



## **Children and the Christian Faith CECH6335**

Christian Education Division  
Fall, 2016

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*The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church.*

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### **Purpose of the Course**

Children and the Christian Faith is designed to equip students to help each child experience and respond to God at his/her own level of development.

### **Core Value Focus**

The seminary has five core values. The focal core value for 2016-2017 is *Characteristic Excellence*. This course supports the five core values of the seminary.

*Characteristic Excellence* – What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### **Curriculum Competencies Addressed**

NOBTS faculty members realize that all ministers need to develop specific competencies if they are going to have an effective ministry. To increase the likelihood of NOBTS graduates having an effective ministry, the faculty developed a competency-based curriculum after identifying seven essential competencies necessary for effective ministry. All graduates are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in all of the following seven areas:

*Biblical Exposition:* To interpret and communicate the Bible accurately.

*Christian Theological Heritage:* To understand and interpret Christian theological heritage and Baptist polity for the church.

*Disciple Making:* To stimulate church health through mobilizing the church for missions, evangelism, discipleship, and church growth.

*Interpersonal Skills:* To perform pastoral care effectively, with skills in communication and conflict management.

*Servant Leadership:* To serve churches effectively through team ministry.

*Spiritual and Character Formation:* To provide moral leadership by modeling and mentoring Christian character and devotion.

*Worship Leadership:* To facilitate worship effectively.

The curriculum competency addressed in this course is:

*Disciple-making:* Students will understand and be able to facilitate the spiritual formation of children.

### **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 Objectives**

At the conclusion of the course you should be able to:

1. Identify and evaluate strategies that will facilitate the spiritual formation of children.
2. Appreciate the significance of family and cultural influences on children's spiritual formation.
3. Facilitate a child's spiritual formation from a sound theological and developmental perspective.

### **Required Readings**

The following texts are to be read in their entirety:

- Davis, Cos. *Children and the Christian Faith*. Franklin, TN: Family Resource Services, 2003. (ISBN 080546221X) [Available from <http://www.cosdavis.com/books/children-and-the-christian-faith>)]
- Ingle, Clifford, ed. *Children and Conversion*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1970. Available online or on cd through the on-campus LifeWay store.
- 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: 978-0-8010-6829-4)

- Trent, John, Rick Osborne, and Kurt Bruner, eds. *Parent's Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children: Helping Your Child Develop a Personal Faith*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2003. (ISBN: 9781589971431)

The following documents may be found on Blackboard:

*Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith, "A Journey Together in Faith"*  
*Children and Worship*  
*The Family Worship Handbook*  
*How to Become a Christian*

The following videos should be viewed before Week 5 – Perspectives on the Salvation of Children:

Jason Foster - Orthodox View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNU0XVBdw4cGregg>  
 David Liberto - Roman Catholic View: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPVZz\\_8-sXk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPVZz_8-sXk)  
 Gregg Strawbridge - Presbyterian View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvewTdmcswg>  
 David Scaer - Lutheran View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFPFBG-tk8Q>  
 Adam Harwood - Baptist View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkZx6jiGILg>

### Course Teaching Methodology

#### **Units of Study**

Unit 1: Biblical Foundations  
 Unit 2: The Child and Spiritual Formation  
 Unit 3: Spiritual Formation through the Family  
 Unit 4: Spiritual Formation through the local church  
 Unit 5: Spiritual Formation and Culture

**Teaching Method.** This class will include group discussions, field experiences, and student projects. This course will be delivered on the main campus in a block format.

### Assignments and Evaluation Criteria

- 1. Biblical and Theological Support for Children's Spirituality (20%) Due: 8/30, 9/20**  
 Write a 6 to 7-page paper supporting the basic assumption that children are spiritual beings, and able to have a relationship with God even before they make a personal commitment.

*Before you write this paper and before you read any course materials, write a one-page summary of your ideas on why children might be considered spiritual beings. Possible directions of thought could be biblical passages, theological concepts in general (sin, guilt, image of God), historical support, ideas about children's place in the kingdom, educational psychology, philosophy, the role of baptism, etc. (8/30)*

Include this one-page summary in the front of this paper (Biblical and Theological Support for Children's Spirituality). This one-page paper is worth 5 points of the 100; the purpose in this preliminary assignment is to "prime the pump" – for you think about possible ideas before you begin to read others' thoughts.

