

REED 700970/80970: Special Topics in Religious Education: Children and the Bible:
Constructions of Childhood in the Bible and Constructions of the Bible for Children

(3 semester hours)

(Fall 2019)

Instructor: Russell Dalton

Prerequisites: None

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Description of Content:

This course will explore three issues related to children and the Bible. Students will interpret Bible passages in light of the role and nature of children in the ancient world, with special attention to emerging “childist” interpretations of Scripture. Students will explore the ways in which the Bible has been adapted and appropriated for children. Finally, students will examine and practice models and methods of teaching the Bible to children in ways that respect the integrity of one’s understanding of the Bible and of children.

Class Procedures:

Lectures, small group discussion, in-class student presentations and lessons.

Requirements:

Attendance and informed, prepared participation in class. Failure to complete all three assignments will result in failure of the course.

Assignments:

1. Write a 10-15 page interpretation (exegesis) of a Bible passage, selected in consultation with the professor. The paper should focus particular attention on the role (stated or implied) that a child or children play in the passage.
2. Choose one of the following:
 - a. Write an 8 page analysis of a Bible story that has been adapted for children from a children’s Bible, children’s Bible video, etc. The analysis should attend to how the adaptation understands (or misunderstands) the Bible passage and how the adaptation seems to understand children and the purpose of religious education.OR
 - b. Produce your own children’s Bible story, children’s Bible story video, etc, including a brief 2-3 page rationale for your approach to adapting the story.

3. Students will, in consultation with the professor, choose a model of teaching the Bible to children, write out a lesson plan and rationale for the plan (at least 5 pages), and present and teach that lesson to the rest of the class.

For DMin students taking the course at the 8000 level

4. Using your congregation as a case study, write a 5 page paper analyzing the ways in which the Bible is presented to children in your congregation, and present that case study to the class.

Required Texts:

1. Julie Faith Parker, *Valuable and Vulnerable: Children in the Hebrew Bible, especially the Elisha Cycle* (Brown Judaic Studies, 2017). ISBN -10: 1946527017 ISBN-13: 978-1946527011. Retail \$34.99.

2. Danna Nolan Fewell, *The Children of Israel: Reading the Bible for the Sake of Our Children* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003). ISBN 10: 0687084148 ISBN-13: 978-0687084142. Retail \$29.99.

3. *Children's Bibles in America: A Reception History of Noah's Ark in U.S. Children's Bibles* (London, New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark's Library of Biblical Studies, 2015) ISBN-10: 0567683923 ISBN-13: 978-0567683922. Retail 39.95. [NOTE: Any royalties that the professor might earn from the sale of this book to students will be donated to The Children's Defense Fund.]

4. Elizabeth F. Caldwell, *I Wonder: Engaging a Child's Curiosity about the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016. ISBN 9781426799921. Retail: \$19.99.

Note: The professor will also distribute occasional articles. Students will also need to read additional texts related to the passage they choose to interpret for assignment #1, the adaptation they choose to analyze for assignment #2, and the model of teaching they choose for assignment #3.

Recommended Texts:

Sharon Betsworth, *Children in Early Christian Narratives* (T & T Clark/Bloomsbury, 2016). ISBN 0567671984. \$42.85 retail.

Marcia Bunge, ed., *The Child in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) ISBN 0802848354. Retail: \$34.00

A. Roger Gobbel and Gertrude G. Gobbel *The Bible: A Child's Playground* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) ISBN-10: 0800618874 ISBN-13: 978-0800618872. NOTE: This book is out of print but is available very inexpensively through Amazon marketplace, eBay, etc.

Grading procedures:

For Masters students:

Assignment #1 exegesis paper 33.3 %

Assignment #2 adaptation paper 33.3 %

Assignment #3, teaching the Bible for children 33.3 %

For Doctor of Ministry students:

Assignment #1 exegesis paper 25 %

Assignment #2 adaptation paper 25 %

Assignment #3, teaching the Bible for children 25 %

Assignment #4, case study paper and presentation 25%

Positive consideration is given for attendance and prepared, informed participation. Students must complete and pass all three (or four) assignments in order to pass the course.

Note: This is a tentative course plan. Some details of this course design may be changed.