do this, the LORD will be your delight.
I will give you great honor and give you your full
share of the inheritance I promised to Jacob,
your ancestor.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

—Isaiah 58:13-14, TLB

One pastor shared a saying she was taught by a district superintendent early in her career: "Never quit on Monday." After resting on Monday, she often found that by Tuesday, there was no desire to resign. The day of rest after six days of work—Tuesday through Sunday—restored and enabled her to see God's vision with new eyes. A strong work ethic is important in ministry, but a failure to rest—to honor Sabbath—is not godly, not healthy, and not wise. Sabbath-keeping is a discipline. It puts us in a position where God can restore us, and we can enjoy Him. Through this, we are continually formed.

Lecture/Discussion: How to Choose a Mentor

(10 minutes)

Mark Twain said, "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me. It's the parts that I do understand."

Most of us understand perfectly well that the disciplines we have talked about are important. Even so, we struggle to make them a priority.

One way to fulfill your spiritual disciplines and continue to experience the spiritual formation within your own life is to work with a spiritual mentor. This person may also serve as your accountability partner.

Sometimes ministers have a difficult time entering into a spiritual mentoring relationship because they feel they must have all the answers. A healthy minister knows that it is OK to say, "I am not certain, but I will certainly seek and pray along with you." We need guides, and we all need accountability. You may already be in such a relationship. If you are not, Resource 8-5 should be helpful in choosing this person.

Refer to Resource 8-5 in the Student Guide.

As you read each description, envision a face that goes along with the description. God can help you determine someone whom you can seek out as a spiritual mentor. A spiritual mentor should have the following characteristics:

1. A well-established Christian. You need a mentor who has journeyed the road ahead and can lead you through difficult terrain.
2. A good reputation and a strong character.
3. Has studied and knows the Scriptures.
4. Someone of the same gender who is competent in theology and skilled and loving in relationships.
5. Embraces the history of the Christian faith.
6. Known for living a life of personal holiness.
7. Spirit-filled and led by the Holy Spirit.
8. Discerning.
9. Demonstrates grace while being frank and honest.
10. A good listener and respectful in his or her responses.
11. Patient.
12. Content with life and not greedy, in other words a person who values God over things.
13. Demonstrates self-giving love, openness, and vulnerability in relationships.
14. Knows forgiveness and can be forgiving.
15. Experienced in life and in prayer.
16. Fits with your personal needs and personality.

Begin to pray and ask God about who might fulfill this role in your life and when you should enter into such a relationship.

Mentoring is a biblical principle—Paul and Timothy, Barnabas and Paul, Peter and Mark, Moses and Joshua, and Elijah and Elisha—that is often overlooked in today's busy world. In a recent survey of young leaders only 11% of those surveyed said they had a mentor, but 100% wanted a mentor.

Nora Wessner, DAI, P.O. Box 49278, Colorado Springs, CO 80949, USA.

Refer to Resource 7-7 in the Student Guide.

From the description of 16 characteristics and the reading of Resource 7-7 you should be forming a list of individuals that you would like to have as a mentor or accountability partner.

So how do you get a spiritual mentor? Use the information from Resources 7-7 and 8-5 to identify someone. Then:

- Don't be afraid to ask.
- Don't be discouraged if one mentoring relationship doesn't work out.
- Don't expect the mentor to fix everything for you.

- Don't expect the mentor to do all the work or set the pace alone.
- Don't assume the mentor can read your mind—communicate openly.
- Don't give up.
- Mentorships require time and personal investment, but the benefits are limitless for both you and your mentor.

You also have to be open to being a mentor. Maybe it won't be today, but as you grow in your relationship with the Holy Spirit you will be required to reach out and help others in their spiritual journey.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Make this a sacred time of reflection by turning off the lights, and perhaps lighting a small candle in front of each student. After the reflection time, turn on the lights, and have the students complete Resource 8-6 according to the directions. Have the students keep the resource private, and refer back to it as they complete their homework this week.

For review we are going to spend some time in reflection of what we have encountered in this lesson. During three minutes of silence, consider where you are and where you would like to be in your commitment to the spiritual disciplines described in class. Also review Resource 7-5 and identify at least one other spiritual discipline you would like to try to practice.

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss effective church relationships.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Write a two-page paper on how you spiritually care for yourself. This is not a paper on your ideal, but your actual day-to-day process. Include in this paper if you actually experience a Sabbath (Day of rest). If so, how does it work? What is your prayer life and Bible reading time like? Describe your times of private worship? Are you in a mentoring relationship? Are you in an accountability group? These are areas of suggestion, and the paper does not have to be limited just to these areas. The idea is to begin to take a serious look at your own spiritual health.

Write a letter to a person who has been a spiritual influence on your life and thank him or her for what that influence has meant to you. Send the letter this week. You will submit a piece of paper next week with your name and the date when you sent your letter.

Read Resource 8-7.

Read Resource 8-8.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a section on your own spiritual

formation, what has formed you in the past and what you see as your needs for growth now and in the future.

Punctuate the Finish

Millions of Christians have grown older without ever growing up.

The truth is that spiritual growth requires a commitment to grow. A person must want to grow, decide to grow, and make an effort to grow.

We become whatever we are committed to. Without a commitment to grow, any growth that occurs will be circumstantial, rather than intentional. Spiritual growth is too important to be left to circumstance. It needs to be intentional, not incidental.

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Lesson 9

Interaction with Staff and Church Personnel

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Dealing with Other Staff Members	Lecture	Resource 8-7
0:15	Dealing with Other Staff Members	Small Groups	Resource 9-1
0:30	Dealing with Conflicts	Guided Discussion	Resource 9-2
0:45	Dealing with Conflicts	Small Groups	Resource 9-3
0:55	How to Recruit and Organize Volunteer Staff	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 8-8 Resource 9-4 Resource 9-5 Video
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Modular Course of Study. *Administering the Local Church*. Lessons 4, 6, 8, 10, and 11.

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lesson 19.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Ask for volunteers who would like to share.

Return and collect homework.

Would anyone like to share something that you wrote in your spiritual journey paper? Perhaps something that you would like us to help you with or pray for you about?

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting for this lesson is to examine different aspects of church relationships. Each church functions differently. There are various sets of rules in different churches, but some skills will serve you well in any circumstance.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- have a basic understanding of appropriate interactions with different staff members, especially the senior pastor
- have a basic understanding of conflict resolution
- know how to recruit and equip others for ministry and handle situations in which volunteers are not fulfilling their responsibilities

Motivator

Play a brief selection of orchestral music, and display a photograph of an orchestra.

Allow for response.

Note differences of opinion here, and point out the piece would be incomplete without any of the parts.

Listen for harmonies and pay attention to how the instruments interact.

What is required for the piece to be played so it stirs the hearts of the listeners?

What element of the piece is most important? Least important?

What role does the conductor play?

How does the orchestra remind you of a church staff?

What can be learned from the "rules of the orchestra"?

Lesson Body

Lecture: Dealing with Other Staff Members

(5 minutes)

All staff relationships are important. However, the relationship with the senior pastor is the most critical. There are many different factors that influence the way the relationship develops: personalities, communication styles, philosophy of ministry, leadership styles, experience, emotional and mental health of both parties, expectations (both spoken and unspoken) for yourself and the other person, spiritual experience, and other factors.

As with any relationship, it is a complex process to lay the foundation for a healthy, working relationship. If the relationship is to evolve from a strictly boss/employee relationship to becoming companions in ministry, there are three key elements that must be established for any staff relationships.

The first is Mutual Trust. Without a foundation of trust, it will be very difficult to continue in that relationship. In ministry, trust becomes a mainstay of the team. When a senior pastor can have trust in the children's pastor, it frees the senior pastor to concentrate on his or her own duties, instead of micromanaging other church programs.

The senior pastor needs to be able to trust the staff to efficiently handle their own areas with professionalism that protects the church from legal and ethical danger. The senior pastor trusts all staff members to make good decisions. The pastor needs to trust staff members to work toward the same mission and purpose as the rest of the church. The staff should stand together in support of each other, not undermining or competing for their own interests.

Also, you must develop a sense of trust in your senior pastor and know your pastor will support you, mentor you, and walk with you as you encounter difficult times. Some trust must be present in the beginning of the relationship, but deep trust develops over time.

What are some of the benefits of trust in a working relationship?

Emphasize mutual encouragement, giving each other the benefit of the doubt, a non-critical spirit, freedom to share information and concerns,

and an environment for spiritual and personal growth, as well as other benefits students present.

Mutual Respect is the second characteristic of a strong staff

relationship. While this respect grows with mutual trust, it is a little different. One of the challenges children's pastors and youth pastors face is feeling disrespected. There can be a sense that children's ministry is a sub-ministry to other ministry positions.

There is often a misconception about the gifts, skills, and knowledge necessary to be a children's pastor. Some see it as "glorified daycare" where you are the activities director. You plan games and have candy in your office while the real ministry is taking place in the main services with adults. Even very successful pastors such as Bill Hybels of Willow Creek admitted difficulty in accepting Children's Ministry as important. We will look at his story more carefully in a few minutes.

Mutual Appreciation is the third key to strong staff relationships.

When there is mutual trust and mutual respect, the third natural outflow is mutual appreciation. While trust and respect flow out of the experiences you have together as a staff, appreciation is something you need to work on. Individuals vary tremendously in the degree to which they are comfortable expressing appreciation. The best way to build an environment of appreciation is to live with an attitude of appreciation.

An attitude of appreciation looks for four things.

1. Look for what is right.

Many of us have a tendency to look for what is wrong in a situation. The appreciative lifestyle looks for what is right and points toward it. For example, if your pastor has just kept the adults in service for 15 minutes longer than your volunteers had prepared for, the appreciative relationship will say, "I'm so grateful our pastor can hear and respond to the Holy Spirit." The unappreciative relationship might be tempted to focus on the inconvenience of the situation. Similarly, the appreciative children's pastor will point out the positives in how the volunteers respond to the situation, and be ready to resource the volunteers with extra activities.

Here's how that might look: "Thanks for being willing to keep working with the kids. Let's play a game based on the Bible story."

2. Look for ways to encourage.

Hybels, Bill. "What Every Children's Ministry Leader Needs to Know" from Today's Children's Ministry.com
www.christianitytoday.com/childrensministry/articles/whateverchildrensleader.html

Bill Hybels says:

I have never seen a day where it is harder to be a senior pastor than this day, and I have never seen senior pastors under higher levels of stress. There is a good reason for this. The world is changing, ministry is harder, preaching is harder, team building is harder, and fundraising is harder. Capturing the attention of lost people is more difficult, and people are more broken. So there is a lot going on in a senior pastor's mind.

Encouragement requires careful observation as well. But encouragement also asks the question, "How can I help?" Even with all the children's pastor has on his or her plate, it is always important to take time for intentional encouragement through helping.

Encouragement is also important when things aren't going as you hoped. For example, when your senior pastor is discouraged about something, recognize it and point out how his or her strengths have ministered to you as you encountered a similar discouragement. You might say, "I know you're discouraged about the budget shortfall. I remember you really helped me to get through the Christmas program last season by encouraging me to be creative. Your ability to see creative solutions is going to get us through this crunch, too, as we trust God together."

Encouragement can also come in the form of a note of appreciation, a thoughtful token that says, "I care about you as a person," or a short visit to offer the gift of time and availability.

3. Look for times to protect.

One of the main things a senior pastor wants is your support. The pastor needs to feel confident you are representing his or her ministry well to the children and parents. In other words, no off-hand remarks that are meant to be funny but lower the image of the pastor. For example, no matter how harmless it seems, it is not appropriate to joke about sleeping through sermons. You are a team. If someone comes against the team, you need to protect the integrity of the ministry. The image of the church being a body suggests that if someone is attacking part of the body, the other parts should step up to run interference.

This may be especially difficult if your pastor is experiencing personal problems, difficulties in his or her ministry, or a strained relationship between the

two of you. There may be legitimate complaints. Do not discuss your frustration outside the staff context.

4. Look for opportunities to communicate.

If appreciation is to be mutual, there must be sharing of information. This doesn't mean that you "brag" about every detail of your ministry, but you communicate openly about what you are doing and planning to do. You cannot expect your pastor to appreciate your spending ten nights working late on an outreach event if your pastor is not aware of the time required to create such an event. Similarly, you cannot allow your pastor be blindsided by something negative that happened in your ministry.

If a problem arises, you should be the one to identify it. Do not wait and hope that your pastor won't find out. State your problems as well as your successes. Some pastors prefer many details, while others just want the bottom line. You will have to be wise and discerning in order to discover the communication style and needs of your pastor. It is also wise for you to understand your own communication expectations so you can clearly explain what would be helpful to you.

*For more information see the following web site:
<http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/staff_relationships/cats.php>*

Refer to Resource 8-7 in the Student Guide.

Allow for response.

As part of your homework you read Resource 8-7 that gave some communication principles. Have you had any experience using any of these principles?

Have you found other ideas that work?

Small Groups: Dealing with Other Staff Members

(15 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 9-1 in the Student Guide.

After about 10 minutes you may want to lead a discussion about generalizations that might have resulted in their small groups.

- Children's ministry inspires parents/adults as well as children.
- Children's ministry uses the skills and talents of the whole church.
- Children's ministry trains, empowers, and inspires spiritual growth for volunteers as well as children.
- Children's ministry supports and contributes to the mission and goals of the church.

Guided Discussion: Dealing with Conflicts

(15 minutes)

Write the following animals on a board or flipchart.

- Tortoise
- Shark
- Teddy Bear
- Fox
- Owl

Possible answer: The better I understand my reaction, the more successful I will be at responding appropriately. When I understand how I respond, it will be easier for me to recognize the style of conflict resolution of the person with whom I am in conflict. If I am able to determine this, it will influence the way I approach the conflict with this particular person.

Refer to Resource 9-2 in the Student Guide.

Allow for response.

Which animal would you say matches your style of conflict resolution?

Why did you select the animal you did? How is it like you?

Why do you think it is helpful to understand what your style of conflict resolution might be?

Read through Resource 9-2.

Did anyone change your mind about the animal that describes your style of conflict resolution?

What might happen if a "Teddy Bear" is approaching a "Shark" to resolve a small conflict dealing with an angry e-mail that the "Shark" sent when Teddy didn't get his annual report in on time?

What will the "Teddy Bear" need to be aware of personally?

What should the "Teddy Bear anticipate"?

What might be the best approach for this "Teddy Bear" in dealing with this situation?

How might the "Teddy Bear's" approach change if approaching:

- An Owl?
- The Fox?
- The Tortoise?
- Another Teddy Bear?

Knowing your style and the style of the other person can influence the approach to conflict resolution in order to be the most effective. Whatever your style, in most situations you can use a three-step plan for a healthier interaction:

1. When you . . . (Describe the behavior and check your perception.)
2. I feel . . . (Describe your own feelings or summarize the problem. Do not ascribe blame to the other person. Just state your personal reaction.)
3. I would prefer . . . (Explain an alternative approach that would help you to deal with the situation without becoming defensive.)

Lets look at how the "Teddy Bear" would respond using the three steps.

Possible response: When you send me E-mails to express your anger I feel hurt and degraded

What would steps 1 and 2 sound like?

Possible response: I would prefer that you remind me of the deadline without criticism. This would encourage me to complete the task without getting caught up in negative feelings

Step 3?

Small Groups: Dealing with Conflicts

(10 minutes)

Have the class work in pairs. If you have an odd number of students you may need to work with one of the students.

Refer to Resource 9-3 in the Student Guide.

Lecture/Discussion: How to Recruit and Organize Volunteer Staff

(30 minutes)

Refer to Resource 8-8 in the Student Guide.

Do you have any questions or comments concerning Resource 8-8 that you read for homework?

Ready, Set, Go!

When Jesus recruited His disciples, He said, "Come follow me" and the disciples left everything and followed Him. Modern disciples seem to need a little more wooing!

When you have created your job descriptions, review plan, and communication schedule, you will need to find the precise people who are called to become team members. There are some rules of recruitment that have been tested and proven by many children's pastors.

Show the video, "Jesus and Me." It is available on the "Connecting a New Generation" website, www.connecting.nazarene.org.

Refer to Resource 9-4 in the Student Guide.

1. Don't advertise a job. Share a vision.

Be creative. Use recruiting videos to establish the need for passionate children's workers. Let the children help you demonstrate how rewarding it is to be part of their spiritual development. Tell their stories and their families' stories. Tell your own story of falling in love with children's ministry. Tell the story of how children's ministry fits your church's overall ministry plan. People want to become part of a ministry that matters.

2. Let people know this is not an indefinite commitment.

Break down the commitment into manageable chunks. For some congregations, a three-month commitment is a long one. For others, ask people to give one year at a time. Be clear that volunteers are indeed joining a team, and they will not be alone to figure out what to do and how to do it. You make the commitment to them first, and they may be more willing to commit to you.

3. Be selective.

Demonstrate that working with children is an honor and not a chore through a screening process in which you find out a candidate's passions and talents and fit those to an open opportunity. This can be done through interview or through an application process. Let candidates know they will be screened, using the criteria required by your church. This should include, at minimum, a driver's license check, and many churches require fingerprinting as well to reduce the risk of child endangerment. *Safe Kids* from Beacon Hill Press will provide information about safety and legal issues.

Blake Caldwell. Safe Kids: Policies and Procedures for Protecting Children in the Church. Part of LifeStream Resources.

4. Be Spirit-sensitive.

Don't ask for an immediate commitment. Ask candidates who have passed your screening process to meet with you to answer any questions they might have. Ask them to spend at least a week praying about their commitment, and allow them a trial period that fits with your review schedule.

For many new volunteers, a period of mentoring with an experienced team member helps them to feel more comfortable when they begin, while others will be comfortable from day one based on previous experiences.

If an individual decides to decline the opportunity to serve, accept their answer without judgment. You may wish to ask for their permission to contact them at a later time, or for another program.

5. Keep following a process throughout your ministry and keep it alive.
 - Evaluate your needs
 - Plan
 - Recruit
 - Train
 - AND START OVER
 - Evaluate new needs
 - Plan
 - Recruit
 - Train
6. Pray continually. Jesus told His disciples when they were beginning in ministry, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Mt 9:37-38).

