



CEDF 6240: Intergenerational Communities: Families and Children in Congregations

North Park Theological Seminary

May 19–July 11, 2025

Intensive meeting dates June 2–6

3 credit hours

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION: Dr. Sara Heacox Sosa

EMAIL: shsosa@northpark.edu (preferred means of communication). Professor will respond within 24 hours to emails from students monday through friday.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Many church leaders acknowledge that parents/caregivers are of primary importance in the spiritual development of children. However, many church leaders do not know how to equip parents/caregivers to live into that primary role. This class will explore three main components that will demonstrate how churches and parents/caregivers need to be partners as they raise the next generation of resilient disciples: (1) a theology of faith formation that connects families and the church community, (2) a strategy for discipleship that builds on the partnership between parents/caregivers and the church, and (3) an intentional plan to minister to variety of people and learning styles where children are a part of the church and not just attached to it through programs. We will consider these three components through multiple lenses where all generations worship, learn, and serve together and where spiritual development is fostered through these vital relationships.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, participants should be able to:

- Identify passages in scripture that outline a blueprint for shared faith formation
- Apply the theology of faith formation to existing programs/ministries in the student's serving context
- Understand the unique relationship between church and home and the mutual responsibility for both to disciple children in their faith community
- Equip parents to feel competent and confident in their role as disciplers
- Develop a strategy for whole-life discipleship within the church that crosses all age groups (birth through adult) and incorporates multiple learning styles
- Explore the perspectives of different groups/cultures within the church family and community , seeking to understand how that impacts discipleship
- Develop a ministry resource that includes of a variety of people and learning styles
- Empower children to participate in the life of the church in meaningful ways

REQUIRED TEXTS

Allen, Holly Catterton, ed. *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry*. Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 2018. (262 pages)

Miller, Lisa. *The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving*. New York: Picador, 2015. (348 pages)

PLUS: Choose ONE of the following titles as your presentation book (required). Limit of 2 students per book title. Sign up for the book of your choice on Canvas and wait for confirmation from the professor before acquiring a copy of it. Students will prepare a 15-minute in-class presentation for the book they choose.

Crespo, Orlando. *Being Latino in Christ: Finding Wholeness in Your Ethnic Identity*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. (146 pages)

Hardwick, Lamar. *Disability and the Church: A Vision for Diversity and Inclusion*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021. (191 pages)

Park, M. Sydney, Soong-Chan Rah, and Al Tizon. *Honoring the Generations: Learning with Asian North American Congregations*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012. (193 pages)

Scott, Halee Gray. *Not a Hopeless Case: 6 Vital Questions from Young Adults for a Church in Crisis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2023. (214 pages)

Smith, Efrem. *The Post-Black and Post-White Church: Becoming a Beloved Community in a Multi-Ethnic World*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2020. (200 pages)

Sprinkle, Preston. *People to Be Loved: Why Homosexuality is Not Just an Issue*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015. (192 pages)

Wildman, Terry M. and First Nations Translation Council. *First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021. (Reading Luke, John, Acts: 170 pages)

CHAPTERS OF BOOKS (uploaded to Canvas...you do NOT need to purchase these books)

Larson, Mimi L. and Robert J. Keeley, eds. *Bridging Theory and Practice in Children's Spirituality: New Directions for Education, Ministry, and Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020. [Chapters 1, 3, 10, 15] (61 pages)

Miller, Meredith. *Woven: Nurturing a Faith Your Kid Doesn't Have to Heal From*. New York: Worthy Books, 2023. [Part 1: chapters 1-4] (86 pages)

Clifton-Soderstrom, Michelle A. and David D. Bjorlin. *Incorporating Children in Worship: Mark of the Kingdom*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014. [Chapters 1, 2, and 6] (52 pages)

COURSE MEDIA (required)

Luce, Sam. "Deuteronomy 6: What We're Missing." Child Discipleship Forum. September 2023. <https://childdiscipleship.com/resource/cdf-2023-sam-luce/>

Markins, Matt. "Stuck in a Stalemate." Child Discipleship Forum. September 2023.

<https://childdiscipleship.com/resource/cdf-2023-matt-markins/>

Osgood, Christine. "The Family Life Cycle." Youth Leadership. August 2017.

