

First student graduates from advanced certificate program

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WACO—A ministry assistant from an East Texas church became the first student to graduate with an Advanced Certificate of Ministry in Children's Ministry, a program jointly sponsored by Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Robin Mack from First Baptist Church in Wills Point received her certificate at the Texas Baptist Childhood and Family Ministry Summit, held at Truett Theological Seminary in Waco last month.

Mack learned about the [certification program](#) through her husband Keith, state director of Royal Ambassadors with Texas Baptist Men.

The Wills Point church has a learning center for children from 8-weeks-old to age 6 years, and she was eager to learn how she could serve the children better.

Mack noted she also wanted to learn how to grow the church's children's ministry, which had seen a decline in members in recent years.

Invigorate a church's ministry to children

Diane Lane, Texas Baptists' childhood discipleship specialist, explained that stories like Mack's are not uncommon. The joint certification program was designed for people looking to invigorate all aspects of their church's children's ministry.

“The certification program will deepen ministry for children, parents, and teachers. Promoting the intentional purpose of all ministry events will help parents have a higher commitment level of participation with their children,” Lane said.

“It will also renew in the teacher the importance of the spiritual foundation they are building for the child. Educating the entire church on the significance of preschool and children’s ministry will then create an acceptance of the youngest participants in church.”

Mack began by completing the children’s certification the BGCT offers, which is centered on practical skills and training necessary for running a children’s ministry.

When she learned about the opportunity to continue her training by taking theology-based courses through Truett as well, she signed up immediately. Mack said that the skills and theology she learned in the courses were eye-opening.

“I had never taken a theology class in my life,” she said. But when she took the course, she concluded: “You know what? Every Christian needs to take this class.”

Truett Seminary’s [online certificate program](#) is designed to strengthen students’ understanding for all areas of ministry, and Mack plans to use some lessons from her theology courses for the weekly women’s Bible study she leads.

Putting ideas into practice



David Tate, director of the online certificate program at Truett Theological Seminary, presents Robin Mack, ministry assistant at First Baptist Church of Wills Point, with the Advanced Certificate of Ministry. (BGCT Photo)

Already, Mack shared concepts from the BGCT-sponsored children's certification courses she completed with her church's children's learning center director. The director compared her own formal education and experience with what Mack had learned as the two brainstormed ways the center could be improved.

Now, Mack plans to incorporate ideas she learned into revitalizing the children's program at her church, as well.

David Tate, director of Truett's online certificate program, believes the joint certification program is perfect for people like Mack, who want to further their education without uprooting their lives.

Many people want to continue learning, but do not have the time or resources to devote years of their lives to education, he noted. These certification programs can help them enrich their education without disrupting their lives.

“We desire to provide a reputable resource for excellent ministry education and preparation at the level these church leaders and ministers are looking for—between Sunday school and a master’s program,” Tate said.

The flexibility of the courses allowed Mack to continue working at the church while learning. Mack’s pastor was also very supportive of the program, giving her time during the work day to complete her studies.

The Advanced Certificate of Ministry in Children’s Ministry was first introduced last year, when Tate and Lane realized their individual programs complemented each other.

“His ministry looks at ministry philosophy. It’s really strong Bible study time. Mine deals with the hands-on preschool ministry and everything that happens there,” Lane said. “So, when you merge it, you have a strong philosophical base as well as a strong, practical, how-to base. It was just the perfect blending.”

Mack agreed. She encouraged anyone who feels led to expand their church’s children’s ministry or simply wants to learn more about theology to consider participating in both programs.

“If the Lord is really leading you into this, you can’t go wrong,” she said.

To learn more about the Advanced Certificate of Ministry in Children’s Ministry, email diane.lane@txb.org or truett_certificate@baylor.edu. Texas Baptists and Truett Seminary also offer joint certification in [Chaplaincy](#), [Urban Church Leadership](#) and other ministerial areas.