Refer to Resource 9-5 in the Student Guide.

Redirecting a Team Member

Even with this organization, structure, and screening, you may need to redirect a team member to another area of ministry. Most often, this is a mutual decision that can be handled in the context of your reviews. But sometimes an incident will require immediate action that cannot be avoided.

Clarity is your best tool. Spell out even those things you think are obvious. Children's safety must come first. No physical punishment is ever acceptable. UnChristlike behavior or refusal to engage in conflict management may result in immediate termination. Whatever your boundaries are, state them clearly. If these things occur in either a volunteer or paid position, you must comply with both Christian ethical principles and legal obligations which include:

1. Document areas you are working on, particularly with paid staff. Your reviews should include a written record. In addition, you should make a note of any problems that arise between reviews. This will help the person understand they are not being discriminated against, but there is a written track record of expectations and attempts to correct the failures.
2. Your approach should be caring and sensitive, even if the person was unkind to you or to a child.

Be kind, and attempt to help the person discover a more suitable area of service in consultation with other staff members. Note your appreciation of their strengths and affirm their value to another setting.

3. If you are terminating employment due to a lack of funds, offer your networking assistance to help the people find a new job. If possible, negotiate a way to extend any benefits until they can find new employment. Let them know you will provide recommendations or anything else that will help them during this time of transition.

Allow for response.

Have you had any experiences where a particular approach or action was helpful or created a problem?

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

What are the three areas of mutuality that characterize appropriate staff interactions?

Which animal do you think evidences the best kind of conflict resolution skills? Why?

What are the three steps of effective confrontation?

What do you think are the two most important parts of recruiting?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss the pastoral care of children and their families.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Write a two-page paper on the staff relationships you have already experienced. Tell the aspects that were most successful as well as the greatest struggles. If there was conflict, tell how it was dealt with and if it was resolved. If you have not been on a church staff, you can explain other work relationships you have experienced using the same criteria.

Read Resource 9-6.

Read Resource 9-7.

Read Resource 9-8.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a section on what you think your personal strengths and weakness will be in future staff relationships.

Punctuate the Finish

Display a picture of the orchestra.

No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it.

Lesson 10

Pastoral Care

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	What Does It Mean to Be a Pastor?	Guided Discussion	Resource 9-6 Resource 9-7
0:25	Leading Families and Children into Practices of the Church	Lecture	Resource 10-1 Resource 10-2 Resource 10-3
0:45	Helping Children and Families Cope with Crisis, Loss, and Grief	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 9-8 Resource 10-4 Resource 10-5
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Daniel Grossoehme. *The Spiritual Care of Children*.
New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 1999,

Modular Course of Study. *Shepherding God's People*.
Lesson 12 and Lesson 14.

Rob L. Staples. *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*.
Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City,
1991. Chapters 5—8.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

Call on a couple of students to read their paper on staff relationships.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to examine how to pastor children.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand what it means to "pastor" children
- be able to help children engage in the sacraments
- know some guidelines for helping children and families deal with crisis and grief

Motivator

Daniel Grosseohme, The Spiritual Care of Children. New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 1999, 1.

Encourage students to tell one reason they are thankful for the gift of children.

"[Pastoral] care for God's youngest children is rooted . . . in the act of thanksgiving for the gift of children."

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: What Does It Mean to Be a Pastor?

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 9-6 in the Student Guide. The students read this for homework.

What are the differences between pastoral office and the pastoral task?

It may be helpful to make a list on a board or flipchart.

What are some of the ways you have used—successfully—to get to know your flock?

Allow students to share good ideas and ideas that they would not recommend. Let them learn from each other.

Have there been some things that you have tried that have not worked?

What has helped you to be successful in observing, listening, and paying attention to families?

Refer to Resource 9-7 in the Student Guide. The students read this for homework.

Resource 9-7 had ideas for nurturing children.

Did you have any ideas that you thought might be more applicable to your situation?

Were there any of the ideas that you questioned?

Allow just a couple of minutes for the drawing.

Draw a quick stick-figure sketch of your current ministry with children, using the elements of the Chief Shepherd, the sheep, the “undershepherds” (staff and volunteers) and the sheep pen.

Have the students show their drawing and tell their feelings about pastoral care as shown in the picture.

Lecture: Leading Families and Children into Practices of the Church

(20 minutes)

There are many reasons the church participates in rituals. While we are always open to the Spirit, there are some ceremonies that tie us to other believers who have lived before us and those who will come after us. The Church has preserved many rituals because believers have found them to be helpful and trustworthy in Christian formation. Rituals shape our identity and our belonging to something greater than ourselves. In the lives of young children, rituals are activities that are completed over and over again: saying grace before meals, bath time before bed, and stories before sleeping. As we get older, we expand the number of traditions we practice.

Allow for response.

What are some of your family traditions?

In the church, our traditions include our sacraments.

Allow for response.

What is the difference between a sacrament and a ritual?

What are the two sacraments of the Nazarene Church?

There are three times you are likely to be called upon for help in preparing children and families for the sacraments or ritual of the church family.

Rob Staples' book, Outward Sign and Inward Grace, can give more information concerning this choice.

The first is in infancy. When children are born into our faith community, the Church of the Nazarene recognizes the immense commitment that parenting requires. We offer two ceremonies to commemorate this commitment: infant baptism or infant dedication. The choice of which to use is left to the family. You might be asked to help clarify why a family might choose one over the other.

Make sure that there is clarity about infant baptism being a sacrament.

Infant baptism is a longstanding sacrament in the Church, and it has been practiced by many faith traditions. Baptism unites us to Christ in his death and resurrection thus bringing us into his Body. In infant baptism this is by God's prevenient grace. As with a dedicated child, a baptized child is to be raised up within the Body. In presenting a child for baptism, parents promise to help their child understand the significance of this act and teach him or her to walk in the ways of the Lord. Baptism is a once in a lifetime event, and the child who was baptized as an infant need not be baptized again later in life. It is important that a baptized infant personally come to embrace the faith. The individual should be given opportunity to participate in a verbal ceremony of confirming the baptism at a later time.

Clarify that infant dedication is a ritual but not a sacrament.

Infant dedication is a ritual that signifies the parents' commitment to direct their child's experience toward understanding the meaning of serving God and the decision to accept the grace of God in salvation. It is an act of recognizing the child as a gift from God and entrusting the child, their life and future into God's care. Infant Dedication is not a sacrament of the church, but it is a sacred promise for both parents and the congregation to look out for the spiritual welfare of the child. Children who are dedicated by their parents usually choose to be baptized as a believer after deciding to accept salvation.

Usually a family chooses one option over the other because of family traditions or the traditions of the

local congregation. We affirm both equally; we do not place one option in higher esteem, and both are equally significant for the family. The ceremonies are not much different except baptism uses the symbol of water (either sprinkling or pouring), while dedication does not. You can feel comfortable recommending either to a family based on their own traditions and the preferences of the licensed or ordained pastor who will be performing the ceremony.

Baptism or dedication is appropriate for young children

- shortly after birth
- when parents become new believers after a child's birth
- when a family adopts or becomes guardians of a child

Refer to Resource 10-1 in the Student Guide.

Look over the wording and rituals with the students.

It is a wonderful time of involving the whole local church body in the celebration of the family's commitment to the child and the family and church's commitment to each other.

You may also be asked to help a family decide when a child is ready to participate in **believer baptism**. Children's pastors should do everything possible to help ensure that children do not choose baptism because everyone else is doing it, or because it will please parents or other authority figures.

While each church is free to establish its own guidelines for when a child can be baptized, here are some general principles you will want to follow when helping a child make this important decision.

Refer to Resource 10-2 in the Student Guide.

1. Can the child express in his or her own words
 - There is a God.
 - God wants to be friends with us.
 - My sin keeps me from being God's friend.
 - Jesus forgave my sins.
 - Jesus teaches me how to be God's friend.
 - I want to live for God by letting Jesus be my leader.
 - I want other people to know that Jesus took my sin away.
 - My baptism will show others I am going to live as a Christian.
2. Do the adults in a child's life recognize
 - the child's testimony of a relationship with God through Christ?
 - sensitivity to the Holy Spirit?
 - growing maturity to make decisions for him or herself?
 - the decision is being made with encouragement

but without a sense of being pushed or bribed into it?

If you have time, look over this curriculum guide as a group.

Word Action offers a children's booklet titled, "So . . . You Want to Be Baptized?" It explains in a kid-friendly way what baptism is and what will happen. A free downloadable leader's guide is available at www.wordaction.com/go/BAPTISM.

You may be asked to help children prepare to participate in receiving the Lord's Supper. **Communion** is a sacrament that we participate in many times in our lives. In the Nazarene Church, we practice open communion. This means a person does not need to be a church member. "So . . . You Want to Take Communion" is a child-friendly booklet that explains to children the sacrament of Communion and what takes place when we participate in the sacrament. A free downloadable leader's guide is available at www.wordaction.com/go/COMMUNION

If you have time, look over this curriculum guide as a group.

Children should understand that communion is not "snack time." It is something special that believers do together to remember Jesus and what He did for us. The sight and taste of the Lord's Supper makes it a child-friendly sacrament.

Nazarenes teach that Communion is a symbolic sacrament remembering Christ's body and shed blood. Everyone who asks may be forgiven. This implies that all Christians, regardless of age, are invited to share in Communion. We also believe that Communion is a means of Grace—God's grace is expressed to us as we partake of the elements. John Wesley taught that Communion could lead a person, who desired to be in right relationship with God, to faith.

Evangelical churches hold four main strands of thought on this issue. Children should be invited to take Communion on the basis of one or more of these conditions:

1. After they accept Jesus as Savior and understand what Communion means
2. After they accept Jesus as Savior, regardless of their understanding of Communion
3. In recognition of God's prevenient grace—they are part of the kingdom of God until they reject Him and His grace
4. As they participate with adults in the acts of faith, thereby discovering the deep meaning of Communion

Churches are encouraged to make children full participant in the Body. Communion should be a

personal act for the child, guided by an understanding mentor or parent. As the Lord's Supper is served to the whole congregation, someone should be guiding the individual child through the ritual of the sacrament, whispering in his or her ear to direct the child in the process. It should never be done in a rushed way, but it should help the child learn reverence and respect for the significance of Christ's work.

As children's shepherds, we can use the elements to familiarize children with the sacrament. We can plan for times when children can be served communion by a licensed or ordained minister. We can also teach parents how to guide their children through participating in communion, and we can help senior pastors become familiar with ways to be sensitive to children during the Lord's Supper.

Encourage your students to share their ideas for helping to make these sacraments of the church special for children and families. Make a list of these ideas.

Refer to Resource 10-3 in the Student Guide. Depending on your time, go through these ideas or leave it to the students to use as a resource.

Lecture/Discussion: Helping Children and Families Cope with Crisis, Loss, and Grief

(40 minutes)

As they are thinking prepare a chart with one column labeled "Helpful" and the other labeled "Less than Helpful."

Recall a crisis in your own life.

As you think about the crisis in your own life what were some of the things that we could include on our chart?

What might be some other things that you have heard or witnessed that could be added?

We often care for others in the ways we have received care. This can be good or bad. There may be some things that are not helpful that we keep on doing because we don't know about other options. Or we recognize what was not helpful and don't want to repeat those things, so we don't do anything at all. Our goal in this part of the session is to become more comfortable with taking active steps for pastoral care in difficult situations.

We can never underestimate the power of "personal presence." When we think about grief, we usually think about losses that surround death. One of the most

awkward moments in ministry can be when you first approach family members who are experiencing a life-threatening crisis or death of a loved one. Often people feel they must have something clever to say or know the magic words to help. *There are no magic words.*

An appropriate approach is to say "I am so sorry," offer a gentle hug, and tell them "I am going to be here with you in case you need anything. Feel free to use me at anytime." Then you can simply be there in the room. You are not there to interfere but to assist. The power of personal presence is often the most helpful thing. Find a place out of the way and pray. Be very aware of the environment and anticipate needs.

Refer to Resource 9-8 that was read for homework.

Do you have any suggestions or additions to Resource 9-8 that you could share with the class?

Specific Needs of Children

Children do not experience the crises of life in the same way that adults do. In general, they do not have previous experience to help them sort out what is happening. Crisis disrupts their regular schedule, may put their immediate needs on the back burner, and leads to a lot of uncertainty. Children may not be aware of the seriousness of the situation or may be terrified by what they have heard. They may laugh at what seems inappropriate, demand center stage (usually as an attempt to control or "fix" the situation), refuse to participate with the family, or hide, among many other behaviors that may seem oddly out of place. This can be very disturbing to adults around them, so children require special care during times of crisis.

Refer to Resource 10-4 in the Student Guide.

Let's look at some guidelines to share with parents about helping children manage crisis—especially death.

1. Match the amount of information with the need to know.

Never lie to a child. Do not tell a child that everything will be alright when you don't know what is going to happen. If relatives ask you not to tell a child what is happening, you need to use language that refers their questions back to the relatives. For example, if a sibling has died, you should say to the child who asks questions, "That's a hard question for me to answer. We can talk to your parents about that."

If parents are depending on you to do what you feel is best, be simple and direct. Don't use symbolic

language about death that may seem comforting to adults, like, "asleep in Jesus," "In Jesus' arms," or "God took her home." These phrases may cause children to be afraid to sleep, associate Jesus' arms with being dead, or even lead a child to believe that the deceased person is at home waiting for him or her.

Because children are concrete thinkers, they need concrete language. It is appropriate to say (in the case of natural death), "His body wore out and he died. We are very sad, and we will miss him a lot." In the case of an accident, it is appropriate to say, "Her body was hurt too badly for the doctors to fix. Her body stopped working, and she died. We never imagined this would happen, and we are very sad and upset (or whatever emotion you observe)."

Children need to be reminded that our bodies are fragile, and they were not made to last forever. This is not leaving God out of the picture, but it is allowing children to deal with the concrete physical realities.

2. Be theologically accurate.

Children's perceptions of God are especially vulnerable in times of crisis. Don't say, for example, "Your daddy will always be with you." Instead say, "You will always have your memories of your daddy." When a child questions why death happened, always answer in the context of the physical body. Don't offer explanations of "God needed him," or obscure ideas that "God had a reason." Offer reassurance that God is with us even in bad times, and sometimes we don't understand why God lets things like this happen.

Children have all kinds of misinformation about what happens to people when they die, from all kinds of sources: books, movies, and stories, as well as the Bible. Remember guideline #1, match the information with the need to know. Explain with as much detail as necessary what will happen to the physical body. People don't become angels or ghosts. The part of us that lives on will be in God's care and away from us from now on. We trust God to give us new bodies some day. We who love God will live forever together with God. Keep your messages simple and uncontroversial.

We have heard stories where children report supernatural experiences or coincidences that they attribute to the person who has died. God uses all kinds of ways to reveal himself to us. Help children develop a framework that attributes those things to God's loving presence with them. For example, to a

child who has "seen" the deceased, we might say, "God gives us wonderful memories to help us know that He is taking care of everything." Don't try to "correct" the child's thinking (or shame the child), but we can be accepting and help them to understand the experiences in the context of God's love instead of through fear or folklore.

3. Offer ongoing support and regular follow-up.

Children and families need to know they will experience all kinds of emotions in the days, weeks, months, and years following a big loss. It is not uncommon to experience anger, frustration with the circumstances, a sense that none of this is really happening, sadness, tiredness, depression, sleep disturbances, lots of questions, fear about the present and the future, regret, wondering if things could have been different, wondering why or wishing it had happened to themselves instead. There is no prescription for how grief SHOULD happen or how long it SHOULD last. It tends to come and go. People may even feel guilty for enjoying themselves throughout the process. While adults have the language to name the events in this roller coaster ride, children do not.

It is important to give children a chance to be themselves in this process. They often feel they have to take care of their parents and others, and they hide what they are going through. When you offer pastoral care to hurting children, you listen to them, and respect and accept their struggle to make sense of the situation. Often children work out their grief through play as well as through words, so play with them. You can show your openness by asking what they are thinking about the deceased or by sharing a memory or picture. Don't force a conversation a child does not want to have, but leave an opening for the child to talk about what they have experienced. Express your love and concern for them. Remind them of the people who love them, as well as the fact that God and His people are there for them.

After the immediate crisis (funeral or other event), keep the routine of the children's lives as normal as possible. This will provide some stability and normalcy for the child.

Also, when a tragedy happens, get your calendar and mark the date of the tragedy one year in the future. The anniversary of a death or tragedy is often a very difficult time, especially the first one. Send a letter letting the persons know they are in your thoughts and

prayers. It will make the family feel affirmed if a year later they are still being thought of and prayed for.

4. Help other children care.

You offer pastoral care to the whole group of children who surround the bereaved child. They may have questions, too. You can organize the other children in your group to write letters or draw pictures and pray. This support can be a real benefit to the child to know that others care.

Refer to Resource 10-5 in the Student Guide. Spend a few minutes in discussion.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- discuss what it means to “pastor” children
- tell some ways to engage in the sacraments
- share some strategies for helping children and families deal with crisis and grief

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss programming for Children's Ministry.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Write a two-page paper about your role as a children's pastor. What does the word “pastor” mean to you? What images does this elicit? How do your personal characteristics fit with your image of a pastor or shepherd? Where do you see your greatest strengths in shepherding? Where do you see your need for improvement?

Read Resources 10-6, 10-7, and 10-8.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a section about your baptism and first communion experience.

Punctuate the Finish

While we talked about grief and loss specific to death, the guidelines you learned are also good ones to remember when children are dealing with other crises, such as divorce, moving, the loss of a pet, and even small losses that may not seem earth-shaking to adults. A pastoral spirit of thanksgiving for the child will help you to accept and support children's unique ways of looking at the world and to offer your respectful presence in all the challenges of their lives.

Dickens, Charles. Bleak House. London: Penguin Classics. 1851, 1971.

Charles Dickens said, “It is no small thing when those who are so fresh from God love us.” That, my friends, is your pastoral privilege in a nutshell.

Lesson 11

Programming for Children's Ministries

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Planning with Purpose	Small Groups	Resource 10-6 Resource 11-1
0:25	Sunday School Ministry	Guided Discussion	Resource 10-7
0:40	Annual Ministries	Lecture	Resources 11-2—11-5
1:00	How Shall We Celebrate?	Debate	
1:10	Camping Ministry	Guided Discussion	Resource 10-8 Resource 11-6
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

James Riley Estep, Jr. *C. E. The Heritage of Christian Education*, Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2003.

