

Oak Hill
College

THEOLOGY

» FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

oakhill.ac.uk/youth »

YOUTH WORK...A TOP LEVEL MINISTRY

Young people are under pressure today as never before.

Competing world views tell them that there is no God, or if there is, that he is uninterested in their lives. Many children and young people brought up in today's culture find it difficult to believe in the relational God of the Bible and are astounded to discover that people live according to God's word and for his glory.

There's now an urgent need for children's and youth workers who can connect a truly biblical faith with modern youth culture. For people who can handle the tough pastoral issues, and also handle the Word of God, because they understand it in depth and can teach it with confidence.

Getting to that point requires theological study, training in practical skills, spiritual growth and the fellowship of others who are similarly preparing for ministry. To be equipped for the ministry of children's or youth work, we believe you need the same level of training as any other ministry in the church.

For the past decade, Oak Hill has been treating children's and youth work as an area of ministry which deserves the best training we can offer. Our new foundation degree, with a specialisation in theology for children and youth, continues what we've been doing, but makes some significant changes.

We're increasing the number of teaching hours you'll receive on the

course, so you'll have more time to get to grips with the nuts and bolts skills needed for youth work, as well as the theology. And we're fully integrating children and youth students with all other students in the College community.

If you have a desire to serve among children and young people in God's church, we think you need a theological degree, complete with practical and professional training. We are confident you'll thrive in the training we provide.

Come and find out more to see if you agree.

THEOLOGY

Oak Hill's foundation degree is a new two-year programme which helps you get the biblical foundation for your ministry in place.

The course gives you the same thorough grounding in theology that all students at Oak Hill receive, but also allows you to specialise in the theology and practice of children's and youth ministry.

The subject areas in the degree include biblical theology, church history, doctrine, apologetics and preaching, plus contemporary culture, world religions, ethics, pastoral care and spirituality – among others.

Alongside these core subjects, you also focus on modules which help you to think theologically and develop the skills you need for work among children and young people. They include teaching the Bible to children and young people, developing a biblical model for youth work, and evangelism and apologetics for young people.

The programme is designed to strike the right balance between training you for ministry in the widest sense and training you specifically for youth work. Our aim is to equip you for a lifetime of ministry, whether you stay in youth work or transition into other forms of church leadership in the future.

THINKING THEOLOGICALLY

Mel Lacy, the Director of Theology for Children and Youth, wants the programme to get you questioning what you do in the light of the Bible, rather than just settling for 'what works best' with young people.

“We want you to know what you're doing and why you're doing it,” she says.

So you'll be learning to think theologically.

“We do a lot of contemporary theological reflection,” says Mel. “For example, I encourage the students to find a current newspaper or magazine article on an issue specifically relating to young people. They then bring the article to a lecture and we chat it through. As a group, we look at the issue theologically and hammer out an appropriate biblical response.”

Developing this sort of thinking helps you to be innovative and responsive in your future ministry.

“THE BEST ASPECTS HAVE BEEN THE DEPTH IN WHICH WE STUDY THE SCRIPTURES AND THE WAY IN WHICH THIS IS TURNED TO BEAR ON THE REAL WORLD”

ANDY COOK, STUDENT AT OAK HILL

PRACTICAL SKILLS

You might have all the theological knowhow in the world, but when 100 kids are about to arrive for holiday club on a Monday morning, you also need skills of organisation and leadership to

RE classes and assemblies, working among children with special needs, as well as lots of practice and experience in delivering talks.

We also help you develop organisational skills and a leadership style. You'll learn about and debate the ethical issues which shape young people's lives. Our aim is to train you professionally as well as practically.

Mel Lacy, the course director, has been a youth worker for many years and is hands-on involved in youth ministry at her local church. 'Youth culture shifts so quickly,' she says, 'that very quickly you could be out of date in terms of what is catching young people's attention and occupying their thoughts, if you're not immersed in working with young people.'

Mel's wisdom and ongoing experience is a key strength as she leads the course and gives students one-to-one guidance.

“YOUTH CULTURE SHIFTS SO QUICKLY THAT EVEN WITHIN TWO YEARS YOU COULD BE OUT OF DATE IF YOU'RE NOT IMMERSSED IN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.”

MEL LACY, DIRECTOR OF THEOLOGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

see you through. That's why our degree gives a boost to the practical training you receive.

You'll learn loads of skills for ministry in your church placement, of course. But we're supplementing that with practical work in college. A significant proportion of several modules is dedicated to learning practical skills. That includes working with the under 3s, planning



COMMUNITY

People train at Oak Hill for a wide variety of ministries.

