Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY UPON SPIRITUALITY

AMONG SELECTED CHILDREN IN QINGDAO, CHINA

A Thesis Presented to

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Master of Arts in Religious Education

Holistic Child Development

By

Yingzi Piao

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CHAPTER1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Background of the Problem

Children are a gift from God (Deut. 7:13; Ps. 127:3) and bring joy and

blessings to adults (Num. 5:28; Deut. 28:4, 11). The Bible makes it clear that children

are special to God. In Jesus' ministry, He emphasized the value of children by

placing His hands on them, blessing them, praying for them, and saying: "Let the little

children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to

such as these" (Matt. 19:14, NIV). The biblical perspective concerning the importance

of children provides a clear and undeniable message to us: If children matter this

much to God, then they should matter as much to us, too.[1] As stewards of God's

children, parents are responsible for helping children grow physically, intellectually,

emotionally, and especially spiritually. The Bible says that children need to be taught

how to think and act in relation to God and His ways:[2] "Train a child in the way he

should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Prov. 22:6, NIV).

As a child, I was not raised in a Christian home. When I was six, I stayed with

my grandmother, and my parents worked away from home in order to earn money for

my sister and me to have a better education. They made the decision to work because

they thought it was the best decision for us. As a little girl, I thought they must love

me very much if they left me to take care of my tuition fee. Therefore I decided to

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[1] George Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), 45.

[2] Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 44.

study hard as a present to my parents. For the first five years I met my parents twice a month, and then in later years, our visits were reduced to once or twice a year because they went to a distant place for their business. Because of the increased separation from my parents, I did not receive parental love for many years. During my parents' absence, I tried my best to be as self-sufficient as I could while still a child. Unfortunately, when I was fifteen years old, my mother died. I was sad to hear the news of my mother's death, but as I saw my mother's body, it felt as though she were a stranger for me. I was not able to recall any fond memories of my mother in my whole life. I did not know how much I had lost. Instead, one thing came to my mind: "Yingzi, be strong and courageous! It is okay to have no mother. You have done a great job so far, right? Nothing will change in your life. Be yourself just as in the past."Looking back, I am shocked by my own reaction. How could a little girl have such an idea at that moment? Where did I get that idea?

Sometime later, I had started to live with my father and sister in Qingdao, China. When I was twenty-one years old, my father and sister invited me to church on Christmas Day. That day, I received Jesus as my personal Savior. That was the first time in my life that I experienced the inner peace of Christ. Shortly afterwards, I was baptized in the company of friends I had made. I was so excited and could not say enough to others about my newfound faith. However, I had a very hard time in my spiritual life. What I had experienced in my childhood affected my adult life. I started judging people and had a difficult time loving, communicating with, trusting, and forgiving others. I thought everything was conditional, even God; as traditionally Chinese people believe the old Chinese saying, "Seeing is believing."[3] By God's grace, after attending the Children in Crisis course by Dr. Phyllis Kilbourn and

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[3] 眼见为实，耳听为虚 (Yan Jian Wei Shi, Er Ting Wei Xu), Wenwen, Chinese, http://wenwen.soso.com/z/q141670111.htm?sp=1210&pos=0&ch=2013ww.tw.xgzs

receiving the mentorship of Dr. Catherine Stonehouse at Asia-Pacific Theological

Seminary (APNTS) in 2012, I started opening up to my husband and others about my

experiences, even about my mother. My mother committed suicide, and I felt

ashamed and guilty but was later able to share this part of my story with others. I also

forgave myself, my parents, relatives, friends, parents-in-law, and so on for their role

in the hurts of my past. At the same time, I asked forgiveness from them personally.

What would I change if I could go back in time? I would tell my parents to bring me

wherever they went and teach me; I would want my parents to love and protect me.

My personal experiences tell me that the parents' role in childhood indeed affects the

adult's spiritual life.

This study sought to discover the children's perceptions of their families using

Lawrence Richards' framework on the influences that help the growth of faith among

children and establish its correlation to their spirituality. My sincere intention was that

these findings could help local churches and families nurture children's spirituality,

starting in the family. The researcher, as a Chinese citizen, endeavoured to discover

the children's perceptions on the nurture they receive from their families in

correlation to their spirituality. In this study, the researcher studied this issue with 50

selected children from a Christian church in Qingdao, China, who are between the

ages of eight through twelve.

