

*“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”*

<b>Semester, Year</b>	SPRING/SUMMER, 2025
<b>Course Title</b>	<b>NURTURING THE SPIRITUAL LIVES OF CHILDREN</b>
<b>Course Code</b>	<b>CHED 0553 1S</b>
<b>Date</b>	From May 20 to May 23, 2025 TUESDAY TO FRIDAY
<b>Time</b>	From 9:00AM to 4:00PM
<b>Delivery Format</b>	SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
<b>Class information</b>	The classes will be LIVESTREAMED on Tuesday to Friday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM.
<b>Instructor</b>	<b>DAVID CSINOS, PhD</b>
<b>Contact Information</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:dcsinos@tyndale.ca">dcsinos@tyndale.ca</a>
<b>Office Hours</b>	By appointment only.
<b>Course Materials</b>	Access course material at <a href="https://classes.tyndale.ca">classes.tyndale.ca</a> or other services at <a href="https://tyndale.ca">Tyndale One</a> . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course builds a biblical foundation, explores faith development issues and formulates a rationale for ministry to children. Practical approaches that respond to the spiritual needs of children and nurture their growth as whole persons are included.

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate an understanding of the role the faith community plays in the Christian formation of children that is informed by scripture, tradition, and contemporary research.
2. Identify ways in which theologies of childhood and views of children’s spirituality affect practices of ministry with children.

3. Appreciate the contextual nature of children's ministry and describe one's own call and context of children's ministry.
4. Articulate an awareness of best practices for children's faith formation, including the use of story, questions, participation, intergenerational community, hospitality, and social justice.
5. Plan and evaluate ministries that will nurture the spiritual lives of children in light of personal calling, congregational theologies, and community context.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED READING

##### 1. Required Texts

Csinos, David M., and Ivy Beckwith. [\*Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus\*](#). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013.

Larson, Mimi L., and Robert J. Keeley, eds. *Bridging Theory and Practice in Children's Spirituality: New Directions for Education, Ministry, and Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020. (selected chapters)  
NOTE: While not all chapters of this text are required readings, it is strongly recommended that students purchase their own copy of this book.

Nye, Rebecca. [\*Children's Spirituality: What it is and Why it Matters\*](#). London: Church House Publishing, 2009.

##### 2. Required Chapters and Articles (available on the online course page on [classes.tyndale.ca](https://classes.tyndale.ca))

Caldwell, Elizabeth F. "It's What We Do': Faith Formation at Home." In *Shaped by God: Twelve Essentials for Nurturing Faith in Children, Youth, and Adults*, edited by Robert J. Keeley, 47–57. Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive, 2009.

Cloete, Anita. "Intergenerational Ministry: Youth and Church in Context." In *The Generative Church: Global Conversations about Investing in Emerging Generations*, edited by Cory Seibel, 65–80. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019.

Gundry-Volf, Judith. "The Least and the Greatest: Children in the New Testament." In *The Child in Christian Thought*, edited by Marcia Bunge, 20–60. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.

Rahner, Karl. "Ideas for a Theology of Childhood." In *Theological Investigations*, vol. 7, 33–50. New York: Herder and Herder, 1971.

White, Keith J. “‘He Placed a Little Child in the Midst’: Jesus, the Kingdom, and Children.” In *The Child in the Bible*, edited by Marcia J. Bunge, 353–74. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.

## **B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS**

See the bibliography for recommended additional readings.

Tyndale recommends [STEPBible](#) – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

## **C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

### **1. Participation: 10% of final grade**

This assignment is related to all Outcomes.

Come to each virtual class (morning and afternoon are considered separate classes) having read all assigned readings and prepared one of each of the following for the group of readings assigned for that class:

- a statement in the readings that stood out to you,
- a concept raised in the readings that you’d like to learn more about,
- a question that arose as you engaged with the readings, and
- an idea for doing ministry with children based on these readings.

Participate in all aspects of this course, including pre-recorded lectures, class discussions, individual and group activities, etc. Poor attendance, arriving late, being unprepared for class, and under/over-contributing to discussions and activities will negatively affect your participation mark.

