

Syllabus

Introduction to Christian Education

Educational Institution:

Location of Course:

Course Dates:

Name of Instructor(s):

Course Vision Statement:

The course is a basic introduction to the field of Christian Education. Christian education has its foundations in two primary areas: 1) Christian theology and 2) education. Therefore, we will be exploring the theological roots (both in the Bible and history) of Christian education and the education principles and practices which enable our efforts to be effective and relevant. The primary context in which Christian education takes place is the community of faith, which is most often expressed in the local church. So our study will focus primarily on Christian Education in the local church and the various types of educational settings and structures present there.

At the completion of the course, the students and teacher will have a clearer understanding of how Christian faith is nurtured in persons and communities. They will be equipped with some basic skills to create strong educational structures, materials, and practices for use in their own settings. They will also have a growing passion to see children, youth, and adults become Christians and be nurtured in Christian faith.

Educational Assumptions:

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential to the process of Christian education at any level. We will consistently request the Spirit's presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community (people being and working together). Community is the gift of the Spirit but may be enhanced or hindered by human effort. Communities have common values, stories, practices, and goals. Explicit effort will be invested to enhance community within the class.
3. Students are valued not only as persons who have potential to learn, but also as persons who already have significant knowledge and experiences to contribute to the course. Consequently, some of the course assignments will require cooperative efforts among students. Such cooperation is natural in a Christian community of learning.
4. The course focuses on the community of faith expressed in a local church. In order for the purposes of the course to be fulfilled, each student should have a local church in which he/she regularly participates and should project the concepts and applications of the course to that setting.

Course Contribution to Preparation for Christian Ministry

This course will contribute to the learner's development of the following abilities. Other courses will also contribute to the learner's ability to demonstrate

- CN20 Ability to describe how the church's belief, teaching and confession based on the Word of God has led to its implementation of its mission in the various periods of Church history
- CP 2 Ability to communicate correctly in the modes of discourse used in the various ministry contexts
- CP 3 Ability to articulate an integrative philosophy of ministry that will answer "why I do what I do when I do it"
- CP 4 Ability to articulate understanding of ecclesiology that enables minister to answer "why we do what we do when we do it"
- CP 5 Ability to provide guidance of a congregation using management skills including leadership, conflict resolution, and administration
- CP 6 Ability to manage ministry resources (time, human, financial, etc.) in a way consistent with a church's size and characteristics
- CP 7 Ability to conceive and articulate purpose, mission, vision, and to develop strategic plans in a local church
- CP 8 Ability to develop team building skills, identify and cultivate spiritual gifts, recruit volunteers, diagnose and intervene in problems
- CP23 Ability to lead the church in discipling and assimilating new converts into the church
- CP25 Ability to envision Christian education most appropriate for a local church and to assure the development and empowerment of those serving in it
- CP26 Ability to apply knowledge of human development appropriate to the culture in leading people to Christian maturity

Course Outline

Introductions

Definitions and Contexts of CE

Biblical Foundations of Christian Education

Old Testament Christian Education

New Testament Christian Education

History of Christian Education

Important Ideas about Learning and Development

Extent of Learning

Readiness for Learning

Principles of Developmentalism

Physical Growth

Cognitive Growth

Moral Growth

Spiritual Growth

Vocational Growth

Teaching and Curriculum

7 Questions

Models of Teaching

Principles of Curriculum Development

Transformational Teaching
Structure of the Curriculum
Lesson Planning

Structures and Programs of Christian Education in the Local Church
Christian Education Programs
Recruiting and Developing Workers
Evaluation

Course Objectives by Lesson

At the end of this lesson, participants will

Lesson 1: Introduction to Christian Education

- locate the requirements and purposes of this course in the syllabus and describe the nature of the teacher's philosophy of education
- know the names and one fact about each of the other students

Lesson 2: Definitions and Contexts of Christian Education

- identify contexts in which their own Christian education has occurred
- describe the three levels of Christian education and list several ways that formation occurs
- exhibit a passion for intentional formation in the lives of those with whom they minister.

