

**Carey Theological College**  
**SPIR 193: Spiritual Formation of Children and Families**

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April 3- June 9, 2017  
3.0 credit hours

*While every effort has been made to be accurate as of January 1, 2017, syllabi produced before the beginning of class are subject to change.*

### Course Description

This course will teach you to appreciate, understand and develop skills to promote spiritual formation in children in the context of families. Throughout this course, you will explore and reflect on various models and family factors that are likely to shape the spirituality of children and families. Hands-on experiences will also help you to understand the effects of family activities on children's spiritual formation.

### Course Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. List and explain the major findings in the history of children's spirituality.
2. Examine and evaluate the major models of children's spiritual formation from Biblical and theological perspectives.
3. Illustrate the roles of various family elements such as family culture, rituals and activities in the spiritual formation of children and families.
4. Use family activities to enrich spiritual formation in children.

### Course Outline

#### **UNIT 1: Understanding children's spirituality**

Topic 1: Major findings in children's spirituality research

Topic 2: Spiritual growth and experience of Children

#### **UNIT 2: Models of Christian formation in children**

Topic 3: Contemplative-reflective model

Topic 4: Instructional-analytic model

Topic 5: Pragmatic-participatory model

Topic 6: Media-driven active-engagement model

#### **UNIT 3: The role of family in children's spiritual formation**

Topic 7: Family culture and rituals

Topic 8: Family activities

Topic 9: Family discipleship

Topic 10: Parenting

## Required Reading

### Books

Anthony, Michael J, Ed. *Perspectives on Children's spiritual formation*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006.

Ratcliff, Donald & Brenda. *ChildFaith: Experiencing God and spiritual growth with your children*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010)

Stinson, Randy and Timothy Paul Jones. *Trained in the fear of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011. (Ch 1-9)

### Electronic References

Crabtree, Mara Lief. 2007. "Forbid not the little ones: the spirituality of children in the Celtic Christian tradition." *Christian Education Journal* 4, no. 2: 238-251.

Clark, Steve. 2011. "Research brief: intentional fathering." *The Journal Of Family Ministry* 2, no. 1: 44-45.

Nelson, C. Ellis. 2006. "Spiritual formation : a family matter." *Family Ministry: Empowering Through Faith, Fall 2006 Christian Periodical Index*, EBSCO host (accessed November 26, 2016).

Ratcliff, Donald. 2007. "'The spirit of children past': a century of children's spirituality research." *Christian Education Journal* 4, no. 2: 218-237.

Ratcliff, Donald. 2010. "Children's spirituality: past and future." *Journal Of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 3, no. 1: 6-20.

Talbert, Betty W. 2000. "Partners with listening hearts: some thoughts on Christian formation in families." *Journal Of Family Ministry* 14, no. 1: 20-29.

Yust, Karen-Marie. 2004. "Creating a spiritual world for children to inhabit." *Journal Of Family Ministry* 18, no. 4: 24-39.

## Academic Requirements and Time Investment

### Academic Requirements

This ten-week course consists of self-directed learning as well as interactive learning with fellow students. The course includes reflection, response, participation, interview, research and presentation. You are expected to read and learn the theoretical aspects of the course material through self-directed studies. A significant part of your learning will take place through online interactive forums and field activities such as research and interviews. Activities are included in the course to create hands-on experiences and to foster an interactive learning environment. To complete this course, you will need to:

1. Participate in a weekly online discussion forum.
2. Conduct a family interview project.
3. Write a personal reflection paper.

## Time Investment

<i>Activity/Assignment</i>	<i>Hours</i>
Reading (600 pages)	40
Online Discussion and Unit Postings (7 Units)	35
Family Report (and Family Interview)	30
Personal Reflection Paper	30
Total Hours	<hr/> 135

**Please note:** The amount of time taken by students will vary. This information is intended to be used as an approximation for planning purposes.

## Evaluation

<i>Activity/Assignment</i>	<i>%</i>
Online Discussion and Unit Postings (7 Units)	30%
Family Report (and Family Interview)	30%
Personal Reflection Paper	40%
Total Percentage	<hr/> 100%

## Assignments

### 1. Weekly Online Forum: Reading and Discussion Forums

Forums run for 7 weeks and are **due every Wednesday and Saturday**. Marks are only given to **3 selected postings (see Section C below: 30%)**.

