

Certificate

Youth and Children's Ministry

Description

This certificate prepares participants outside CTS degree programs to serve, guide, and mentor children and youth in faith-based and community settings through the integration of theological study, pastoral care, and practical ministry skills. It supports leaders in nurturing faith development and fostering safe, supportive environments for young people.

Coursework engages Scripture, theology, human development, and contemporary ministry contexts to deepen understanding of the spiritual, emotional, and developmental needs of children and adolescents. Special attention is given to creating ethical and safe ministry environments, practicing culturally responsive and trauma-informed care, and designing developmentally appropriate programming.

Participants develop practical skills in teaching, mentoring, curriculum planning, leadership development, and family engagement. Graduates are equipped to serve thoughtfully and responsibly in ministries with children and youth across congregational and community contexts.

Targeted Audience

The CTS Certificate in Youth and Children's Ministry is designed for:

- Lay leaders, ministers and clergy seeking to strengthen their capacity for ministry with children, youth, and families in congregational and community settings
- Youth and children's ministry leaders, directors, and volunteers seeking theological grounding and practical skills for faith formation and pastoral care
- Professionals in education, counseling, social work, and related fields who wish to integrate faith-based and developmental approaches into their work with young people
- Graduates of theology, ministry, or related programs who are not currently enrolled in a degree program but seek specialized training in youth and children's ministry
- Community and nonprofit leaders engaged in programs serving children, adolescents, and families in faith-based or community contexts

Format: Synchronous hybrid/blended online or in-person

Credits: 18 credits

Prerequisites: None. Prerequisites may be established or revised through standard institutional curriculum review and approval processes.

Transfer Policy: Upon approval, a maximum of 6 credits may be transferred toward the certificate program. All transfer credits must meet CTS institutional transfer requirements and are subject to review on a case-by-case basis with approval by the Dean. Eligible coursework must be graduate-level, completed at an accredited institution, and directly relevant to the certificate curriculum.

Program Completion Policy: Upon approval, students have a maximum of three years in which to complete their respective Certificate, with extensions possible by petition.

Admissions and General Requirements

A bachelor's degree (B.A. or equivalent) from an accredited institution is required. Preference will be given to applicants with prior graduate theological education and/or relevant ministry or professional experience in care settings. Applicants are expected to demonstrate readiness for graduate-level theological and clinical work, typically evidenced by such prior study and/or significant experience.

The certificate requires completion of 18 total credits (12 required and 6 elective), with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5.

Rationale

Children and youth ministry today takes place within a rapidly changing cultural and social landscape shaped by shifting family structures, increased mental health needs, digital environments, and ongoing social disruption. These realities have significantly impacted the formation, well-being, and spiritual development of children, adolescents, and families, while also placing new demands on those called to serve in ministry and educational contexts.

At the same time, churches, schools, and community organizations are seeking leaders who are equipped not only with passion for children and youth ministry, but also with the theological depth, developmental awareness, and practical skills necessary to engage young people in meaningful, ethical, and contextually responsive ways. Effective ministry with children and youth now requires the integration of theological reflection, pastoral care, trauma awareness, and culturally informed approaches to formation.

In response, the Certificate in Youth and Children's Ministry at CTS is designed to prepare lay leaders, clergy, ministry practitioners, and community professionals for faithful and effective engagement with children, youth, and families across congregational and community settings. The program provides a structured opportunity to strengthen vocational competence, deepen theological grounding, and develop practical skills for leadership in faith formation and pastoral care.

The certificate also supports those who are discerning or expanding their call to ministry with young people, offering a flexible and accessible pathway for skill development, ministerial enrichment, and professional growth. In this way, the program contributes to the formation of

leaders who are equipped to respond creatively, ethically, and compassionately to the complex realities facing children, youth, and families today.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Certificate in Youth and Children’s Ministry, participants will be able to:

- **Analyze and integrate** biblical, theological, developmental, and pastoral care frameworks in order to design contextually appropriate ministry strategies for children and youth in diverse faith-based and community settings.
- **Evaluate ethical, cultural, and systemic dynamics** (including issues of race, gender, trauma, family systems, and pluralism) and apply informed pastoral judgment in ministry with children, youth, and their families.
- **Design and implement creative, developmentally informed ministry practices** (e.g., teaching, worship, storytelling, community collaboration) that demonstrate professional competence and theological reflection.

General Requirements: 18 credits. 9 required credits + 9 elective credits and cumulative 2.5 GPA

THEOLOGY AND PASTORAL ARTS (9 credits)

- THEO B503 Introduction to the Children and the Bible – 3 credit
- THEO M540: Teaching and Learning in Community – 3 credits
- COUN P531 Human Growth and Development – 3 credits

ELECTIVES (12 credits)

- _____ (3 credits)
- _____ (3 credits)
- _____ (3 credits)

Students select courses that align with their professional goals. Electives provide practical experience, specialized skills, or advanced theoretical knowledge.

Note: All of the following courses qualify for the certificate subject to availability. Other courses may be available pending approval by the Dean.

- THEO B620 An Anti-Racist Gospel? – 3 credits
- THEO T500 Introduction to Theology – 3 credits

- THEO B628 Early Christian Worship: Baptism and Communion – 3 credits
- THEO B736 Teaching the Bible through Podcasting – 3 credits
- THEO B737 LGBTQ and the BIBLE – 3 credits
- THEO B815 Biblical Storytelling – 3 credits
- THEO C615 Bridging the Gap: Church and Community Activism – 3 credits
- THEO C758 Worship as Resistance – 3 credits
- THEO H707 Christianity in Pluralistic America – 3 credits
- THEO M739 The Enabled Church – 3 credits
- THEO M741 Christian Ministry in a Fake News World – 3 credits
- THEO M747 Biblical Values in Ethics – 3 credits
- THEO P500 Intro to Pastoral Care – 3 credits
- THEO T610 Gender, Sexuality, and Theology – 3 credits
- THEO T882 CS Lewis – Theology – 3 credits
- THEO M849 Guided Research in Christian Education – 3 credits
- COUN P633 Healing through Play and Ritual – 3 credits
- COUN P619 Sexuality, Gender, and Culture – 3 credits
- COUN P646 Family and Larger Systems – 3 credits

Implementation Timeline: July 1, 2026 (pending approval and readiness)

Cost: Details regarding scholarship and financial aid eligibility for this program are under review and will be finalized prior to implementation.

Recruitment Strategy: Targeted outreach through churches, nonprofit organizations, and clinical and community care networks.

Advising Guidelines for Certificates and Non-CTS Students: Advisors are responsible for clearly communicating program structure, limitations, and outcomes for certificate seekers and students not formally enrolled in CTS degree programs. Advising should be more targeted, eligibility-focused, and policy-sensitive. **Certificate Advisor:** Dr. Amy Lindemann for advising and program guidance -- alindemanallen@cts.edu.

1. Program Overview

- Purpose and learning outcomes of the certificate
- Intended audience (e.g., ministry professionals, lay leaders, continuing education students, external/non-degree students)
- Whether the certificate is stand-alone or stackable toward a degree (if applicable)

2. Admission and Eligibility (Expanded for Non-CTS Students)

- Whether admission to CTS is required or if non-degree enrollment is permitted
- Prerequisites for enrollment (academic or experiential)
- Any restrictions for students from other institutions
- Visiting or non-matriculated student status requirements

3. Curriculum Requirements

- Total credit hours required for completion
- Required vs. elective courses
- Course sequencing expectations (if applicable)
- Whether credits may later apply toward a CTS degree

4. Academic Progress and Completion Pathways

- Expected time to completion (often flexible or accelerated)
- Whether courses must be taken within a defined timeframe
- Whether incomplete or interrupted progress affects certificate eligibility

5. Financial Implications

- Cost per credit or per course for non-CTS students
- Whether financial aid, scholarships, or institutional aid applies (often limited or unavailable for non-degree students)
- Additional fees for non-degree enrollment
- Clarification that certificate credits may not be covered by traditional degree-based aid packages

6. Enrollment and Declaration Process

- How to attain an CTS ID, email address, and login steps
- Registration procedures for non-CTS students (including any separate application systems)
- Deadlines, enrollment windows, and capacity limitations

7. Academic Policies (Adjusted Scope)

- Minimum grade requirements for certificate completion
- Transfer credit acceptance (often limited or case-by-case)
- Academic standing expectations for non-degree students
- Whether CTS academic policies fully apply to non-CTS students or only in part

8. Career, Vocational, and Ministry Outcomes

- Practical application of certificate learning (ministry, vocational, continuing education)
- Whether the certificate is recognized by partner organizations or denominations
- Internships, practicums, or field components (if applicable)

9. Risks and Considerations (More Emphasized for Non-CTS Students)

- Limited transferability of credits to other institutions
- Financial investment without degree completion pathway unless explicitly planned
- Scheduling constraints for part-time or external learners
- Potential misunderstanding of certificate vs. degree value

10. Documentation and Compliance

Advisors should:

- Document advising conversations clearly, especially eligibility and limitations discussed
- Note status clearly (CTS degree student vs. non-degree/visiting student)
- Ensure acknowledgment that students understand certificate scope and limitations

Dean's office use only		
Academic Council Action	Approved	Denied
Will ATS need to be notified?	Yes	No

If “yes” who will take the lead? _____

Note any recommended changes _____

Forwarded to Faculty for Approval _____

Approved on _____

Referred back to _____

Forward to BOT for Approval _____

Referred back to _____

Faculty notified of BOT Approval on _____

(Attach a copy of notification)

Changes noted for Catalog	Yes	No
---------------------------	-----	----

Students Informed:

How: _____ Date _____

(Attach a copy of notification)

Registrar Notified	Yes	No
--------------------	-----	----

New Worksheet needed?	Yes	No
-----------------------	-----	----

Who will complete new worksheet?

(Attach a copy of new worksheet)