Lesson 3: Old Testament Education

- be able to describe Old Testament educational practices
- have experienced the powerful teaching tool of ritual
- have an increasing desire to be intentional in the formation of children

Lesson 4: New Testament Education

- understand several features of Jesus' teaching ministry
- desire to follow the model of Jesus as teacher
- synthesize insights learned from Old and New Testament education into a list of principles

Lesson 5: The History of Christian *Education*

- name two forms of education found in the early church
- identify influences on the development of CE in the history of the church
- discuss the importance of informal education in the history of Christendom

Lesson 6: Important Information About Learning

- name the three holistic domains of learning
- identify models of learning
- identify, in the proper order, the six stages of the knowledge domain

Lesson 7: Developmentalism

- define readiness for learning
- explain "If there is no learning, is there teaching?"
- define developmentalism
- discuss three characteristics of a developmental approach and four developmental assumption

Lesson 8: Physical and Intellectual Growth

- correlate physical maturation and cognitive development
- identify four stages of Piaget's theory of intellectual development

Lesson 9: Developmental Approach to Christian Education

- identify the eight stages of psycho-social development
- compare and contrast the stages of psycho-social development with the stages of moral development
- name and describe four stages of vocational growth

Lesson 10: Basic Questions for Teaching

- define the term educational philosophy
- describe their own educational philosophy

Lesson 11: Educational Philosophy for Teaching

- discuss strengths and weaknesses of the factory and wildflower philosophies of education
- relate how the nature of learning and human development influence their personal educational philosophy

Lesson 12: Christian Teaching for Transformation

- list three reasons why Christian Education is transformational

Lesson 13: Curriculum Design and Lesson Writing

- identify three curricula that schools teach
- list basic principles of curriculum development
- identify four steps of lesson preparation
- develop two hooks for a lesson on Christian Education

Lesson 14: Book, Look and Took

- list characteristics and give examples of inductive and deductive Bible study
- select teaching methods based on learner characteristics, intended outcomes and context
- use educational principles to evaluate lesson plans

Lesson 15: Lesson Planning

- write a lesson plan that utilizes the lesson plan form
- review existing lesson plans based on sound educational principles

Lesson 16: Curriculum Scope and Sequence

- write a lesson plan that utilizes the lesson plan form
- name three structures of curriculum and describe their relationship
- review existing lesson plans based on sound educational principles

Lesson 17: Curriculum Evaluation

- utilize the curriculum evaluation model to critique lesson plans

Lesson 18: Structures and Programs of Christian Education

- create a Christian Education ministry that incorporates balanced functions of education, accountability and belonging.

Lesson 19: Recruiting and developing workers

- list the issues involved in recruiting, developing and dismissing leaders
- create a plan for recruitment leader development
- exhibit a deeper burden for leadership development and care

Lesson 20: Dismissing Workers and Course Evaluation

- formulate and demonstrate a method of dismissing workers in a redemptive way
- demonstrate a method for program evaluation

Course Schedule

The course will meet for 30 hours according to the following schedule:

Date and Time	Topic	Assignments Due

Course Textbooks:

Steele, Les L. *On the Way: A Practical Theology of Christian Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990

Pazmino, Robert. *Principles and Practices of Christian Education: An Evangelical Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992

Course Requirements

1. **Class attendance, attention, and participation** are important for each student. The student must attend 90% of the scheduled course time to receive credit without a reduction in the grade.
2. **Reading** - The textbooks should be read completely. There is a study guide for the book, *On the Way*, which should be completed as the student reads.
3. **Focus Groups** - Each student will be asked to meet each class session with a group of persons working with the same age group (children, youth, adult) to allow reflection on educational concepts, provide feedback on application of some of the materials presented in class, and to work on cooperative projects.
4. **Sample Teaching Outline** - Each focus group will be asked to plan a lesson, teach the lesson in a real Christian education setting, and critique both the lesson and their teaching of it. The lesson plan will include vision statement and objectives, educational assumptions, description of the context, session content outline, planned learning methods, and an evaluation plan. This will be turned in before the lesson is taught.
5. **Three Lesson Observations and Critiques** - Each student will visit two other Christian Education settings and observe someone else teaching a lesson. At least one of these settings must be outside the student's home church. In addition, the student will write a critique of his/her own teaching in the lesson that his/her group developed. These written critiques will follow the format given in class. All three lesson critiques will be due on _____.
6. **Journal** - Each student will keep a journal or notebook, to be written in after each class session and after the Christian Education seminar. In this journal, the student will make personal reflections of what he/she is coming to believe about Christian Education as well as ideas he or she wants to implement in the classroom. The journal may also be used as a place to interact with the reading.