The following questions may offer some direction.

What is the status of children before God?

Are children in the kingdom?

What role does baptism play? (either infant or believers baptism)

What does the concept of original sin have to say about children's spirituality?

What does the concept of *imago dei* have to say about children's spirituality?

What biblical passages offer insight into these ideas?

What is "spirituality" in Scripture?

Does Scripture offer any guidelines regarding the age when children may be accountable for their sins?

Organize your paper with subheadings. Include an introduction and concluding paragraphs. *A rubric for this assignment may be found on Blackboard in Assignments. This assignment is related to SLO #3.*

## 2. Interview with a Child (20%)

**Due: 9/13**

Interview a 7 – 12-year old child following the interview protocol included in this syllabus. Print out a copy of the interview protocol, and as you interview the child, write down what the child said after each question. If child says, "I don't know," or "I don't think so," put that down. (You may wish to audio or video record the interview to facilitate later transcription.)

Submit a copy of the interview protocol, with the child's responses inserted in the correct places. (Copy the interview protocol into a new document—then simply type in the child's responses.) The whole interview will probably be 3-4 typed pages. At the beginning of the written assignment, give the child's first name (or a pseudonym if you wish), age, and gender as well as the date of the interview. THEN—at the bottom of the interview protocol, compose **one full paragraph** (half a page), describing your understanding of the child's relationship with God. How would you describe that relationship (e.g., distant, intimate, warm, formal, etc.)? **Support what you say with examples** from the interview responses.

Bring a printed out copy of this assignment to class on October 13 - both questions and answers. We will use the interviews in class, analyzing responses, noting themes that emerge from the data.

## 3. Spiritual Disciplines Presentation (10%)

**Due: 10/11**

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) and how children and families may engage in the practice of the discipline. Assignments will be made in class during week 1. Your presentation should be creative and address various learning styles. The presentations will be posted to the assigned Discussion Board on the due date. *This assignment is related to SLO #1. A rubric for this assignment may be found on Blackboard in Assignment Upload.*

#### 4. **Spiritual Formation Plan (30%)**

**Due: 11/15**

In our readings and class discussion we explore a variety of ways to cultivate and nurture children's spiritual development. For this assignment, you will identify a congregation with which you are familiar - your home church, current church, or another that you know well.

Assume that the educational leadership of your selected church are exploring the shift towards spiritual development in children's ministry. They have come to you and requested that you:

- Help them understand children's spirituality
- Help them understand how this new focus on spiritual development differs from the traditional understanding of Christian education /children's ministry
- Recommend and describe at least three ways to foster the spiritual development of the children of this church.
- Provide a rationale for these three recommendations – biblical/theological support from current literature (your course materials, etc.) that validate these ideas.

Guidelines:

- General introduction
- Explanation of children's spirituality (1 page)
- Compare/contrast Christian/spiritual formation with traditional idea of Christian education/children's ministry (1 page)
- Three recommendations for fostering spiritual growth and development. (2.5-3 pages each)
  - Identify/define/describe what this idea might look like in this church setting
  - Support this idea from course materials
  - Provide biblical/theological support
- Conclusion

Include a paragraph that provides basic information about the church you have chosen – size, number of preschoolers and school-age children, current approaches to ministry (Sunday school, children's church, choir, etc.). This paragraph should precede the spiritual formation plan.

The paper should be 10-13 page with a minimum of 10 sources. Submit to Blackboard. A *rubric for this assignment may be found on Blackboard. This assignment is related to SLO #1 and #3.*

#### 5. **Childhood Reflection Paper (20%)**

**Due: 11/29**

Over the course of the semester, take time to reflect and journal regarding your childhood experiences and how they impacted your spiritual development. The following questions (from author Catherine Stonehouse) may prompt your reflection. You may address ideas and issues not reflected in these questions as well.

General:

- What during childhood gave me the most satisfaction – the greatest sense of “specialness” or joy?

- What made me uncomfortable or caused pain?
- What do I remember from school experiences with pleasure? With pain?
- How did my relationships with other children impact who I am?
- How did my early relationship with my parents impact my self-image and the kind of person I am?
- Who were the persons outside my immediate family who most impacted me during childhood?

**Spiritual/Religious:**

- How did my relationship with my parents during childhood shape my image of God?
- In my experience in the church, what was most meaningful and formative? What was most painful and destructive?
- What memories do I have of prayer?
- Were there times when I felt God’s presence?