Using concepts acquired from required reading, answer the discussion questions prepared by the instructor and interact with the postings by your peers. Anticipate spending 3 to 5 hours each week on discussion forums. Saturday is the last day of the study week. We take Sundays off and begin the new week again on Mondays. The basic pattern for most weeks is as follows:

- A. Each week, you will be assigned pages from one or more of the course texts for online learning and interactions. It is vital to complete the required readings by Wednesday and submit an initial post by mid-night on Wednesdays. The assigned discussion questions will be related to the topic of the week. Initial posts should be about 200 words.
- B. You have 3 days (Thursday to Saturday) to read posts on **all** discussion questions and make a substantial response by midnight on Saturday. Both the initial post and the substantial response are **required** each week. Each missed post will result in a one percentage point drop of the final grade, unless arrangements prior to the deadline are made with the professor. The Saturday immediately after the current discussion is the final day for posting on time.
- C. **Only 3 initial posts will be graded.** Refer to the Course Schedule and Discussion questions and choose 3 topics that interest you the most. The 3 graded initial posts should be about 400 words, instead of the normal weekly 200 words initial post. Grammar, spelling and writing

style will also be graded. Included “GRADABLE POST” at the top of post to distinguish between the graded initial posts and the regular weekly initial posts. The 3 graded initial posts will be 30% of your final grade (10 % each)

**Expectations for Weekly Online Participation**

You are expected to participate in all class discussions and activities. Timely participation is essential to allow time for interaction between students. Students who do not participate in a timely manner will receive a grade of zero for the activity. Participating in discussions and activities will take about 3-5 hours per week.

Submit your first post by midnight every Wednesday and respond to fellow students’ postings and questions by midnight on Saturday. You are required to integrate the readings in their posts. Initial posting should not exceed 200 words, while responses to the initial post should not exceed 150 words.

**Evaluation of Graded Postings**

Weekly grad	Description
10 = A	Exceptional in every respect. Display a deep integration between the readings and application. Provides a sustained and respectful challenge to the group.
9 = A-	Very good work: Organized, relevant, and deep contribution that refers to the readings and uses them in a way that is appropriate to the subject.
8 = B+	Good work – contributions and interactions with peers, expresses complete thoughts and are well-supported.
7 = B	Generally good work, but with several areas of weakness – for example, in application, depth of comprehension, etc.
6 = B-	Minimally acceptable contribution. Requires improvement. See parameters.
5 = C+	Inadequate contribution. Requires improvement See parameters
0	Late work without prior approval from instructor.

**2. Family Interview Report (30%, 1000 words)**

The family interview report is another way for you to explore and understand how family shapes the spiritual formation of children. Select at least two different Christian families with different devotions to their spiritual and church lives. Both interviews should be around 1-2 hours and should be conducted with a similar set of questions. Drawing from what you have learned from the course (particularly from Anthony’s text), compare and contrast children’s spiritual formation in both families. Write a concise paper to summarize your findings. Also, please attach your interview questions in an Appendix of your paper.

**3. Personal Reflection paper (40%, 1500 words)**

By the end of the course, you will not only have been introduced to the foundational understanding of spiritual formation in children and families, you will also have gone through many practical and experiential exercises and learning opportunities. This is an opportunity for students to reflect on course material and summarize your personal learning in a short reflection paper. This paper is a personal reflection. However, it should display your comprehension of the course material as well as demonstrating your ability to apply those concepts.

