

Grace Davis

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Career Research and Reflection

In the summer of 2017, the children's ministry department of Buckhead Church offered me an internship position. Although I was still in Georgia State University's school of music, I was increasingly interested in working in ministry, so I took the job. I wanted to gain experience in the field and figure out if it was something I would want to do after graduation.

As their intern, I worked for more than twenty hours each week. I was the children's ministry office manager and volunteer coordinator, as well as a project manager for a few special assignments for seasonal events. As a part of the Leadership Development Program, I worked on introspective projects, like the Strengthsfinder and Enneagram tests. I had monthly meetings with a supervisor to check in on my progress and see where I could improve. After I completed the internship, I changed my major from Music Education to Rhetoric and Composition. This switch has enabled me to spend more time thinking critically about my future. The Rhetoric concentration engenders initiative, critical thinking skills, and an aptitude for rhetorical and literary analysis.

I got the internship because someone I had once volunteered with mentioned me as a hard-working and motivated Atlanta-based college student. My twelve years as a dedicated and dependable volunteer has made for easy networking; therefore, my first step – a step I have already initiated – is to find a steady job in the field. Having already performed well in an entry level position, I have set myself up as a well-known and likable employee and mentee. However,

steady jobs in ministry are hard to find. The network I have built exists mostly in one organization: North Point Ministries, Inc, and they do not post their jobs on platforms like Indeed. There, hiring is done through word of mouth. As I move past college, I aim to get a job at one of Southside Church's campuses south of Atlanta. I grew up in those churches, and I have worked for its new leadership for the last four years in various summer hire positions. To express interest in a more long-term job, I will email the lead pastor of Southside Church, Peachtree City, about setting up an informal meeting, wherein I will talk to him about my goals and my skillset. I will explain how my degree and decade of volunteer experience in family ministry will be an asset to the church. This meeting, although informal, will make sure that I am on his mind as a potential hire when jobs open in the future.

As an example of what sort of career I hope for, I focus on the Residency Program at North Point Ministries. The Residency is a part-time position in ministry, not unlike the internship I had in 2017, but it comes with the opportunity to sharpen my skills in a narrower field. The Residency offers a cheaper theological graduate education through a partnership with Dallas Theological Seminary. It also pays participants \$1,500 for each of the twenty-two months of the program.

The Residency Program sets up participants for bigger opportunities through higher education. As described by Best Value Schools, "The ministry job outlook in America is slowly on the rise. At just shy of 2% growth predicted over the next few years, it has a ways to go before it reaches the 7-8% average across all American industries, but it is already seeing improvement." Because of the small employment growth, I have used every tool to set myself up for success. My undergraduate degree in rhetoric and my twelve years of field experience are unmatchable for someone my age.

Works Cited

“Residency.” *Leadership Experience*, North Point Ministries, Inc, Jan. 2020.

“How Is the Job Outlook in Ministry? - Best Value Schools.” *BestValueSchools.com*,

Bestvalueschools.com, 1 July 2019.