Mikel Keifer, (ed). *Children's Ministry that Works: The Basics and Beyond (Revised)*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2002.

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lesson 18.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students read each other's papers.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose for this lesson is to examine programming for children's ministry and a camp ministry

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand how to plan and implement programming for Sunday School
- understand how to plan and implement annual ministries
- articulate the value of a camping ministry

Motivator

Programming is a tool. It is nothing more and nothing less. If all you have is a hammer, you'll be tempted to use the hammer to unclog drains, remove screws, and chop onions! If you have no hammer, you'll be trying to do a lot of things by your fingernails. The key to programming is to choose the right tool for the right task.

<http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/programming/discipleship.php>

Duffy Robbins, a professor of Youth Ministry at Eastern College makes these observations about programming:

1. If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time.
2. One size does not fit all.
3. The "unspiritual" is important.

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Planning with Purpose

(20 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 11-1 in the Student Guide.

In your groups work through the questions. Use the information from Resource 10-6 and your responses to the questions to develop a vision statement for Children's ministry at your church.

Your group may come up with just one vision statement or you may each need a different statement to fit your own particular congregation. Help each other as you look for the right words to guide your ministry.

Use the last 5 minutes for the groups to share their statements. Allow them to challenge or question the statements.

Guided Discussion: Sunday School Ministry

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 10-7 that the students read for homework.

Allow for response.

The Nazarene Sunday School curriculum for children is divided into 5 age groups. While many churches separate babies from toddlers for child care purposes the curriculum is the same for both.

What were the key points for babies?

What have you found important from your experience?

Did you gain any ideas from the Toddler section?

What is most important to remember about Preschoolers?

Do you have a Preschool/Day Care at your church?

How has that worked for your church and community?

What is the key idea for Early Elementary?

What ideas did you find helpful?

Do you have any additional ideas for Middle Elementary?

What are the challenges for Preteens?

These concepts are offered as a general overview of the important characteristics of each age group. You will want to think through each of the areas and create a plan for effectiveness before beginning your ministry. Have your mission statement in hand and stay focused on your goals and purpose.

Lecture: Annual Ministries

(20 minutes)

Allow a few minutes for sharing.

Share your favorite personal story about an event you experienced as a child at church.

You may want to discuss the difficulty of removing an event that some consider a tradition for the church even though it is no longer valid.

The children's program will have annual events the children's pastor will be required to plan, organize, and carry out. Some of these may be long-standing traditions you will maintain. Other traditional events may be removed and replaced as your vision directs.

Annual events are great for several reasons. They help to structure your year and are natural times for celebration. Well-planned annual events can be something the children look forward to attending. You can build a lot of enthusiasm and use these as outreach tools, since the children can anticipate and plan for the events.

Refer to Resource 11-2 in the Student Guide.

Many annual events are either connected to the Church calendar (such as Lent or Advent) or national holidays such as Christmas. There are other annual events, such as Vacation Bible School or children's camp, that are planned according to local or district church calendars.

What other events have you found beneficial to your church and community?

Basics for Event Planning

Whatever the event, you will need a planning strategy.

Refer to Resource 11-3 in the Student Guide.

Let's plan a Back-to-School event to encourage children whose attendance has been sporadic to get back in the habit of Sunday School attendance.

We will prepare for the event by using the five classic journalistic questions.

Discuss with the students how each of the steps need to be carried out to plan the pretend Back-to-School event.

1. WHO will attend the event? How will you get them to attend?

- Church children will come to the event and be the base attendance of any event.

- You also want children who have been inconsistent in their attendance to come too. Think about how the event will attract them. This has to be geared to the group you have. For some, receiving a part of their school supplies would be a big attraction (a backpack, for example). For others, a simple social event may be all that is necessary.
- Think about how you will publicize the event. How will you let children know about the event, and how will they be enlisted to help you publicize it? Church newsletters, flyers, mailings, bulletins, bulletin board displays, newspaper announcements, community bulletin boards in local places, websites, and television public service announcements are possible sources of publicity.
- Think about personal contacts your group can make.

2. WHAT will the participants do? What supplies will be needed?

- Decide on the games, food, and activities you will provide.
- Create a separate list of items you will need for each part of the plan.
- Think about decorations and environment.
- Consider special equipment. Will you need to rent a popcorn popper or a helium tank for balloons?
- Will you need a special speaker or musical guest?
- How will this event be budgeted and funded?

3. WHEN will the event be held? (Check the church calendar for conflicts first.)

- What are the kids' upcoming schedules like?
- Is there a strategic time that needs to fit the event? A back-to-school event should be conducted between the two weeks before and two weeks after school starts.
- Should this be a Sunday event or should it be held on another day? Should it be a day or evening event?

4. WHERE will the event be? What arrangements must be made to secure and set up the location?

- What part of your church will best accommodate your activity, or should you consider an off-site location? For this event, because you have chosen to reach out to children who have already

attended your church, you may want to keep it AT the church. But if you want to reach out to new contacts, you could plan the event to take place at the church or at a different site that would attract more attention from new families.

- If you choose an off-site location, are there deposits to be made ahead of time?
- If you choose the church location, do you need to make arrangements for custodial assistance?
- How will your event be set up, and how quickly will the room need to be reset for other uses?

5. WHY are we doing this event? Which of our purposes does it address?

- While this was your starting point, this is your opportunity to remind yourself of the purpose and make sure you are still on target with it. As you are planning, are you losing sight of the goals or working toward them?
- Are you communicating your goals and purposes as you publicize your event? Does everyone know what they are doing?

6. HOW will you follow up this event?

- Who will write thank-you notes to those who helped?
- Have you planned an attendance tracking strategy so you can contact immediately after the event the children who came? Will you contact them at regular intervals as you host other events?

Refer to Resource 11-4 in the Student Guide.

Breaking Down the Tasks

To carry out an event:

- What do I need to be responsible for?
- What can I delegate and to whom? What support will be required to ensure success?
- What extra resources will be required the day of the event?
- What should we evaluate about the event, and how will we evaluate it?
- Prepare a timetable to ensure a well-organized and promoted event that will help you accomplish your goals.

If there is time you can look through this resource together.

Resource 11-5 is for you to use in your ministry as an example of a timetable that will make it possible to have a well-organized event that you can enjoy.

Do you have any questions or comments about events for children's ministry?

Debate: How Shall We Celebrate?

(10 minutes)

*Divide the class into 2 groups.
Have the 2 groups face each other.
Give each group the designation of
Team 1 or Team 2.*

*Be the mediator to encourage
debate and moderate when
necessary. The purpose is to think
through this issue in order to help
the students decide how they will
approach this issue in their own
ministry.*

One of the challenges you will need to think through before planning your annual events is your philosophy of secular holidays. For example, will you have an Easter Egg Hunt, Santa Claus, and Trick or Treating at your church, or will you offer alternatives?

Team 1 is to argue for the inclusion of "Trick or Treat" at the church where the children will dress up and go through a candy walk to gather their candy. Team 2 is to argue for the church to plan a "Harvest Festival" celebration as an alternative to "Trick or Treat".

You will have 2 minutes to meet as a team to formulate your position. Your reasons must be fair, relevant, and true. Anticipate the arguments of the other team.

Each team will then have 2 minutes to present your position. And we will close with a question time.

Guided Discussion: Camping Ministry

(15 minutes)

*Refer to Resource 10-8 that the
students read for homework.*

*You may want to list these on a
board or flipchart.*

*Refer to Resource 11-6 in the
Student Guide.*

*If there is time you can look
through this resource together.*

This overview of camping ministries gives you a starting point to work with your district in making sure camping ministry plays a vital part in your children's lives. Within these guidelines, you can work with exciting themes, develop curriculum that makes Bible content fun and exciting, choose speakers that bring the gospel to life, and establish games and activities that make for an exciting and meaningful program. All this and maybe you will have a campfire, too!

What was the greatest camping experience that you had as a child?

What were the components that made it so memorable?

What ideas from your homework did you think were important for you to remember?

What ideas or suggestions can you add?

You have been given a resource, with several pages, in the Student Guide that may help you as you become involved with Children's Camps on your district.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- understand how to plan and implement programming for Sunday School
- understand how to plan and implement annual ministries
- articulate the value of the camping ministry

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we will discuss strategic planning and the development of a calendar and a budget for your ministry.

In Lesson 17 you will each be asked to present a Children's Church lesson as a demonstration of a specific method of a lesson presentation. You may want to begin to think about what you will do and read Resource 16-9 as part of your advanced preparation.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Write a two-page paper about how you plan to approach Easter, Christmas, and Halloween. Will you treat each of these days the same? What is your reasoning behind your perspective? Are there biblical reasons for your decision? How will you proceed if either your pastor or parents or both take an opposing view?

Read Resource 11-7.

Read Resource 11-8.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a list of Children's Ministries annual events and list them in order of importance to you. Give a rationale for your arrangement of the list.

Punctuate the Finish

The 2005-2009 quadrennial theme for Children's Ministries is: Kidz First: through our Purposes, Plans, Prayers, and Presentation of the Gospel

Lesson 12

Developing a Strategic Plan, Calendar, and Budget

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Strategic Planning for Your Ministry	Guided Discussion	Resource 11-7 Resource 12-1 Resource 12-2
0:20	Components of a Strategic Plan	Action Plan	Resource 12-3 Resource 12-4
0:35	Planning a Ministry Calendar	Lecture	Resource 12-5
0:50	A Budget for Your Ministry	Lecture	Resource 11-8 Resource 12-6
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Modular Course of Study. *Administering the Local Church*. Lessons 5—8, and 16.

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lesson 11.

Ginny Olson, Diane Elliot, and Mike Work. *Youth Ministry Management Tools*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

<<http://www.christianitytoday.com/childrensministry/articles/nobudgetnoproblem.html>>

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

When you enter the room, have a sign attached to the front of you that says, "Follow Me." Have another sign attached to your back that says, "But I Don't Know Where I am Going."

Do not explain what it means or draw attention to the signs. Walk into the room, making sure the message on the front is seen by everyone as you enter. As you walk to the front, make sure everyone is able to read the message on your back. Continue to do all the aspects of the introduction.

Call on 2 or 3 students to read their paper on dealing with holiday celebrations.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose for this lesson is to discuss strategic planning and the preparation of a ministry calendar and a budget for your ministry.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand how to administer a strategic plan for your ministry
- understand how to plan a ministry calendar
- understand how to establish a budget for your ministry

Motivator

"If you are planning for one year, grow rice. If you are planning for 20 years, grow trees. If you are planning for centuries, grow men."

Chinese Proverb

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Strategic Planning for Your Ministry

(15 minutes)

Continue to wear the signs—“Follow Me” and “But I Don’t Know Where I am Going”—while the students respond to the questions.

When have you been in a situation where it was clear that someone was wearing the signs that I am wearing today?

How did it affect your ability to contribute or participate?

Have you ever felt like you were the one wearing the signs?

How did it affect your ability to lead?

Refer to Resource 11-7 that the students read for homework.

Ministry to children is meeting specific needs of children with intentionality. A vision that is written for all to see and a strategic plan that guides the day-to-day program, make it possible for children, parents, and workers to actively follow.

How do you define strategic plan?

Refer to Resource 12-1 in the Student Guide.

Resource 12-1 gives 5 components of a strategic plan.

1. Your philosophy—how ministry to children should be accomplished
2. Your vision—big dream for what your ministry will look like in the future
3. Your mission—the big goals of what your ministry will accomplish
4. Consideration of the overall mission and vision of the church
5. Resulting in a direct plan of action for one year, three years, and five years in the future

What might a Children’s Ministries strategic plan look like?

Refer to Resource 12-2 in the Student Guide.

Have the students quickly write down their first thoughts for each of the steps.

This is not a detailed activity to turn in, but first responses, ideas that come to mind.

Let’s look at some practical steps to develop a strategic plan for Children’s Ministry.

- After being quiet before God, write all the words you hope will be used to describe your ministry in three to five years.
- Next list the qualities visitors will notice about the children in your ministry. (Kind, fun, excited about Jesus, great worshipers)

- Write the types of leaders and the number of leaders you will need. (List them.)
- Begin to dream about the new ministries that will emerge. (List them.)
- Write how you plan to evangelize the children in your community. (Write it.)
- Name the service opportunities you will provide for the children. (List them.)
- Describe what your relationship with the parents will look like.
- Dream about your plan to continue your own professional development. (Write about it.)

After looking over your lists, consider how these dreams can become a reality. Think about how these plans connect with the other ministries in the church. Are your ideas connected to the overall vision of the church? For each idea you decide to pursue, develop an action plan. Within an action plan, include:

- Reasonable timetables
- Barriers you anticipate
- Two ideas for overcoming each barrier
- The number of people necessary to accomplish your plans
- Potential cost

At this point, let God help you refine the plan.

Action Plan: Components of a Strategic Plan

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 12-3 in the Student Guide.

For the next few minutes use Resource 12-2 and 12-3 to think through and write out how you are going to proceed to make one dream a reality.

In about 10 minutes we will share with each other.

Call on each student to share what dream they are working on.

Refer to Resource 12-4 in the Student Guide.

Resource 12-4 is a sample of an action plan. It may help you as you work through and make action plans for each of the items that you have identified for your life and ministry.

Lecture: Planning a Ministry Calendar

(15 minutes)

You have just been hired to lead the children's ministry at a large church. On your first day on the job, you make your way down the long hallway to your new office. You take your office key from your pocket, place it in the lock, and open the door. After turning on the lights and getting comfortable in your chair, you open the calendar on your desk and stare at the 365 blank squares looking back at you. It is your task to fill in the dates!

This can be a fairly intimidating situation unless you have a plan on how to proceed. There are different ways to plan a calendar:

- Obtain the calendar from last year and fill in the same activities but on different dates.
- Dig out your calendar from the church you just left, and copy those activities on your new calendar.
- Search the Internet for calendars of other churches with a children's ministry, and copy their program.
- Use the first children's church service to ask the children what they would like to do during the next year.
- Fill in every day of your calendar with all kinds of activities. Go wild, try to be everything to everybody, crash and burn, and resign after one year.

We laugh at these ideas but know truthfully, this is how some calendars get made.

If you do any of the previous procedures, your ministry probably is not going to be effective or meet the needs of the children. Instead, use some aspects from your past experience, add suggestions from other ministries, and use ideas from others on your leadership team. These are all legitimate resources as you lay out your calendar for the year.

Your church is not like any other. Your church may choose fewer regular activities and more special events. Whatever you do, plan your activities to match your goals.

Refer to Resource 12-5 in the Student Guide.

Practical Steps of Calendar Planning:

1. Place all the previously-expected activities on the calendar first. These would include:
 - Local Church Dates—Revivals, all-church picnic,

holiday services and activities, and other age-level ministry schedules, such as VBS and Children's Week

- Weekly Events—Sunday School, Children's Church, Caravan, Quizzing
 - District Church Dates—Children's camp, camp meeting, retreats, conferences
 - Community or School Dates—First and last day of school, spring break, sports tournaments
 - Family Dates—Birthdays, vacation days
 - Dates you add to accomplish your ministry plan
2. Create a Seasonal Schedule. Each season will have a specific focus or goal unique to that time.
- Late summer, focus on recruiting and training volunteers.
 - Fall, focus on building relationships and creating the group norms and group identity.
 - Winter, focus on personal development and leadership development—Bible Quizzing, worship team practice, drama team practice
 - Spring, focus on celebrating the year's accomplishments and preparation for VBS, camp, and summer service opportunities.

These are just suggestions and very general. However, if you have certain areas that fit well with the different seasons, it may help you structure the specifics within those timeframes on your calendar.

3. Begin to shape and mold the specifics within this framework. Remember to be clear about the purpose of any event to stay within the stated mission of the ministry. Keep your purposes and activities on-track with others in the church.
4. Decide what your patterns of recurring activities will be. For example, you may have an activity the first three Saturdays of each month from 5:00–8:00 in the evening. The first Saturday of each month is for preschool children and their parents. The second Saturday is for first through fourth graders. The third Saturday is for Preteens. You may have Preteen Discipleship every Thursday afternoon or Mom's Day Out each Tuesday morning.

Decide what annual events you will plan. Examples might be a fifth- and sixth-grade service project or a family retreat.

Mark the time for staff training days and parent education events that do not directly involve the children.

Keep in mind your schedule is not the only schedule children have to deal with. They also have sports events, lessons, school calendars, family calendars, and so forth.

5. After obtaining approval for your calendar, distribute it to everyone in the church to avoid any last-minute conflicts that could put the events in jeopardy. Ways to do this:
 - Use the newsletter to provide all the important dates for the coming month.
 - List the week's activities in the church bulletin on Sundays.
 - Keep an updated bulletin board that lists the events for the year on it.
 - If your church has a web site, have a page that lists the year's events and then the week's events with all of the details included.
 - Provide a letter to parents each week to explain the week's activities.

This may sound like overkill. However, people gather information differently. Most people need information reinforced in order to follow through. You are covering all your bases and giving interested people every possible means to get the information and be reminded.

*Information was adapted from:
Youth Ministry Management Tools,
85-90.*

Allow for response.

Do you have any additional ideas or suggestions that would be helpful to others?

Lecture: A Budget for Your Ministry

(30 minutes)

Refer to Resource 11-8 that the students read for homework.

Allow for response.

Refer to Resource 12-6 in the Student Guide.

The opening statement in your homework reading said, "Your budget should reflect the philosophies of your ministry, not drive them."

What does that mean to you?

How easy is it to accomplish?

Guidelines for Preparing a Budget

Let's look at some guidelines to follow when preparing a budget for your ministry:

1. Be accurate in your estimate of costs. It may be tempting to overstate your budget needs in case some of it gets slashed by the board. However, the first issue is an honesty issue. If what you have submitted is not true, it represents dishonesty that has no place in a Christian's life. Being as accurate

as possible will help the board see exactly how reducing funds will affect your ministry. Be honest and trust God.