Participation will be evaluated according to the following scale:

- 9–10 Exceptional! Demonstrated consistent attentive listening and active contribution. Always prepared and on time for class.
- 8–8.5 Very Good. Demonstrated a fair amount of attentive listening and often actively contributed to class. Almost always prepared and on time for class.
- 7–7.5 Satisfactory. Contributed to class discussions a fair amount and did not tend to dominate conversations nor remain too quiet. Timeliness and preparedness were inconsistent.
- 6–6.5 Needs Improvement. Did not contribute to class to a satisfactory level and/or did not respect the views and voices of others, but showed some desire to improve. Inconsistent preparation and involvement in class discussions.

- ≤5 Poor. Did not contribute to class at a satisfactory level and/or did not respect the views and voices of others, while demonstrating a lack of desire to improve. Consistent poor preparation and involvement in class discussions.

## **2. Theology of Childhood Paper: 25% of final grade, due Friday, 13 June**

This assignment is related to Outcome 2.

Write a 5-7 page paper in which you articulate your personal (working) theology of childhood. Material from this course, your readings, your faith tradition, your engagement with scripture, and your personal experiences may be used as resources for this assignment. Remember, this is a working theology—your theology of childhood may change over time, but I am interested in what it is at this moment. Your theology of childhood can respond to the following types of questions: What, theologically, does it mean to be a child? What theological themes are important to your theology (grace, sin, vulnerability, life, etc.)? What are the roles of children within families and faith communities? What can do children teach us about what it means to be human (for example, what it means to live in community, to follow Jesus, to care for others, etc.)? What practices in the church and wider society challenge children from living into their full potential? What is our responsibility as adult people of faith in helping children live to their full potential? You do not need to answer all these questions and your paper can address other questions or issues; these questions are shared to springboard you toward thoughtful engagement with children from a theological perspective.

Your reflective research paper must rely on at least two course readings and two additional reputable scholarly sources (you may use the book you chose for assignment 3 as a resource, but it is counted as a course reading).

This paper is to be 5-7 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins and Chicago-style endnotes.

This paper will be evaluated according to the attached rubric for written assignments.

## **3. Digital Book Presentation: 25% of final grade, due Friday, 27 June**

This assignment is related to Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Choose one of the books from the bibliography below and read it carefully and thoughtfully. Prepare a digital presentation (15-20 minutes) that creatively and engagingly presents material in the book. You can record a podcast, host an interview about the book (real or mock), or make a creative video presentation (TED talk style, image-based, tutorial, late-night talk show parody, LEGO stop motion animation —the options are endless!). The goal of this presentation

is to present material in the book, and to get creative while doing it! Remember that sometimes less is more—it may be better to dig deeper into one concept or a particular section from the book instead of providing an overview of the whole book. You must post your digital presentation online (with a private link) and send the link to the instructor by midnight on Friday, 16 June.

This assignment will be evaluated according to the attached rubric for presentations.

Note: Students are required to view and discuss one another's presentations. To provide ample time for students to create high-quality presentations, instead of sharing presentations during the week of class, students must log into Classes, view one another's presentations online, and post comments and questions on a discussion board by Wednesday, 9 July. With approximately four hours for viewing presentations and two for discussing the presentations on the discussion board, this work is equivalent to one full day of class (in lieu of one day of class).

#### **4. Curriculum Analysis: 40% of final grade, due Friday, 18 July**

This assignment is related to Outcomes 3, 4, and 5.

Write a 8-10 page paper that offers a thoughtful and thorough analysis of a children's ministry curriculum. It can be a curriculum intended for Sunday schools, vacation Bible schools, children's worship, intergenerational activities, or another context altogether. Choose a full unit of the curriculum (for example: 5-8 weeks of Sunday school, a one-week VBS, etc.) and analyze it using the guidelines below. You must submit your curriculum to the professor for approval by 9 June, stating the name of the curriculum, its publisher, the length or number of lessons included in the unit, and the year for which this curriculum was intended (if available). Please note that you will not be able to select a curriculum written or published by the course instructor for this assignment.

Part 1: Describing the Curriculum (approximately 1.5-2 pages)

- What do you know about the publisher and authors of this curriculum?
- For whom was this curriculum created? Describe its intended audience.
- What are the goals (stated or assumed) of this curriculum?

Part 2: Analyzing the Curriculum (approximately 3-4 pages)

- What broad theological assumptions guide the curriculum (views of God, the cross, salvation, discipleship, the work of the church, etc.)?
- What theologies of childhood guide this curriculum?

