

**UTS D.Min. Program**  
**MIN 8502: Religious Education and Ministry**  
**Needs of the Postmodern Family**  
**Spring Semester Draft Syllabus 2022**

**Doctor of Ministry Program**  
**Family and Educational Ministry**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Most of our ministries and faith communities today are composed of families – and diverse families at that. And families are composed of individuals of different ages and needs. There are also diverse family configurations. And all families are part of complex and diverse contexts. This presents us with various issues to keep in mind when working with families. These concerns include: a) how each member of that family unit learns - individually and corporately based on generational, age and personal distinctions – something that should be of great importance to each one of us if we want to support spiritual growth, and b) how the type of family configuration impacts how one learns within that unit. This is why the field of Religious Education can be of tremendous help to those in diverse ministries. Even if one views their congregation or faith community as a “family,” Religious Education can provide profound insights for those in ministry.

This course will look at how we learn – mind and heart – as well as the areas of intergenerational learning, how factors such as culture, ethnicity and gender impacts learning, educational technology, family studies and teaching theory to shed new light on how to be effective in our ministries particularly in the postmodern age where families question traditional religious beliefs and practices.

**COURSE OUTCOMES:**

- Students will develop a multifaceted understanding of how we learn as individuals and in families and communities.
- Students will be able to integrate their understanding of spiritual formation and religious education in defining programs that address the faith needs of the family/congregational context.
- Students will be equipped with the skills needed to assess the religious education needs and resources for individuals, diverse groups and families in the church or faith community.

- Students will be equipped with the skills to design basic religious education programs that support the development of healthier functioning individuals, families and congregations/ communities.

**TEXTBOOKS:**

- Bengtson, Vern l., Putney, Norella, Harris, Susan. (2013). *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0190675158; \$19.95. (ebook option).
- Foster, Charles. (2012). *From Generation to Generation: The Adaptive Challenge of Mainline Protestant Education in Forming Faith*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock. ISBN: 13:978-1620321959; \$14.73. ebook option
- Seymour, Jack. (2014). *Teaching the Way of Jesus: Educating Christians for Faithful Living*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. ISBN: 978-1426765056; \$15.24. ebook option.
- Tye, Karen. (2000). *Basics of Christian Education*. St. Louis: Chalice Press. ISBN-10:0827202296; \$12.49. ebook option.

**EVALUATION:**

Book Review / Critiques (4)	20
Student Presentations (5)	25
Discussion & Participation (10)	20
Final Project Presentation (1)	<u>35</u>
	100%

Grades for each assignment are recorded by letter:

- A = Excellent
- B = Good
- C = Satisfactory
- D = Poor
- F = Failure

\*See UTS catalog for a detailed grading policy.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Book Review / Critiques** - Four book reviews / critiques are required. Summarize in just a paragraph or two at the most, the key themes covered in the text. For the rest of the document, discuss what you liked, did not agree with, what was particularly helpful and what was missing. The purpose of this exercise is to learn to be concise, and to encourage self-reflective thinking –

a key point of the D.Min. program and ministry. Each paper should be approximately 1000-1500 words. Follow Chicago/Turabian formatting with a cover page and footnotes, if needed.

Follow the “Guidelines for Writing a Critical Book Review,”

[https://d3pi8hptl0qhh4.cloudfront.net/documents/dmin/Book\\_Review\\_Guide.pdf](https://d3pi8hptl0qhh4.cloudfront.net/documents/dmin/Book_Review_Guide.pdf)

Students should read Karen Tye’s *Basics of Christian Education* and email your paper before the beginning of the first class. Books will be discussed in the following order: Karen Tye, Vern Bengtson, Jack Seymour, and Charles Foster.

**Student Presentations** - Student presentations will be assigned to each student; topics and dates to be announced in advance. The presentation should be in PowerPoint form for 5-10 min followed by discussion.

**Discussion & Participation** - Doctoral students should actively participate in the 10 classes -- engage, listen, share ideas, ask questions, challenge themselves as well as each other in class. In addition, students should take advantage of the online Discussions feature on Populi. This is an opportunity to engage, converse and support your cohorts in open dialogue.

**Final Project Presentation** - Students will give a presentation (PowerPoint, 20-30 min) in which they analyze their faith community, target congregation’s current religious educational efforts toward helping nurture the individuals and families within their ministry/congregation in terms of their faith, spiritual formation and religious formation. The presentation should include a discussion of the current religious educational efforts with an analysis of the effectiveness of these efforts, incorporate what they feel individuals and families need because of living in the world of today and what changes they anticipate in the coming few years, and an analysis of what efforts need to change or what new programs need to be developed if they are to support their learners more effectively. Students should incorporate their SWOT analysis and conclusions from their analysis, insights from their preliminary lists, integrate relevant content from course textbooks, class discussions and other readings into their analysis and paper. Afterwards, the presenter will lead cohorts in an effective discussion.

## **NETIQUETTE:**

When posting online or by email, you need to follow the same ethical standards and laws as you would in face-to-face communications. Your language should be respectful of faculty members and fellow students. Do not post private or confidential information about anyone, and do not provide personal information that could put yourself at risk. The Seminaries LMS has robust security measures to protect communication between teacher and student. Yet please be aware that anything that you post in discussions and groups in which other students participate can be retrieved by others and copied.