Swamidass, Santosh. "Helping Parents in Their Confidence and Increase Their Capacity for Discipleship." The Child Discipleship Podcast. November 2023.

Audio: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/4lYrCEvfNGVtq4X3Lxiesf>

Video: https://d1v3zx42axhpdf.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/Santosh_FULL_1.mp4

Additional learning materials as posted in Canvas modules.

ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING SCALE

Pre-Course Readings (*InterGenerate*; *The Spiritual Child*; *Children's Spirituality* (selected chapters); *Incorporating Children in Worship* (selected chapters); *Woven* (selected chapters):

Students will complete the readings. Then using the Reading Report link in Canvas, fill out one Reading Report for each book. The goal in filling out the book report is to convince the professor that you read each book/chapter in its entirety. Think broad themes. Use quotes to support your observations (internal citations with page numbers are fine. Ex: (Smith, p 86)) **5 pts for each book.**

Maximum: 20 pts

Book Presentations: Students will sign up in Canvas for one additional course book (options listed above, no more than four students per title). After reading the book, the student will prepare a 15-minute presentation for the class that answers the following questions:

- What book did you choose and why?
- What are two points of agreement with the author? Are there any points of disagreement? If so, what are they?
- How did reading this book impact your current ministry?
- Would you recommend this book to another seminary student or ministry leader? Why or why not?

Maximum: 10 pts

Media Posts: Students will engage assigned podcasts/videos then post a response in Canvas including two takeaways from the media. Minimum of 200 words for the post. The initial posts are due the day they are assigned for class (June 2-5). **2.5 pts per podcast. Maximum: 10 pts**

LunchBox/CovYouth Scavenger Hunts: Students will spend time interacting with the denominational gathering spaces for youth leaders (CovYouth) and children's ministry leaders (LunchBox). Specifics for this assignment will be posted in Canvas and talked about on the first day of class. **Due June 6. 5 pts per platform. Maximum: 10 pts**

Fall Kick-Off Resource: students will create an original Fall Kick-Off resource for their ministry setting, taking into account the learning from class. Ideas: an event for the church/community, elements for a corporate worship service, advent readings for families, etc. More details about this assignment will be communicated during the intensive week. **Due June 30. Maximum: 20pts**

Integrative Project: Students will choose one of the two project prompts below and develop a project that demonstrates the learning from the class. A project proposal is due June 6. Students will post their completed projects in Canvas. **Final project due July 16. Maximum: 30 pts (Proposal – 5 pts; Project – 25 pts)**

Project Proposal: Write a one-page project proposal that includes the following:
(Due June 6: 5pts)

- Your choice of project
- Resources you will use (digital, written, human)
- How you plan to submit your final project (written, audio, video, live with the course instructor, a combination of the above)
- Timeline for completing the project

Choose a Project Option:

- **Create a presentation** summarizing the themes from the course: theology of faith formation; strategy for discipleship; vision for diverse faith community. Use the presentation software of your choice (PowerPoint, Keynote, Canva, Prezi, etc.). Record yourself (video) delivering your presentation. If your presentation software does not allow you to record yourself, you can download Loom to your computer and make a recording that way. Save your video as an MP4 file and upload to the assignment submission page in Canvas. You could also set up a time with the professor to give your presentation live instead of submitting a recording.
- **Write a traditional integrative paper** that demonstrates your learning in all areas of emphasis for this class: theology of faith formation; strategy for discipleship; vision for diverse faith community.. Be sure to use quotes from the course reading/podcasts to support your writing. (minimum 2500 words)

Additional details and grading rubrics for all projects will be posted in Canvas.

COURSE GRADING

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS	PERCENTAGE	GRADING
Pre-Course Reading	20 pts	20%	Superior work (A=95-100; A-=93-94)
Book Presentation	10 pts	10%	Above Average (B+=91-92; B=88-90; B-=86-87)
Media Posts	10 pts	10%	Average (C+=84-85; C=80-83; C-=78-79)
LunchBox/CovYouth	10 pts	10%	Unsatisfactory (D+=76-77; D=72-75; D-=70-71)
Fall Kick-off Resource	20 pts	20%	Failing (69 and below)
Integrative Project	30 pts	30%	

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

Written assignments should adhere to guidelines, including the inclusive language policy found in the Student Writing Handbook.

