

ADVANCED CHILDHOOD MINISTRY CLASS | DEVELOPS CURRICULUM FOR BUCKNER INTERNATIONAL

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The DBU Master of Arts in Christian Education: Childhood Ministry program has quickly built a reputation as an important Christian education resource for social ministries and their work with children. Under the leadership of program director Dr. Tommy Sanders, the Childhood Ministry program has received multiple opportunities to write and develop materials for underprivileged children. Dr. Sanders is a member of the Council for Service-Learning, which guides the University's implementation and assessment of service-learning as DBU students reach out to the community, the state, the nation, and around the world.

In Fall 2009, Dr. Sanders was approached by Buckner International to see if his students could develop curriculum for a Vacation Bible School and for Buckner's Shoes for Orphan Souls program. Dr. Sanders chose his Advanced



Childhood Ministry class, a designated service-learning course, to take on the project. The class was a mini-term course comprised of a diverse group of students from across the nation, which helped as they wrote curriculum for multicultural groups of children.

The master's students developed curriculum for older pre-school through elementary-age children in a one-day VBS format and also in a five-day format. The curriculum taught the children the stories of how Jesus met the needs of others



from washing feet to feeding the hungry. The children also learned how to share the story of Jesus with others. Students developed the age-appropriate framework and activities to be used by volunteers all over the world. These materials were also released in February to church groups working with Buckner's Shoes for Orphan Souls projects.

According to Dr. Sanders, the purpose of the assignment was "for students to demonstrate their earlier course understanding of children, learning styles, faith formation, and biblical levels of learning." He believes that service-learning is not just to serve, but to put into practice what has been learned to support a need.

The project took place at the end of the course and allowed the students to apply what they had been learning throughout their studies. Through this hands-on experience, the students were able to identify an issue, develop curriculum for that issue, then practice and measure what they learned. They were able to experience all of these things while helping a community partner. The students were also able to experience the joy of creating their first published curriculum through its use by Buckner International.

Based on the success of the Buckner project, the Childhood Ministry Program has recently been asked to develop educational materials to assist the Christian Life Commission in educating Texas churches on the issues

of poverty and hunger among children and families. In Fall 2010, through a similar project, a new group of DBU online Childhood Ministry students will have the same opportunity to learn and serve by developing this second set of curriculum.



Photographs courtesy of Buckner International