Do not download and share course materials without permission of the instructor, as this may violate copyright. UTS reserves the right to delete postings on UTS maintained sites that are considered insensitive, harassing or illegal. Language that is illegal, obscene, defamatory,

threatening, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing abusive, hateful or embarrassing to any person or entity, or otherwise, is a violation of the Student Code.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:**

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a student passes off someone else's work as their own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student's paper, to cutting and pasting paragraphs from different websites, to handing in a paper downloaded from the Internet. This includes buying or submitting a paper written by a third party. All are considered forms of "plagiarism" and a violation of the Seminary's academic integrity policy. The instructor has the option of having the student repeat or fail the assignment. In cases of serious or repeated violations, the instructor has the option of having the student fail the course or of reporting the student to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for disciplinary action. Possible disciplinary actions include probation, suspension or withdrawal.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE** (*Subject to change*)

**Class 1:** "Religious Education Ministry and Needs of the Postmodern Family" - We will look at how far we have come in our understanding of education, learning and religious education. How do we learn? How does this impact our teaching and programs? We will also discuss how we were educated religiously.

Homework due: #1 Book Review / Critique - Karen Tye, *Basics of Christian Education*

Welcome and overview

Presentations and discussions:

- SWOT analysis - Students present a SWOT analysis (PowerPoint, 10 min) of the families within your congregation/community or context.
  - Evaluate the types of religious educational activities and programs that are currently offered in your target community/congregation for the families and age groupings.
  - List the diverse programs that are available. For age specific programs, indicate the specific age or type of groups targeted by those programs.
  - Reflect on your list of programs and begin to develop a preliminary list of the additions and/or changes you would make to the religious education programs and activities that will help address the SWOT analysis created.
  
- Karen Tye - *Basics of Christian Education*

**Class 2:** “How Has Religious Education Changed?” - How far have we come in our understanding of education, learning and religious education. How do we learn? How does this impact our teaching and programs? How were we educated religiously?

Presentations and discussions

- SWOT analysis continued
- Karen Tye - *Basics of Christian Education*

**Class 3:** “Spiritual Formation and Faith Development Process” - What makes today’s congregations and individuals different from those a generation or more ago? What are the needs of today’s congregations? In what ways have the needs of individuals and families changed? How have these changes in definition and need impacted my ministry and me? What is on the horizon?

Presentations and discussions:

- SWOT analysis continued
- Vern Bengtson - *Families and Faith*

**Class 4:** “Past, Present and Future” – How are the religious educational needs different from a generation or more ago? What are the needs of today’s congregations?

Homework due: #2 Book Review / Critique – Vern Bengtson - *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations*

Presentations and discussion:

- Vern Bengtson - *Families and Faith*

**Class 5:** “Can Religious Education be Reduced to Spiritual Formation and How Do Others Engage in this Process?” - While we all make meaning and sense of our world in a similar way, what is meaningful to each of us differs. How does that shape our educational endeavors? How does life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century impact how we define meaning and how we seek to address our spiritual needs? What does it mean to have faith today? What does it mean to be spiritual but not religious? What can we learn from others?

Presentations and discussions:

- Jack L. Seymour - *Teaching the Way of Jesus*

**Class 6:** “Religious Education and Spiritual Formation: Two Sides of the Same Coin” – How does life in the postmodern era define meaning and how we seek to address our spiritual needs? What does it mean to have faith today in contrast to a generation ago?

- Jack L. Seymour - *Teaching the Way of Jesus*

**Class 7:** “Spiritual Formation, Spiritual Disciplines and Religious Education” - What is our faithful response all about when we consider family, community, postmodernism and religious education? How do we keep up with these changes? How do we design, create and construct meaningful programs? How should we look at these issues in religious education and ministry? We will also consider our own processes of spiritual formation and faith development that we have experienced in our own lives. What is a community of practice and how does that impact learning?

Homework due: #3 Book Review / Critique – Jack Seymour - *Teaching the Way of Jesus: Educating Christians for Faithful Living*

Presentations and discussions:

- Charles R. Foster - *From Generation to Generation*

**Class 8:** “Religious Education as Spiritual Formation” - How do we envision meaningful religious education programs in the postmodern age, and how do we prepare for the educational needs of the post-millennial age?

Presentations and discussions:

- Charles R. Foster - *From Generation to Generation*

**Class 9:** “Where Do We Go From Here?” - Religious Education (Catechesis) plays an important role in character development and spiritual formation, as well as in fostering community cohesion and breaking down barriers between groups. What is the fate of Religious Education in the postmodern world and how will “Millennials” and “Generation Z-ers” and their unique life experiences and worldview change Religious Education for the future?

Presentations and discussions:

- Final Project Presentations

**Class 10:** “The Future of Religious Education” - Students will apply all that has been discussed to their particular ministries today. Diverse curricula will be discussed and students will develop sample curricula that might be utilized for their own family ministry programs.

Homework due: #4 Book Review / Critique – Charles R. Foster - *From Generation to Generation: The Adaptive Challenge of Mainline Protestant Education in Forming Faith*

Presentations and discussions:

- Final Project Presentations

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

### General Teaching Sources:

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