



# Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

## CED 790 Children's Spirituality Spring 2008

### ***Essential Information***

Please refer to the following documents for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. All of these documents are available at <http://bbwiki.nts.edu>

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS bookstore procedures
- Online technical requirements and helpdesk information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *A Handbook for Inclusive Language*

### ***Instructor Information***

Professor: Dean Blevins, Ph.D.

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### ***Catalog Description***

Subjects of relevance will be studied according to the needs and interests of the participants. Repeat credit will be allowed for non-duplicated seminar subjects.

### ***Course Narrative & Rationale***

The class provides a study of existing and emerging views addressing the spiritual lives of children and their implication for ministry. While the 20<sup>th</sup> century was identified as the century of the child, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has opened new questions and interests in the relationship between children and the spiritual life. This course serves primarily as a readings class where students will explore various interpretations of the spiritual lives of children and examine current approaches to fostering spiritual formation with children.

### ***Educational Assumptions:***

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential to the processes of Christian education at any level. I will consistently request the Spirit's presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community. Christian community remains the gift of the Spirit, enhanced or hindered by human effort.
3. Students are valued not only as persons who have potential to learn, but also as persons who already have significant knowledge and experiences to contribute to the purposes of the course.

Consequently, some of the course assignments will require cooperative efforts among students. Such cooperation is inherent in a Christian community of learning.

4. The course focuses on the community of faith expressed in a local congregation or parish. In order for the purposes of the course to be fulfilled, each student should have a local church or parish in which he/she regularly participates or is able to “call to mind” a recent congregation that provides a living context for ministry discussion..

5. This is a graduate course. The quality of thinking, writing, speech, and class participation should reflect a graduate level quality. Higher levels of thought (e.g., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), writing style, spelling, grammar, as well as faithful attendance, consideration of fellow students and their ideas, and timely submission of assignments is expected.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

It is my commitment to make a reasonable effort to facilitate learning for students capable of graduate level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may prevent full demonstration of his/her abilities as the course is presently designed should contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss alternative educational practices that have served the student well in the past, and appropriate, mutually acceptable strategies for the present to insure the student’s maximum participation and appropriate evaluation in the course. Student learning limitations need to be based on sound clinical diagnosis and include referential material to help with assessment.

### **Course Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course students should demonstrate:

- 1) An ability to identify and name basic definitions and approaches to understanding children’s spirituality.
- 2) An ability to identify and practice strategies for shaping the spiritual lives of children
- 3) An ability to describe Christian points of intersection in the midst of these concepts and practices.
- 4) An ability to engage in detailed research in the nature and practice of one aspect of children’s spirituality for faithful Christian practice.
- 5) An ability to envision a Christian discipleship most appropriate for responding faithfully in the midst of these influences.

### **Required Texts & Course Materials**

Anthony, Michael J. (Ed.) *Perspectives on Children’s Spiritual Formation: Four Views*. Nashville: Broadman Holman 2006 ISBN 10-0-8054-4186-7 (278 pages)

Coles, Robert. *The Spiritual Lives of Children* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co 1990 ISBN 0-395-59923-7 (351 pages)

Hay, David with Rebecca Nye. *The Spirit of the Child* revised edition London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2006 ISBN 1-84310-371-0 (172 pages)

Marty, Martin E. *The Mystery of the Child*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans 2007 ISBN 978-0-8028-1766-2(246 pages)

Ratcliff, Donald (Ed.) *Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications*. Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2004 ISBN 1-59244-711-2 (417 pages)

Yust, Karen Marie *Real Kids Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children’s Spiritual Lives*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass 2004 ISBN 0-7879-6407-7 (199 pages)

In addition you may be asked to read resources provided either online or in class during the semester.

## Recommended

Cavalletti, Sofia. *The Religious Potential of the Child: Experiencing Scripture and Liturgy with Children*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications/ Catechesis of the Good Shepherd ISBN 0-929650-67-0 (178 pages)

Cloyd, Betty Shannon. *Children and Prayer: A Shared Pilgrimage* Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1997 ISBN 0-8358-0803-3 (163 pages)

Persky, Margaret McMillan. *Living in God's Time: A Parent's Guide to Nurturing Children Throughout the Christian Year*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1999 ISBN 0-8358-0875-0

## Course Outline

**Unit 1:** Introduction Week 1

**Unit 2:** Discerning, Defining and Describing Children's Spirituality Weeks 2-5

**Unit 3:** Approaches to nurturing Children's Spirituality practices Weeks 8-11 (Fall Break Week 7)

**Unit 4:** Explorations of Child Spirituality: Weeks 12-13

## Course Assignments & Requirements

1. **Class participation:** (200 points) students are expected to read and discuss assigned reading in a timely fashion. For the sake of other learners in the class, students need to be able include engage, summarize, and apply readings not only for themselves but their classmates. The assumption remains that our collective insight weekly will make for a richer learning community.

**Blackboard Discussion Component:** To assist in this process, and also to allow students to demonstrate process strengths more written than oral, a Blackboard discussion process will be included. Students will be required to **report two crucial insights** or emerging themes from the assigned weekly reading (including citing the location of the insight) **before 11:59 pm Thursday prior to class**. In addition students will **write responses to two insights**, one of their own and one posted by another student in the class, and **discuss the implications of this knowledge** for ministry **before 11:59 pm Saturday prior to class**. The quality of these discussions will provide background for in-class discussion as well.