At any one time, the college community includes future ministers from Anglican and non-conformist churches, cross-cultural workers heading to the Far East and other places around the globe, church planters, people getting ready for urban mission, school teachers, and of course children's and youth workers.

Sharing life together in this community of diverse journeys and talents is incredibly enjoyable and rewarding. Not only in lectures, seminars and times of corporate worship, but also just sitting round a lunch table talking about the

“IT HAS GIVEN ME OPPORTUNITIES TO STOP AND CRITICALLY ASSESS WHY AND HOW WE DO YOUTH WORK. STUDYING IN THIS WAY HAS HELPED ME SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FROM WHICH TO DEVELOP A YOUTH OR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY.”

RACHEL HOLTON, CURRENTLY STUDYING AT OAK HILL

stuff of everyday life and the issues which matter.

As a student on the children's and youth course, you'll be a full member of the college community, with the same opportunities to live on campus and share mealtimes as every other student.

Melissa Tuthill, who is studying on the course, has found the crossover between students following different paths to ministry an enriching experience. 'Learning alongside all the different people on different courses is one of the best aspects of my time here so far.'



MEL LACY



Mel Lacy is Director of the Theology and Praxis for Children's and Youth Ministry course at Oak Hill. She

has had a long standing commitment to theological education, training and biblical youth ministry in the UK and Ireland.

She has been actively involved in children's and youth ministry, and training others involved in children's and youth ministry, for many years, and had a significant role in establishing Soul Truth, a youth work and training organisation in Ireland. Mel also served as the Ireland team leader for Crosslinks, the evangelical Anglican mission agency.

Before coming to Oak Hill in 2009, Mel was Youth Minister in St John's Knutsford, Cheshire, where she worked in the church and the community.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

All the teaching, discussion and skills training at Oak Hill would be worth nothing if you weren't also discovering for yourself the height, depth and breadth of the love of God. That's why we put the focus firmly on your growth in personal holiness and sacrificial living during your time here.

'Christian character matters as much to us at Oak Hill as theological and academic capability,' says Mel Lacy.

One of the ways we structure that is with a new module dedicated to theological reflection. The module encourages you to take a fresh look at your past experience in the light of all you are learning now. And it helps

you develop the spiritual disciplines of meditation and prayer which will be essential in your life and ministry.

» DISCOVER MORE

If you would like to find out more about Theology for Children and Youth, please visit the Oak Hill website...

oakhill.ac.uk/youth

The website gives more detail about the course content and tells you how to apply. We have various deadlines for applications. These may be earlier than you expect, so please visit the website or contact us to discuss your situation.

“CHRISTIAN CHARACTER MATTERS AS MUCH TO US AT OAK HILL AS THEOLOGICAL AND ACADEMIC CAPABILITY.”

MEL LACY, DIRECTOR OF THEOLOGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

I am really excited by the direction that Mel is taking this course: seeking to be utterly faithful to the Bible and engaging with the culture; seeking to raise up youth and children's workers who will work with parents, not round them, and who love young people and are passionate about them becoming followers of Christ in every area of their lives.'

DR KRISH KANDIAH

Executive Director, Churches in Mission at the Evangelical Alliance

I am passionate about ministry to children and young people. They need to be fed by God's Word just as much as adults do. That's why at Oak Hill we want to train and equip ministers for children and young

people with the same depth as those who minister to adults, but with a clear focus on the specific challenges and opportunities of this area of Christian ministry.'

MIKE OVEY

Principal, Oak Hill

If we are to reach the rising generation it is critical that a good, sound theological education is provided to those called to youth work. I am confident that Mel Lacy and her team at Oak Hill have the doctrinal and intellectual tools necessary to do this work. I have personally have seen the long term benefits of this work, where many young people are still going strong as Christians many years later. The sort of

training being provided by Oak Hill in this area is strategic and can only be in the long term interests of the church.'

REVD NIGEL ATKINSON

Vicar of St John's, Knutsford

It's easy to spot a graduate from Oak Hill's youth and children's work course – they're confident and thought through on their gospel convictions. They have developed a strong ministry mindset which is both professional and passionate, and they show a thorough competence in their Bible handling.'

TIM THORNBOROUGH

Publishing Director,
The Good Book Company

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Oak Hill is an Associate College of Middlesex University.

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Registered in England No. 365812.

Registered Office: Kingham Hill School, Kingham, Oxon OX7 6TH.

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