Journaling is the integrating element that helps you draw spiritual meaning and ministerial application from the content of each lesson whether the lesson concentrates on content, competency, character or context. It insures that the "Be" component of "Be, Know and Do" is present in every module in which you participate. Further explanation of the journaling process is provided at the end of the syllabus.

7. **“I Believe” Statement** - Each student will be asked to write an essay at the close of the class which expresses his/her personal beliefs concerning Christian education and the task of teaching. This essay should be understood as a “work in progress” and should not be considered as the student’s final statement on the topic. This is an essay, not a composition. It should be written concisely in less than three pages. It should give evidence that the student has thought through all the major questions of educational philosophy for Christian education. This essay will serve as the final exam for the course. The essay will be due by the close of the last class session on _____.

Course Evaluation

Five primary means of evaluation will be utilized. Some of the evaluation activities will be during the course. This form of evaluation is called “formative evaluation.” Some of the evaluation activities will be conducted after the conclusion of the course. This form of evaluation is called “summative evaluation.” The evaluations are for the benefit of both the student and the teacher.

1. Each day at the close of the session, we will discuss which portions of the session were most appropriate and helpful for the students’ ministry contexts.
2. Observation of the focus groups will help us see your developing skills in teamwork and group process. Evaluation of your group projects (e.g. job description) will help us see how well you have applied the theory learned in class.
3. An evaluation of the lesson critiques and sample teaching outlines will assist us in knowing how effective the teaching has been.
4. The “I Believe” statement will serve as an evaluation tool of the individual student. The statements will be turned in to the instructor, reviewed, and returned to the student with comments.
5. At the close of the final session, the class will be asked to reflect with the teachers on the course and our teaching. We are interested in how we can improve our teaching skills.

Ultimately, the best course evaluation will occur as the student teaches in the local church with increased skill and enthusiasm. If people are being brought into relationship with Christ, led towards growth in grace, and equipped to serve through the teaching ministries of those who were students in the course, then the course will have fulfilled our goals for it. This final evaluation will, of course, take months and years.

Grading

The grade for the course will be determined using the following system:

Course attendance and preparation (includes required reading)	20%
Focus Group Participation and Projects	20%
Lesson Plan	20%
Lesson critiques	20%
I Believe essay	20%

The following grading system will apply:

91-100%	5	A
81-90%	4	B
71-80%	3	C
61-70%	2	D

Additional Information:

Students Needing Assistance - Our commitment is to make a reasonable effort to assist every student to learn. Any student who is having difficulty in following the presentations or understanding the assignments should not hesitate to talk with one of us personally. Together we can discover ways to make our teaching and the course more effective.

Teachers' Availability - We are privileged to have the opportunity to teach this class. Our desire is to be model teachers in and outside of the classroom. The students enrolled in the class are a high priority in our lives. We will be available before and after the class to students.

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 course you will be required to listen to lectures, read several books, participate in discussions, write papers, and take exams. 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 course work will be really helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritually formative 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 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 dialog. 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 days 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 course 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 that 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, aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable and available.

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 course work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration; weaving together faith development with 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 lynch-pin 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!

Assignments that need written instructions:

Lesson 1

Prepare a 2-minute speech (presentation) on the following questions:

What are the key influences which helped you come to know Jesus and understand what it means to be a Christian?

If you weren't raised in a Christian home how did you decide to be a Christian?

Lesson 6

Using Luke 15:1-7, prepare Bible Study questions that would address each of the 6 Learning Stages.

Awareness

Comprehension

Application of Learning

Analysis/Problem Solving

Synthesis or Creativity

Evaluation

Make them applicable to the age level that you work with the most. There should be at least two questions for each stage.

Lesson 7

Select a Bible Story. Write out how you would teach the story to preschoolers, adolescents and adults. Describe the method, the amount of detail and length of time that would be used for each group.

Now describe changes that you would make if the audience had never been in a church before or had never heard a Bible Story before. What difference would the background of the group make in the story that is selected?

Notes: