



Certification

in Specialized Ministries in The United Methodist Church

Youth Ministry



Educational Requirements

Individuals seeking professional certification in youth 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 youth 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 urban 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 Youth Ministry

1. Ability to develop and lead a program for youth that leads to faith development and Christian formation in discipleship.
2. Understanding of biblical and theological concepts, as well as ways youth can be taught these and become disciples for the transformation of the world.
3. A knowledge of adolescent development and behavior that includes personal, moral, social, and religious development and the implications of these for youth ministry.
4. Skills in relating with young people and developing strategies for effective youth ministry that include counseling, program development, teaching, and empowering others.
5. Understanding the importance of relationships with volunteers, parents and youth, and ways of communicating and enhancing collegial leadership.



Required Courses for Youth Ministry

1. **TEACHING BIBLICAL FAITH:** A consideration of pedagogical methods for the church as it encounters the biblical message of the Old and New Testament with special emphasis on understanding theological implications for youth.
2. **TEACHING THEOLOGY:** A survey of issues in theology and their implication for teaching and learning in the church, with special emphasis in understanding theological implications for youth.
3. **MINISTRY WITH YOUTH:** Clarifying leadership styles and developing effective strategies for youth ministry (including counseling, staff relations, program development, teaching, and empowering others).
4. **ADOLESCENT WORLD:** Understanding adolescents (personal, moral, social, religious development) and implications for ministry.
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 youth ministry certification when these courses have been taken within the past 10 years and a special assignment related to youth ministry is completed in consultation with GBHEM.

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 schools, 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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