2. Be wise in your purchases. Look for bargains, but be careful. You usually get what you pay for. Buy your materials in bulk, when possible. This will help you be a good steward of your resources and help you save money. You can buy more materials and earn the trust of those overseeing your ministry. Be wise in the quality and durability of the furniture, toys, and sports equipment you purchase. A bigger investment for quality merchandise may save you money in the future.
3. Indicate the materials and equipment for a new program that will be universally functional. Determine what equipment would be usable also in other programs.
4. Be aware of complex and highly technical equipment (or programs) that can be operated only by one or two people. This may leave you or the church in trouble during a program if those competent to operate the equipment are not available. Be aware of the need for training for any new technological advances, and allow time for the learning process.
5. Make a priority in the budget for whatever is needed for safety and security. The best program in the world can be destroyed if a child is seriously injured.
6. Do not sign contracts with anyone until you know exactly what you are getting. This includes speakers, musicians, caterers, and the rental of facilities or equipment. Make personal contact with those involved to clarify what you are actually getting for your money. Everything should be in writing! Don't just assume, but be diligent and look for hidden costs.
7. Develop a strategy for filing and submitting your receipts. A rule of thumb in the larger church is to hold them until you have either \$100.00 worth or 10 receipts. Have a specific place to keep your receipts until you complete your check requisition form. However, don't hold on to receipts any longer than 30 days. There is too much risk of losing or forgetting them.
8. Ask questions of the people responsible for budget development. Ask a technician about the need for

the proposed video equipment and if there are other factors you need to consider. Talk to an accountant if you have bookkeeping questions. It is better to humble yourself and ask questions than to make a big financial error that will have negative consequences in your ministry.

9. Keep a personal file of your financial documents. Make copies of receipts and any forms you submit. This may save you in the future if questions emerge about your spending or if the originals get lost.
10. Here is a list of possible expenditures. This will give you an idea of what is involved in maintaining a multifaceted children's ministry:
 - Salaries
 - Travel expenses
 - Rental Equipment
 - Staff Development
 - Educational materials
 - Craft and other supplies
 - Phone
 - Promotion/advertising
 - Printing
 - Envelopes, stamps and postage
 - Insurance
 - Food
 - Hospitality
 - Repairs
 - Music
 - Retreat Speakers
 - Other Miscellaneous

For more information, see: The Christian Educator's Handbook on Children's Ministry, 79; or Youth Ministry Management Tools, 107-115.

Allow the students to brainstorm ideas. Write them on a board or flipchart.

What if there is no money to start your ministry or very little money?

Don't forget to:

- Make your requests available to the congregation for donations, or borrow items such as CD players, TV, and DVD player.
- Call other churches and let them know you are starting a children's ministry with very limited resources. Ask if they have any equipment or materials they are not using that they would be willing to donate or loan. Many churches have lots of "stuff" in storage they never plan to use.
- Ask the local schools if they have any equipment they would be willing to donate to you. A theater group may have some props they would donate to you.
- If your church has a qualified driver, another church may loan their vans for an activity. Be creative, and do not be afraid to ask for help.

*For more information see the following website:
<<http://www.christianitytoday.com/childrensministry/articles/nobudgetnoproblem.html>>*

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Ask different students these questions.

Allow for some discussion.

What are two things you considered about strategic planning during this session?

What do you think is the most important consideration for calendar planning and why?

What problems can be avoided through strong budget planning?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we will discuss the administrative tasks of providing a safe environment and being aware of legal and ethical issues that relate to the facility where the children gather.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Begin work on a budget for your children's ministry. Consult at least three sources for pricing supplies (a constantly shifting market). Decide on two sources for purchasing supplies.

Read Resources 12-7, 12-8, and 12-9.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a section about your strategic plan for children's ministry.

Punctuate the Finish

George Barna. Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003, 40.

Perhaps nothing makes the relative unimportance of children's ministry clearer than budget realities. Approximately 41 percent of the people who attend the church on a typical weekend are under the age of 18—and that figure jumps to nearly 50 percent if we include all the young people involved in some type of church-based, faith-related activity on the church campus throughout the entire week. Yet, less than 15 percent of the average church's budget is allocated to the needs of children's ministry.

Lesson 13

The Church—A Safe Environment

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Creating a Safe Nursery Environment	Guided Discussion	Resource 12-7 Resource 13-1
0:35	Safety Beyond the Nursery	Guest Speaker/Video	Resource 12-8
1:05	Designing a Facility that Works	Class Activity	Resource 12-9 Resource 13-2 Large pieces of paper
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Alley, Steve. *Growing a Healthy Children's Ministry*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 2002.

Austin, Sandy J. *Crisis Manual for Christian Schools and Youth Workers: How to Prepare for and Handle Tragedy*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2007.

Caldwell, Blake. *Safe Kids*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, LifeStream Series, 2004.

Modular Course of Study. *Administering the Local Church*. Lesson 16.

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lessons 19 and 20.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Classroom Preparation

Arrive early and leave different items around the room. Try not to make it too obvious. You can have a safety pin on the floor, a pencil and a stapler on a table, maybe a bottle of cleaning fluid lying in the corner under a cloth, toys with small parts that can be swallowed by small children, and a cord with a split in it. In other words, you are making an unsafe room for children.

Accountability

Allow students to share.

What did you encounter as you worked on your children's ministry budget? Any problems?

Did you find a good source of supplies that the other students might be able to use?

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to examine the issues surrounding the administrative tasks of providing a safe environment and being aware of possible legal and ethical issues as they relate to the facility where the children gather.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand what a safe environment looks like
- understand potential legal and ethical issues
- understand important components of the structure of a children's ministry facility

Motivator

Sandy J. Austin, Crisis Manual for Christian Schools and Youth Workers: How to Prepare for and Handle Tragedy, 11.

It is not a question of *if* a tragedy will strike under our watch but *when* . . . No one can use the excuse anymore that he or she didn't know a crisis plan was needed.

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Creating a Safe Nursery Environment

(30 minutes)

Not only should they find things that you placed around the room, but, things like uncovered outlets, cupboards that could be crawled into, doors/windows that can be easily opened, bookcases that could fall over, etc.

NOTE: Remove all of the unsafe objects from the room after the class.

Walk around the room and find things that might be a safety issue for children. Keep in mind infant through elementary children. You might list them as infant, preschool, or elementary.

What did you find that could be a potential safety issue?

There is nothing that tells parents you love their children more than being concerned about the safety of their children. Even though initially some parents might be a little put off by clear rules for children's ministry, gentle explanations and consistency will help both parents and the ministry team feel confident that a safety-first policy is in everyone's best interest.

Steve Alley, in *Growing a Healthy Children's Ministry*, lists these categories of safety issues that require a written policy statement:

- Health concerns (including cleanliness and bodily fluids procedures)
- Sick children
- Protection on campus (check-in and check-out procedures, as well as a safe environment)
- Adult/child ratios
- Emergency procedures
- Child abuse prevention and protection

Allow for discussion.

When or how do you or your church inform the parents of the policy statements?

Do you wait until there is a situation or are they informed in advance?

Does everyone in the church know the policies or is it kept within Children's Ministries Department?

Refer to Resource 12-7 that that students read for homework.

Resource 12-7 gave some information and ideas for nursery care. You also need to be aware of local and state requirements that you would need to follow.

Allow for some brainstorming as the students work to help each other with problems they are encountering.

What are some of the safety challenges that you face in your church?

Times and requirements do change. Are there other ideas that we need to include or modify from the reading assignment?

Refer to Resource 13-1 in the Student Guide.

One of the suggestions listed was to use the changing time as an opportunity to sing about God and his wonderful creation.

It might be fun to sing one of the songs.

Guest Speaker: Safety Beyond the Nursery

(30 minutes)

The most effective way to deal with this section is to invite an attorney, insurance agent, or social worker who deals regularly with church safety issues, to speak to your students. This will give students a chance to ask questions that may be beyond the scope of your expertise. You can tell the professional that he/she may pass out business cards in case the students ever need their services.

Another option is to show a video/DVD that discusses safety issues and legal concerns for churches.

The students read Resource 12-8 for homework. If you can not get a speaker or video you can have a discussion over the reading material.

Class Activity: Designing a Facility that Works

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 12-9 that the students read for homework.

Use the information that you read about, your experience in church settings, and your dreams for a children's facility. Design a classroom that meets the needs of the church, your program, and the children.

Refer to Resource 13-2 in the Student Guide.

Have the students design 4 classrooms

- *Infant*
- *Toddler/Preschool*
- *Early Elementary*
- *Middle Elementary*

We are dreaming but we do have to be practical. It needs to be possible—cost effective—for the average church.

You can assign each student a different age group, allow them to select, or have them work in small

You will have about 10 minutes to draw and write out your plans and then we will take 10 minutes to share your plans.

groups. Each age group should be represented.

Provide large sheets of paper, markers, crayons, catalogues, etc.

If you have a guest speaker, you may not have time for this activity. You can assign it as part of homework.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Which part of the session was most helpful to you?

Which part was most troubling?

About what would you like to learn more?

Look Ahead

You will need to bring to class a variety of children's curriculum for the students to look at and evaluate.

In the next lesson we will discuss the administrative tasks of evaluating curriculum, evaluating event effectiveness, and evaluating the effectiveness of your children's ministry program.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Examine the policies of your church concerning screening, assigning, and training volunteers. Evaluate the main safety issues we discussed in class. Write a two-page paper on your findings. If your church doesn't have these policies in place, make a specific recommendation for what policies you believe should be implemented.

Visit a mid-sized or large church in your community and obtain copies of their policies. Also, ask to see their facilities and ask questions about how they carry out their policies and procedures.

Read Resource 13-3.

Read Resource 13-4.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a section with your thoughts about creating a safe environment for children.

Punctuate the Finish

Think of policies as life preservers in a sea of uncertainty, not as bricks to sink your ship!

Lesson 14

Evaluating Curriculum, Events, and Programs

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:05	Selecting Curriculum	Guided Discussion	Resource 13-3
0:30	Evaluating the Curriculum	Small Groups	Resource 14-1 Resource 14-2 Children's Curriculum
0:55	Evaluating Event Effectiveness	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 14-3 Resource 14-4
1:10	Evaluating the Children's Ministry Program	Guided Discussion	Resource 13-4
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Bondy, John K. "The critical Importance of Curriculum that Transmits Nazarene Core Values," in *Didache—Faithful Teaching*, Vol 7, No 2 (an online journal), <http://didache.nts.edu>, 2008.

Children's Ministry Smart Pages, Grades 1-6, Ventura, California: Gospel Light, 2004.

Modular Course of Study. *Providing Christian Education for All Ages*. Lessons 10-17.

Lesson Introduction

(5 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students read each other's report.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose today is to discuss the administrative tasks of choosing curriculum, evaluating event effectiveness, and evaluating the effectiveness of your children's ministry program.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand how to choose curriculum
- understand how to evaluate your events
- understand how to evaluate your overall children's ministry program

Motivator

Louis Pasteur said, "Chance favors prepared minds." Christian Education curriculum is our attempt to anticipate what preparation is necessary, not for chance, but for the opportunities that God will bring into our lives.

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Selecting Curriculum

(25 minutes)

The definition of curriculum has shifted from strictly referring to printed material to including everything that contributes to an individual's learning. Curriculum is not only a book that teaches concepts to a child. Curriculum is also the environment, the attitude and abilities of the teacher, the culture, and his or her peers. Children learn both intentionally and unintentionally, directly and indirectly. There is no part of the classroom that escapes the learning potential for the child. This cannot be packaged or produced for purchase.

However, for the sake of this lesson, we will refer to curriculum as materials that are published, purchased and implemented by teachers. We'll look at some characteristics of these published materials and discuss a process for choosing resources that are appropriate for our circumstances.

Refer to Resource 13-3 that the students read for homework.

In your homework reading there is a section that is in bold type. I want us to look at that section.

Small differences in the foundation of children's faith become magnified as they grow and mature. If their foundation is built on what our tradition sees as misinformation or tiny misconceptions about God, we run the risk of building a faith that is misdirected. Most teachers do not have the theological background to think through the long-term consequences of small theological details. This is the main reason to recommend denominationally-developed curriculum as the primary source of Christian education in the church. In addition to being educationally sound, it is carefully reviewed for theological consistency.

If you choose to use supplemental curricula for other programs in your church, you as the children's pastor are responsible for the theological consistency of the curriculum you choose. If you don't have a strong theological background, you will need support from someone who does.

Allow for discussion.

How did you respond to this section?

These are serious questions and the students need to be very aware of the life long impact when children learn incorrect, contradictory, or misleading information.

How important is it to you that the materials for children be theologically sound and in keeping with our denominational positions?

Do you have someone whom you can call to help you with theological evaluation of a curriculum?

How important is it for you to continually work at learning and understanding our theological and doctrinal positions?

Let's review the questions to be asked when choosing a curriculum.

1. What are your program goals and missional values?
2. For what is the curriculum to be used?
3. Who will teach this curriculum?
4. Who will be taught?
5. What are your assets and limitations?
6. What is your budget?

These questions reflect the needs of your church, your program, your ministry. They are the first line of consideration before you look at what is available.

Allow for response.

What ideas or information did you gain from Resource 13-3 that you feel was very helpful?

Did you have a question about anything?

Five Reasons NOT to Change Curriculum.

Why should the decision to change curriculum not be made lightly?

1. Each time you change curricula, you get a different scope and sequence. A scope and sequence is designed carefully to give you balance over time. If you switch curricula, you don't give children the benefits of that design. You may create an unbalanced view of Scripture rather than helping the children understand both the Old Testament and New Testament are significant and tell important parts of our faith story.
2. While the same curriculum may be boring to you, it's always new to a new group of children. It may be more effective for a bored teacher to change grade levels than to change the curriculum to suit the teacher.
3. You may be trading one set of limitations for another. No curriculum is perfect for every setting or every group of children. If teachers learn to

supplement the materials they use, any curriculum can be made MORE effective. If you keep switching the curriculum, you just uncover different needs for supplementation.

4. The process of change always requires a learning curve, causing teachers to be less effective for a while. If changes are made too frequently, you spend more time being less effective than you should, and children's learning may suffer.
5. Changing curriculum is costly, time-consuming, and messy. All of this inconvenience is acceptable if the change is being made for important reasons that will help you accomplish your strategic plans. Changing should never be done on a whim!

Small Groups: Evaluating the Curriculum

(25 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Have several examples of children's curriculum available for the students to look at.

Refer to Resources 14-1 and 14-2 in the Student Guide.

You will have about 15-20 minutes to work on Resource 14-1. We will then discuss your evaluation of the various curricula.

Lecture/Discussion: Evaluating Event Effectiveness

(15 minutes)

It is not unusual, especially in a children's pastor's first assignment, to work hard to plan the events for the year, spend time and energy building relationships, and be overwhelmed with all of the extra duties of the job. In the whirlwind of activity, the one aspect that often is overlooked is formally evaluating the events.

For many pastors, the only evaluation of events is to count the number of children who attended, and the number of complaints received. We balance the pro (number of children) against the con (number of complaints), and decide whether to do the event again next year. This process tells you relatively little and gives very little help. Your only goals based on this information may be to reduce complaints or increase numbers of children. Your ministry is far too important to reduce it to numbers or negativity!

Refer to Resource 14-3 in the Student Guide.

The first secret to helpful evaluation is to match your purposes to your observations. Determine the main reasons you are doing an event, and think about the unanticipated benefits or complications that could help you to do better in the future. Decide what you really need to know.

The second secret is to keep it simple. You won't follow through if it is too complicated or time consuming.

The first step toward evaluation happens before the event, and the second step happens immediately after, before you forget details of the day.

An acronym that might be helpful in establishing goals and evaluating if the goals were appropriate and met is SMAC:

- S—Are the goals specific?
- M—Are the goals measurable?
- A—Are the goals achievable?
- C—Are the goals compatible with the overall purpose of the Children's Ministry program?

This helps you measure whether you did what you said you would do. This is a helpful evaluation to track whether you are on target with specific goals.

Let's work through an example of the SMAC plan in action:

- Our mission is to help children know, love, and serve Jesus.
- The purpose of this event is to introduce children to the concept of salvation, give them an opportunity to respond to a salvation invitation, and provide an opportunity for each child to share with an adult what took place in his or her heart and life.
- The Goals are:
 1. Have 60 children present to hear the message of the Gospel.
 2. Have a specific time of salvation invitation and prayer following the message.
 3. Have adults available to pray with those children who respond.
 4. Have each child share with an adult what he or she experienced during and after the message (small group with adult leader).
 5. Send a follow-up note in the mail or by email to new believers, welcoming them to the family of God and inviting them to a follow-up Bible study.
 6. Have at least three children participate in our new believer's class.

- S—Are the goals specific? Notice the numbers and the specific components of the event that are listed.
- M—Are the goals measurable? Each question can be answered YES or NO based on the specific goal.
- A—Are the goals achievable? Each goal is realistic based on a particular church profile.
- C—Are the goals compatible with the overall purpose of the Children’s Ministry program? The purpose of this event is to help children KNOW Jesus, part of the overall mission of the children’s program.

When the event is over, revisit the purpose and goals and see if these were actually accomplished.

The goals are:

1. Did we have 60 children present to hear the message of the Gospel? YES or NO
2. Did we have a specific time of salvation invitation and prayer following the message? YES or NO
3. Did we have adults available to pray with those children who responded? YES or NO
4. Did we have each child share with an adult what he or she experienced. YES or NO
5. Did we send a follow-up note in the mail or email to each new believer, welcoming him or her to the family of God and inviting him or her to a follow-up Bible study? YES or NO
6. Did we have three or more children sign up for our new believer’s class? YES or NO

The disadvantage of using this model is that it may encourage tunnel vision. A different kind of evaluation tool uses a Before, During, and After model. It is more holistic and focuses on the processes rather than just the program.

Refer to Resource 14-4 in the Student Guide. Look at the questionnaire together.

When evaluating a specific event it is sometimes difficult to determine if the long-term results of an event will accomplish our overall purposes. When evaluating events, try to determine:

1. Are the results in line with your efforts?
2. Did you accomplish what you said you wanted to accomplish?
3. Are there any unanticipated benefits or consequences from the event?
4. What can you learn from this experience? Are you working effectively? What can be done to improve the process for other events?
5. Will repeating this event yield similar, greater, or compounded results? (For example: Can you have a greater impact by doing certain things more effectively? Will doing this event another time add to the effect on the children who participate?)

