

# CM204 Understanding Today's Child

## Course Syllabus for CMI Online

### I. Course description

A study of child development and behavior from birth through adolescence as related to the unique problems faced in today's society. Emphasis is placed on the role of the parent/teacher in helping children to develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. In addition, the student will develop greater sensitivity toward today's child and his needs, taking into consideration his family life as well as religious background.

This course challenges the student to examine child development and behavior from birth to adolescence in addition to the particular needs of children from troubled home situations and different religious backgrounds to help them minister more effectively to today's child.

### II. Rationale

Today's child is growing up in a world that is incredibly complex and ever changing. The days of carefree childhood are history. In order to effectively minister to the child of today, the children's ministry leader must have insight into the child's unique problems and an understanding of how to meet his needs through teaching situations as well as one on one.

Understanding Today's Child should broaden the children's workers' perspective on the nature of childhood and provide some practical insights for relating to children according to their level of physical, social, intellectual and spiritual development.

### III. Prerequisites

Born-again Christian

Minimum age of 18 (for a CMI Online course)

### IV. Course Objectives

By the conclusion of this course, the student will:

1. Interview children ages 3-5 and post a three-page paper describing the different characteristics of the children
2. Interview children ages 6-11 and post a three-page paper describing the different characteristics of the children
3. Interview children ages 12-17 and post a three-page paper describing the different characteristics of the children
4. Construct a project that will minister to at-risk children and/or their families based on the principles shared in this course.
5. Construct a project that will summarize basic foundational beliefs along with practical ways to relate biblical truths to children of different religious backgrounds
6. Describe growth throughout the course discussing their progress with classmates in the forum

## V. Instructional procedures

Individual assignments along with community forum discussions allow students to interact with the curriculum on both a personal and interpersonal level. As well, project assignments provide the students with practical tools that can be directly used in ministry.

## VI. Course materials

- A. *Understanding Today's Child*, Student Manual
- B. *Wholly Kids* – LifeWay Press, Kids Ministry Publishing, Nashville (2015 or 2016), ISBN 978-1-4158-7319-9

## VII. Participation policies

Students should anticipate spending about 10-12 hours per week on course activities and assignments. All assignments must be posted or submitted by midnight Central Standard Time (CST) of the day the assignment is due. It is expected that all assignments including forum posts will be submitted on time.

Due to the fact that this is an interactive course requiring feedback from other students, submitting assignments late affects not only that student but the other classmates and their learning as well. Failure to submit any assignment on time will result in a reduction in the grade for each day late. In cases where the student consistently misses assignment due dates, the student may be withdrawn from the course without remuneration.

In the case of an emergency or other extenuating circumstance, students should contact their online instructor before the assignment is due and make arrangements for late submission of an assignment.

Participation on the forum and in live chats should be characterized by Christian courtesy. You may disagree with another student's (or instructor's) point of view, but please do so with respect for one another. Please read the Communication section of the student handbook for more details about communication expectations.

This course will require three groups of observation interviews of children between the ages of 3-5, 6-11, and 12-17. These interviews will enable the student to immediately experience the characteristics and behavior of children learned about during the course. See the Real-world Observation Interviews section in the course for more details. If you have problems accessing the website or the forum during the first week, promptly contact the CMI Online Administrator at 1-800-300-4033 ext. 1313.

## VIII. Grading policies and information

During each week, there will be activities and assignments that must be completed. The text reading and activities are designed to provide information needed to complete the assignments. Students will need to do additional research as well.

All assignments will be graded. Each assignment will earn points that will determine the final course grade. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Assignment	Percentage	Point Value
Forums	15%	150
Observation Paper (Ages 3-5)	15%	150
Observation Paper (Ages 6-11)	15%	150
Observation Paper (Ages 12-17)	15%	150
Children at Risk Summary	10%	100
Children at Risk Project	10%	100
Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds Summary	10%	100
Teaching Children from Different Religious Backgrounds Project	10%	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,000</b>

## IX. Learning outcomes and activities for each week

The following information can serve as your checklist as you navigate through the course. Printing this sequential checklist and checking off each activity or assignment as they are completed will help keep you on track throughout the course.

### Week 1

This first week of Understanding Today's Child will help you become familiar with the characteristics and needs common to children enabling you to become more effective in teaching according to their needs. You will begin by posting a brief introduction about yourself to the other students following the guidelines in the assignment. This "getting to know you" exercise will help you begin to feel connected to other students participating in the learning community. This discussion requires responses to at least two other students. Be sure to respond to comments to your own post as well.

In addition, you will read about and research the characteristics and behavior of children in different age groups. You will also conduct five real-world interviews with children ages 6 -11. After your interviews, you will begin work on a three-page paper describing, comparing, and evaluating the characteristics, behavior and teaching of children that you read about and researched with the characteristics, behavior and teaching that you observed in the classroom.

Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Post in the week one forum (Due Friday)
- Participate in an optional live chat with your instructor and classmates! (See course for details)
- Complete the reading for week one (Due Monday)
- Watch the "Age Group Characteristics/Personality Development" video class sessions
- Conduct five real-world interviews with children in the 6-11 age group (Due Monday)
- Watch the "How to Write a Paper" video

- Return to the week one forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

## **Week 2**

In week two, you will continue to learn ways to meet the needs of children in your ministry as you read about adapting for special needs and building self-worth in children. You will also use the information in the last week about the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual needs of children along with your observation notes to complete your three-page Real-world Observation Paper on children in the 6-11 age group.

Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Post in the week two forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the reading for week two (Due Monday)
- Submit your interview questionnaires and observation paper for the 6-11 age group (Due Friday)
- Watch the "Adapting for Special Needs Children" video class session
- Post in the week two forum (Due Friday)
- Return to the week two forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

## **Week 3**

In this week of Understanding Today's Child, you will become familiar with the characteristics and personality development of either young children or adolescents enabling you to become more effective in teaching according to their needs. You will begin by reading about young children ages 3 to 5. You will also discuss the different characteristics of children ages 3 to 5 in the forum. This discussion requires responses to at least two other students. Be sure to respond to comments to your own post as well.

After your interviews, you will begin work on a three-page paper describing, comparing, and evaluating the characteristics, behavior and teaching of children that you read about and researched with the characteristics, behavior and teaching that you observed in the video class sessions.

Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Post in the week three forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the reading for week three (Due Monday)
- Conduct three real-world interviews with children in the 3-5 age group (Due Friday)
- Submit your interview questionnaires and observation paper for the 3-5 age group (Due Friday)
- Return to the week three forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

## **Week 4**

In this week, you will continue to learn ways to meet the needs of children in your ministry as you complete reading assignments for both young children and adolescents. In addition to this reading,

you will use the information in the last week about the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual needs of children along with your observation notes to complete your three-page Observation Paper on the 12-17 age group.

Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Post in the week four forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the reading for week four (Due Monday)
- Conduct three real-world interviews with children in the 12-17 age group (Due Friday)
- Submit your interview questionnaires and observation paper for the 12-17 age group (Due Friday)
- Return to the week four forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

### **Week 5**

More and more children live in single-parent or conflict-ridden homes. Because many of these children are attending our church programs, Sunday School, neighborhood Bible clubs, or other ministry events, the children's leader needs to be equipped to identify children from troubled backgrounds and to provide basic helps when possible. This week you will begin the process of becoming equipped to minister to the needs of hurting children. Through reading and research, you will learn to apply the principles and ideas taught in this week. You will also provide an evaluation of your ministry in the forum noting the things that you are doing well and some things that need to change based on the material in this week.

Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Watch the video class sessions for "Children at Risk"
- Post in the week five forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the Children at Risk Summary Assignment (Due Monday)
- Return to the week five forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

### **Week 6**

In this week, you will describe three important discoveries about children at risk along with how these discoveries are directly applicable to ministry discussing this information in the forum. You will also construct a project that will minister to at-risk children and/or their families based on the principles shared in this course.

Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Post in the week six forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the Children at Risk Project Assignment (Due Monday)
- Return to the week six forum and respond to two other student's posts (Due Monday)

### **Week 7**

In this week, you will begin your study by reading information about Roman Catholicism, secular humanism, and one religion of your choice from the list. You will also compose a summary about a specific religion of your choice. This project will not only help you become familiar with the teachings of different religions as contrasted with Scripture, but you will also learn practical ways to create relationships with children of different religious backgrounds and ways that you can share the Gospel effectively. You will also share in the forum exciting discoveries that you made during your research and how these discoveries can be directly applied in your ministry.

Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Complete the reading for week seven (Due Monday)
- Watch the “Children of Different Religious Backgrounds” video class sessions
- Post in the week seven forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the Different Religious Backgrounds Summary Assignment (Due Monday)
- Return to the week seven forum and respond to two other student’s posts (Due Monday)

### **Week 8**

In this week, you will continue your study of children of different religious backgrounds. After reading all the assigned texts for each of the different religions, you will complete a project of your choice (Newsletter, Teacher Training or Ministry Plan). You will also have the opportunity to share about your growth during the course.

Your assignments and activities for this week will be described below in the recommended order of completion.

- Complete the reading for week eight (Due Monday)
- Post in the week eight forum (Due Friday)
- Complete the Different Religious Backgrounds Project Assignment (Due Monday)
- Return to the week eight forum and respond to two other student’s posts (Due Monday)
- Complete the End of Course Survey (Due Monday)