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**PT5/721 - How Children Can Help Us Understand the Teachings of Jesus  
Summer, 2023  
Course Description**

**PURPOSE:** What did it mean to be a child in the ancient world? Did Jesus and the early Christians accept and value children in different ways than their fellow Jews or neighbouring Greeks and Romans? This course will look at Jesus' teachings on children, on reading other New Testament texts that deal with the life of children, and with exploring how later Christian authors, such as Augustine and John Chrysostom, understood the role of children in the early Church. We will discuss the social and economic lives, the education and discipline, and the treatment of children, theologically and otherwise, in the early Church and work towards an overall understanding of childhood in the early Church. The course will be intersectional, paying attention to gender, freeborn or enslaved status, as well as ethnicity. The course will also employ sources from the Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds, in an attempt to understand similarities and differences with early Christian understandings of children and childhood. Modern discussions of children and childhood will also be consulted in order to deconstruct Western presumptions of what it means to be a child and engage with an awareness of the cultural nature of children and childhood.

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:**

1. To become acquainted with children's lives in the ancient world.
2. To understand how Christianity altered the lives of children in the ancient world.
3. To read the Old Testament and New Testament with the purpose of gaining knowledge about children.
4. To gain knowledge of the primary Christian texts dealing with children in the ancient world.
5. To interpret biblical stories of children and youth in creative and meaningful ways, making them relevant and exciting for communities of faith.
6. To affirm children and youth as insightful readers and interpreters of biblical texts.
7. To integrate the situations of child characters in the Bible and the challenges facing children around the world today.

**FORMAT AND CONTENT:**

This class will meet July 3-7, 2023, Monday through Friday, for three hours per day (2pm – 5pm).

For on-campus students, work in the course consists of classes including lectures, discussions and small group exercises, some prepared before class. Distance students will participate through

Zoom either synchronously at the same time as class (required for credit students), or asynchronously through recordings of class (auditors only). Expectations for distance students will be spelled out in the syllabus.

### TEXTS:

A Bible. A New Revised Standard Version of the Bible with the Apocrypha is recommended, specifically the *New Oxford Annotated Bible*. If you do not have a copy of this NRSV Bible, other translations are satisfactory, such as the Revised Standard version, the New Jerusalem Bible, or any other reputable translation. If you are in doubt about your translation, please come and see me.

Marcia J. Bunge, ed., *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001)

Cornelia Horn and John W. Martens, *"Let the Little Children Come to Me": Childhood and Children in Early Christianity* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2009)

These books should be acquired online and read prior to the start of the class

### EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

The expectations and assignments in this course include:

**All Students:** reading of assigned texts, active class participation in discussions;

**Certificate (Con.Ed) students:** two short reflection papers (1-2 pages) for non-degree students reporting on an aspect of a particular class topic. **Due date July 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Basic Degree (Dip/MA/MDiv)** a research paper of 6-8 pages (1500-2000 words) for degree students with a research depth of 5-8 sources beyond the course texts. **Due date July 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Advanced Degree (ThM/GDTS):** a research paper of 12-15 pages (4000 words) with a research depth of 15-20 sources beyond course texts. **Due date August 28<sup>th</sup>**

Details for all assignments will be provided in the syllabus.

### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Reidar Aasgaard, Cornelia Horn, and Oana Cojocaru, eds., *Childhood in History: Perceptions of Children in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*.

Amy Lindeman Allen, *For Theirs Is the Kingdom* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2019).

David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997).

Sharon Betsworth and Julie Faith Parker, eds., *T&T Clark Handbook of Children in the Biblical World* (London: T&T Clark, 2019).

Sharon Betsworth, *Children in Early Christian Narratives*. Library of New Testament Studies, 521. (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015).

Gillian Clark, “The Fathers and the Children” in Diana Wood, ed., *The Church and Childhood. Studies in Church History. Volume 31* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 1-28.

Maria E. Doerfler, *Jephthah’s Daughter, Sarah’s Son: The Death of Children in Late Antiquity*. (University of California Press, Berkeley 2019).

Shawn Flynn, ed., *Children in the Bible and the Ancient World: Comparative and Historical Methods in Reading Ancient Children* (London: Routledge, 2019).

Kristine Henriksen Garroway and John W. Martens, eds., *Children and Methods: Listening To and Learning From Children in the Biblical World (Brill’s Series in Jewish Studies)* (Boston: Brill, 2020).

Peter Garnsey, “Sons, Slaves – and Christians” in Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver, eds., *The Roman Family in Italy* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, 101-121.

Jennifer Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Mark Golden, “The Child in the Household and the Community” in *Children and Childhood in Classical Athens* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 23-50.

Cornelia B. Horn and Robert Phenix, eds., *Children in Late Antique Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010).

W.K. Lacey, “*Patria Potestas*” in Beryl Rawson, ed., *The Family in Ancient Rome: New Perspectives* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 121-144.

Margaret MacDonald, *The Power of Children: The Construction of Christian Families* (Waco: Baylor Press, 2014).

Halvor Moxnes, ed., *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (New York/London: Routledge, 1997).

Christian Laes, Katarina Muskatilio, and Ville Vuolonto, eds., *Children and Family in Late Antiquity: Life, Death and Interaction* (Leuven: Peeters, 2015)

Joan M. Petersen, “The Education of Girls in Fourth-Century Rome” in *The Church and Childhood. Studies in Church History. Volume 31* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 29-37.

Richard Saller, “Corporal Punishment, Authority and Obedience in the Roman Household” in *Marriage, Divorce and Children in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 144-165.

O. Larry Yarbrough, “Parents and Children in the Jewish Family of Antiquity” in Shaye J.D. Cohen, ed., *The Jewish Family in Antiquity* (Brown Judaic Studies 289. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 39-60.