2. **An eight-ten page comparative review** of Robert Coles *The Spirituality of Children* and Martin E. Marty's *The Mystery of the Child* (200 points)

3. **Research topic or ministry implementation plan:** (350 points) Each student will select **one key issue** intersecting with key course content and explore it to a greater depth through academic research or through development as strategy for children's spirituality. **Preliminary approval of the topic and a working Bibliography must be submitted prior to mid-semester break**. If presented as a paper will be 10-12 pages in length, reflecting sound research methods including: establishing a key thesis for the paper, establishing backing and warrants for the thesis as well as providing qualifications as necessary, and following Turabian form and style.

4. **Comprehensive essay** (150 points). At the end of the semester the student will write a summative essay (7-10 pages) giving their own approach to children's spirituality that will guide future ministry. This summative paper may draw from sources within the class but should reflect the student's synthesis of the material presented in class.

5. **Oral Final** (100 points): Students will be asked to participate in an oral final examination discussing aspects of the class. The professor will initiate the conversation but students will be asked to sustain the conversation. In addition students will be asked to provide assessment of the course (oral and written).

## **Method for Submitting Assignments**

Please use the assignments section of Black Board unless otherwise directed.

## **Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams**

Late posts receive a 15% daily reduction the week of the assignment. Posting after the assigned week will not be graded. All research/project work is due midnight of the date assigned. Late work without a valid reason (illness or death in family) is reduced by 15% the first week and an additional 10% each week following. No coursework may be submitted after the last day of the regular semester.

## **Course Grading**

1000-901: A    900-801: B    800-701: C    700-600:D    599 or Below: F

### **Grade Descriptions**

“A”-EXCEPTIONAL WORK (surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives)

“B”-GOOD WORK (strong, significant achievement of course objectives)

“C”-ACCEPTABLE WORK (basic, essential achievement of course objectives)

“D”-MARGINAL WORK (inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives)

“F”-UNACCEPTABLE WORK (failure to achieve course objectives)

*See rubrics for major assignments and posting for further information on assessment.*

### Children's Spirituality Weekly Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Module/Theme	Reading	Class Assignments
<b>Unit 1: Introduction Week 1</b>			
Wk 1 Feb 04 (Mon)	Introduction		
<b>Unit 2: Discerning, Defining and Describing Children's Spirituality</b>			
Wk 2 Feb 11	General definitions	Hay & Nye	
Wk 3 Feb 18	Biblical and Historical Contexts	Ratcliff tbd	
Wk 4 Feb 25	Family and Spiritual Life	Ratcliff tbd	
Wk 5 Mar 04	Church and Spiritual Life	Ratcliff tbd	
Wk 6 Mar 11	Coles & Marty Review		An eight-ten page comparative review due in Class
Wk 7 Mar 18	<b>Reading and Research Week</b>		Research Topic & Preliminary Bibliography Due
<b>Unit 3: Approaches to nurturing Children's Spirituality practices</b>			
Wk 8 Mar 25	Two Approaches	Anthony 1- 164	
Wk 9- April 02	Two Approaches	Anthony 165- 278	
Wk 10 Apr 09	Yust: Practices	Yust 1-92	
Wk 11 Apr 16	Yust: Practices	Yust 93-180	
<b>Unit 4: Explorations of Child Spirituality Weeks 12-13</b>			
Wk 12 Apr 23	Research/Ministry Paper Presentations		Research/Ministry Paper due in Class
Wk 13 Apr 30	Essay discussion		Comprehensive Essay due in class
Week 14 May 07	Final Exam Week		Oral Exam

## Grading Rubrics

### Posting Rubric

	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Great</b>
Participation and Initiative Shown	Rarely participates in discussion; does not make an effort to participate; seems indifferent	Limited initiative, does not post minimum requirement; occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Posts minimum requirement; attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group	Demonstrates good self-initiative; posts frequently; attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely
Relevance of Posts	Posts responses which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most responses are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts responses that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts responses related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic to further discussion
Clarity of opinions/ideas; connection to topic	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; evidences grammatical/spelling mistakes	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas; occasional spelling/grammatical errors	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly; occasional lack of connection to topic; well-written and presented	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic; well-planned
Totals				

**Grading Rubric for Reading and Research**

**Student**

Preliminary Considerations	Cognitive Levels (Reasoning)	Recognition & Recall	Comprehension	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation	Comments
Target Level		1	2	3	4	5	
	<b>Reading/ Research Indicators</b>						
Point/ percentage of writing	Overview of writing or introduction to paper	Able to identify/ state key claim(s) of reading/ paper	Able to explain claims in clear & concise manner	Able to indicate how key claim develops through reading/writing	Relates Key Claim to Class focus	Indicates importance of material to Class focus	
Point/ percentage of writing	Primary review/ development of writing	Identifies primary support claims and backing	Able to define clearly & concisely support claims, backing, and qualifications	Able to identify warrants & assumptions support claims & backing	Relates support claims to each other and to class focus	Able to show relative strengths and weaknesses of support claims	
Point/ percentage of writing	Personal Interaction	Connects specific claims to personal interaction	Demonstrates why claim elicits response	Reflection nuances range of writings support claims	Reflection indicates sources that endorse/dispute writing	Reflection references constructive alternatives or application	
	<b>Argumentation Level</b>	<b>Attention</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Demand</b>	
Target Level		1	2	3	4	5	
Point/ percentage of writing	Form & Style Level	Demonstrates standard form (pagination) and clear writing style	Consistent outline with headings and subheadings detailing development of argument	Forceful writing with consistent documentation at key claims and clear transitions and anticipates qualifications	Documentation addresses supporting claims & backing internally with detailed transitions and intersects with issues in class	Wide range of academic sources with strong rhetorical skills at each level. Clearly identified audience to elicit response	
	<b>Surprise Factor</b>						
<b>Total point/ percentage</b>							