- What methods of formation—broad strategies and more focused tactics—does this curriculum utilize to accomplish its goals (use of story, spiritual practices, participation in faith community, etc.)?
- Do these methods help this curriculum accomplish its goals? Why or why not?

### Part 3: Using the Curriculum in Your Context (approximately 3-4 pages)

- For whom would you recommend this curriculum, and why?
- How would you make use of this curriculum in your ministry context?
- What aspects of this curriculum (theological assumptions, goals, methods, etc.) are appropriate for your ministry context? What aspects are not appropriate?
- What changes (additions, omissions, etc.) would you make to this curriculum in order to make it more appropriate for your context?
- What practices discussed in this course would you use to enhance the implementation of this curriculum in your context? Describe how you would use these practices?

Be sure to draw from relevant course material, readings, additional research into children's ministry/theology/spirituality, websites from the publisher, etc. in order to provide an academically-sound and thorough analysis. Your analysis must rely on at least three course readings and four additional reputable scholarly sources (you may use the book you chose for assignment 3 as a resource, but it is not counted toward this minimum number of sources).

This paper is to be double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins and Chicago-style endnotes.

This paper will be evaluated according to the attached rubric for written assignments.

### **Formatting Requirements**

Written assignments should be clearly written and free from grammatical and spelling errors. Proper formatting, correct spelling, and correct grammar are factored into the evaluation of assignments (see Appendix A for the rubric for written assignments).

All written assignments must be formatted as follows:

- All assignments must include a cover page
- Assignments must remain within the page count (for example, a 4–5 page paper must conclude on the bottom half of the fourth page or any place on the fifth page). Title page, endnotes, and works cited are not included in the page count.
- Assignments must include endnotes (not footnotes or in-text citations) and a works cited page that conform to Chicago Manual of Style
- Double space all assignments

- Use 12-point Times New Roman font
- All margins should be 1 inch (2.5 cm)
- All pages should be numbered
- Assignments should be submitted online as PDF files. If you need to send multiple files, ensure each is clearly named.

**Late Assignments:** Assignments submitted late—with or without an extension—will receive a mark but will not receive annotated comments.

#### D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

1. Participation	10%
2. Theology of Childhood Paper	25 %
3. Digital Book Presentation	25 %
4. Curriculum Analysis	40 %
<b>Total Grade</b>	<b>100 %</b>

#### IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

##### **Tuesday AM – Introduction to Children’s Ministry**

Review: Csinos and Beckwith – Introduction, 1  
Keeley and Larson – Introduction

##### **Tuesday PM – Children in Scripture**

Listen: Podcast Lecture - “Children in Scripture”  
Review: Gundry-Volf  
White

##### **Wednesday AM – Children’s Spirituality**

Review: Csinos and Beckwith – 2  
Keeley and Larson – 1  
Nye (entire book)

##### **Wednesday PM – Theology and Children**

Review: Csinos and Beckwith – 3, 4  
Keeley and Larson – 2, 12  
Rahner

### **Thursday AM – Enlivening Children’s Theological Imaginations**

Review: Csinos and Beckwith – 5, 6

Keeley and Larson – 10, 11

### **Thursday PM – Children in the Faith Community**

Review: Csinos and Beckwith – 7, 8, 9

Keeley and Larson – 5

### **Friday AM – Bringing the Generations Together at Church, at Home, and Online**

Listen: Podcast Lecture – “The Power of Intergeneration”

Review: Keeley and Larson – 6, 14, 15

Caldwell

Cloete

### **Friday PM – Nurturing Every Child, Nurturing the Whole Child**

Review: Csinos and Beckwith – 10, 11, 12

Keeley and Larson – 3, 4, 8, 13, 16

## **V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Allen, Holly Catterton. *Forming Resilient Children: The Role of Spiritual Formation in Healthy Development*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021.

Berryman, Jerome W. *Becoming Like a Child: The Curiosity of Maturity Beyond the Norm*. New York: Church Publishing, 2017.

Borgo, Lacy Finn. *Spiritual Conversations with Children: Listening to God Together*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020.

Brandt, Cindy Wang. *Parenting Forward: How to Raise Children with Justice, Mercy, and Kindness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019.