The Context of the Families in Qingdao, China

Qingdao is a major city in eastern Shandong Province, Eastern China, with a

population of over 8.715 million (2010 census). Its developed area, made of 6 urban

districts and 4 country-level cities, is home to about 4.896 million inhabitants. As of

2010, children aged zero to fourteen numbered approximately 1.17 million, fifteen to

sixty-four numbered approximately 6.65 million, above sixty-five numbered

approximately 0.894 million, or 13.44%, 76.5%, and 10.26% of the Qingdao population which includes urban and country-level cities.[4]

One top social concern in Qingdao is children's education in their families. Children usually stay with their parents, but many of them were raised by their grandparents because their parents work. In the morning, parents tell their children to follow a given schedule. After school the grandparents go to pick up children for parents, take care of them, check the children's assignments, play with them, cook for them, and then wait for their parents' arrival to bring them back home. Many times children stay with their grandparents due to parents coming late. Children do not have enough time to communicate with their parents. Parents traditionally expect their children to be successful (望子成龙).[5] In order for their children to be competitive, parents force arts, music, sports and foreign language into their curriculum. Parents who do not enrol their children in weekend study sessions are considered irresponsible; playtime or free time is a foreign concept to children.[6] Sadly, for many children family is just another dreadful battlefield outside of school.

The Chinese "one-child policy"[7] makes the only child the sole object of attention for his parents and two sets of grandparents, as well as the only hope for their future. Parents and two sets of grandparents are willing to pour all possible resources into meeting the high expectations of theirs, which leads to excesses of

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[4] Statistics of Qingdao, (Chinese), [online], available from http://www.stats-qd.gov.cn/6rkpc/news/201151010104729203.asp?id=276&parentid=0&videos=&typeid=1868. 10 May, 2011.

[5] 望子成龙 (Wang Zi Cheng Long), BaiduBaike, (Chinese), http://baike.baidu.com/view/166571.htm (accessed Jan 11, 2012).

[6] Ying Li, *Five Errors in Family Education*, (Chinese), http://bd.hbrc.com/rczx/shownews-4159393-50.html (accessed January 21, 2014).

[7] Chinese State Council Information Office, *Chinese One Child Policy*, August 1995, XinHua Wang, (Chinese), http://news.xinhuanet.com/zhengfu/2002-11/15/content_630929.htm (accessed March 1, 2012).

indulgence, giving, attention, protection, expectation, and control.[8] Growing up in these overprotected and overindulged families, these children tend to have no manners and have difficulties getting along with others. Although they do not lack love and attention, they tend to be selfish, stubborn, and isolated from the outside world. Additionally, some may be lacking in basic psychological areas such as love, acceptance, or recognition, as well self-esteem.

David Seamands in his book *Healing Grace* speaking about parental grace or disgrace, says that the ways in which parents care for, guide, and encourage their children are all part of spiritual formation. God's design is to work through the everyday relationships of parents and children to provide children with experiences that prepare them for faith.[9] More work and less family time makes it clear that families in Qingdao are really in trouble, and children are paying the price now. This study investigated children's perceptions of their families in terms of having a sense of belonging in the family, modelling by parents, biblical instruction, and exercising choice in relation to their spirituality. If parents do not know how the children feel in the family, how can they know what they need and at the same time teach and guide children spiritually?

Judith Allen Shelly in her book, *The Spiritual Needs of Children* encourages her readers to realize that the childhood years, especially the first twelve years, are crucial to spiritual development.[10] In other words, the childhood years are the formative years for their spiritual formation. When Catherine Stonehouse talks about

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[8] Ziliao, *Problems in Contemporary Families*, (Chinese), http://clzx.hcedu.cn/chl/deyu/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=487 (accessed March 28, 2008).

[9] David Seamands, *Healing Grace: Let God Free You from the Performance Trap* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1988), 46.

[10] Judith Allen Shelly, *The Spiritual Needs of Children* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 15.

the importance of childhood, she explains that children "are laying the foundations on which to build life and faith. They are being formed through what they experience in their homes, schools, and the faith community."[11] Family and the faith community should build good relationships to help children's spirituality develop.

