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EML5405 Early Faith Foundations, 3 hours
Dallas Theological Seminary
Fall 2020 ~ CAC-202
Aug 28/29, Oct 9/10, Nov 6/7, Dec 4/5 (Fri 6-9pm, Sat 8am-5pm)

EML5405 EARLY FAITH FOUNDATIONS SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore the biblical rationale for faith development within the family from birth through age twelve and discover models where partnership is taking place with churches and families in the spiritual development of children. Opportunities will be provided to learn from guest speakers and participate in field trips.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The focus of children's ministry has been changing in the past 15+ years from a church-centered program approach to a family-centered approach. Churches are realizing the need to partner with parents and reinstate parents as the primary people responsible for the spiritual development of their children. This course will assist those working in children and family ministry to adjust to a new supporting and equipping role.

The following objectives will be achieved during the semester:

Cognitive

- Students will discover a biblical framework for a family-centered children's ministry model.
- The student will observe and evaluate various current models.

Behavioral

- The student will participate in class discussions by asking and answering questions.
- The student will observe age-group characteristics and spiritual development at different age levels.

Affective

- The student will gain an appreciation for the importance of partnering with parents in the spiritual development of children.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. Required (FINALIZED TEXTBOOKS as of 6/16/20)

Freudenburg, Ben F., and Rick Lawrence. *The Family-Friendly Church*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2009. (This book is out of print, but available through Amazon.com)

Haynes, Brian. *Shift: What it Takes to Finally Reach Families Today*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2009.

Jones, Timothy Paul. *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing, 2011.

Trent, John T., Rick Osborne, and Kurt D. Bruner. *Parent's Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children*. Focus on the Family. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003.

B. Suggested

Dunagan, Ann. *The Mission-Minded Family*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007.

Fuller, Cheri. *Opening Your Child's Spiritual Windows: Ideas to Nurture Your Child's Relationship with God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Neifert, Marianne R. *Dr. Mom's Prescription for Preschoolers: Seven Essentials for the Formative Years*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Stonehouse, Catherine. *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998.

C. Supplementary Bibliography

A bibliography will be included in the online course files.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments

The student will read the four required textbooks in their entirety and report your reading in Canvas.

B. Written Assignments

1. Online Discussion Talking Points – **TWO** of the four textbooks will be discussed online as listed in the course schedule (Freudenburg and Jones). While reading these books, the student will compile three 'talking points' – these can be in the form of questions, comments or quotes that you found to be meaningful, helpful, or thought-provoking. In the discussion thread in Canvas, post those three 'talking points' along with **why** each point is either puzzling or memorable. You will also interact with 2-3 of your classmates.

Freudenburg Discussion: **Post by Sept 12, Interaction by Sept 16.**

Jones Discussion: **Post by Oct 24, Interaction by Oct 28.**

C. Projects (choose **THREE** from the following)

1. Faith Interviews – for this assignment you will interview three children of different ages (between 6-12), individually asking each of them questions regarding their faith and what it means to know God. A sheet of questions to be asked and instructions will be provided in class. Children to be interviewed may include children in your church or community, children from DTS families, or family friends or relatives. You will write a 4-6 page review of the children's answers, the interview process and draw conclusions about what you learned regarding children's faith.
2. Conduct a Family-Night Teaching Time – The student will conduct a Family-Night teaching time in their home or local church with 1-2 families. This assignment will also include the scheduling, planning, publicizing, organization, setup, etc. that is needed when planning an event. A lesson plan will be developed and followed for the family night. The time will include teaching a Bible lesson with parents and kids included in the same session as well as an activity that reinforces the lesson. The student will write a 3-5 page reflection paper detailing how the night went, how it was received by the families, what they learned from the process, and an evaluation of what they might do differently next time. The lesson plan should be included at the end of the paper.
3. Ministry Model Presentation – The student will choose one of the Ministry Models listed on the course schedule with an '*' and explore that model. Based on the student's research, the student will make a presentation in class on **Saturday, October 10 or Saturday, November 7** describing the model and their evaluation of the model. A two-page summary (handout) will be given to the class on the day the student presents the model.
4. Family-Centered Children's Ministry Proposal – The student will develop a proposal for their church to launch or redesign a children's ministry that is family-centered. The proposal will include biblical foundations for such a ministry as well as a brief summary of various models currently being used.

The course reading will also expose students to various ministry models in existence. The student will also conduct online research to uncover any additional family-centered children's ministries. Based on the student's research, course readings and lectures and evaluation of the various ministry models a conclusion will be made as to which model the student would choose if they were responsible for developing a family-centered children's ministry in their current or future church. The paper will be a total of 5-6 pages, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font.

5. Family Spiritual Growth Plan – The student will complete a Family Spiritual Growth Plan for their family or a family in their ministry or sphere of influence. A “Template” will be included in the Canvas Course Files. By walking step-by-step through the process explained in the template, you will come up with a plan for each person in the family that will help them grow spiritually as individuals and together as a family. If working with a family other than your own, you will complete the template WITH that family, providing them direction and purpose for the importance of having a plan in place to grow spiritually. The student will submit a one-page summary evaluation of the process and experience as well as the completed Family Spiritual Growth Plan which includes the family plan, individual plans for each family member, and the personal strengths chart for each family member.
6. Bethlehem Revisited – The student will attend “Bethlehem Revisited” in Waxahachie, Texas on **Friday, December 4** from 6-9pm. This is a family-encouraged, interactive, walk-along experience that transports you back to the city of Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth. A reflection paper of 4-6 pages will be written 1) describing your experience of the evening – your reactions to the sights, the sounds, the smells, 2) explaining how and why this would be a meaningful experience for children, and 3) brainstorming ways you could incorporate this type of activity into your ministry or encourage families to make an event like this part of their family traditions. **NOTE to RV Students:** You are welcome to research and attend a similar event in your local neighborhood for this project!