Late work will be reduced in grade by 10% per day. In case of an emergency the instructor may, at her discretion, make an exception but it is the student's responsibility to communicate with the professor in advance.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
5. Use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software to impersonate individual assignments.

For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please email the Disability Access Specialist or contact by phone (773-244-5737). Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

TITLE IX & EQUITY

In accordance with Title IX, North Park employees who become aware of any incident of discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on sex, gender, including pregnancy or related medical conditions, and other protected classes are required by law to notify North Park University's Title IX & Equity Team by submitting a report [here](#). The Title IX Coordinator will respond and manage concerns about students. The Senior Director of Human Resources and Deputy Title IX Coordinator will respond and manage concerns about employees. More information can be obtained here: [NPU’s Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#).

INCOMPLETE GRADES

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as “I” until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of “I” will automatically be changed to “F.” For the full policy, see the Seminary Academic Catalog.

COURSE SCHEDULE (M-Th 9-11:30am, 1-5pm; F 9-11:30am, 1-3pm)

PRE-INTENSIVE (before June 2)

Read the two assigned class books and the chapters of books available in Canvas and complete a Reading Report form for each. The link to the form will be posted in Canvas in the Pre-Intensive Module. Reading Reports are due by June 2.

Read your book of choice and prepare a 15-minute presentation to be given in class during the intensive. Presentations will take place June 2-5 according to the course schedule.

Listen to all four podcasts and complete the required response posts in Canvas (see assignment description below). Posts due by June 2.

Choose your final project option (see “Assessments” below). Write and submit a project proposal (maximum one page). Due by June 6.

June 2 MODULE 1: Theology of Faith Formation (faith community, family, story)

Explore biblical texts:

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Psalm 78:1-8
- Matthew 28:18-20
- Matthew 21:12-17
- Mark 10:13-16
- Matthew 18:1-4
- Matthew 18:5-6

Outline the roles of the faith community and the parents/caregivers in the discipleship of the next generation

Explore the role of story in faith formation

BREAK FOR LUNCH

Media: Sam Luce “*Deuteronomy 6: What We’re Missing*”

Book Discussion: *The Spiritual Child*, pt 1

Student Presentations: *Disability and the Church* and *Not a Hopeless Case*
Q&A

June 3 MODULE 2: Equipping Parents/Caregivers (engagement, care, discipleship)

Explaining discipleship

Mentoring parents/caregivers

Play-based Childhood

Identify necessary partnerships for raising a generation of resilient disciples

BREAK FOR LUNCH

Media: Santosh Swamidass “*Helping Parents in Their Confidence and Increase Their Capacity for Discipleship*”

Book Discussion: *The Spiritual Child*, pt 2



Student Presentations: *Post-Black, Post-White Church* and *First Nations Translation of the New Testament* (Luke-John-Acts)
Q&A

June 4 **MODULE 3: Strategy for Discipleship** (faith development, programs, systems)
Look at faith development across ages and stages
Family Life Cycle
Explore different types of programming that can deliver strong discipleship opportunities

BREAK FOR LUNCH

Media: Matt Markins “*Stuck in a Stalemate*”
Book Discussion: *Children’s Spirituality* (ch. 1, 3, 10, 15); *Woven* (ch. 1-4)
Student Presentations: *Being Latino in Christ* and *Honoring the Generations*
Q&A

June 5 **MODULE 4: Equipping the Church** (vision, strategy, partnership)
Casting vision, changing language
Inviting presence (Sticky Faith)
Empowering children as full participants in the family of faith
Engaging emerging adults

BREAK FOR LUNCH

Media: Christine Osgood “*The Family Life Cycle*”
Book Discussion: *Intergenerate* (parts 1-3); *Incorporating Children* (ch. 1, 2, 6)
Student Presentations: *A People to Be Loved*
Q&A

June 6 **Module 5: Including All** (culture, learning styles, traditions)
Book Discussion: *Intergenerate* (parts 4-5)
The Nations: multi-cultural diversity
Including every generation
Ministry models

BREAK FOR LUNCH

ECC Resource Overview
Q&A

POST-INTENSIVE

June 30 Fall Kick-Off Resource Project

July 15 Integrative Project

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Provided in Canvas and at the top of this syllabus