The Bible holds up the family as critical in faith development. In the family faith is first sensed, is born, and is nurtured.[12] Ivy Beckwith in *Postmodern Children's Ministry* mentions:

> Roman Catholic educators call the family the "domestic church." It is the safe home where spirituality is formed, practiced, explored, and questioned in perhaps a more intimate way than can ever happen in even the best of faith communities. The home is a place where community spiritual practices can be honed and reflected in the nurturing environment of the family. It is a place where faith can become our own in the whirl and storm of everyday life, a small, important microcosm of the larger community of faith.[13]

The family plays a key role in spiritual formation long past childhood. God wants children to live in homes and communities where the laws of God are not just recited but lived. Children need to see and experience the faith in action.[14] Parents are the primary teachers of the faith. Two Old Testament scripture passages, Deuteronomy 6:5-6 states the guideline. God called parents to impress His word on their children. They were to instruct and to discipline their children in the Word of God.

[11] Catherine Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Family Christian Press, 1998), 62-63.

[12] Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 180.

[13] Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry*, 109.

[14] Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey*, 27.

Theoretical Framework

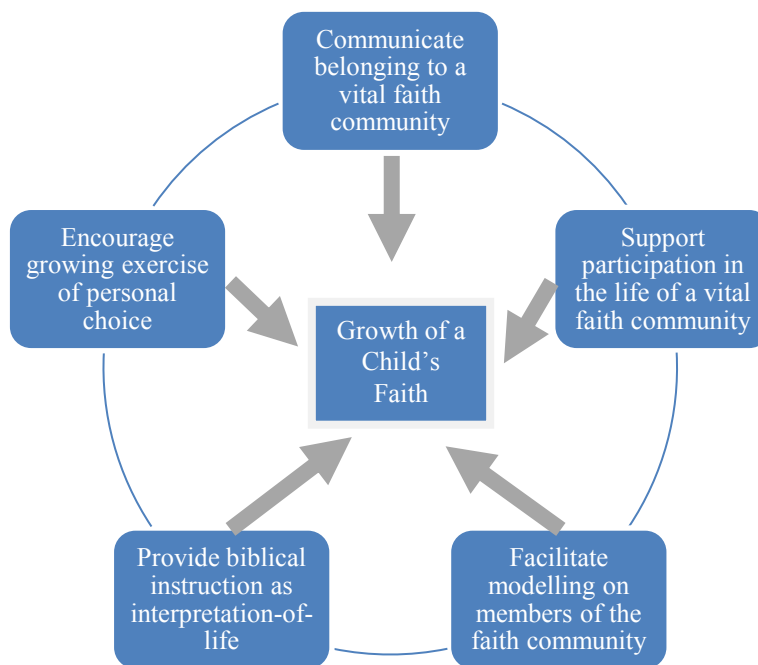This study adapted Lawrence Richards' processes that influence the growth of a child's faith (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Five Processes that Influence the Growth of A Child's Faith[15]

Richards focuses on what we discovered in Deuteronomy: the vitality of the faith community is critical to the nurture of the child's faith.[16] He believes that the five processes namely, communicate belonging to a vital faith community, support participation in the life of a vital faith community, facilitate modelling on members of the faith community, provide biblical instruction as interpretation-of-life, and encourage growing exercise of personal choice influence the growth of a child's faith. Richards says that each of the five is a significant guideline for practices, and can provide guidance as we explore ministry to children in the church, the home and the Christian school.[17] However, the researcher only used the home as a faith community

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[15] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 76.

[16] Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Their Spiritual Journey*, 37.

[17] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 81.

in this study. This study utilized four of the five processes in the formulation of the research questionnaire. This study did not include "participation in the life of a vital community" in the five processes of Richards and just subsumed it under "communicate belonging to a vital faith community."

First, Richards says that it is essential to belong in the faith community. Within the network of relationship in the faith community, spiritual growth comes to the individual and to the congregation as a whole (Eph. 3:14-21; 4:14-16). To influence spiritual growth in children and adults, we need to be particularly sensitive to these personal relationships and build the love between persons that community requires. Richards also believes that children must feel that they belong in their faith community as much as the adults.[18]

Second, Richards says children need to be guided in processes that support participation. Children need to participate in activities and rituals of the faith community, not just have things done for them. The faith community should intentionally provide opportunities for the children to act on their faith.[19]

Third, Richards states that the modelling of faith community impacts children powerfully.[20] When the children brush up against people of faith through this participation in the life of the community, the children see models of faith.[21] In ministry with children, we should pay close attention to building relationships between adults and children, and among children, that will incorporate the factors that enhance modelling.

