



Certification in Specialized Ministries in The United Methodist Church

Children's Ministry



Educational Requirements

Individuals seeking professional certification in children's ministry in The United Methodist Church must meet the standards set by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Division of Ordained Ministry. These include successful completion of five (5) certification courses relating to children's ministry. Persons are certified by their conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) in cooperation with GBHEM.

Courses are designed to provide graduate academic experience for persons to qualify them for certification. Other requirements for certification include personal and church qualifications and experience in the area of children's ministry as determined by GBHEM.

The five (5) courses include theories and methods of teaching the Bible, exploration of the pedagogical and theological bases for ministries, and equipping persons as disciples for the transformation of the world. Courses also include an understanding of The United Methodist Church, its structure, curriculum, and resources.

Each course must be offered for no less than two (2) semester (or equivalent quarter) hours of graduate academic credit. All certification courses must be taken at a United Methodist seminary or approved graduate schools. Exceptions may be made for other seminaries on the University Senate-approved list in consultation with an annual conference BOM and GBHEM.

Three of the five courses may be taken online.

Candidates may participate in more than one course each year. A maximum of ten (10) years is allowed for the certification studies in ministry careers. Two years' experience working in specialized area is required for certification. Experience is defined as a contractual agreement with supervision, accountability, evaluation, and continuing education in a specialized ministry area. Sufficient experience is approved by the annual conference BOM and may also require pre-approval.

Core Competencies for certification in Children's Ministry

1. Ability to develop and administer a program for children that develops faith formation and equips them as disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. Knowledge of faith development for all ages with specific knowledge of faith and moral development of children and the ability to teach theological concepts to children.
3. Skills in working with volunteers and staff to create programmatic experiences and an environment that encourages children in the Christian faith.
4. Understanding of United Methodist tradition and doctrine and commitment to the ministry of the church with children.



Required Courses for Children's Ministry

1. **TEACHING BIBLICAL FAITH:** A consideration of pedagogical methods for the church as it encounters the biblical message of the Old and New Testaments with special emphasis on understanding theological implications for children.
2. **TEACHING THEOLOGY:** A survey of issues in theology and their implications for teaching and learning in the church, with special emphasis on understanding theological implications for children.
3. **TEACHING/LEARNING:** Historical, theological, and philosophical foundations of Christian education with attention to ways people develop and learn across the age span and how teaching takes place in the church.
4. **CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH:** An examination of the role of the educator in supporting the faith development of children in the congregation including pedagogies, administrative and leadership issues, and a theology of childhood.
5. **UNITED METHODIST STUDIES:** Understanding of and grounding in United Methodist doctrine and polity, and the practice of ministry. The course may include a study of doctrine, general rules, social principals, and polity of the UMC as found in the *Book of Discipline*; historical issues in UMC polity (organization and structure of contemporary United Methodism).

GBHEM may accept the two (2) courses in Bible and theology required for other areas of certification as meeting the requirements for children's ministry certification when these courses have been taken within the past 10 years and a special assignment related to children's ministry is completed in consultation with GBHEM. The course Teaching/Learning is common to both Christian education and children's ministry.

Should I seek Professional or Paraprofessional Certification?

Professional certification is available to persons with an undergraduate degree and graduate credit courses at a United Methodist seminary, approved graduate school, or students graduating from a United Methodist-related college, where they have completed the required courses in an area of specialization and served two years in a specialized ministry area.

Paraprofessional certification is available to persons who may not have an undergraduate degree and are working in areas of specialized ministry. Paraprofessional certification does not carry academic credit and is designed for persons seeking training in a specialized ministry as a worker or volunteer.



General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

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