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## Faith in the Classroom: Teaching Adolescent Faith Development in a HBSE Course

Erin Olson  
*Dordt College*, [erin.olson@dordt.edu](mailto:erin.olson@dordt.edu)

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## **Faith in the Classroom: Teaching Adolescent Faith Development in a HBSE Course**

### **Abstract**

Social work educators and practitioners now recognize the important role of faith, spirituality, and religion in work with both students and clients. A course in Human Behavior and the Social Environment provide an appropriate venue for teaching students how to ethically assess for spiritual and religious beliefs while also assessing how that development occurred.

### **Keywords**

faith development, adolescents, HBSE, Human Behavior in the Social Environment

### **Disciplines**

Christianity | Social Work

### **Comments**

Presentation from the 64th Annual Convention of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW) in Annapolis, Maryland, November 6-9, 2014.

A close-up photograph of a small, round, reddish-brown seed resting on a piece of white paper with light blue horizontal lines. A pencil with a purple eraser and a sharpened lead tip is positioned diagonally across the lower right portion of the frame. Faint, dark pencil scribbles are visible on the paper behind the seed.

# **Teaching Faith Development in HBSE**

Erin Olson, MSW, LISW

# Agenda

What is HBSE?

What is happening during adolescence?

What is Fowler's theory on faith development?

What are some applications for teaching this stuff?

# HBSE

- Life-Span Assessment
- Person-in-Environment
- Theory

## CSWE's Educational Policy 2.1.7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

1. Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being.
2. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development.
3. . Social workers utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.





# Adolescence

“A person’s or group’s way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person’s way of seeing him- or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose.”

--Fowler, 1981, p. 4



# Fowler

- Primal
- Intuitive-Projective
- Mythic-Literal
- Synthetic-Conventional
- Individuative-Reflective





# Teaching "Christianly"

- Teaching as "divine assignment"
- Teaching with direction
- Teaching as service
- Van Dyk, 2000

# Practical Implications

- "My Story in God's Story"
- Vogel and Zastrow (2013) classroom activity

What do I find satisfying, meaningful, and enjoyable?

What is my moral code?

What are my spiritual and/or religious beliefs?

What kind of image do I want to project to others?

What type of people do I enjoy being with and why?

What types of relationships do I desire to have with my relatives, friends, and neighbors?

What are my thoughts on death and dying?

What gives me stress? How do I handle that stress?

What do I want to accomplish in the next 5 years? How do I plan on accomplishing those goals?

Discussion Questions: Which questions caused you the most struggle? What do you see as being the purpose of this exercise? What do you feel you learned from this process?



# My Story In God's Story

## ◆ Kingdom

- ◆ Who am I in relation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

## ◆ Identity

- ◆ God's Story
- ◆ Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation

## ◆ Calling

- ◆ Growth-What's my place in God's world?

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