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[18] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 77.

[19] Ivy Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 66.

[20] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 79.

[21] Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry,* 66.

Fourth, Richards emphasizes that we should search Scripture to learn how to live with God and with each other in this world. Through Scripture we have a different vision of reality, a vision which shapes our understanding of events, captures our affections, and infuses us with new motivations.[22] Scripture allows persons to know God and His revealed thoughts, plans, and decision or will for humankind and the world. Through exploring the scripture persons can experience a new relationship with God and grow spiritually in his likeness.

Finally, Richards says that as free and responsible beings, persons must and will exercise choice. Children need to be guided to strengthen their ability to make responsible choices. Faith itself is never mere intellectual assent.[23]

Having outlined Richards' theoretical framework, the following is the conceptual framework of this research.

Conceptual Framework

Family as the "domestic church" plays an important role in nurturing children's spirituality.[24] Richards claims that primarily, the home is the center of the place where children were raised in Hebrew nurture (Deuteronomy 11:18-19).[25] In the home, adults and children could talk about God and God's way together. Adults and children shared life together in the home. The idea of instruction was woven into daily life. Furthermore, Richards also states, the home setting is important because the whole understanding of the socialization process insists children learn what their

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[22] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 79.

[23] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 80.

[24] Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry*, 109.

[25] Richards, *A Theology of Children Ministry*, 22.

parents are."[26] Since spirituality, as David Hay and Rebecca Nye say, is "relational

consciousness" which is reflected in how the child related to things, other people,

himself/herself, and God,[27] positive family settings can provide children four aspects

of spiritual development, namely, sense of belonging, modelling, biblical instruction,

and exercising personal choice; as shown in the four squares below (see figure 2).This
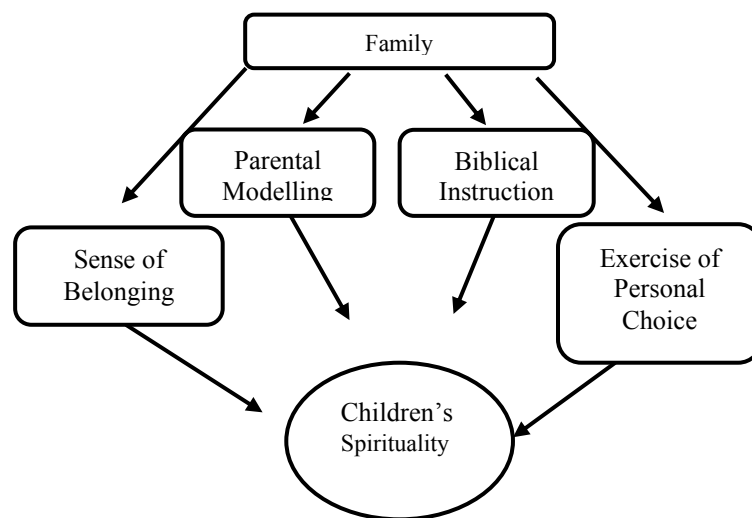
is also an adaptation of Richards' model processes.

Figure 2.Conceptual Framework

The relationship is represented by the upper four lines in the diagram.

The four lower arrows in the diagram show that each of the above aspects is relevant

in the action of forming children's spirituality. This study tried to find out how

selected children in Qingdao, China perceive the following aspects in their families,

namely; sense of belonging, modelling by parents, biblical instruction, and exercising

personal choice. By knowing the children's self- perceptions on these areas of family

life, I may be able to determine the strength of correlation of the children's spirituality

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[26] Richards, *A Theology of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 218.

[27] David Hay and Rebecca Nye, *The Spirit of the Child* (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1998), 112-113.

and the other areas being studied. In this way, this study could attempt to make recommendations to the respondents' parents in terms of having a sense of belonging in the family, modelling by parents, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice.

Statement of the Problem

The main question for this study is: what is the strength of the relationship between the self-perceptions of the selected children from Qingdao, China on the following processes that influence the growth of faith, namely, a sense of belonging in the family, modelling by parents, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice in correlation to their self-perception of their spirituality? In relation to this main problem, the study addressed the following questions.

Sub-problems

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of:

    a. Age

    b. Gender

2. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their families in the following aspects?

    a. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their families in terms of having a sense of belonging?

    b. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their families in terms of parental model?

    c. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their families in terms of biblical instruction?

    d. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their families in terms of exercising personal choice?

3. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their spirituality in the following aspects?

    a. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their spirituality in terms of loving God?

    b. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their spirituality in terms of talking to God?

    c. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their spirituality in terms of feeling God close to me?

    d. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their spirituality in terms of experiencing God guiding me?

    e. What are the self-perceptions of the respondents toward their spirituality in terms of loving to worship God at home?

4. If a positive correlation can be established between children's spirituality and their perceptions of the following processes that influence the growth of faith [a sense of belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice] then can it be stated that these are factors affecting the children's spirituality?

5. What is the strength of the relationship between the self-perceptions of the respondents' spirituality and the following aspects?

    a. What is the strength of the relationship between the self-perceptions of the respondents' spirituality and having a sense of belonging?

    b. What is the strength of the relationship between the self-perceptions of the respondents' spirituality and parental model?

  c. What is the strength of the relationship between the self-perceptions

   of the respondents' spirituality and biblical instruction?

  d. What is the strength of the relationship between the self-perceptions

   of the respondents' spirituality and exercising personal choice?

Null Hypotheses

The following are the null hypotheses of the study:

1. There would be no correlation between the variables of the sense of belonging in the families and spirituality of the children;

2. There would be no correlation between the variables of modelling by parents in the families and spirituality of the children;

3. There would be no correlation between the variables of biblical instruction in the families and spirituality of the children.

4. There would be no correlation between the variables of exercising personal choice in the families and spirituality of the children.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant in the following ways. First, this study was important to the parents of the respondents in the sense that they were able to know how their children perceived the nurture they have extend to them. Second, this study may provide a framework for a Christian parenting ministry in my local church in Qingdao, China.

Assumptions

This research was based upon two assumptions. The first assumption was that the respondents were all part of the Chinese Christian church at the time of the survey in Qingdao, China. The second assumption was the respondents' cognitive

development is already appropriate to articulate their perception of their family more fully.

Definition of Terms

Spirituality according to David Hay and Rebecca Nye is "relational consciousness" which reflects two patterns: an unusual level of consciousness or perceptiveness, relative to passages of conversation spoken by the child; and conversation expressed in a context of how the child related to things, other people, himself/herself, and God.[28] Stonehouse defines it as how "children think deeply about God."[29]

Self-perception refers to the way someone thinks or feels about something. It indicates how a person values something.[30]

Scope and Delimitations

Three limitations were noted in this study: First, this study was limited to the selected Christian children in Qingdao, China. The children and their families attend the same Chinese Christian faith community, so the findings may not represent other churches in Qingdao, China. Second, this study focused on discovering and analyzing the self-perceptions of children towards the processes that influence the growth of faith, namely, belonging in the family, modelling by parents, biblical instruction, exercising personal choice; and how these aspects correlated to their spirituality. The results of this study may not be valid for other areas. Finally, the research also limited the study to about fifty (50) respondents, who are between the age 8 to 12, and they

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[28] Hay and Nye, *The Spirit of the Child*, 112-113.

[29] Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, 133.

[30] Gerald R. Girad, *Writing and Assessing Attitudinal Objectives* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing, 1973), 2.

are all Chinese Christian children. Because of the small sample size, the study cannot be generalized to other populations.

This chapter presented the background of the study. The next chapter discusses the review of literature and studies that were related to the current research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, STUDIES AND WORKS

The study concerned with the children's perception of their families in correlation to their spirituality. Since there were no related studies on children's spirituality in Chinese context,[31] this chapter presents a review of international literature and studies relevant to certain aspects of the family. Furthermore, the chapter also examines spiritual formation of children according to the book of Deuteronomy, the importance of family, Chinese family, developmental theories related to the children's spirituality, and processes that facilitate the nurture of children's spirituality.

Spiritual Formation of Children According to
The Book of Deuteronomy

The Bible is considered as the major sourcebook and foundation for Christians and Christian education.[32] does God think about children and their place in the home? How was the spiritual formation of children nurtured? Deuteronomy 6 demonstrates that informal training was done in a way that enables the child to not only see the faith being applied in the life of the family, but grow to understand it intellectually. This current study focused on Deuteronomy to investigate the spiritual formation of children.