Caldwell, Elizabeth. *God’s Big Table: Nurturing Children in a Diverse World*. Harrisonburg, VA: Pilgrim Press, 2011.

Campan, Tanya Marie Eustace. *Holy Work with Children: Making Meaning Together*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2021.

Frisk, Natalie. *Raising Disciples: How to Make Faith Matter for Our Kids*. Grand Rapids, MI: Herald Press, 2019.



Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. *Let the Children Come: Re-Imagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019.

Stonehouse, Catherine, and Scottie May. *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey: Guidance for Those Who Teach and Nurture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.

Westerhoff, John H., III. *Will Our Children Have Faith?* 3rd ed. New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2012.

## **VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES**

### **A. EQUITY OF ACCESS**

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

### **B. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR BLENDED COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes\*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building\*

*\*exceptions with permission from professor*

### **C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS**

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at [classes.tyndale.ca](https://classes.tyndale.ca).

### **D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

## **Grading Rubric**

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at [classes.tyndale.ca](https://classes.tyndale.ca).

## **Academic Integrity**

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

For proper citation style, consult [Citation Guides](#) for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

## **Turnitin Text-Matching Software**

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at [classes.tyndale.ca](https://classes.tyndale.ca). Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- [Student](#) Guides for Turnitin via [classes.tyndale.ca](https://classes.tyndale.ca) course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity ([Guide](#), [Video](#), [Spectrum](#))

## **Research Ethics**

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office ([aau@tyndale.ca](mailto:aau@tyndale.ca)) before proceeding.

### **Late Papers and Extensions Policy**

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from “A+” to “A-,” from “B” to “C+”). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the [Extension Request Form](#). The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete (“I”) may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of “F” will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

### **E. COURSE EVALUATION**

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

### **F. LIBRARY RESOURCES**

[Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).

## **G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE**

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or [classes.tyndale.ca](https://classes.tyndale.ca). For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).

## APPENDIX A: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT EVALUATION RUBRIC

NAME:

		60-69 (C range)	70-79 (B range)	80-100 (A range)
<b>CONTENT</b>				
<b>Depth</b>	/30	Surface-level, book report, no depth	Some level of depth, appropriate for level of studies	Exceeds expectations for level of studies
<b>Clarity of Ideas</b>	/25	Confused interpretation of most points, or several major ideas	At expected levels	Beyond expected levels
<b>Adequacy Sources</b>	/15	Uses and cites less than required amount of sources or unacceptable sources	Uses and cites appropriate number of acceptable sources	Uses and cites more than appropriate number of sources, or uses sources of uncommon quality
<b>Subtotal</b>	/70			
<b>ORGANIZATION AND MECHANICS</b>				
<b>Formatting / Citation Style</b>	/15	Frequent or severe errors in formatting and citation practices	Fewer than five errors in formatting and citation practices	Free of formatting and citation errors
<b>Use of English</b>	/15	Frequent or severe errors in grammar, sentence structure, or word usage	Fluency in use of English; appropriate for level of studies	Exceptional fluency and language capacity supports communicative purpose
<b>Subtotal</b>	/30			
<b>TOTAL</b>	/100			

COMMENTS:

## APPENDIX B: PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENT EVALUATION RUBRIC

NAME:

		60-69 (C range)	70-79 (B range)	80-100 (A range)
<b>Articulation of Content</b>	/35	Surface-level, book report, no depth, confused interpretation of most points, or several major ideas, inadequate responses to questions	Some level of depth, appropriate for level of studies, clear interpretation, Q&A demonstrated an adequate grasp of material	Exceeds expectations for level of studies, articulated content with consistent clarity and depth, responded to questions by going deeper into content
<b>Preparedness and Delivery</b>	/30	Disorganized, confused, and disconnected parts of presentation, too long/short, did not speak clearly, did not use any additional presentation material (handouts, slideshow, etc.)	Demonstrated a level of organization and coherence, remained within timeframe, speech was clear, some additional materials used to engage participants	Exceeds expectations for organization and coherence, exceptional use of time, speech was very clear and showed passion, excellent use of materials to engage participants
<b>Creativity</b>	/35	Did not demonstrate creative thought in content and/or delivery	At expected levels, utilized some creative approaches to present content	Beyond expected levels, consistently demonstrated a high level of creativity and engagement
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/100</b>			

COMMENTS: