

**Job Title:** Director for Holy Playground Initiative

**Organization:** South Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

**Location:** South Dakota, USA

**Employment Type:** Full-Time with benefits

**Summary:** The South Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) seeks a passionate and experienced leader to serve as the Director for the Holy Playground Initiative. This individual will play a crucial role in supporting congregations as they foster spiritual growth in children (birth-5th grade) through worship in developmentally appropriate ways. This is a 4-year, grant-funded position.

**Key Responsibilities:**

*Holy Playground Advisory Team:* Develop and support a team of ministry/education practitioners to identify, produce, and compile resources that will nurture the worship and prayer life of children with an understanding of evidence-based, developmentally appropriate strategies.

*Neighbors in Solidarity:* Work with the Director of Evangelical Mission to support the initiative's efforts with the Synod's Neighbors in Solidarity partners. The Director will listen to, learn from and collaborate with these congregations to explore ways that children are integrated into the worship and prayer life of each faith community.

*Congregation Cohorts:* Recruit congregations to participate in two cohorts. Create opportunities to communicate the vision and support South Dakota congregations as they implement the Holy Playground Initiative.

*Congregational Coaches:* Identify, train and support congregational coaches in collaboration with the Synod's coaching coordinator and the ELCA Coaching Network. The Director will coordinate professional development for coaches, ensuring a working knowledge of childhood development as the underpinning philosophy of the Holy Playground Initiative.

*Administration:* Work with the Synod's Business Manager to oversee administrative tasks related to the Holy Playground grant, including budget management, reporting, and documentation. The Director will provide evidence of program impact aligned with the evaluation benchmarks established in the grant.

**Qualifications:**

- Strong commitment to the mission and values of the ELCA and understanding of Lutheran theology and traditions, with a passion for children's ministry especially with regard to congregational worship and prayer.
- Demonstrated qualification in childhood development and research-based practices to engage young children. The ideal candidate would have education and experience specializing in the learning, development, social and physical needs of children.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, and relationship-building skills, with the ability to connect with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to develop and implement effective plans, programs, and initiatives to support children's ministry objectives.
- Strong organizational and administrative skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities, deadlines, and stakeholders effectively.
- Ability to collaborate with teams of people, working towards consensus while staying focused on ministry objectives.
- Willingness to travel within the South Dakota Synod region and occasionally beyond for meetings, conferences, and events.
- Valid driver's license and access to reliable transportation.

**Salary:** \$60,000 per year (with a 3% increase each year) plus Portico benefits. Mileage and lodging reimbursement for travel.