



Children and the Christian Faith CECH6335

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Church Ministries Division

Spring, 2023 NOLA 2U Flex T/Th 2:00 – 3:20

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

In this course the student is exposed to approaches for developing ministries for children which will better equip the child to experience and respond to God at his own level of understanding. Worship, conversion, church membership, baptism, the Lord's Supper, prayer, and the Bible are the primary content areas.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course you should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

1. the biblical and theological support for the spiritual formation of children;
2. strategies that facilitate the spiritual formation of children;
3. the significance of family and cultural influences on children's spiritual formation; and skill in:
4. developing recommendations for a particular local church to facilitate a child's spiritual formation from sound theological and developmental perspectives.

Required Readings

Harwood, Adam and Kevin Lawson. *Infants and Children in the Church: Five Views on Theology and Ministry*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2017. (ISBN: 9781462751105).

Keeley, Robert J. *Helping Our Children Grow in Faith: How the Church Can Nurture the Spiritual Development of Kids*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008. (ISBN: 9780801068294)

Provided on Canvas:

- Westerhoff, *Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith, "A Journey Together in Faith"*

- Haywood, *Children and Worship*
- Ingle, Clifford, ed. *Children and Conversion*.
- Kummer, *The Family Worship Handbook*
- Peavey and Cline, *Evangelism and Children*

Course Teaching Methodology

This class includes group discussions, field experiences, and individual assignments.

Format

This course is taught on the main campus, NOLA2U (Flex).

If you are taking this course as a NOLA2U Flex student, please note the following attendance policies:

1. You are required to be in class either through viewing the lectures live or viewing the recorded lectures on Canvas. When you view the recorded lecture, you will be considered present for that class. Regardless of if you watch the class live or recorded, you are only allowed to miss the amount of class time specified in the NOBTS attendance policy as stated in the graduate catalog. (See page 184 in the graduate catalog: https://www.nobts.edu/_resources/pdf/academics/GraduateCatalog.pdf).
2. You will be asked to certify that you have been present for the live session or have viewed the recorded session. This certification will be done by emailing a statement of completion to the professor after having watched the class live or viewing the recorded session.
3. All video lectures are available for 7 days after the video is posted. If you are unable to view the video within that time frame, you will be considered absent for that class session.
4. Technical issues will not be considered a valid reason for missing a lecture.

Assignments and Evaluation Criteria

Theology Paper (15%)

Due: Week 2

Write a 3 to 5-page paper supporting the basic assumption that children in early and middle childhood are capable of spiritual formation and able to have a relationship with God even before conversion. A minimum of 5 sources, including the Bible, must be used. *A rubric for this assignment may be found on Canvas. This assignment is related to SLO #1.*

Interview with a Child (15%)

Due: Week 4

Interview a child between the ages of 7 and 12 following the interview protocol included in this syllabus. Submit a 3-4 page verbatim of the interview.

- Seek permission to audio or video record so that you may give the child your full attention. Interviews flow better if you are not writing after each question.
- Insert the child's responses into the interview protocol.
- At the beginning of the document, provide a pseudonym for the child, age, and gender as well as the date of the interview.
- At the end of the document, describe your understanding of the child's relationship with God. (Is it distant, intimate, warm, formal, etc.)? Support what you say with examples from the child's responses.

Bring a copy of this assignment to class - both questions and answers. We will use the interviews in class, analyzing responses, noting themes that emerge from the data. This assignment is related to SLO #3. A rubric for this assignment may be found on Canvas.

Spiritual Disciplines Presentation (10%)

Due: Week 6

Develop and deliver a 20-minute presentation on an assigned spiritual discipline (i.e., service, prayer, family worship, Scripture memory, Bible study, silence and solitude, and evangelism) regarding how children and families may engage in the practice of that discipline. Assignments will be made during week 1. Depending on the size of the class, this may be a group presentation. The presentation should be created using a presentation software (i.e. Prezi, PowerPoint) and posted to the assigned Discussion Board on the day of the presentation. *This assignment is related to SLO #2. A rubric for this assignment may be found on Canvas.*

Children in Worship: Observation and Paper (15%)

Due: Week 11

Observation: Attend two services of worship - one Baptist (or the church you currently attend if you aren't Baptist), and one of the following: Catholic, Lutheran, Orthodox, Reformed. Observe what children experience and how children participate. Experience the service "through a child's eyes." Prepare by doing some research on the denomination. (Refer to Harwood and Lawson). Review the church's website to see their focus on children. Observe the entire service. Taking observation notes during the service is not appropriate. Write notes after the service. Consider what you wish to observe ahead of time. The following questions are meant to help you frame your observation, although you aren't limited to these.