Submit to Blackboard at least five dated “entries” in your journal (4-5 pages). *This assignment is related to SLO #2. A grading rubric for this assignment may be found on Blackboard in Assignments.*

**Evaluation**

Biblical and Theological Support Paper	20%
Interview with Child	20%
Spiritual Disciplines Presentation	10%
Spiritual Formation Plan	30%
Childhood Reflection Paper	20%

**Course Policies**

**Absences:** You are permitted a maximum of 9 hours of absence from this course. However, participation in this course is partially based on attendance. You can’t participate if you are absent.

**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 Feedback:** Assignments requiring grading will be returned within a reasonable period of time. Feedback on graded assignments will be provided through the grading rubric located in your Blackboard Grade Book. You will find comments in the grading rubric, as well as on graded paper assignments. You may also email the course grader with questions regarding grading.

**Assignment Formatting:** Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be created in Turabian format. All written assignments must be Word documents, written in third person unless otherwise instructed, and created in 12 pt. Times New Roman font. PDFs will not be accepted.

**Assignment Submission:** All assignments are to be submitted to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. of the due date unless otherwise indicated. Do not send files as attachments via email to the professor. 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:

- Arrive on time.
- Come to the class with a constructive point of view, prepared to interact with the readings and resources related to the course topic.
- Demonstrate respect for the professor and other members of the class.
- Dress appropriately and in accordance with the NOBTS Student Handbook.
- Turn off cell phones. Utilize laptops and other technology for class purposes only.
- Maintain confidentiality when someone shares personal information.

**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.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit assignments are not offered in this course.

**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:** NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Please be aware that plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. Refer to the NOBTS Student Handbook

<http://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/student-services/NOBTSHandbook.pdf> where the definition, penalties and policies associated with plagiarism are clearly defined.

**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:** 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**

**Academic Policies:** Academic policies relating to absences, grading scale, final examination schedules, and other topics can be found in the current online catalog: [New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Graduate Catalog](#).

**Blackboard and ITC Technical Support:** Blackboard is the instructional platform used in this class. Please make sure that your contact information is accurate and up-to-date. If you need assistance, please contact the Information Technology Center (Hardin Student Center 290 or call 504.816.8180). Here are other helpful links to ITC assistance. [Selfserve@nobts.edu](mailto:Selfserve@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support request for help with the site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.) [BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu](mailto:BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu) - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard System. For Student Assistance in using Blackboard, visit: [Student Bb Help](#). [ITCSupport@nobts.edu](mailto:ITCSupport@nobts.edu) - for general technical questions/support requests. [www.NOBTS.edu/itc/](http://www.NOBTS.edu/itc/) - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

**Office Hours:** Monday - Friday 9-12

**Correspondence with the Grader:** You should contact the grader via email at [peaveygrader@gmail.com](mailto: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.

**Graduating Seniors:** Graduating seniors are responsible for alerting the professor of their intention to graduate. All of your assignments must be completed by noon (12:00 p.m.) on the Wednesday prior to commencement exercises.

**Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”:** This is the official NOBTS Writing Center online help site for writing academic papers and essays.

<http://www.nobts.edu/writing/default.html> You will discover writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help you become a better writer. Go here for Turabian and APA style helps and guidelines. You will also find language fonts for Greek and Hebrew.

**Professor Availability:** You may contact the professor at any time using the email address provided in the course syllabus. The professor will make every effort to return answers to emailed questions within a 24-hour period of time, excluding weekends.

**Special Needs:** If you need an accommodation for any type of disability, please set up a time to meet with the professor(s) to discuss any modifications you may need that are able to be provided.

**NOBTS Emergency Text Messaging Service:** Once you have established a SelfServe account you may sign up for the NOBTS emergency text messaging service by going to <http://nobts.edu/NOBTSEmergencyTextMessage.html> .