Guided Discussion: Evaluating the Children's Ministry Program

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 13-4 that the students read for homework.

Were there any areas in the reading assignment that you had a question about?

What ideas seemed to be the most helpful?

What ideas did you feel would be difficult?

Are there items that need to be added?

How have you been doing evaluation?

It would be valuable to repeat the last part of the homework reading.

You may think this is too time-consuming, difficult, and not really needed, especially if people seem pleased with how things are going and you are getting a lot of complements. However, not only will annual evaluations help you keep the ministry effective and on track, but they will help guard you against excessive criticism if it arises. You will know that your decisions have been based on solid goals and consistent evaluations conducted by a board of overseers.

Make a conscious decision right now to view evaluation as a helpful tool for your ministry and not something to be dreaded or feared.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Do you know:

- How to choose curriculum?
- How to evaluate your events?
- How to evaluate your overall children's ministry program?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss the spiritual formation of children and families in your ministry.

Bring Bibles, Study Bibles, Bible Dictionaries, and other reference books that would help with a Bible study.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Evaluate a leader's guide from your church's curriculum. It can be a current one or even one from the past. Write a two-page paper of your evaluation of the curriculum. Use the same process discussed in class. Explain the strengths and weaknesses. Tell if you would adopt the curriculum, and explain why.

Read Resource 14-5.

Read Resource 14-6.

Read Resource 14-7.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a section about your perspective on the use of evaluation as it relates to curriculum, events, and the overall effectiveness of your ministry.

Punctuate the Finish

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark. The real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.

Plato

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Lesson 15

Storytelling, Spiritual Formation, and Biblical Interpretation

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Understanding How Creativity, Play, and Story Influences Spiritual Formation	Guided Discussion	Resource 14-5 Resource 15-1
0:25	Developing Imaginative Storytelling Skills	Guided Discussion	Resource 14-6 Resource 15-2
0:40	Appropriate Biblical Interpretation	Guided Discussion	Resource 14-7
1:10	Biblical Interpretation	Small Groups	Resource 15-3
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Steven James, *The Creative Storytelling Guide for Children's Ministry*, Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 2002.

Lori Niles, "Using Story as a Transformational Device" *Didache*, 6 (1). http://didache.nts.edu/pdfs/6-1_Niles.pdf

http://www.gbod.org/partners_in_discipleship/christian_spiritual_partner.html

www.stevenjames.net

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on several students to share about who they sent a letter of appreciation to and why.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to discuss spiritual formation through creative processes.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand how creativity can encourage spiritual formation
- develop creative methods for storytelling
- practice maintaining exegetical integrity in the teaching process

Motivator

If you have internet access, show this brief clip from author and storyteller, Steven James:
http://www.stevenjames.net/SJ_bonus_video_story.php

Hambleton, A. Children and the Power of Literature. School Libraries in Canada, 21(1), 2001, 3-8.

Ted Hughes, a children's poet and novelist, says that stories are "little factories of understanding continually providing new implications and revelations of meaning."

Storytelling is only one of the many kinds of creative expressions we will discuss today.

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Understanding How Creativity, Play, and Story Influences Spiritual Formation

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 14-5 that the students read for homework.

In your homework reading you were asked to stretch your imagination and think about what a newborn infant is creating.

Make a list of the ideas.

So, what is a newborn creating?

How do these ideas work with the diagram that is in the homework?

How important are imagination and stories to your teaching methods?

Have the person who is the best at dramatic reading, read this poem.

Listen to a poem about a great adventure series. Try to identify the sources of the stories the poem describes:

This is in the homework.

Sea monsters, dragons, magicians, and spies!
Riddles and mystery! Intrigue and surprise!
Heroes and villains and giants and midgets,
Palaces, dungeons, and madmen and witches!

Kings, queens and emperors, wise men and fools;
Miracles, plagues, hidden treasure and jewels!
Angels and demons, rebellion and war,
Deception, disaster and mayhem and gore!
(Ew . . . yuck . . .)

Time travel! Romance! Adventure! Betrayal!
Freedom from slavery! Escaping from jail!
Soldiers and warriors and healers and saints,
And poems of thanksgiving, praise, and complaints!

Partying prophets and killers who preach,
Fish who eat people! Donkeys that teach!
Shipwrecks and journeys and blessings to give!
And the world's greatest SUPERHERO ever to live!
by Steven James

*James, Steven, The Creative Storytelling Guide for Children's Ministry. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 2002, 22.
Or
http://www.stevenjames.net/SJ_bonus.php*

You read this as part of the homework, which was more powerful—reading it or hearing it?

Which stimulates imagination for you? Is it the same for children?

Does it make a difference of who reads it?

Refer to Resource 15-1 in the Student Guide.

As we think about reaching children where they are, let's consider some general tools for attitudes and practices that nurture spiritual formation. You can share these with parents in your church.

Respect children's spiritual sensitivity.

- Listen to children's perceptions of God and the world around them. Listen. Look. Listen some more.
- Honor children's special position as defined by Jesus.
- Provide opportunities for children to minister to each other and to the church.
- Give children opportunities to be wrong and discover right through sensitive questioning rather than lecturing.
- Trust that God is at work in them.

Give children time and space.

- Provide for quiet times as well as activity.
- Help the children experience the awe of "sacred places" and times, such as the altar and communion, and beautiful objects that reflect the glory of God.
- Encourage "sanctified imagination" experiences, imagining how God might act or feel based on shared stories or experiences. Only "correct" these impressions if they explicitly violate what we know about the nature of God through the Bible.
- Help children be aware of clouds, stars, animals, and other expressions of God's creativity.
- Provide times to choose how to respond to God as well as structured activities.
- Wonder aloud together about the work of God without giving answers.
- Look for beauty and creative human expression as gifts from God.

Model hearing the voice of God

- Pray together in a natural way and share answers to prayer.
- Talk about how you are experiencing God and how God is changing you.
- Share the Bible verses and devotional thoughts with others.
- Recall your own childhood and try to stay in touch with what some people call "the inner child"—that part of you that experiences wonder, play, and moments of hurt and joy in a vulnerable way.

Lecture: Developing Imaginative Storytelling Skills

(15 minutes)

*From a Von Seggen workshop,
"Story Telling Techniques."*

According to Liz Von Seggen, there are four general aspects to telling a good story.

- 1. Maintain Eye Contact.** One of the most important methods to capture an audience is to look them right in the eye. This communicates confidence and a personal touch. You also express emotions through your eyes that help listeners pay attention, as well as experience what you are feeling. It has been said the eyes are the pathway to the soul. If your eyes wander to the ceiling or to the floor, it will be difficult for your audience to connect with you. Also, you will not be able to read your audience. By looking at them, you can determine if you need to cut the story short or if you have captured their attention. If your eyes are fastened to notes or a script, you cannot maintain this kind of connection with your audience.
- 2. Paint Word Pictures.** Provide details, details, details. Help listeners experience the scene you are describing. Help them experience the smells, the sounds, the sights, and the emotions of those involved. Sometimes visuals will help children experience and remember as well. Variety is a big issue. The more you can repeat a word or concept in different ways, the better it is.
- 3. Use Sound Effects.** Children love to hear different voices and speaking sounds. Change your voice for the sweet child and the grouchy old man. Make the sound of wind, rain, thunder, animals, or creaking doors. Pretend to cry or yell, hack and cough and so on. Not only is it fun and interesting, but it will help the children remember the story.
- 4. Use Vocal Variation.** Alternate between loud and soft tones and fast and slow. If you have been talking softly, then raise your voice for the next line. Use pauses and silences to build suspense in the story. When reaching the climax of the story, begin to speed up; slow down when reaching the conclusion of the story.

*Refer to Resource 15-2 in the
Student Guide.*

Resource 15-2 is a good resource for you to use as you prepare to tell stories to children. We will not read it together at this time but you will want to know these helps.

Refer to Resource 14-6 in the Student Guide that the students read for homework.

Allow students time to discuss and share ideas.

There are many storytelling tips that can aid in the presentation to children. You were given several tips as part of your homework reading.

Have you tried any of these ideas in the past? Did they work for you?

What ideas were new to you that you think would work in your setting?

What other ideas have you used that really work for you that could be added to the list?

Guided Discussion: Appropriate Biblical Interpretation

(30 minutes)

Refer to Resource 14-7 that the students read for homework.

In the homework you were presented with 4 categories of truth. *Which is the easiest to present to children? Why?*

Which do we need to be most careful with as we teach children?

What problems have you encountered as you try to teach concepts to children?

Walk through the 7 steps with the students. This is a very critical aspect of being a children's pastor or teacher. Children remember and hold on to the teachings that they learn when they are young.

We need to spend some time talking through the 7 steps that were discussed for biblical study.

Do you have a favorite study Bible that you have found helpful in working with children?

You may have other questions that need to be asked and discussed, or the students may need to pursue a direction in greater detail.

One of the problems today is the selection of a version for children to memorize. How are you handling this situation?

Do you spend time listening to Scripture, either having someone read or on CD?

How much do you know about the history and development of the Bible? Much misinformation that is taught comes from not knowing about the history of the book that we claim to be the foundation literature of our faith.

How familiar are you with literary forms and terminology?

What reference books do you own or have access to? How often do you refer to them?

What reference books or web sites have been the most helpful to you?

How do you apply Scripture to contemporary life?

Small Groups: Biblical Interpretation

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 15-3 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

You can allow the groups to select one of the passages of scripture or make assignments.

If there is time at the end of class have the groups report on their Bible study.

If you get into a long discussion during the previous section, you might assign this Bible study as homework.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on each student for a response.

What was the most important thing that you learned in this lesson?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss how to communicate the truth of the gospel and how to lead a child to Christ.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Observe and listen to as many lessons/stories presented to children as possible. Write a two-page paper on your observations. How accurate was the information? How engaged were the children? Were they allowed to interact or add to the lesson? What do you think the children gained from the lesson or story? Will they remember it?

Read Resource 15-4.

Read Resource 15-5.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a section on either your current practices with children in relation to their spiritual formation or your plans in the future.

Punctuate the Finish

"Knowing is more than thinking, although thinking is one of the processes by which people come to know. Knowing is a very personal process involving imagination above all else."

Source unknown

Lesson 16

Salvation of Children and Follow-up Activities

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Share the Gospel in an Age-appropriate Way	Guided Discussion	Resource 15-4 Resource 16-1
0:25	Follow-up Activities	Lecture	Resource 16-2
0:40	Teaching Children About Prayer	Guided Discussion	Resource 15-5 Resource 16-3
0:55	Teaching Children to Study the Bible	Lecture	Resources 16-4—16-6
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

My Best Friend, Jesus, Leader's Guide
<http://www.WORDACTON.com/MBFJ>

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

This should not turn into a criticism of teachers but a critique of how well we are teaching and the information that is taught.

What did you observe from the lessons and activities that you watched as part of your homework?

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose for this lesson is to examine how to communicate the truth of the gospel and help children grow in their Christian commitment.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand how to communicate the truth of the gospel with clarity and urgency in an age-appropriate way
- consider several ways to follow up a child's conversion
- develop strategies to teach a child to participate in prayer and Bible study

Motivator

Titus was Paul's friend, helper, and student. Titus had traveled with Paul on some of Paul's missionary journeys and was now the leader of the church on the island of Crete. The people of that church needed instruction about living as Christians. Paul told Titus to teach the truth of God—"In your teaching, show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2: 7b-8a).

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Sharing the Gospel in an Age-Appropriate Way

(15 minutes)

One of the greatest aspects about being a children's pastor is to introduce children to Jesus and experience the excitement of watching the changes in their lives. Children usually respond to a salvation invitation because of experiences that lead them in that direction. Salvation is a goal for each child in your ministry. However, a genuine salvation experience and strong follow-up activities increase the probability the child will continue in that relationship.

Refer to Resource 15-4 that the students read for homework.

You read some of the key areas of Christian formation that are important in leading children to a point where they are likely to respond to a salvation invitation.

What is your response to what you read?

Do you have any questions about the ideas?

What is the key or most important idea?

Do you have other suggestions?

Refer to Resource 16-1 in the Student Guide.

Look at Resource 16-1. These are similar statements and concepts to what you read for homework.

Allow for discussion.

Briefly look over the statements for babies. *Is there anything that we need to refine?*

Are the concepts for Toddlers & Twos something that you can work with?

How about the statements for Preschool?

Do we need to clarify anything for Kindergarteners?

Is there anything in the Early Elementary list that we need to focus on?

Middle Elementary is a time where children ask more questions, are there ideas that we need to be more careful about in the words we use?

Where do we place our focus for Preteens?

Lecture: Follow-up Activities

(15 minutes)

When children become Christians, they need to be disciplined. These new Christians know they should be doing something to build their relationship with God, but they don't know how. They know they should read their Bible, but they don't know where to begin. They know they need to resist temptation but they don't have a plan. Even though they may have been raised in a Christian home, they may not know the specifics of living a Christian life.

The denomination recognizes the importance of follow-up to anyone's conversion experience. It is especially important for children. We offer age-appropriate follow-up activities for children. The "So . . . You Want to Follow Jesus?" packet provides everything you need to teach children the basics of what it means to follow Jesus. Children will understand what happened when they invited Jesus to be their Savior and best Friend.

As part of this plan, a spiritual guide (parent, teacher, mature friend) is assigned who meets with the child each week for five weeks to go over a booklet of activities. You can obtain a free downloadable leader's guide at www.wordaction.com/go/BBSKIDS.

This web site is listed on the Lesson 16 information page in the Student Guide.

There are some basics of discipleship that can be applied at any stage of life, though exactly what they will look like will vary.

1. Mentorship
2. Small group accountability
3. Christian education and catechism
4. Practicing Spiritual Disciplines

Mentoring

Mentoring is one-to-one support in development. In the best of all possible worlds, mentoring happens with a family member who is a day-to-day role model for the child. Sometimes grandparents serve this function. Throughout history, godparents have been selected for exactly this purpose. Mentors show personal interest, check in regularly, set aside time, and are available for chats when something comes up. They share tools from their own personal experience. Mentors watch for areas where training is needed. For example, a mentor might notice the approach of adolescence and begin to initiate conversations about growing up. You might think of this as an apprenticeship in Christianity.

To help parents in their role as mentors, it is helpful to provide tools for family devotions that are fun and practical. We can also teach parents to be on the lookout for God in creation, in daily situations, and as our family sustainer.

The family is God-ordained to pass on the faith to the next generation. The denomination offers a devotional magazine for families to help them be successful with devotions. This magazine is *connect!* It has helpful articles for parents and weekly activities (five days and a weekender). Contact www.wordaction.com for a free sample.

Refer to Resource 16-2 in the Student Guide.

Families need your help to give them guidelines and ideas. Parent meetings or newsletters are a way to make information available.

Lori Niles, professor at Mid-America Nazarene University, says children have a much more favorable attitude to family devotions when they are integrated into life rather than implemented as a rigid, scheduled event.

Small Groups

The purpose of small groups is different from a class. While a class may have some characteristics of a small group, their purpose is different. Small groups foster community, usually among a group that has a particular reason for coming together. In the case of discipleship, it would be a place for children who are interested specifically in growing as a Christian and are willing to set aside extra time to talk with other kids who are serious about growing in Christ.

A small group is oriented around answering thematic questions as they arise in life more than around a curricular plan with a scope and sequence. A small group provides a place where people who are going through similar things can strategize for success together. A small group would include games, activities, and services that teach through life experience. You could think of this as an internship facilitated by someone who is a specialist in bringing groups together.

Two booklets that teach kids how to evangelize and disciple their friends are:

So . . . You want to Share Jesus?

So . . . You Want to Disciple Others?

These are available for purchase from Nazarene Publishing House. Each booklet has a free downloadable leader's guide.

Christian Education

Our Christian education in the church is still largely done in a Sunday School model. Our focus is the content of the Scripture—learning about it and how to apply it to our lives. This is where children learn the basics of Bible content to apply in all areas of their lives. In many cases, practically speaking, a Sunday School teacher becomes a mentor who leads a small group that meets during Sunday School and helps children learn the spiritual disciplines they hope will be practiced independently as children grow in the faith.

This is a mighty tall order for a volunteer who may have also a job and family responsibilities. That may be one reason we have such a hard time discipling children for lifelong commitment. The job is too big for one person to accomplish.

Catechism classes are another tool for helping children learn specific content about the Christian faith. A catechism is an organized summary of the essentials of the Christian life as we believe them to be true according to the Christian faith, rehearsed in Holy Scripture, and passed down by the saints to guide us. A catechism traditionally has been basically a rote memorization process. This background may help children to develop an understanding of the meaning behind the theology being developed by their personal experience.

A great resource printed by WordAction for Nazarene children is *Discovering My Faith – Catechism Teaching Resource Packet*.

Practicing Spiritual Disciplines

The learning model associated with Christian education is obviously the classroom. We have looked at discipleship as apprenticing, interning, and being in a classroom. What's left? Obviously, there is independent practice! Students need to be able to put into action those skills that will help them be Christian when no one else is noticing—when they are on their own with God. That leads us to teaching kids about spiritual disciplines.

Remember our adult explanation for helping us understand why we should practice spiritual disciplines was that they put us in a place where God can do for us what we can never do for ourselves—make us Christlike. It is the same for children.

Perhaps they have not seen this happen and have some ideas that could be put into practice in their churches.

How have you seen mentoring, small groups, and Christian education work together in discipling?

Another resource located at www.wordaction.com is *The Young Believer's Discipleship Series*. This resource walks you through a step-by-step plan for nurturing new believers.

Guided Discussion: Teaching Children About Prayer

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 15-5 that the students read for homework.

Teach children to pray in ways that match their developmental stages. However, as in all developmental approaches, children do not always follow the calendars we project. Any child can pray in any way at any age (especially if you use tools to teach them about specific kinds of prayer). This framework helps children have the tools for an effective prayer life. Once children learn these basic prayer patterns, they can participate meaningfully in more highly-developed practices based on these earlier forms. For example, a preteen no longer prays, "God is great. God is good. Let us thank Him for our food." Also, the preteen should have the ability to recognize the significance of "The Lord's Prayer" spoken together or of prayers read together in worship.