Project #1 (your choice): **Due September 26.**

Project #2 (your choice): **Due October 10.**

Project #3 (your choice): **Due December 9.**

D. Quizzes and/or Exams

No quizzes or exams will be given.

V. COURSE POLICIES

A. Weight Given to Course Requirements for Grading

Project #1	15%
Project #2	15%
Project #3	15%
Reading 4 Textbooks	30%
Online Discussion (2 books)	15%
Attendance and Participation	10%

B. Class Participation

It is expected that students will come prepared to interact and participate in discussion. Learning takes place best when the student is personally involved in the process. The Educational Ministries and Leadership Department takes the view that students can and should learn from one another as well as from the instructor.

C. Late Assignments

We prefer NO LATE assignments. However, in keeping with grace, a student can submit a late assignment with a 1% penalty reduction of the value of the assignment for each calendar day (including weekends) it is late. Assignments turned in late will not be counted unless previously agreed upon by the professor.

D. Absences

The student handbook allows four 75-minute class absences for a 3-hour course without penalty. Note that three tardy arrivals or early departures are equal to one absence. Additional absences will result in a 4% course grade reduction for each class session beyond the allowed four absences.

E. Other Classroom Policies

Laptops and electronic devices may be used in class for *note-taking purposes only*. They are not to be used to play games, communicate with others, check email, and work on other assignments, etc. Using these devices for reasons other than taking notes is disrespectful and distracting to other students and to the professor or guest presenter.

F. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

A+	99-100	B+	91-93	C+	83-85	D+	75-77	F	0-69
A	96-98	B	88-90	C	80-82	D	72-74		
A-	94-95	B-	86-87	C-	78-79	D-	70-71		

VI. COURSE SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

NOTE: When doing any research on the Internet, you must follow the guidelines explained at the following web sites:

www.virtualsalt.com/evalu8it.htm,

milton.mse.jhu.edu:8001/research/education/net.html, no “www” in front, and

www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/help/critical/index.htm, no “l” at the end

If a research paper is required, include a signed affirmation that you’ve read the articles about Internet research guidelines.

DTS does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the operation of any of its programs and activities. To avoid discrimination the student has the responsibility of informing the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities and the course instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications.

Receive Weather and Campus Alerts by Text Message

DTS also wants you to be aware of our emergency texting service. We strongly urge you to sign up to receive emergency texts related to weather or disaster school closing.

VII. COURSE LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE (SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**)**

Date	Topic	Assignment Due Dates
Aug 28 & 29	<p><u>Introduction to the Course</u></p> <p><u>Exploring Faith Development</u> Biblical Foundations Child Development Stages of Faith Development Building Biblical Truth Foundations</p> <p><u>Empowering Churches for Their Role</u> The Parent Teacher Feedback Loop Family Night Tool Chest Family Spiritual Growth Plan</p>	
Sept 12–16	Changing the Focus of CM – Online Discussion of <i>The Family-Friendly Church</i>	<p><i>Freudenburg Reading Due</i> <i>Post Talking Points by Sept 12</i> <i>Interact with 2-3 classmates by Sept 16</i></p>
Sept 26		<p><i>Project #1 Due</i></p>
Oct 9 & 10	<p><u>Equipping Parents for Their Responsibility</u> The State of Today’s Families What Makes a Strong Family Educating Parents Regarding Their Role Leading a Child to Christ</p> <p><u>Ministry Models – Faith Development in Partnership</u> Building Faith at Home – Overview</p> <p><i>Ministry Model Presentations:</i> * Live Orange Model (North Point in Atlanta) * Milestones Model – Based on <i>Shift</i> by Brian Haynes</p>	<p><i>Project #2 Due</i> <i>Ministry Model Presentations</i> <i>(if you choose this as one of your projects)</i></p> <p><i>Haynes Reading Due</i></p>
Oct 24 – 28	Online Discussion of <i>Family Ministry Field Guide</i> by Timothy Paul Jones	<p><i>Jones Reading Due</i> <i>Post Talking Points by Oct 24</i> <i>Interact with 2-3 classmates by Oct 28</i></p>
Nov 6 & 7	<p><i>Ministry Model Presentations, continued:</i> * HomePointe Model (Lake Pointe in Rockwall) * Faith Path (Lake Pointe in Rockwall) * D6 Curriculum Model</p> <p>Other Models: L.i.T. Discipleship Model, etc. Service & Development of Spiritual Gifts</p>	<p><i>Trent Reading Due</i></p>
Nov 16 & Nov 23 ~ Reading Week & Thanksgiving Break ~ no classes		
Dec 4	Fri PM, Dec 4 – Bethlehem Revisited – Field Trip (attendance is optional)	
Dec 5	The Process of Implementing Change Partnering with the Family Family Resources	<p><i>Confirm Semester Attendance (online)</i> <i>Confirm Semester Participation (online)</i></p>
Dec 9		<p><i>Project #3 Due</i></p>
Dec 14 ~ Finals Week ~ no classes ~ no final		