**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.

### Course Schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
1	8/23	Introduction	
2	8/30	<b>Unit 1: Biblical Foundations</b> Theology of Children	<i>Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith, "A Journey Together in Faith"</i> <i>Children and Conversion</i> , chapters 1 - 4, 9 <i>Helping Our Children Grow in Faith</i> , chapters 1 and 3 <b>One-page Biblical and Theological Support for Children’s Spirituality Due</b>

3	9/6	Theology of Christian Education for Children	<i>Children and Conversion</i> , chapter 5 <i>Helping Our Children Grow in Faith</i> , chapters 2 and 8 <i>Parent's Guide to Spiritual Growth of Children</i> , Part I - "The Single Most Important Task for Christian Parents" <i>Children and the Christian Faith</i> , Chapters 1, 4-5
4	9/13	<b>Unit 2: The Child and Spiritual Formation</b> Developmental Theory and Spiritual Formation	<i>Children and Conversion</i> , chapters 7 and 9 <i>Helping Our Children Grow in Faith</i> , chapter 6 <i>Parent's Guide to Spiritual Growth of Children</i> , chapters 11 – 14 <b>Child Interview Due</b>
5	9/20	Perspectives on the Salvation of Children	<i>Children and the Christian Faith</i> , Chapters 2-3 View video links <b>Biblical and Theological Support for Children's Spirituality Due</b>
6	9/27	Communicating the Plan of Salvation to Children	<i>How to Become a Christian</i> (on Blackboard) <i>Children and the Christian Faith</i> , Chapters 6-9
7	10/4	Personality and Faith Development	
8	10/11	<b>Unit 3: Spiritual Formation through the Family</b> Laying Children's Spiritual Foundations in the Home Guest Speaker: Faye Scott, Children's Minister, First Baptist New Orleans	<i>Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith</i> , "A Journey Together in Faith" <i>Children and Conversion</i> , chapters 1-4, 6, 8 <i>Parent's Guide to Spiritual Growth of Children</i> , chapters 16 - 27 <b>Spiritual Disciplines Presentation Due</b>
9	10/18	<b>Fall Break</b>	
10	10/25	<b>Spiritual Disciplines Pres.</b>	<i>Children and the Christian Faith</i> , Chapter 15
11	11/1	Family Missions and Ministry Family Worship	See Blackboard for Missions Links <i>The Family Worship Handbook</i>
12	11/8	<b>Unit 4: Spiritual Formation Through the Local Church</b> Developing a Spiritual Formation Plan	<i>Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children</i> , chapters 29 - 32. <a href="http://www.legacymilestones.com/">http://www.legacymilestones.com/</a> <i>Children and the Christian Faith</i> , Chapter 16
13	11/15	Ordinances Worship	<i>Children and the Christian Faith</i> , chapters 12 and 13 <i>Children and Worship</i> <b>Spiritual Formation Plan Due</b>
14	11/22	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	
15	11/29	<b>Unit 5: Spiritual Formation and Culture</b> – Media/Technology Community Culture	<i>The Family Worship Handbook</i> See Blackboard for links <b>Childhood Reflection Due</b>
16	12/6	Selecting Resources – Field Trip to LifeWay Class Celebration	<b>Spiritual Formation Plan Due</b>

## Interview Protocol\*

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Get parental permission. Ask permission to audio or video record the conversation.*

### **Get Acquainted, chit-chat**

Maybe demographic information: (e.g.,)

- Who lives at your house or apartment? (*parents, names and ages of siblings, pets*)

### **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?
- 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?
- Do you have any questions you want to ask me?

### **Feelings about God**

- When you think about God, how do you feel?
- Can you tell me about a time when felt surprised or amazed about God?
- Sorry or guilty toward God?
- Happy about God?
- Sad about God?
- Scared about God?
- Angry at God?
- Ever feel 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?
- Do you think you know God?
- How do you know God? (*or* What are some things that you do that help you know that you know God?)
- Do you talk to God (prayer)? In your mind, in your imagination, out loud?
- What sort of things do you talk to God about?
- Can you think of other ways you can get to know God? (*allow time*)
- 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?

***Questions that may get at the same idea, to dig a little deeper:***

- Were you ever afraid or alone, and you think God helped you? Would you tell me about that?

Or:

- Has your family ever needed special help and you think God helped? Would you tell me about that?

Or:

- Have you ever been at the mountains, or in a park, or at the ocean, and Thought God was nearby? Would you tell me about that?

**Your questions (You must ask at least two questions that you have created)**

Do you have any questions you want to ask me?

Thank child and mention that you will be writing a report, though you will not be using names. In your report, please use a pseudonym for the child.

*\*This interview protocol is taken from Dr. Holly Allen's doctoral dissertation and was the instrument used for the field research in the dissertation.*

### **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.

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