Have you had any experiences with children's prayers that taught you something of value?

Is there anything that you could add or modify from the homework reading?

This resource could also be a tool that you can give to parents that would help them in the home.

Refer to Resource 16-3 in the Student Guide.

Talk through the ideas presented in the resource.

The child-friendly prayer list gives us some ideas that get children involved with prayer in a way that is fun and exciting for them. Prayer time should not be something that is tedious, boring, or uncomfortable.

Have you used any of these ideas? What was your experience?

Allow students to learn from each other.

Do you have other ideas that have been successful?

Have you tried something that turned out to be a bad idea?

Lecture: Teaching Children to Study the Bible

(30 minutes)

From the time children are very small, they need a Bible they can call their own. For a young child, there are board-book Bibles that are mainly pictures. Young reader's Bibles use simplified vocabulary that match early reader's emerging skills, such as the New International Reader's Version (NIRV) or the New Century Version (NCV). When children are old enough to read on their own, they should be introduced to Bibles and devotional books designed for their use.

To better understand how children can learn to make the Bible their own source for daily guidance, teach them to use very simple reference sources. Many youth Bibles provide these resources alongside the text. You want to introduce some basic Bible study skills. Help them learn how to use maps and concordances that are in their Bibles.

How do you develop practices that will really help children grow in their faith? Here are just a few ways children can be involved in discovering the Bible.

Refer to Resource 16-4 in the Student Guide.

Strategy 1: Bible Detective

There are lots of strategies you might use. First, help children understand the Bible is organized into chapters and verses. Verses alone don't usually tell the full story. Children need to understand the message. They need to read the Bible in passages. Most modern translations identify passages with topic headings—descriptions that are not part of the Bible text but help us know the main idea of the passage.

After reading the passage, have the children think about what they understand in the passage and pick one thing they don't understand. For example, they might understand the idea of doing good found in one verse, but they may not understand the parts about sowing and reaping in the next verse. That becomes the mystery. How do you find out about sowing and reaping?

You could:

- ask someone with more experience
- use a dictionary or encyclopedia to find out more about words
- follow the "leads" your research turns up

Keep searching until you understand the mystery you have identified.

Strategy 2: Bible Archeologist

All parts of the Bible happened in a time and place and were written by someone for some reason. An archeologist discovers these details and then helps us understand how the people are like or different from us. To discover this information, you could:

- look in the introduction to the Bible book
- look for words in the text or title of the book that will help
- look at Bible maps
- place the event on a Bible timeline

When you know the Galatians were people who were going overboard with the idea of rules to live by, you can begin to see ways that we might be tempted to do the same thing today.

Strategy 3: Heart and Soul

Show the children how to use a highlighter to underline words that cause strong feelings. For example, “carry each other’s burdens” may catch the attention of a compassionate child’s heart. “Without comparing himself to others” may speak to a child who is struggling with peer pressure. This kind of Bible study is not oriented so much to knowledge as to the work of the Spirit in showing us how to live.

Strategy 4: Imagine the Outcomes

Beginning at the first verse of the passage, imagine a real life situation that compares to the verse. For example, Galatians 6:1 talks about a person who is caught in a sin. The child might think about someone they have seen committing a sin. He or she might think about what they thought when it happened. This verse says that spiritual people should restore that person gently. What might a gentle response to this person be? What kind of gentle response might the child give next time he or she is in this situation?

Have the child imagine what it feels like to be restored gently. Have the child think about how Jesus does this for them when they have done something wrong. What are some other times people have been gentle with them?

Like all strategies, this one must be taught and practiced before children can use it effectively.

Strategy 5: Follow the Questions

To help children internalize Scripture, it is necessary to understand how children move from remembering facts to applying content. Benjamin Bloom, educational researcher, developed a classification scheme to describe different levels of cognitive learning. It is called Bloom's taxonomy and can be useful for developing strategies to assist children in progressing from recognizing Bible verses to gaining meaning from the text and then applying biblical principles to their everyday life.

Refer to Resource 16-5 in the Student Guide.

The model in Resource 16-5 suggests that the adult teacher may develop strategies to guide children into higher levels of understanding and creative application through a progression of teaching-learning questions. To assist children with the lowest level of learning, remembering, the teacher might ask: "How should a brother who is caught in a sin be restored?" The answer is, "Gently."

Moving to the next level, we need to make sure that a child understands. A question might be, "What does gently mean?" There are many ways a child could answer that question based on his or her own experience. There are some wrong answers, and the teacher should help the child understand why they are incorrect.

Next, the child might be encouraged to apply the information through a question such as, "When was there a time someone treated you gently when you made a mistake?"

An analyzing question might be framed as an example: "Jared discovered Alyssa taking a cookie from the tray after their mother asked them to wait until after dinner. Jared yelled, 'Stop!' at Alyssa and ran to tell his mom. Did Jared appropriately apply Galatians 6:1? How do you know?"

An evaluating question might be: "What could Jared have done better to apply Galatians 6:1?"

To move to the final step of creating, you might assign a task: "Create a short skit with a friend to show how you might live out Galatians 6:1."

Notice how this process takes the learner deeper and deeper one step at a time. It is possible to skip steps, but each step of the process leads to a better and deeper ability to bring the text to life.

If you are looking for good published Bible studies with questions, make sure the questions move above and beyond the remembering stage. Remembering is important, but remembering alone doesn't lead to active life formation or change. Children need to go deeper into the text.

There are many other ways to teach children how to study the Bible for life change. These are just a few you might consider so that children can work toward studying the Bible for themselves. As a bonus—by the time a child works through this series of exercises for understanding, the passage is often memorized, or the principle is committed to memory whether the words are or not.

Refer to Resource 16-6 in the Student Guide.

Some Mistakes in Teaching Bible Study to Children

1. *Too much, too fast.* The practice of a chapter a day (or a Psalm, a Proverb, or a passage) doesn't give a child a chance to dwell deeply with the concepts. They have completed a reading task that is part of developing a discipline. But, is that really all we want them to accomplish? Less may be more as children develop personal devotional skills.
2. *Memorizing words without exploring understanding.* We can't assume that just because we taught the verse, they understood the verse. Children need to take whatever steps are necessary to put the verse into their own words.
3. *Memorizing verses without putting them into the context of God's story.* By focusing on memorization of important concept verses, we sometimes fail to help children get the overall view of the Bible as a story that continues in history.
4. *Teaching stories without drawing out the life principles New Testament letters present so clearly.* Children need to see the connections between how Bible characters act and the standards God sets for our character and behavior.
5. *Overestimating children's independent reading level.* Children can understand what is read to them approximately two years before they can understand what they read on their own until they are about middle school age. Just because they can read the words does not mean they can comprehend the meaning independently. Children

who do not have strong reading skills can listen to brief passages of Scripture and feel just as successful in developing the spiritual disciple of Bible study as those who read the passages themselves.

6. *Assuming that "One size fits all."* Our teaching needs to reflect the different needs of different learners. The methods we teach children to use independently should reflect their different learning styles. There is not a right way and a wrong way to explore the Bible. God promises that Scripture will not return void and His Spirit can be trusted to reveal truth!
7. *We fail to check for understanding.* If we send kids out to study the Bible without following up on their understanding, children may develop misperceptions. One way we can follow up is to ask them to teach us what they are learning from the passages they explore. Christian life is best learned in the context of conversation and practice.
8. *We fail to help children understand that their ability to live up to God's standards will grow as they do.* Children need to understand that we are all growing in grace and becoming more Christlike as God continues to work in our hearts and lives.

If there is time have the students work through a passage of scripture using the 5 strategies.

*Possible scripture:
Mark 9:33-37*

This is a Bible study that students would lead children through, not a Bible study for themselves.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on each student.

What was the most significant thing that you learned from this lesson?

Do you have any questions about anything?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss different models of ministry.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Develop a plan for your church for the parents and/or teachers to follow up a child's conversion.

Read Resource 16-7.

Read Resource 16-8.

You will need to assess the number of students in the class and how much time is available for presentations. Tell the students how much time each of them will have.

Read Resource 16-9. Prepare a Children's Church lesson that you will present in class. Use whatever method or technique that you find helpful in presenting a lesson that will impact children. You may choose the age group and the lesson topic. You are not limited to the methods that are described in the resource.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights on the material presented in class. Include your thoughts about leading a child to Christ. Really think through this in terms of your responsibility to God, to truth, and to developing a lifelong servant of Jesus Christ.

Punctuate the Finish

A little boy opened the big, family Bible. With fascination, he looked at the old pages as he turned them. Then something fell out of the Bible. He picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that had been pressed between the pages.

"Mama, look what I found," the boy called out.

"What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked.

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered: "I'm not sure, but I think it is Adam's suit!"

The Bible is literally living and active for many children. Encourage their love for God through reading Scripture!

Preparation for Next Lesson

Before Class: Write several common Bible stories on small strips of paper and place them in a box (envelope). Write the names of the tunes of several familiar children's songs on strips of paper and place them in a second box (envelope).

In Class: Have your students draw one strip from each box (envelope) and attempt to write lyrics that emphasize a point from the Bible story to the tune of a familiar song. This is a great activity for your musical learners! Let the students share their songs.

Lesson 17

Leading Children in Worship

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Kid's Worship— Children's Church	Small Groups	Resource 16-7 Resource 17-1
0:25	Children's Church	Lecture	Resource 17-2 Resource 17-3
0:40	Using Music for Worship	Class Activity	Resource 16-8 Bible verses Song tunes
0:50	Accomplishing Worship Goals	Lecture	Resource 17-4
1:00	Methods for Your Message	Presentations	Resource 16-9
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

<http://keyboardsforchrist.com/kids%20in%20worship.html>

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students share their papers on a discipleship plan for children.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to discuss models and methods for children's worship.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- describe the purposes of worship
- list several models and methods for children's worship
- know the strategies and skills required for using music effectively in children's worship

Motivator

Wes Eby. A Dictionary of the Bible and Christian Doctrine. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 334.

"Worship of God can happen in private. It also occurs when the members of a church come together to worship. People worship God through adoration, prayers, thanksgiving, and preaching. People also worship God by singing hymns and by receiving the sacraments. Public worship prepares people to serve God in the world. This service is also a kind of worship."

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Kid's Worship—Children's Church

(15 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students each.

Refer to Resource 16-7 that was read for homework.

Refer to Resource 17-1 in the Student Guide.

You read about 7 different models for Children's Church as part of homework. Spend the next 10 minutes working on Resource 17-1. The objective is not to plan out a specific children's church session but to look at the overall concept of each model and how it could be improved.

Your group will have an opportunity to share your ideas.

Lecture/Discussion: Kid's Worship—Children's Church

(10 minutes)

The model that you follow for children's worship may be a variation of several of the models that we looked at. However, there are key elements that need to be incorporated into your plans and model.

Refer to Resource 17-2 in the Student Guide.

Important Elements to Keep in Mind for Children's Worship

1. Variety may be the spice of life, but repetition is the meat and potatoes. Be creative, but every week include:
 - Music
 - Prayer
 - Offering
 - Bible focus on God's awesomeness
 - Traditions that are important to your church such as greetings, responsive readings, brief silence, benediction, special music, Lord's Prayer
2. Pay close attention to making worship different from instructional classes. Consider the environment carefully. Plan the setting so it helps you create the attitude you want to inspire.
3. Demonstrate worship yourself. Encourage adults to be models of worship. All adults should be participating in worship, not just watching the children worship or preparing for another activity.

4. Be intentional about encouraging children to take part in whatever model you choose. If you want adults who will pray aloud, offer children opportunities to pray aloud. Let kids read Scripture. Let the children lead in singing or playing instruments of all kinds. Don't just add children as an afterthought! Plan for the children to participate. Give the children the Bible verses ahead of time so they can practice. Give children time to practice the music also.
5. Don't miss teachable moments. Pay attention to what is happening in the children's lives, your congregation, and the world. Pay attention to what children are interested in today. God is a part of it all, so help children realize the spiritual connections by asking, "What's God got to do with that?"

Refer to Resource 17-3 in the Student Guide.

Talk through the schedule.

Class Activity: Using Music in Worship

(15 minutes)

Before Class: Write several common Bible stories on small strips of paper and place them in a box (envelope). Write the names of the tunes of several familiar children's songs on strips of paper and place them in a second box (envelope).

In Class: Have your students draw one strip from each box (envelope) and attempt to write lyrics that emphasize a point from the Bible story to the tune of a familiar song. This is a great activity for your musical learners! Let the students share their songs.

You read information about music and the worship experience in your homework. Music is an art form that binds families, groups, and cultures together. It is an important part of our lives.

We are going to spend some time being creative with music. You will each pick a Bible story out of the box and a children's tune out of the other box. You will have about 8 minutes to create a song—lyrics—that conveys the story using the tune that you have. We will then have a sharing time.

We may never get any of our songs published but children delight in songs like these. When we allow them to be creative and do activities like this it brings out their talents and encourages them to continue to use those talents.

Lecture: Accomplishing Worship Goals

(10 minutes)

Let's talk about some specific ways to use music to accomplish worship goals.

Refer to Resource 17-4 in the Student Guide.

Roles of the Worship Leader

1. The worship leader selects the songs to facilitate worship. The real purposes of worship songs are to tell God how much He means to us and tell each other what we think of God. We do this through:
 - Action songs—high energy
 - Adoration songs—low energy but high intensity
 - Adult worship songs—teaching children the music of their larger faith community
 - Psalms—scripture songs
 - Hymns—music that conveys important truth
 - Spiritual songs—usually original or very modern songs

Most of the time, the progression of this sequence begins with high action songs, moving to praise songs that are upbeat and fun, then to worshipful songs about God, and finally to adoration songs that are sung to God in an attitude of prayer. Leaders should be attentive to the progression of music and also to the content. Music should lead children toward the theme and content of the worship message.

2. The worship leader models worship. This helps children move together in the same direction. You cannot lead children where you are not willing to go. Your enthusiasm inspires them. Your attention directed to God directs their attention to God. Your thoughtful reflective worship models for them what your expectations are. It is almost impossible to worship and discipline at the same time. The worship leader needs adult helpers, so he or she can maintain a focus on God so the children will focus on Him too.
3. The worship leader should help children understand the meaning behind the music. Music often uses vocabulary and imagery that are unfamiliar to children, but not beyond their understanding. Explain words and concepts to the children. Help children realize worship means drawing attention to God rather than to them.

4. The worship leader sets the environment and tone for experiencing God. The leader does not CREATE an experience with God. The worship leader helps children put themselves in the place where they can recognize God's presence, and He does the rest.

Children are not too young to experience God. However, they may not have the prior experience to be able to identify God's presence. The worship leader helps children recognize how and where God is working and gives them an opportunity to acknowledge God's presence. It goes without saying that the worship leader must be able to recognize God at work.

Practical Guidelines

Children need both predictability and surprise. Keep the routine and your interaction style fairly regular, but make the content surprising.

Be creative. Use games, unusual instruments, shared microphone time, occasional audience help or solo work from children, lots of visuals (not just words, but pictures that reinforce the song's message), and video backgrounds where appropriate.

Be clear. Give clear directions, loud enough to be heard. When projecting words, make them large enough to read. Have few enough words to a page that kids don't get lost trying to read them. Don't get carried away with fancy lettering. You can use a fun font or letter style for the title of the song, but use clear printed lettering for the lyrics.

Be sensitive. There should be less and less direction as the worship moves along. One leader summarized this idea: "Become invisible as God becomes visible." Encourage children to close their eyes and visualize God seated on His throne. Teach the value of prayer postures, such as folding the hands, bowing the head, turning palms up, and other quiet, calming positions. Stay aware of the time and children's attention spans. Leave them at an appropriate energy level for whatever worship activity is to come.

Integrate brief prayers with singing. Encourage silence (with guidelines of what to think about), sharing of testimony with a partner or to the whole group, and listening to music, as well as singing.

Continually narrow the children's focus. By the end of music time, they should be focused on God.

And on the practical side, obtain appropriate permission and give credit for any music and lyrics you use that are not public domain. You are also modeling respect for copyright laws and practices.

Presentations: Methods for Your Message

(25 minutes)

The time allowed for each student will depend on the number of students in the class.

Other sections of the lesson could be shortened if you need more time for the presentations.

Have each student write a sentence or two of critique for each of the lesson presentations.

It is important that you give each student an in-depth evaluation of the presentation.

You have each been working on a demonstration of a method that you use to present a Children's Church lesson. We all look forward to learning new ideas from each other.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- describe the purposes of worship
- list several models and methods for children's worship
- know the strategies and skills required for using music effectively in children's worship

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, we will discuss a philosophy of ministry.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Plan a complete worship service for children based on the information we discussed. It should include: Topic, Scripture, Music, Student involvement, and method of lesson presentation.

Visit a children's worship service at another church. Write a one-page paper of your experience.

Read Resource 17-5.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include your thoughts about the models of worship and what you think is best.

Punctuate the Finish

Beckwith, Ivy. Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21st Century. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004, 151.

Entering into the mystery and majesty of God through praise, prayer, silence, generosity, and interaction with God's voice should perhaps be the most engaging activity one does all week. Worship should never be boring. But being meaningfully engaged in an activity is different from being entertained. In the first, we are active participant. In the second, we are passive observers.

Preparation for Next Lesson

You will need a puzzle for the next lesson. The puzzle should be fairly small—100 pieces at the most.

Divide the pieces into equal portions for each of the students in the class. Put the pieces into envelopes or plastic bags. You will keep the box with the picture separate to be used later in the activity.

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Lesson 18

A Philosophy of Ministry

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Understanding the Value of a Philosophy	Class Activity	Puzzle
0:15	Understanding the Value of a Philosophy	Guided Discussion	Resource 17-5 Resource 18-1
0:25	Understanding the Components of a Philosophy of Ministry	Lecture	Resource 18-2
0:45	How to Write a Philosophy of Ministry	Guided Activity	Resource 18-3 Music
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=philosophy>

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students share their worship service plan with each other.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to examine the value of a philosophy of ministry and learn how to write one.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand the value in identifying a philosophy of ministry
- understand what components should be considered in developing a philosophy of ministry
- begin to write a philosophy of ministry

Motivator

Refer to the quotes in the Lesson Overview in the Student Guide.

"Philosophy is the science which considers truth."
—Aristotle.

"Philosophy, rightly defined, is simply the love of wisdom."
—Cicero

"A true philosophy will always show that a vast, perhaps the larger, proportion of the truth arises from the seemingly irrelevant."
—Edgar Allen Poe

"Philosophy is like trying to open a safe with a combination lock; each little adjustment of the dial seems to achieve nothing; only when everything is in place does the door open."
—Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Allow for response.

Do any of these quotes summarize your understanding of philosophy? Do you have a better way of stating your understanding?

Lesson Body

Class Activity: Understanding the Value of a Philosophy

(5 minutes)

Distribute the envelopes or baggies with puzzle pieces to each student.

After the students have struggled with the process or when they ask for the picture, ask them what they believe the puzzle is a picture of.

Show them the picture after a few minutes and ask how it helps to put the puzzle together.

They probably will not get the puzzle completed—that is not the real objective.

You each have a portion of a puzzle. Your task is to brainstorm/work together on how to put the puzzle together. You will have about 5 minutes to complete the puzzle.

Guided Discussion: Understanding the Value of a Philosophy

(10 minutes)

Refer to Resource 17-5 that the students read for homework.

Refer to Resource 18-1 in the Student Guide.

Challenge the students' responses. Make them justify their answers.

How does the puzzle activity relate to your experience or understanding of philosophy?

The pyramid in Resource 18-1 shows how each block in our ministry builds on the ideas before it.

Do you believe that philosophy is the foundation of the practices of your ministry? Why or why not?

Can you give an example of a time when practices conflicted with philosophy in your life? What happened?

Lecture: Understanding the Components of a Philosophy of Ministry

(20 minutes)

While there is no precise formula for developing a philosophy of ministry, there are some things that are required in this process:

1. An attitude of prayer.
2. A commitment to intense reflection on your life and your thoughts.
3. A willingness to spend time developing the document.

You will also find it helpful to have some resources: Bible, class notes, journals, books, etc.

You are going to be provided with a list of guidelines to assist you in this process. However, this is not a question and answer experience. The questions are provided to help you consider what is important in developing a philosophy. If you answered each question thoroughly, you would be writing a book! In the next part of our session, we will discuss a strategy for prewriting and writing your philosophy.

Refer to Resource 18-2 in the Student Guide. Look over the questions together.

Ask the students to contribute other questions that would fit into each category, but don't ask them to ponder the questions at this point. Instead, focus on the kinds of ideas that are appropriate.

The students have the bullet points in the Student Guide. But do not have the opening sentence(s) under each heading.

In the next section, you will be asking students to fill in a few answers that will get them started in the prewriting phase of the assignment.

Personal Basis

First, you will be looking at questions related to your own personal experience.

- What are the major forces that have shaped your life?
- What do you notice about what you have learned about life so far?
- What has God done for you? How is He changing your life?
- How do you take care of yourself so that you can minister effectively to others?
- How will you continue learning so you can lead others?
- What are some influential resources—books, thoughts, people, experts, experiences—that have shaped your thoughts? Look for quotes that express your own thoughts and feelings well.

Theological Basis

These are questions based on your understanding of God and His plans.

- What do you believe about God? What is God's nature, what characteristics dominate God's interaction with humanity? (Don't forget that God exists in three persons and each has a role in your ministry.)
- What do you believe about humans? What are they like? What do they need or long for?
- What do you believe about sin and salvation?
- What do you believe about Scripture and how it should be used?
- What do you believe about the church?
- What does God want from His people? How do you believe God wants us to live?

Developmental Basis—Human Development

These are questions about the characteristics of childhood and their developmental stages.

- What are children like physically, cognitively, emotionally, socially, spiritually?
- What do they need from adults?
- How should we understand and work with their changing needs?
- What are some key characteristics that help us understand what they need for spiritual formation?
- What role does family play in children's lives?
- What role does the church play in children's lives?

Cultural Basis

The church does not exist in a vacuum. We are called to be God's people in the midst of a larger culture. If we only understand where Christianity has come from and do not understand the world we are ministering within, we can't be an effective evangelist or train others to do that.

- What do you understand about the world you live in? What is the world like?
- What trends or forces do you recognize that may influence children and the church?
- What should be the church's role in interacting with cultural forces?
- Are there historical events that influence how you see the world today?

Ministry Basis

In addition to our biblical and theological understanding of ministry, there are also dynamics in place that are unique to our work in the Church of the Nazarene. We must examine our theology about the church.

- What do you understand about how the church works in practical terms (universal, denominational, local)?
- How do you understand your role in the church?
- What responsibilities do the church and children have to each other? The church and families?
- What attitudes should the church have toward children?
- What social roles and responsibilities does the church have toward children?
- What should the church NOT do in relation to children?

- What should you always keep in mind when working with children in the church?

Education/Learning Basis

We are learning much from research into the human brain. We are spending a great deal of time in this course looking at how people learn and what we can do to help them learn.

- How do you think people learn? What are specific characteristics of how children learn?
- What is the relationship between content knowledge and wisdom for life?
- What specifically do you want children to learn (content, attitudes, behaviors, skills)?
- What conditions or attitudes need to be present for children to learn?
- What are the roles of the teacher, the pastor, and the parent?
- What teaching skills or behaviors promote learning?

Administrative Basis

Much of your responsibility as a children's leader will be in the area of administration.

- How should the children's ministry function?
- Are there standards for conducting ministry to children?
- What should be the standards for planning?
- How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your ministry to children?

Ultimate Outcomes

These questions help you understand why your philosophy matters.

- What should happen for children, parents, and the church as a result of children's ministry?
- How does God see your efforts?
- How does this ministry fit into God's plans?

Remember Edgar Allen Poe's quote in the motivator? "The larger proportion of the truth arises from the seemingly irrelevant."

The little things we don't spend a lot of time thinking about form a framework for everything that consumes our life. If we are unaware of the significance of the little things, we often arrive at the end and wonder, "What went wrong?" or "How did a nice guy like me

wind up in a mess like this?" Small seemingly insignificant choices can determine the direction of our ministry, just as small helms determine the directions of great ships.

On the other hand, the magnitude of getting this philosophy on paper may not seem like a small feat at all, so let's look at some strategies to simplify it.

Guided Activity: How to Write a Philosophy of Ministry

(40 minutes)

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time! And that is how we begin to write a philosophy.

Refer to Resource 18-3 in the Student Guide.

Step 1: Outline it. We've already looked at some questions. They help us begin. Your outline starts there and you make additions or changes as you feel the need.

Step 2: Sit with it. Put aside your pens and pencils or computers. Close your Student Guide. If I have emphasized the significance of developing a strong philosophy, you probably feel a little anxiety. Pray that the Lord will direct your thoughts and help you understand why you feel as you do about some issues. Close your eyes and let all kinds of thoughts come to your mind.

At this point, put on some instrumental music, and encourage the students to sit with their eyes closed for about 5 minutes. Forbid writing at this time, as the goal is to let the students think freely.

Step 3: Begin Writing. Open your eyes, and begin writing. Use the space on Resource 18-2 to write one word or short phrase answers in random order or use a blank piece of paper. You can put your thoughts into order later. Don't answer the questions in detail. Just write words that will help you remember your thoughts later.

Allow about 10 minutes for students to engage in this process.

Step 4: Discuss Some Issues to Clarify Thoughts. Now return to the questions. Which do you need to think about more? Choose a partner and choose one topic to talk through together, answering each question aloud.

Allow about 10 minutes for students to dialog.

Step 5: Support Your Thoughts. Look for important quotes or Scripture references that support your thoughts. Your thoughts should be supported by sources that are significant. Some of your thoughts will be dependent on Bible verses. Think about this part of the process as adding pictures—word pictures—that illustrate your main points.

This is the end of the prewriting process. If there is a part of this exercise you found especially helpful, you may want to spend more time with it. Otherwise you are ready to begin to write when you get home.

Writing the Paper

Here is one strategy for writing your paper.

Rough draft. Use the outline to format the paper. Write one section of the paper at a time. Don't worry about the length. Just say what's important. Remember you won't answer all the questions one by one in your paper. The questions are guides to your writing. Take a break between writing each section.

Revise. Set the draft aside for a day or so. When you come back to it, read it again to see if it still makes sense to you. Correct any errors.

Option: Have a friend read it. Ask them what parts of your work are unclear, poor grammar, or misspelled. You want a good critique of your work, so your writing will be clear and accurate.

Finalize. Check the length. You should have no more than five pages. Ask yourself if you should add some details or if you can say anything in a more concise way. Make any necessary changes.

Option: Have a friend read it.

Write the final draft when you are comfortable with your thoughts, your choice of words and ideas, and the comments of others.

If there are specific guidelines you want your class to follow, introduce the format at this time.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Allow for response.

Do you have any thoughts or comments concerning this lesson?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we will explore classroom management.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

If possible have the students send to you (email) their rough drafts a couple of days before the next class so that you can give suggestions to them before they write the final paper.

Work on your philosophy of ministry paper, following the process we discussed in class. You will hand in your finished paper in the last class. Bring a copy of your rough/near-finished draft with you to the next class.

Read Resource 18-4.

Read Resource 18-5.

Write in your journal. How has working on a philosophy of ministry impacted your life?

Punctuate the Finish

Nine requisites for contented living:

- Health enough to make work a pleasure;
- Wealth enough to support your needs;
- Strength to battle with difficulties and overcome them;
- Grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them;
- Patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished;
- Charity enough to see some good in your neighbor;
- Love enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others;
- Faith enough to make real the things of God;
- Hope enough to remove all anxious fears concerning the future.

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

For Next Lesson

*You will need five balls—
approximately the same size but
different colors—in a box, and you
need a stopwatch.*

*Tennis balls of different colors
would be great.*

Lesson 19

Discipline and Classroom Management

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:15	Why Children Misbehave	Class Activity	Resource 18-4 Colored balls and box Stopwatch
0:30	A Goal-directed View of Misbehavior	Guided Discussion	Resource 18-5
0:50	Establishing an Environment for Success	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 19-1 Resource 19-2 Resource 19-3
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Nelson, Jane. *Positive Discipline*. Series available from <http://www.positivediscipline.com/>

Lesson Introduction

(15 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students read each other's Philosophy of Ministry. The students should write questions and comments on each other's papers.

Return and collect homework. If you have received rough drafts from the students return them, with your comments. Your evaluation, comments and suggestions at this time will allow them to write a better philosophy.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to discuss discipline and classroom management.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- Understand some reasons children misbehave.
- Suggest interventions for particular misbehaviors.
- Identify some strategies for developing an environment that promotes self-discipline.

Motivator

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/h/harry_emerson_fosdick.html

No horse gets anywhere until he is harnessed. No stream or gas drives anything until it is confined. No Niagara is ever turned into light and power until it is tunneled. No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated, disciplined.

—Harry Emerson Fosdick

Lesson Body

Class Activity: Why Children Misbehave

(15 minutes)

You will need five balls—approximately the same size but different colors—in a box, and you need a stopwatch.

Have the students stand in a circle. Place the box of balls on the floor in the middle of the group.

If you only have a couple of students in your class you may need to ask a few others to participate in order for the students to experience the affect of this activity.

As you present a lesson, many things are happening in class. Every activity should have a purpose, and you want your students to leave the class with a sound understanding of your Bible lesson.

Each of your classroom activities can be represented by one of these balls. You have a limited amount of class time, let's say two minutes. Your job is to make sure every member of our class makes contact with every activity (ball) within the two-minute period. Now you want active engagement, so the balls can't just be passed from person to person! You can't pass the ball to someone standing on either side of you. At the end of the two minutes, all the balls must be returned to the box.

Roll the balls out of the box at the center of the circle, and shout Go! Start the stopwatch. What happens depends largely on the personality of your class. After two minutes or when the group expresses complete frustration, yell STOP!

What was wrong with this activity?

How is this experience like or unlike your class time with children?

Let the students devise a strategy they all understand and can be successful with. You may or may not want to actually do the activity again.

I did give you some structure—rules and a time limit. Let's keep those rules, but let's add some additional structure. How can we better accomplish the goal of each person touching each ball sometime within the two minutes?

This activity was designed to demonstrate what can happen in a poorly-structured class session. It is the teacher's responsibility to manage the class effectively. Only part of that responsibility pertains to goals and preparing a lesson. The rest depends on active classroom management.

We just discovered one reason kids misbehave—not enough direction. That is one element over which teachers have a great deal of control. You read about some reasons for misbehavior in your homework.

Refer to Resource 18-4 that the students read for homework.

Allow for discussion.

You may need to give a few examples of your own.

What successes have you had dealing with any of these behaviors?

Guided Discussion: A Goal-directed View of Misbehavior

(20 minutes)

Throughout this class, you have been encouraged to have a planned approach to each class session. Your mission statement tells you why you are going into the classroom. However, your mission statement and goals are not necessarily shared by your students as they walk into the classroom.

What do you think some of their missions might be?

Refer to Resource 18-5 that the students read for homework.

Throughout this portion of the lesson, allow students to suggest management strategies that might work for each profile before reading the bulleted suggestions.

Let's look at the four main character profiles for children's behavior and misbehavior, from your homework, to help us develop some intervention strategies that work.

Miss Piggy

So what is a teacher to do with a Miss Piggy child? Your tendency may be to say, "I will not dignify that behavior with a response." However, the behavior is an indicator of a real need to be seen, noticed, appreciated, and valued.

Help this child to begin to identify when the need for attention arises, so the need can be met appropriately. For example, say to this child: "I notice you try to make everyone laugh whenever you don't want to do an activity. Instead of speaking out, could you wink at me? As soon as I finish giving instructions, you and I can talk alone for a minute about how to do the

activity." This allows you to meet this child's need for attention and special instruction.

Make a list on a board or flip chart.

What other strategies would you suggest?

Allow for discussion before giving the bullet list.

Other strategies are:

- Stand near the child, putting a hand gently on his or her shoulder or arm.
- Develop a signal that lets the child know you see him or her and are acknowledging the observation. Signals that will not disrupt your teaching are a finger to your lips, a point, or a tug on your ear.
- Actively involve the child by asking him or her for a favor or asking a specific question directed just to him or her.
- If all else fails, good naturedly remind the child that if he or she needs attention you can spend time together after class. Then follow up and direct your full attention that way!

Superhero

Whenever possible, give the child choices—including the choice to opt out. The only way to really win with a Superhero is to refuse to play power games. Appreciate his or her strength when it is used appropriately, such as making a decision and sticking to it or persevering when something gets tough.

Again make a list of ideas and allow for discussion before giving suggested ideas.

What other strategies would you suggest?

Some other suggestions:

- Make a date to discuss the issue later when there is no audience, or discuss it with the parents.
- Set consequences for inappropriate behavior and stick to it.
- Distract from the issue with humor. (Try to break the impasse, but do not joke about or excuse the misbehavior.)
- Accept the opt-out option. "I see you have decided not to make a gift for your mom."
- Give limited latitude. "You have until 10:30 to change your mind."

Sullen Saul

Help this child steer clear of his or her danger zone by building a loving protective relationship. Be this child's champion by teaching him or her to appropriately express fear or hurt feelings before they turn to anger.

Again make a list of ideas and allow for discussion before giving suggested ideas.

What other strategies would you suggest?

Here are some tools to use with this child:

- Turn these children into your helpers before they have a chance to criticize.
- Use teamwork strategies.
- Help these children identify other ways of behaving that do not get a negative response. "I'd rather you tell me you don't want to do the activity than to say it's stupid."
- Look for and notice things that really do matter to these children and include those topics in the conversation and discussion. If a child loves dogs, talk about your dog. If a child is fascinated with airplanes, imagine what kind of flying escape vehicle might have been useful for Joshua and Caleb.

Fearful Fran

Sometimes this behavior is caused by unrealistic expectations or the belief that only perfection is acceptable. Sometimes a highly competitive environment is to blame. Try to reduce the stress level by not linking performance to reward and stopping comparisons within the classroom. Encourage an "I can" attitude by providing tools rather than "doing it for" this child.

Again make a list of ideas and allow for discussion before giving suggested ideas.

What other strategies would you suggest?

Other suggestions:

- Break complex tasks down into simpler ones. (Take one jump, take one jump, and take one jump—instead of take three jumps.)
- Point to previous successes.
- Teach the child self-affirming, God-centered promises to repeat. ("I can do all things through Christ," or "When I am afraid, I will trust in you!")
- Make mistakes—including your own—"No big deal."
- Talk about learning from the mistakes.

Do you have any ideas or suggestions for any of the other four profiles from the homework?

Remember these facts:

- Kids who feel liked and appreciated don't need to use negative behavior to get attention.
- Kids who are intellectually stimulated don't need to create their own excitement.
- Kids who feel in control of their own responses don't need to work so hard to control others.

Lecture/Discussion: Establishing an Environment for Success

(35 minutes)

Call on students to read the following passages of scripture:

Psalm 94:12

Proverbs 1:1-7

Proverbs 12:1

Proverbs 15:5 and 32

What is the theme of these verses?

What words are repeated?

What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

These passages help us understand the meaning of the root word of discipline or disciple. The root word from the Latin means "to learn." If learning is going to happen, it will happen because children are able to apply discipline to their lives and use personal self-control. In other words, children must value discipline as a tool for learning.

Allow for response.

What is it that we must understand about discipline to learn to love or value it?

There are all kinds of disciplinary strategies that schools and churches have adopted. Some are based on clearly defined rules and punishments. Others are based on clear concepts and consequences.

Adults tend to choose a disciplinary style from these:

- Permissive—Children should do what THEY want to do
- Authoritarian—Children should do what an authority figure wants them to do.
- Authoritative—Children should choose their actions within the limits set for them.

Allow for response.

Which of these styles most closely matches the way you were raised?

Which of these styles most closely matches the way you try to be with children?

What are some challenges you face in exercising your disciplinary style?

It is one thing to have your own style. It is another thing to work as part of a team that has many different styles for managing children. We know children need

consistent discipline that is fair and friendly in order to come to trust and value it. To give children the best kind of learning and growing environment, adults may have to set aside some of their personal preferences and experiences in order to give children the best opportunities to learn self-discipline.

Refer to Resource 19-1 in the Student Guide.

It is important for every church to establish a policy about disciplinary procedures. These are the actions that will be taken by all teachers, regardless of the specific strategies they employ.

- A church-wide discipline policy must be consistent, but open and flexible enough to allow for the personalities and preferences of each teacher to have a role in the classroom.
- A church-wide discipline policy must have spiritual formation as its primary objective. In order to do that, the policies must encourage personal responsibility and thoughtful application of biblical principles in a developmentally-appropriate way.
- A church-wide discipline policy must have some principles that are "absolute" based on an understanding of God's value on children and the laws of the land.
- A church-wide discipline policy should establish lines of accountability between the child, the teacher, the supervising pastor, and the parents.
- A church-wide discipline policy should be publicized freely so all adults can correct children in the spirit of discipleship.

An example of this kind of policy is:

1. Adults will never physically discipline a child.
2. Adults will not yell at or degrade a child. A raised voice is appropriate only to get the attention of a child who is in immediate danger.
3. If adults can no longer manage the behavior of a child in the classroom, they will contact the children's pastor (or director) who will take one of the following actions at his or her discretion:
 - Remove the child from the classroom for conferencing
 - Assign a personal mentor to the child so he or she can remain in the classroom
 - Request the parents to make a decision on what the child should do instead of being in class that day
4. Adults will never ban a child from a class or worship session. Commitment to this principle may demand

that parents participate in the classroom or that special arrangements be made on a regular basis.

This particular policy puts responsibility on the children's pastor and the parents to make sure the real disciplinary needs of the child are being addressed. It allows the teacher to focus on the responsibility to look to the interest of the whole class. It is corrective in nature and not punitive. It doesn't define punishments, but it does suggest that there will be appropriate consequences for actions based on the child's real needs.

Allow for response.

Do you have any comments on this policy or suggestions for a policy? What has worked for you?

Refer to Resource 19-2 in the Student Guide.

Many churches also find it helpful to have church-wide rules of behavior for the children. Some guidelines for this strategy are:

- Make the rules simple and few.
- Post the rules and remind everyone about the rules regularly.
- Share the rules with parents, students, and the greater church community.
- Make the rules narrow enough to be agreed upon by the whole team and broad enough to allow each team member to be themselves in managing their classroom.
- Call them behavior standards, Christ-like conduct guidelines, powerful principles, or something else! Do not call them rules.

Reasons for not calling them rules:

1. A rule-based system invites rebellion:
 - "If I don't get caught, it doesn't count."
 - "Where there's a law, there's a loophole."
 - "I can do anything you didn't say I couldn't."
2. You can't create or remember enough rules to cover every situation.
3. Rules teach kids to rely on a list rather than to engage in thoughtful personal responsibility for their actions.
4. Most importantly, from a spiritual perspective, it encourages a legalistic way of life rather than a principle-based way of thinking about life—an Old Testament rather than a New Testament way.

Let's look at an example of one district's camp discipline policy based on the acronym SAFE:

Refer to Resource 19-3 in the Student Guide.

The two-standard approach allows you to be consistent without getting you locked into a plan that doesn't allow for the direction of the Holy Spirit. It allows you to administer discipline in a way that teaches rather than punishes. The camp staff still had to help children understand specific guidelines for safety. (Everyone must wear closed-toe shoes. Pinecones are not for throwing.) These rules were framed in the context of teaching rather than controlling.

Some of this lesson is adapted from material originally published in Beckwith, Ivy (ed.) 1998-1999 Hands-On Bible Curriculum Director Manual. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 1998.

Within a church-wide policy, there is still room for specific behavioral standards in each class or worship setting based on the developmental level of the children, the personality of the teacher, the needs of the specific children, and the planned activities. These standards tend to be temporary based on specific circumstances and still reflect the goals and objectives of the larger church policy.

Allow for response.

How are the concepts presented in this lesson like or not like the policies in place in your church?

How might you adapt some of these thoughts about discipline into your situation?

Help the students realize that this one lesson does not begin to cover all that they will need to know about classroom management and children's behaviors.

Seek additional information. Most colleges offer a whole course in Classroom Management/Behavior Modification as part of their elementary education curriculum. If you are not seeking college credit or a degree they may allow you to audit the class.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Can you

- understand some reasons children misbehave
- suggest interventions for particular misbehaviors
- identify some strategies for developing an environment that promotes self-discipline

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, you will share your philosophy of ministry and review the topics of this course.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Finalize your Philosophy of Ministry. Use the comments and suggestions from your classmate and instructor to clarify and improve your paper.

Observe several classrooms—church and/or school. What behaviors did you observe? How was it handled? What was the style of classroom management? What rules were evident? What did you learn that will help you in your ministry? Write a 2-page paper.

Bring your journal to class. The instructor will be verifying that you have been faithful to the journaling assignment.

Write in your journal. Include your reflections, reactions, and insights about the material presented in class. Include a section on either your current discipline practices with children or your ideas for implementing a plan in the future.

Punctuate the Finish

Of all the strategies for disciplining children, “walking your talk” may be the most important one of all.

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Lesson 20

Ready to Minister

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	What Can We Expect Children to Learn About God and the Bible	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 16-1 Resource 20-1
0:20	Children and Discipleship	Lecture/Discussion	
0:35	Sharing What We Have Learned	Student Sharing	
1:15	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students share their observation papers.

Return and collect homework.

Make arrangements for returning the Philosophy of Ministry papers to the students.

Orientation

Our purpose in meeting today is to discuss what children can learn about God and the Bible at different ages and how they can be disciples and disciple others. You will also share your philosophy of ministry.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

By the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand what children can be expected to learn about God and the Bible
- know how they can disciple children and teach them to disciple others
- share their philosophy of ministry with their classmates

Motivator

Michael Henderson. Making Disciples One Conversation at a Time. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2007, 147.

"Henrietta Mears was an influential Christian educator who instilled vision in the minds of the youth in her church. One of these young men was Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusades, whose ministry has affected millions of people around the world. He kept a photo of Miss Mears on his desk throughout his ministry. Why? Because she was a good teacher? No, because she instilled in him a great vision. She helped him see what nobody else could see: that he could reach an entire world with the gospel."

How can you instill a vision in the children to whom you minister?

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: What Can We Expect Children to Learn About God and the Bible

(10 minutes)

We have learned together about children and their importance to the church. We have discussed the many ways children can be active participants in the church. You have discussed children's needs and ways to meet these needs. You have given your ideas for programming, discipline, budgets, special events, and safety issues. We discussed spiritual formation and ways to help children grow in their faith. We have talked about the pros and cons for ways to conduct children's church. We discussed the desire of many parents for intergenerational worship.

After assimilating all this information, you have written your philosophy of ministry. We are eager to hear how you have applied this knowledge to form a vision and plan for your ministry. You will have an opportunity to share those at the end of class today.

First, let's talk about what you can expect children to learn about God and the Bible as they grow and move through the stages of childhood. It is frustrating for teachers and children if adults expect more from children than they are developmentally ready to do. We don't expect toddlers to memorize Bible verses. We don't expect fourth graders to explain in depth about the Holy Spirit. As the children's pastor, you will be responsible to help your teachers know what children can learn and give them the guidance and resources to help the children enjoy learning.

Refer to Resource 16-1 in the Student Guide.

You saw Resource 16-1 previously in Lesson 16. However, it is important for you to know the scope of what children can learn and the ages where it is best for them to learn the information. Referring to it often will help you in your ministry. A beginning piece to Resource 16-1 is Resource 20-1.

Refer to Resource 20-1 in the Student Guide. Talk through the resource together.

The WordAction editorial staff and the Children's Ministries staff have worked together to prepare the "Organizing Principle and Age-Group Goals" document. It provides guidelines for what each age-level can learn. Each age-level builds on the levels that came

before it. The kindergarten children should have learned the goals assigned to babies, toddlers and twos, and preschoolers. A spiral curriculum will allow for the repetition and expansion of concepts throughout the curriculum.

The organizing principle is: We study the Bible to know, love, and serve the God of the Bible. It is not sufficient to know Bible facts. Bible facts do not change the heart. At the end of every Bible story, we need to ask the question: What does this story tell me about God? It is important for children to understand how God interacts with the characters within the story. Were the characters obedient or disobedient? How did God respond to that obedience or disobedience? What attribute of God is revealed through this story? What part of this story helps me love God more? How can I serve God like the people in the story?

The overall goals for children's curriculum are to help children:

1. Desire a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Become lifelong disciples.
3. Develop a biblical worldview.
4. Be a part of and participate in Christian community.
5. Develop skills to do their part in fulfilling the Great Commission.

As you think about your duties as a children's pastor, you will be using these or similar goals to assess your progress. Your assessment would be easier if every child entered into your ministry at birth and continued in the church through the elementary years. We know that doesn't always happen. Children enter and leave at different stages. However, these goals provide a standard for which you can strive.

As you look at the goals for each age-level keep in mind the varying abilities and backgrounds of children. Those who come from Christian homes with parents who take a serious interest in their children's spiritual formation will progress faster than children who do not have these advantages.

Many children in the early elementary years realize their need for a Savior. That realization comes after the child experiences God's love through the love of caregivers (B1), knows God made them and are aware of His love for them (T1), talks with God (P1), wants to please God (P5), knows that God's love through Jesus is for all people, including them (K3), and confesses sin and seeks forgiveness when the Holy Spirit convicts them (EE2b).

You can trace a child's growth of Bible knowledge through the goal statements. A child becomes familiar with the words "God" and "Jesus" (B5), knows that the Bible is a special book that tells them about God and Jesus (T2), falls in love with Bible stories (P6), continues to build a relationship with God (K2), learns Bible stories and characters (EE3b), knows how to read Bible references and find verses in the Bible (ME2), and develops and uses Bible study skills to understand better the overall message of the Bible (PT1).

Allow for response.

Have you had opportunity to refer to Resource 16-1 to give guidance to the development of your lessons?

Has it been helpful?

Lecture/Discussion: Children and Discipleship

(15 minutes)

Goal 3 for the children's curriculum was to help children become lifelong disciples. Children need help in attaining that goal.

Matthew 28:19-20 says: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." We call this the Great Commission. Built on these verses is the mission statement for the Church of the Nazarene: To make Christ-like disciples in the nations.

To carry out the Great Commission and the mission statement of our denomination, we need to understand what discipleship is and how children can be disciples and be taught to disciple others.

A disciple accepts and assists in spreading the doctrine or beliefs of another person. For Christians, we accept the teachings of Jesus and share those teachings with others. Too often Christians have believed that discipleship was the duty of the pastoral staff, especially the minister or director of outreach. However, the words from Matthew 28 were directed to all of Jesus' followers and all who would "follow" after them. It is an ongoing command, and no believer is exempt.

How do adults disciple? They tell their story. Often this is through one-on-one conversations about how God has intervened in their life. Discipleship starts with a

relationship, then a sharing of experiences and knowledge, and then encouragement to join the person on a spiritual journey. Disciples should be disciplined by others and, at the same time, be discipling others. In other words: Who is discipling you? Who are you discipling?

As children's pastor, you have the awesome privilege of discipling children. You can tell them about God's love and His plan of salvation. You can help them understand how Jesus came to show us God's love and teach us how God wants us to live. You can teach them about Jesus' death and resurrection—God's plan to restore a right relationship with Him. You can be a part of teaching children and helping them to become established in the Christian life.

Children need help to establish their faith. The goal is to produce lifelong disciples. This includes helping children learn regular habits of Bible reading, prayer, and church attendance. It includes helping them know how to resist temptation and obey God's commands. It includes guidance in knowing how to share their faith with others.

Children learn quickly from adults who model an attitude or habit that needs to be learned. If the church leadership is modeling discipleship and telling the exciting results, children will grasp the excitement and want to be a part of it.

Allow for response. Be prepared to share a story of a child leading another child to Jesus.

Do you have any examples of children reaching out to other children and making a difference in their lives?

WordAction has produced "So . . . Who Is a Disciple-maker?" This is a kid-friendly booklet that helps children understand who is a disciple and how children can disciple others. There is a free, downloadable leader's guide at www.wordaction.com/go/DISCIPLES.

Refer to Resource 20-2 in the Student Guide.

Let's look at a discipleship study that you could use with your children's ministry volunteers and the older children.

Discipleship Study

1. Who is a disciple? A disciple is a person who follows the teachings and example of another person. Jesus called people to become His followers. His followers loved Him, learned from Him, and obeyed Him. They lived their lives the way Jesus lived His life.
2. What is discipleship? Discipleship involves information and transformation. As disciples of

Jesus, we learn about and obey His teachings. Our lives are transformed as we live by and obey His teachings.

There are three kinds of discipleship:

- Classic discipleship involves curriculum such as Sunday School, children’s worship, or mid-week classes. This form of discipleship brings children into contact with others in the faith. Classic discipleship provides a solid information foundation.
 - Christian Spiritual Formation focuses on spiritual disciplines as children grow in their relationship with God. These spiritual disciplines include: prayer, Bible reading, baptism, communion, and membership. These disciplines help children develop habits of faith that foster their spiritual maturity.
 - Community involves the church. Discipleship does not happen in isolation. The church is a source for wholesome relationships for children. The church is designed to help us bear each other’s burdens, find comfort and support, and confess our needs.
3. Who has disciplined you? Take time to think of at least six people who have disciplined you. In what role and in what way did these people support you in your Christian life?
 4. Who are some New Testament examples of disciplers? Briefly explain how the first person disciplined the second person.
 - Ananias—Saul
 - Barnabas—Saul
 - Philip—the Ethiopian
 - Aquila and Priscilla—Apollos
 - Paul—Timothy
 - Paul—Lydia
 5. What would be some benefits of being a disciple-maker? Being a disciple-maker can be rewarding and challenging. There are benefits to discipleship and there are roadblocks for the disciple and the disciple-maker. Have the students read the scripture and tell the benefit.
 - John 13:35—Love is a benefit. We love and are loved by others.
 - Romans 15:14—Disciple-makers have a unique relationship with God that allows them to teach others. They have goodness, knowledge, and competence. When we don’t know the exact words to say, we trust the Holy Spirit to lead us in what to say.

- 1 Thessalonians 5: 11—We can depend on others to help us.
 - James 5: 16—We have friends to whom we can express our needs and confess our wrongdoing. Disciples pray for one another.
6. What roadblocks keep us from being disciple-makers?
- Galatians 6: 9—Discouragement. Christians may become discouraged. Not everyone wants to become a disciple, and some people may not want to hear about Jesus. Friends may tease or make fun of our attempts. Results do not always happen immediately. We have to be patient.
 - 2 Thessalonians 3: 13. Bad choices may cause you to lose credibility with others. Bad choices hurt our attempts to be a disciple, and these choices reflect wrongly on all Christians. Don't get tired of doing what is right.
 - Hebrews 10: 25—Being alone. Being a Christian is not a solitary life. Christians can attend and participate in church events to help them learn, grow, and worship God. The fellowship of others keeps us encouraged.
7. How can I be a disciple-maker? One of the best ways to be a disciple-maker is to share with others how you became a disciple. Share your story with others. Take about five minutes to write your story or tell it to someone.

Another way to be a disciple-maker is to tell others what God is doing in your life right now! Take a few minutes to write or tell someone how God has helped you recently. For kids, this may be: God's healing a friend or relative who was sick; keeping the child calm when he or she faced an important test at school; courage to stand up to peers who tempt the child to do wrong; and strength to obey God when others are doing wrong.

A third way to be a disciple-maker is to start a small group or participate in a small group. A Sunday School class is a great example of a small group. In the class, children or adults study the Bible, pray together, and grow closer to God.

8. Who can I disciple? Disciples of Jesus are called to be disciple-makers. List three people whom you could disciple.
9. How do I disciple those people?
- Pray for the people on your list. Ask God to help

you find ways to disciple them.

- Share with them your story about becoming a disciple.
- Get together with them. Share the Bible with them and pray for them.
- Keep growing as a disciple. You need to continue growing as a Christian, so you can be a good example for those you want to become disciples.

10. How long can I be a disciple? Discipleship is a lifelong journey. One of the greatest joys for a children's pastor or parent is to be the catalyst for a child's choice to begin the lifelong journey of discipleship.

Student Sharing: Sharing What We Have Learned

(40 minutes)

Now is the time when you can share what you have learned from this module. Every student comes from a different background and set of experiences. Each needs different kinds of knowledge and help from these classes. Writing a philosophy of ministry helps you take knowledge from many different areas and combine it with your previous knowledge and experience to formulate your vision and plan.

It would be good for each of you to share how the process of formulating the philosophy has helped you be a better children's pastor. Then if you would share some of your philosophy.

During this time look briefly through each student's journal. You do not need to read the entries—your focus is on the sharing time. You only need to verify that the student did do the journaling assignment.

You may need to give a time limit for each student so that each student has equal opportunity to share.

Allow for response.

You want honest responses that will help future classes.

Now is your opportunity to give me some feedback on the class.

What did you hope to gain from this module before the class began?

What was the most significant thing that you actually learned?

How will it benefit your ministry?

What was something that you had hoped to gain and it was not accomplished?

Lesson Close

(15 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Have we accomplished our goals?

Return Resource 3-6 that you collected in Lesson 4.

How have you changed since you completed this assignment?

Look Ahead

In the future, you will be using your knowledge and skills to be effective children's pastors.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Commit to life-long learning and to a ministry of serving precious children that leads them to Christ.

Punctuate the Finish

Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection. John tells about a miraculous catch of fish after being told to cast their nets on the right side of the boat after a long night of catching no fish. Peter was in the boat. John recognized the One on the shore as Jesus.

When the men had finished their breakfast on the seashore with Jesus, He spoke directly to Peter. He asked him three questions. Think about the questions and answers. In the first sequence Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." The other two times, He said, "Feed the sheep." Ask, "Who was mentioned first?"

Throughout His ministry, Jesus demonstrated His value of children. In this conversation, the lambs were the first priority.

Children will be your first priority. Their families will also be important to you, especially if your title is Pastor to Children and Families. You have a wonderful privilege and awesome responsibility.

Pray with the students, and then close with a blessing.

God bless you and keep you, give you the strength and energy you will need, give you the wisdom and discernment to aid you in your tasks, and keep you motivated as you lead children into God's kingdom and give them the skills to be lifelong disciples.