

Class Objectives

- To describe and to challenge different perspectives on the evangelization of children.
- To explore how children of all ages have the ability to grow in their faith in all domains.
- To consider how a child's development impacts the appropriateness of using behaviorism in the educational context.
- To reflect on the high value that Jesus placed on children and their faith.

Key Terms:

- Evangelization of Children
- Nurture
- Covenant Family
- Crisis Conversion
- Crisis Rejection
- Behaviorism

Pre-lesson Recommended Reading:

- Chapters 21-22 of M. Anthony's *Introducing Christian Education*:
 - i. Anthony, Michelle. (pp. 205-216). *Childhood Education*.
 - ii. Rahn, Dave. (pp. 217-226). *Ministry to Youth*.
- Chapter 13 of R. Habermas' *Teaching for Reconciliation*.
- Downs, Dr. Perry. 1994 "The Evangelization of Children" in *Teaching for Spiritual Growth*. Zondervan.
- Williams, Dr. Michael. 2000. "On Moralistic Interpretations of Scripture"
- Chapman, Dr. Tasha. 2003. "Candy in the Classroom"

Educational Ministry with Children

I. Church’s Responsibility for Children’s Safety

II. Theological and Developmental Issues

A. Downs’ “The Evangelization of Children” article

1. One viewpoint – children are sinners and not candidates for salvation
2. Another viewpoint – children are part of a covenant family and need to be nurtured
3. Another viewpoint – children are candidates for salvation, but need a crisis conversion
4. Another viewpoint – children need to be protected from a crisis rejection

B. Developmental Considerations: Nurturing Faith at Any Age

1. Domains of Saving Faith

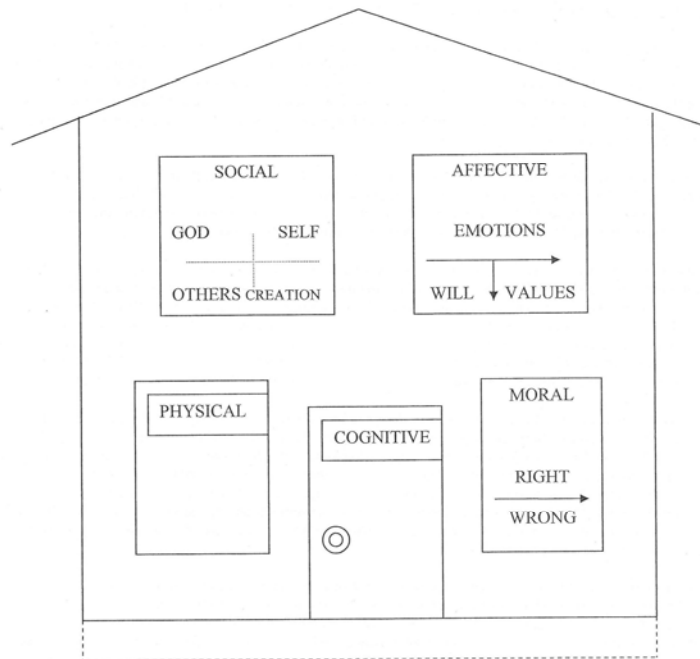
Know – facts about God and humans; Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration

Be – emotional relationship with God

Do – volitional obedience to God

(Heb 11; Rom 10:17; Jn 17:3; Mt 25; Jms; 1Jn 2:3)

2. Domains in an illustration of a house –



We only have doors and window as ways to know the learner. We can’t minister directly to the spirit of the other. 1 Cor 2:11. The spiritual person fills the house. Does what we hear at the door match what we see in the windows? The hidden foundation determines the stability of the house.

Spirituality is not a domain, but the core and the essence of a person; only God can speak directly to the spirit.

3. Differentiating between mimicking and actuality

III. Methodology Issues:

A. Motivating with Behaviorism Vs. Nurturing Faith

1. developmental issues with behaviorism
difference between 2-year-olds and 5-year-olds
2. 5 questions, based on the domains to ask yourself when considering rewards
 - What does it teach my kids in the social area?
 - Moral?
 - Affective (values, will emotion)?
 - Physical?
 - Cognitive?

B. The Killer Be's

1. Moralism – “be like the character in the story”
2. Legalism – “be like me”
3. Personalism – “be whatever you want”
4. Doctrinalism – “be a proposition”

C. Example: Curriculum for children about Jonah

IV. Important Scripture Passages:

A. Matthew 18:1-6

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

B. Matthew 19:13-14

“Little children were then brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them, but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ And when he had placed his hands on them he went on from there.”

C. Mark 10:13-16

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

D. Luke 18:15-17

People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Please complete the following **Activity** (11.1).

Sometime in the next week take time to ask three to five children in your church the following questions:

1. Why do your parents bring you to Church?
2. What do you like about coming to Church?
3. What do you dislike about coming to Church?
4. What are some things you have learned (about the Bible) at Church?

Please complete the following **Activity** (11.2).

Ask the person overseeing children’s ministry in your church if you may see some children’s ministry curriculum materials. Read through a few lessons. Find any strengths or weaknesses of the curriculum, using the questions below.

1. How does the curriculum view the child’s faith? Are they eligible for salvation yet? Is their faith a saving faith? Is the curriculum anticipating a crisis conversion?

2. How well does the curriculum address the different domains (cognitive, affective, physical, social, moral)?

3. How well does the curriculum avoid the four “killer be’s” (legalism, moralism, personalism, doctrinalism)?

VI. Questions for Consideration:

1. What is your current philosophy on the faith and evangelization of children? Why? What questions do you have?