4. **Spiritual formation family activity research & online presentation (This assignment is NOT required by 100 level students, but they are welcome to participate and learn from the presentations\*)**

*\*This research focuses on studying one spiritual formation family activity that is common in a North American family environment. In addition to conducting thorough research on your selected spiritual formation family activities, also provide concrete and practical suggestions on how to apply the activities in present day families. You will find examples of some common family spiritual activities in Ratcliff's text (2010) including Bible storytelling, family field trips, communion, etc. You can also create or develop your own family activities to foster children's spiritual growth. You are expected to select an interesting research topic regarding family activities and email it to the professor by Week 5. For the presentation, creative modes of presentation are most preferred, such as the use of PowerPoint, video clips, etc.*

*After listening to the various presentations given by other students each week, you are required to submit online feedback (100 words for each presentation). Comments should be constructive and expand the scope of learning for all students.*

### Course Schedule

<b>Week 1 (Apr 3-7)</b>	
Topic/Activity	<b>Topic 1:</b> Major findings in children's spirituality research
Reading	Ratcliff, Donald. 2007. "'The spirit of children past': a century of children's spirituality research." <i>Christian Education Journal</i> 4, no. 2: 218-237. Ratcliff, Donald. 2010. "Children's spirituality: past and future." <i>Journal Of Spiritual Formation &amp; Soul Care</i> 3, no. 1: 6-20.
Assignments Due	Online Posting & Response #1
<b>Week 2 (Apr 10-14)</b>	
Topic/Activity	<b>Topic 2:</b> Spiritual growth and experience of children
Readings/Discussions	Ratcliff, Donald & Brenda. <i>ChildFaith: Experiencing God and spiritual growth with your children</i> , Ch. 1-5. (pp.1-82) Anthony, Michael J, Ed., Introduction (pp. 1-43)
Assignments Due	Online posting & Response #2
<b>Week 3 (Apr 17-21)</b>	
Topic/Activity	<b>Topic 3:</b> Contemplative-reflective model <b>Topic 4:</b> Instructional-analytic model
Readings/Discussions	Anthony, Michael J, Ed., Ch.1-2 (pp. 43-164)
Assignments Due	Online posting & Response #3

<b>Week 4 (Apr 24-28)</b>	
Topic/Activity	<b>Topic 5:</b> Pragmatic-participatory model <b>Topic 6:</b> Media-driven active-engagement model
Readings/Discussions	Anthony, Michael J, Ed., Ch. 3-4 (pp. 165-278)
Assignments Due	Online posting & Response #4
<b>Week 5 (May 1-5)</b>	
Topic/Activity	<b>Topic 7:</b> Family culture and rituals <b>Topic 8:</b> Family activities
Readings/Discussions	Ratcliff, Donald & Brenda. <i>ChildFaith: Experiencing God and spiritual growth with your children</i> . Ch. 6-9 (pp.83-180) Crabtree, Mara Lief. 2007. "Forbid not the little ones: the spirituality of children in the Celtic Christian tradition." <i>Christian Education Journal</i> 4, no. 2: 238-251.
Assignments Due	Online posting & Response #5
<b>Week 6 (May 8-12)</b>	
Topic/Activity	<b>Topic 9:</b> Family Discipleship
Readings/Discussions	Anthony, Michael J, Ed., Ch. 4, (pp. 165-278) Stinson, Randy and Timothy Paul Jones. <i>Trained in the fear of God</i> . Ch 1-9 (pp. 1-162)
Assignments Due	Online posting & Response #6
<b>Week 7 (May 15-19)</b>	
Topic/Activity	<b>Topic 10:</b> Parenting
Readings/Discussions	Clark, Steve. 2011. "Research brief: intentional fathering." <i>The Journal Of Family Ministry</i> 2, no. 1: 44-45. Talbert, Betty W. 2000. "Partners with listening hearts: some thoughts on Christian formation in families." <i>Journal Of Family Ministry</i> 14, no. 1: 20-29. Nelson, C. Ellis. 2006. "Spiritual formation : a family matter." <i>Family Ministry: Empowering Through Faith Fall 2006Christian Periodical Index</i> , EBSCOhost. Yust, Karen-Marie. 2004. "Creating a spiritual world for children to inhabit." <i>Journal Of Family Ministry</i> 18, no. 4: 24-39.
Assignments Due	Online posting & Response #7 Family Interview Report

<b>Week 8 (May 22-26)</b>	
Topic/Activity	Presentation 1
Readings/Discussions	
Assignments Due	Presentation 1 Feedback Responses #1
<b>Week 9 (May 29-Jun 2)</b>	
Topic/Activity	Presentation 2
Readings/Discussions	
Assignments Due	Presentation 2 Feedback responses #2
<b>Week 10 (Jun 5-9)</b>	
Topic/Activity	Presentation 3
Readings/Discussions	
Assignments Due	Presentation 3 Feedback responses #3 Personal Reflection paper (Due: June 16)

## Bibliography

Anthony, Michael J., Michelle D. Anthony, Karen E. Jones, Freddy Cardoza, Michael S. Lawson, Richard R. Melick, Curt Hamner, et al. *A Theology for Family Ministries*. Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2011.

