

“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.”

Semester, Year	WINTER, 2026
Course Title	FAITH FORMATION IN THE SMALL CHURCH
Course Code	PAST 0671 NP
Date	From January 6, 2026 to January 8, 2026 Tuesday to Thursday
Time	From 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Delivery Format	IN-PERSON ONLY
Class information	The classes will be IN-PERSON on Tuesday to Thursday.
Instructor	KA HON TONY WONG, Ph.D.
Contact Information	Email: tonywong@tyndale.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The small church is not a condensed form of the larger church. A small church—typically with 150 or fewer members—is a close-knit faith community where relationships are personal and everyone is known. These unique dynamics shape the way faith is formed and nurtured, requiring pastors and lay leaders to adopt intentional and context-sensitive approaches to discipleship and spiritual growth. This course aims to help pastors and lay leaders grasp the unique features of the small church and the nature of faith formation to develop ways of forming and shepherding the small congregation to flourish in their local setting.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. Articulate the dynamics and characteristics of small church communities.

2. Explore theological and educational foundations in faith formation.
3. Evaluate the role and calling as an agent of faith formation in the small church.
4. Analyze existing faith formation practices within small churches.
5. Develop skills to design and implement effective faith formation programs.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

- Galindo, Israel, and Marty C. Canaday. [*Planning for Christian Education Formation: A Community of Faith Approach*](#). Saint Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8272-3011-8. (137 pages)
- Maddix, Mark A., Jonathan H. Kim, and James Riley Jr. Estep. *Understanding Faith Formation: Theological, Congregational, and Global Dimensions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. ISBN: 9781540960382. (161 pages)
- Tye, Karen B. [*Christian Education in the Small Membership Church*](#). Ministry in the Small Membership Church. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-687-65099-6. (110 pages)
- Vaters, Karl. [*Small Church Essentials: Field-Tested Principles for Leading a Healthy Congregation of Under 250*](#). Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2018. (255 pages)

[It is advised that you quickly read through the assigned texts (not word by word) to grasp the general sense of the content before the beginning of the course.]

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

- Harris, Maria. [*Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church*](#). 1st ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989.
- Westerhoff, John H. [*Will Our Children Have Faith?*](#) 3rd rev. ed. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2012.

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. Reading Report: Due on January 23, 2026; 35% of final grade. This assignment is related to Outcomes #1 & #2

This learning task aims to assess the extent to which you have grasped a theoretical perspective and practical aspects of faith formation in the small church. The ideal outcome is that you finish reading the required textbooks and submit the reading report.

The reading report provides a central argument of each textbook and summaries in each major section of each textbook (estimated one and a half pages per book). Also, it should provide an evaluation of each textbook, stating at least one strength and one weakness in each book with brief reasons (estimate one page per book). Finally, it should include at least one insight from each book that is useful for your participation in faith formation in the small church context, with a brief explanation related to your small church ministry setting (former, current, or future) with each insight (estimated half-page per book).

2. Journal Writing: 3 x 7% = 21% of final grade. This assignment is related to Outcome #3.

This learning task aims to assess how much you have grown in recognizing your role as the agent of faith formation in the small church. After each **class participation**, the learner needs to prepare a journal. Each student will submit five journals for this course. Each journal has a maximum of two pages. The learner needs to reflect on the reading and **classroom learning** to respond to **ONE** of the questions in each journal (**Please be specific about which question you are responding to**):

- a) What knowledge did you encounter in today's learning that you gained to advance your understanding as an agent of faith formation in a small church? Why?
- b) How does today's learning shape or challenge your conviction to become an agent of faith formation in a small church? Why?
- c) What practice in today's learning will prepare you to be an effective agent of faith formation in a small church? Why?

Students must respond to all three questions at least once for their five journal writings.

The ideal journal is where the learner reflects on the knowledge, practices and experience in the classroom learning and reading to draw implications toward his/her personal experience and conviction in faith formation in a small church.

Each learner must submit their journal **before the beginning of the next class (January 7 to 8, 2026)**. The final journal needs to be submitted **one day after the class (January 9, 2026)**.

3. Final Project - Proposal for Intentional Faith Formation Program of a Small Church: Due on February 6, 2026; 44% of final grade. This assignment is related to Outcomes #4 & #5.

This learning task aims to assess the extent to which you can analyze existing faith formation practices and develop skills to design and implement effective faith formation programs in a small church.

You will describe a faith formation program in an existing church and evaluate its effectiveness. Based on the evaluation, you can choose EITHER 1) propose improvements and implementation of those improvements OR 2) design and implement a new program for this church if there is a need. The maximum length of this assignment is 12 pages (without counting the reference or appendix).

The ideal final project should reflect your ability to assess the faith formation program of a small church, providing a thoughtful analysis and suggested improvements of its program OR suggestions for designing and implementing a faith formation program suitable for a small church with reference to the learning from this course.

Grading Rubric: *Please check the rubric of each assignment on the course resource page on Moodle.*

Penalty for late submission:

For every week late, the grade will be reduced by 5 %, a half a letter grade (i.e. one week late: 82 % A- becomes 77 % B+; two weeks late, 82 % becomes 72 % B-, etc.). Please note that the deduction is accumulated weekly, not daily, and so a student will receive the same penalty whether the assignment is one or six days late.

Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to heavy workload, other assignments, professional or ministry obligations, or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

Requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to the instructor explaining the reason why the extension is needed. Such requests need to be submitted at least 72 hours prior to the due date.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due	%
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1. Reading Report	Jan 23	35%
2. Journal Writing	Various	21%
3. Final Report	Feb 6	44%
Total Grade		100%

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Date	Topic	Assignment
January 6 (Day 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome and Introduction Understanding the Small Church Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition Nature, Dynamics, Ethos Theological Foundations for Faith Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is faith? What is faith formation? Brainstorming: What are the needs of faith formation in your small church? Reflection: Small Church + Faith Formation = ?? Educational Theories Applied to Small Churches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning and developmental theories Faith development stages Sharing: What can you take away from this session? 	
January 7 (Day 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges in Small Church Faith Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal challenges External challenges Brainstorming: Purpose and Objectives of your church's faith formation endeavours? Reflection: Conviction to be an agent of faith formation Meditation and Prayer: Erza Faith Formation Models for Small Churches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every program and event: More than Sunday School! Every relationship and every story! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congregational Life and History Family and Intergenerational Faith Formation Technology and Faith Formation in Small Churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal #1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorming: Teaching & Learning Methods in your small church. 	
January 8 (Day 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of Leadership in Faith Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I doing it alone? What am I supposed to do? Reflection: Am I a shepherd and mother? Designing Faith Formation Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn from others – case studies Let's make our hands dirty! – Role play game <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let's help a small church develop a faith formation program! Evaluating Faith Formation Initiatives Final Reflection : Is it possible? Sharing: What can you take away from this course? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal #2
January 9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal #3
January 23		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Report
February 6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Project

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adamson, William R. *Small Churches: Understanding and Encouraging Them*. Saskatoon, SK: Adam Enterprises, 1993.

Bick, Angela Reitsma, and Peter Schuurman. *Blessed Are the Undone: Testimonies of the Quiet Deconstruction of Faith in Canada*. 2nd ed. Saskatoon, SK: New Leaf Network Press, 2024.

Bickers, Dennis W. *The Healthy Small Church: Diagnosis and Treatment for the Big Issues*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2005.

Canadian Small Church Ministry Centre, dir. "[Episode 89 Tony Wong: Everyday Canadian Chinese Small Church DNA](#)." YouTube, 2025.

Crandall, Ronald K. *Turnaround Strategies for the Small Church*. Edited by Herb Miller. Effective Church Series. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.

Daman, Glenn. *Leading the Small Church: How to Develop a Transformational Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2006.

Dudley, Carl S. *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-First Century*. Rev. and Updated ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.

- Emery-Wright, Steven, and Ed Mackenzie. *Networks for Faith Formation: Relational Bonds and the Spiritual Growth of Youth*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017.
- Foltz, Nancy T. *Religious Education in the Small Membership Church*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2013.
- Fowler, B. G. "The New Testament Basis for the Small Church." *American Baptist Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1990): 91–96.
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- Huang, Daniel. *A Study on the Overseas Chinese Small and Medium Churches Major Challenge*. Hong Kong: Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism, 2010.
- Hussey, Ian. "The Big News on Small Churches: Re-Evaluating the Contribution of Small Churches to the Fulfillment of the Great Commission." *Great Commission Research Journal* 7, no. 2 (2016): 172–83.
- Johnson, Bob I. "[The Nature and Characteristics of the Small Membership Church](#)." *Review & Expositor* 93, no. 3 (1996): 369–76.
- Koessler, John M. "The Dynamics of Small Church Ministry." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 3, no. 2 (1992): 175–89.
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- McGee, Richard Patrick. "How to Successfully Mature a Small Church." D.Min. dissertation, Lynchburg, VA: Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008.
- McIntosh, Gary. *One Size Doesn't Fit All: Bringing out the Best in Any Size Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: F.H. Revell, 1999.
- _____. *Taking Your Church to the Next Level: What Got You Here Won't Get You There*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009.
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- Nell, Ian. "[Congregational Spirituality: Faith Formation in and through the Congregation](#)." *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 9, no. 3 (2023): 1–16.
- Nelson, Carl Ellis. *How Faith Matures*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989.
- Ogden, Greg. *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Ott, Craig. *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation Among All People*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019.
- Park, Young Woo. "Survival Factors for Small Immigrant Ethnic Churches: The Limitations of A Korean Congregation." *Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN): Theses & Dissertations*, 1998.
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- Parrett, Gary A., and S. Steve Kang. *Teaching the Faith, Forming the Faithful: A Biblical Vision for Education in the Church*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.
- Patton, Jeffrey H. *If It Could Happen Here*. Nashville: Abingdon Books, 2002.
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- Risley, Jean F. *A Place Where Everybody Matters: Life and Ministry in a Small Church*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010.
- Root, Andrew. *Faith Formation in a Secular Age: Responding to the Church's Obsession with Youthfulness*. Ministry in a Secular Age Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Schaller, Lyle E. *The Small Church Is Different!*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1982.

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Witmer, Stephen. *A Big Gospel in Small Places: Why Ministry in Forgotten Communities Matters*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019.

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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. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (*SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY*)

- 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.

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.

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. 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 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 (seminaryoffice@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 courses 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. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).