What is the setting like? What type and size of building, what kind of seating plan, decoration, placement of important objects, symbols, and furnishings that may be used in worship (or the absence of ritual objects etc.)?

What type of service did you attend--regular Sunday worship, holiday, weekday, baptism, etc.?

Was there a musical component? What type, amount, and style of music? Was it performed or created by the congregation? How did children participate?

What kind of clothing was worn? Did participants in the service wear special clothing or vestments?

Who participated and how? What degree of lay (congregational) involvement in the service? Were children involved in any way?

Ages and number of people attending? Who led the service? Did you notice distinctions of gender, race, or age in worship leadership? Were children involved in worship leadership (prayer, instrumental, etc.)?

How formal or informal was the service? (Note: Dress is not always a reliable measure of the formality or informality of the service. Was it primarily scripted or spontaneous?)

What was the style of prayer or preaching? Was the sermon written and read, prepared but not written, or spontaneous? Were the children attentive?

How much time was spent in various activities--song, spoken prayer, scripture reading, preaching, sacraments, etc.?

How welcoming was the congregation to the children?

Paper: Write a 4 to 6-page comparing and contrasting the two worship experiences. How are they alike and different? What impact might the experience have on the Christian spiritual formation of a child in attendance? Express how the events and surroundings converge to express beliefs or emphases particular to that congregation or its denomination.

Class readings and lectures should help you to interpret what you see. Include the name of the church, the date and time of the service, and the name and title of the worship leader/pastor. First person narrative is acceptable for this paper.

Media Evaluation and Summary (15%)

Due: Week 14

Movie: Attend one movie (rated G or PG) currently in theatres and evaluate its worldview using the *Let's Go to the Movies* handout provided by the professor.

Bookstore: Visit a major bookstore and review current literature, music, and electronic games for children. If you don't have access to a store, contact the professor and request permission to use an online site. Consider the physical environment (i.e., what children see as they approach the children's section and once they arrive there), and the worldview promoted through the materials.

TV/Video Games: View one television program or one video game and evaluate the worldview it promotes.

Summary: Write a 3 to 4-page summary of your findings and their possible implications for the spiritual formation of children. In light of your findings and their implications, make several recommendations that may be implemented by a local church. *This assignment is related to SLO #3.*

Final Exam: Case Study - Consultant Report (20%)

Due: 15

Case Study: The educational leadership of a selected church are exploring contemporary approaches towards spiritual formation for children. They have hired you as a consultant to help them understand children's spirituality and how the contemporary focus differs from the traditional understanding of children's spiritual formation. Additionally, they want you to recommend and describe *at least three ways* to foster the spiritual formation of the children of their church.

Consultant Report: Identify a congregation with which you are very familiar or one to which you can have access to for an assessment. Develop a 6 to 8-page report with a minimum of 6 sources, which may include the Bible and course materials. Construct the report in the following manner:

- Cover Page
- Introduction (½ - 1 page)
- Overview of children's spirituality/formation (1 page)

- Comparison and contrasting of contemporary Christian/spiritual formation with traditional idea of Christian education/children’s ministry (1 page)
- Description of the selected church - size, number of preschoolers and school-age children, current approaches to ministry (Sunday school, children’s church, choir, etc.) (½ - 1 page) Do not use the real name of the church.
- Recommendations (at least 3) for fostering spiritual formation of children in this church. (2.5-3 pages)
 - Identify/define/describe the recommendations
 - Provide a rationale for each recommendation. Support these recommendations from course materials and/or additional research sources.
 - Provide biblical/theological support for the recommendations.
- Conclusion (½ - 1 page)
- Works Cited - *A rubric for this assignment may be found on Canvas. This assignment is related to SLOs #1 and #4.*

Class Presence and Participation (10%)

Class presence and participation points may be earned to encourage your active class participation and discussion. You will earn a perfect score if you attend class and actively contribute to the class discussion.

Presence: Although it is not required, a brief e-mail of explanation in advance of the absence is appreciated. Three late arrivals or early departures equal an absence. Attendance is taken each class period.

Participation: I am less concerned with “right” or “wrong” answers than I am with thoughtful contributions which follow the discussion and either add to it or move it in a new direction. If you find it uncomfortable to speak up in class, I encourage you to work on this skill, as this is an integral component of ministerial training.

Evaluation

Biblical and Theological Support Paper	15%
Interview with Child	15%
Spiritual Disciplines Presentation	10%
Media Evaluation and Summary	15%
Children in Worship	15%
Final: Case Study: Consultant Report	20%
Presence and Participation	10%
A 93-100 B 85-92 C 77-84 D 70-76 F 69 and below	

Course Schedule

Wk	Date	Unit	Topic	Readings & Assignments
1	1/17		Introduction to Course	
	1/19	1	Section 1: Biblical, Theological, and Developmental Foundations Theology of Children	Westerhoff – “A Journey Together in Faith” Ingle – Chapters 1-4,9 Keeley – Chapters 1, 3
2	1/24	2	Theology of Christian Education for Children	Ingle - Chapter 5 Keeley – Chapters 2, 8
	1/26	3	Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Children’s Spirituality	Biblical and Theological Support Paper
3	1/31	3	Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Children’s Spirituality	
	2/2	4	Developmental Theory and Spiritual Formation	Ingle, Chapters 7, 9 Keeley – Chapter 6
4	2/7	4	Developmental Theory and Spiritual Formation	
	2/9	5	Section 2: Spiritual Formation in the Home Children’s Ideas of God Interviews of Children	Interview with Child
5	2/14	6	Laying Spiritual Foundations in the Home	Ingle – Chapters 6,8
	2/16			
6	2/21		Mardi Gras	
	9/23	7	Leading Children in Spiritual Disciplines	
7	2/28	7	Leading Children in Spiritual Disciplines	Presentations
	3/2	8	Family Missions, Ministry, and Worship	Kummer, <i>The Family Worship Handbook</i>
8	3/7	9	Section 3: Spiritual Formation through the Local Church Theological Perspectives on Children in the Church (4 views)	Harwood and Lawson, <i>Infants and Children in the Church</i>
	3/9			
9	3/14		Spring Break	
	3/16			
10	3/21	10	Welcoming Children to Worship /Ordinances	Haywood, <i>Children and Worship</i>
	3/23			
11	4/4	11	Developing a Spiritual Formation Plan	https://legacymilestones.com/milestones-tour/#1498332033811-6be1a725-ba9a Children in Worship
	4/6			
12	4/11	12	Intergenerational Experiences for the Spiritual Nurture of Children	
	4/13			
13	4/18	13	Responsible Evangelism of Children	Peavey and Cline, <i>Evangelism and</i>

	4/20			<i>Children</i>
14	4/25 4/27	14	Media/Technology and Spiritual Formation	Media Evaluation and Summary Due
15	5/2 5/4		Selecting Resources Final: Case Study – Consultant Report Due Thursday, May 4 by 4:00	

Interview Protocol

Child's Name (Pseudonym) and Age: _____ Your Name: _____

Obtain written parental permission to interview, audio or video record the conversation.

Before the interview, tell the child that you want to talk with him about what he/she thinks about God. Reassure him that his answers will be recorded but his name will not be used.

Get Acquainted

Who lives at your house or apartment?

People who know God

Of all the people you know, who do you think knows God the best? Why do you think that person knows God best?

Are there other reasons why you think _____ knows God?

Is there someone else you know who knows God really well? Why do you think so? Anyone else?

Feelings about God

When you think about God, how do you feel?

Tell me about a time when you felt surprised or amazed about God.

Have you ever felt guilty towards God for something you have done?

Have you ever been happy about God? If so, when?

Have you ever been scared of God? When?

Have you ever been angry at God? If so, why were you angry?

Have you ever felt love for God?

Knowing God

What is the difference between someone who knows *about* God and someone who *knows* God?

How do you think someone gets to know God?

What are some things that you do that help you know God?

Do you talk to God (prayer)? If so, do you pray in your mind, or out loud?

- What sort of things do you talk to God about?

Can you think of other ways you can get to know God?

In what ways do you listen to God?

In what ways does God talk to us? Have you ever thought God talked to you? Would you tell me about that?

- Have you ever felt God close to you? Would you tell me about that?

Ask at least two questions that you develop.

Thank the child. *This interview protocol is adapted from Dr. Holly Allen's doctoral dissertation and was the instrument used for the field research in her dissertation.*

Course Policies

Academic Honesty Policy: All graduate and undergraduate NOBTS students, whether on-campus, internet, or extension center students, are expected to adhere to the highest Christian standard of honesty and integrity when completing academic assignments for all courses in every delivery system format. The Bible provides our standard for academic integrity and honesty. This standard applies whether a student is taking tests, quizzes, exams, writing papers, completing Discussion Boards, or any other course requirement.

Assignment Formatting: Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be created in Turabian format. All written assignments must be Word or PDF documents, written in third person unless otherwise instructed, and created in 12 pt. Times New Roman font. (Hint: PDF preserves the formatting).

Assignment Submission: All assignments are to be submitted to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday unless otherwise indicated. Do not send files as attachments via email to the professor unless requested. For technical reasons, this mode of file transmission is extremely inefficient.

Classroom Decorum: Your participation is required for every class session. You are expected to:

- Come to the class with a constructive point of view, prepared to interact with the readings and resources related to the course topic.
- Dress appropriately and in accordance with the NOBTS Student Handbook.
- Turn off cell phones and not accept any calls and/or text messages during class.
- Use laptops appropriately during class.

Disabilities and Accommodations: New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary does not discriminate against applicants/ students on the basis of personal disabilities. The Seminary, in voluntary compliance with the American Disabilities Act, will provide reasonable institutional accommodations, modifications, and adjustments to enable and empower students with disabilities to participate in Seminary programs and activities to the fullest extent possible. However, NOBTS cannot support accommodations that place undue hardship on the Seminary or its resources or which alter the essential requirements of curriculum and academic progress. While the seminary does not provide direct assistance to students in the form of equipment or personnel, accommodations may be made by individual professors at their discretion. These accommodations usually take the form of early access to lecture materials in electronic format and additional time to complete tests and assignments. The most efficient way to pursue such accommodations is to provide the Director of Testing and Counseling (Dr. Jeff Nave, jnave@nobts.edu, 504-282-4455 ext. 8004) with documentation of the condition for which you seek accommodation, an explanation of helpful accommodations received in the past, and a description of the specific accommodations you desire. The Director of Testing and Counseling will document your request and communicate on your behalf with the professors who teach the course(s) for which you are registered. The seminary reserves the right to consider each request for "special" accommodations on a case by case basis pursuant to the criteria enumerated above.

Electronic Devices: Electronic devices may be used in class only for taking notes and other activities assigned by the professor. Other activities are strictly prohibited. Laptops may not be open during presentations unless requested by the presenter. Phones must be silenced during

class time. Any student found violating this policy may be asked to leave class and will be counted absent

Grading Scale: Your final grade will be based on your total accumulation of points as indicated under the *Assignments and Evaluation Criteria* section of this syllabus according to the grading scale in the NOBTS 2013-2014 catalog.

A 93-100 B 85-92 C 77-84 D 70-76 F 69 and below

Late Assignments: Only under extreme circumstances, and with prior approval, will a late assignment be accepted. Late assignments will be assessed an initial 10 percent penalty and 1 percent for each day after the due date (i.e. 10/1 points for a 100-point assignment, 3/3 points for a 30-point assignment). No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks after the original due date. Missed presentations may not be made up.

Netiquette: Appropriate Online Behavior: Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior when working online. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times in the online environment.

Plagiarism: A high standard of personal integrity is expected of all students. Copying another person's work, submitting downloaded material without proper references, submitting material without properly citing the source, submitting the same material for credit in more than one course, and other such forms of dishonesty are strictly forbidden. *Although anything cited in three sources is considered public domain, we require that all sources be cited.* Any infraction will result in failing the course. Any infraction will be reported to the Dean of Students for further action.

Professor's Absence or Tardiness: If the professor is late in arriving to class, you must wait a full 20 minutes after the start of class before you may leave without being counted absent, or you must follow any written instructions that may be given to you.

Recording Policy: Student recordings of class, including any audio and/or video recordings, regardless of the media or format, and regardless of the intended or actual use, are not permitted without prior written permission of the professor. The class will be notified in advance should any such recording be approved. This policy is intended to protect the privacy of the students.

Revision of the Syllabus: The course syllabus is not a legal contract. Any syllabus revision will be preceded by a reasonable notice to students. The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the professor. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class or by email notice.

Withdrawal from the Course: The administration has set deadlines for withdrawal. These dates and times are published in the academic calendar. Administration procedures must be followed. You are responsible to handle withdrawal requirements. A professor can't issue a withdrawal. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in the course if you choose not to attend once you are enrolled.

Additional Information

Canvas and CampusNexus Student (CNS): You are responsible for maintaining current information regarding contact information on Canvas and CNS. The professor will utilize both to communicate with the class. Assignment grades will be posted to Canvas. You will be enrolled in the course on Canvas.

Correspondence with the Grader: You should contact the grader via email peaveygrader@gmail.com. The grader responds to email during normal business hours, 8 a.m.

and 5 p.m. on weekdays only. The grader may not respond to late night or weekend e-mails until regular “business” hours. Please respect the grader’s personal time. Remember, graders are students as well and have their own coursework and research to complete. Please be respectful in the language you use in your emails to the grader.

Correspondence with the Professor: Every effort is made to respond to emails and phone calls within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends. Please feel free to contact the professor(s) with any question you may have regarding this course.

Hurricane/Severe Weather Evacuation: For up-to-date weather information stay tuned to:
WBSN FM-89.1 -- WWL Channel 4 -- WWL AM-870 -- www.nobts.edu

Mandatory Evacuation: Hurricane season lasts from June 1 to November 30. If the Mayor or the President of NOBTS recommends that you leave the city, then do so. If a mandatory evacuation is called everyone except emergency personnel must leave. Staying on campus is not an option. See the *Student Handbook* for further information regarding hurricane preparedness, evacuation, and shelter.

NOBTS Emergency Text Messaging Service: Sign up for the NOBTS emergency text messaging service at <http://nobts.edu/NOBTSEmergencyTextMessage.html>

Office Hours: Hours are posted outside the office door. Email the professor to arrange a meeting outside of posted hours.

Student Wellness: Take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your academic and ministry goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. Helpful resources are available on campus and an important part of the seminary experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. The Dean of Students office is here to help and may be contacted at 282-4455, ext.3283 or deansec@nobts.edu. The Leeke Magee Christian Counseling Center may be contacted at 504-816-8004 or lmccc@nobts.edu. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

Attendance Policy

If you are taking this course as a NOLA2U Flex student, please note the following attendance policies:

1. You are required to be in class either through viewing the lectures live or viewing the recorded lectures on Canvas. When you view the recorded lecture, you will be considered present for that class. Regardless of if you watch the class live or recorded, you are only allowed to miss the amount of class time specified in the NOBTS attendance policy as stated in this syllabus.
2. You will be asked to certify that you have been present for the live session or have viewed the recorded session. This certification will be done through [**assignment by professor**] after having watched the class live or viewing the recorded session.
3. All video lectures are available for 7 days after the video is posted. If you are unable to view the video within that time frame, you will be considered absent for that class session.

Technical issues will not be considered a valid reason for missing a lecture.

Traditional Classes: Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions. Any student missing more than nine hours may receive an automatic grade of “F” for the course. Three tardies will count as one absence.

Technical Support: Need technical assistance? Contact the ITC today:

1. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/- Email for general technical questions/support requests.
2. Selfserve@nobts.edu- Email technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, Faculty portal, etc.)
3. Canvas@nobts.edu Click on the “Help” button for technical questions/support requests regarding the NOBTS Canvas System. You can also email questions to Canvas.nobts.edu / nobts.instructure.com.
Bluejeanshelpdesk@nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with Bluejeans and NOBTS Bluejeans classrooms (On and Off-Campus).
4. TelephoneHelpDesk@nobts.edu- Email technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Nextiva Phone system.

[504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon-Thurs 7:00am-9:00pm & Fri 7:00-7:00pm Central Time).

Writing Style Guide

A copy of the approved NOBTS Style Guide can be found in the course Canvas shell, or can be located online at the Writing Center’s page on the seminary website at:

<https://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/writing/StyleGuide.pdf>

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Selected Bibliography

- Adams, Jessie. *A Guide to the Spiritual Development of Children: Seventeen Subjects Every Christian Parent Needs to Focus Upon*. Bloomington, IN: Crossbooks, 2010.
- Allen, Holly Catterton, ed. *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008.
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- Baucham, Voddie. *Family Driven Faith: Doing What it Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God*. Wheaton, IL: Good News & Crossway, 2007.
- Bunge, Marcia, ed. *The Child in Christian Thought*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001.
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- Hemphill, Ken, and Richard Ross. *Parenting with Kingdom Purpose*. Nashville: Broadman, 2005.
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- McIntosh, Kenneth R. *Following Aslan: A Book of Devotions for Children Based Upon The Chronicles of Narnia by C. S. Lewis*. Vestal, NY: Harding House Publishing Service, 2006.
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- Water, Mark. *What the Bible Has to Say About Children*. Nashville: Dimensions for Living, 2003.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988.