Boucher, Therese. *Spiritual Grandparenting: Bringing Our Grandchildren to God*. New York: Crossroad, 1991.

Carlson, Gregory C., and Michael J. Anthony, eds. *Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Formation: Four Views*. Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2006.

Cavalletti, Sofia. *The Religious Potential of the Child*. New York: Paulist Press, 1983.

Church of England, ed. *Something to Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society*. 2nd impr. London: Church House Publishing, 1995.

Fishburn, Janet Forsythe. *Confronting the Idolatry of Family: A New Vision for the Household of God*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

Hunt, Susan. *Spiritual Mothering: The Titus 2 Model for Women Mentoring Women*. 2nd ed. Wheaton, Ill. : Franklin, Tenn: Crossway Books ; Legacy Communications, 1993.

Leckey, Dolores R. *The Ordinary Way: A Family Spirituality*. New York: Crossroad, 1982.

Ratcliff, Donald, and Brenda Ratcliff. *Childfaith: Experiencing God and Spiritual Growth with Your Children*. Eugene, Or: Cascade Books, 2010.

Rempel, Elsie H. R. *Please Pass the Faith: The Art of Spiritual Grandparenting*. Waterloo, Ont: Herald Press, 2012.

Sheek, G. William. *The Word on Families*. Creative Leadership Series. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985.

Stinson, Randy, and Timothy P. Jones, eds. *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011.

Thompson, Marjorie J. *Family: The Forming Center: A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1989.



## Academic Policies

Please see the **Carey Academic Catalog** for more details:

<http://www.carey-edu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Academic-Catalog-2016-2017-FINAL.pdf>

### **Course Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions to fulfil degree requirements. This includes on-line webinars and/or live-streamed portions of courses.

### **Carey Grading Scale**

See the Carey Academic Catalogue for details on the Carey grading scale.

### **Course Withdrawal Policy**

A student who withdraws after the period for which tuition refunds are available within the first half of the course will receive a “W” on their transcript. Beyond those dates, they will receive an “F.”

### **Extensions**

Extensions for course work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If an extension will make it impossible for the professor to submit the final grade no later than one month following the final assignment, the student must petition the Registrar’s Office. If the Registrar’s Office grants such a request, the final extension deadlines will be clearly established. Work granted an extension may receive a grade reduction of up to one-third of the final mark.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is honest and responsible scholarship. Students are expected to submit original work and give credit to other peoples' ideas. Academic dishonesty is acting in a manner to gain unearned academic credit. Examples of academic dishonesty are:

- Plagiarizing by misrepresenting the work of another person (in whole or in part) as a student’s own work or failing to give credit for either wording or ideas that belong to another.
- Submitting the same material for credit in more than one course (whether the earlier submission was at Carey or another institution).
- Using unauthorized aids of any sort in examinations, completing work in unauthorized collaboration with others, or the unauthorized recording and use of class lectures.

Penalty for a lack of academic integrity may include a failing grade in the assignment, examination or course, depending on the severity of the offense. All students are responsible for knowing and practicing academic integrity and must become familiar with the plagiarism student resource at: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/academic-integrity/>.

### **Gender Language**

As language usage changes, the church must discern where its language must change in order to bear faithful witness to the gospel. Modern English usage has moved away from using masculine terms to refer to groups that include women. Using of such terms in worship, writing, or conversation miscommunicates the invitation of the gospel and the nature of the church. Assignments that don’t conform to the gender language policy will be returned to the student for resubmissions.

See the Carey Academic Catalogue for more details on this policy.