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[31] Ebsohost, Google, 中国知网（ZhongGuoZhi Wang）Chinese, ScienceDirect, and ResearchGatehave no related studies on children's spirituality in Chinese context.

[32] Stonehouse, *Joining Children on Spiritual Journey*, 23.

Spiritual Formation in Everyday Life

The Bible conveys a radical perception of family and children's spiritual formation. God's people in the Old Testament, parents had to train children to live differently from those around them (Deut. 6:1-25). The spiritual formation of children appeared long before the return of the exiles to Jerusalem.[33] As Moses prepared the Israelites to enter the Promised Land, teaching the faith to the next generation surfaced as a top priority. God charges Moses with the responsibility of teaching the commandments of God to the people. God's goal is that Moses teach the present generation in a way that their children and their children's children will respect (fear) God and live out God's law (Deut. 6:1-2). At the beginning of Deuteronomy 6, Moses places before the people the challenge of passing their faith, a lived faith, from generation to generation.

Moses addresses the teaching of children in the everyday spontaneous course of family life: "Impress them [the commands of God] on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 6:7). Reciting the commandments and talking about them with the children is to take place at home, when the family travels, at bedtime, and first thing in the morning. In other words, from the time parents get up until they go to bed they are to be about the task of passing on the faith.

The life of Israel as a people chosen and blessed by God depends upon parents passing on the faith. Three times in Deuteronomy, Moses expresses that he was afraid Israelites would forget God (4:9; 6:12; 11:16) and within a few verses, commands the people to teach their children (Deut. 4:9-10; 6:7, 12; 11:16, 19). The juxtaposition of

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[33] Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannell, *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 32.

these verses is significant. When we recite God's commandments to our children and

talk with them about God in the flow of everyday life; when we remember the

importance of the life our children see us live; when we tell our children the story of

God at work throughout history and in our lives, it is hard to forget God.[34] Douglas J.

Schoelles, in his dissertation, "Equipping Parents to be Spiritual Leaders in the

Home" expounds the importance of passing on faith:

> When Moses asked the name of God, he hears, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob" (Exod. 3:6, NIV). The name of God, as the God of one's fathers (and mothers), suggests that the context of faith formation is the passing of the faith from one generation to the next. The family as the context of faith is reiterated when Joshua announced, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord" (Jos. 24:15, NIV). The generation of Moses was faithful in passing on the faith to the generation of Joshua (Jos. 2:6). When the next generation did not pass on the faith, anarchy resulted: "After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals" (Judg. 2:10-11, NIV).[35]

This pattern is repeated throughout the Old Testament, when parents neglect to

teach their children the Bible and biblical standards of living– in other words, do not

pass on the faith to their children—the children became more wicked than their

predecessors. David's polygamous marriages included eight wives and at least ten

concubines (2 Sam. 3:2-5; 5:13-16; 15:16; 20:3; 1 Chron. 3:1-9). It comes as no

surprise to know that his son Absalom slept with those concubines (2 Sam. 16:21),

and that David's son Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred

concubines (1 Kings 11:3). Rehoboam, in turn, followed Solomon's sinful example,

by having eighteen wives and sixty concubines (2 Chron. 11:21).

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[34] May, Posterski, Stonehouse, and Cannell, *Children Matter*, 35.

[35] Douglas J. Schoelles, "Equipping Parents to be Spiritual Leaders in the Home," DMin.diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2009, 47.

To understand and live in God's ways, children need to see the commandments lived out. Parents do have a significant role to play in living out God's commandments and nurturing the spiritual formation of children. John Westerhoff says, "No matter where you look in our Judeo-Christian heritage it is the parents who have the prime responsibility to bring up their children in the faith."[36] And history shows that the "church has always maintained that religious education begins in the home through the imitation of parents and participation in family and community worship."[37] He considers other forms of education as supplement and extension to the training from parents.

Mitch Finley and Kathy Finley claim that it is within the family that the foundational experiences of the Christian life happen best, for both children and adults. It is within the fabric of family life that faith becomes real. In contrast with many scholars who believe that the synagogue is the center of Jewish religious life, the Finleys are convinced the family is the most basic religious community which predates the Gospel, that is the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In the Jewish tradition the home, not the synagogue, is the center of Jewish religious life.[38] Parents are in the best position of nurturing faith to children through family life. This current study examined the children's perceptions of their family in relation to their spirituality, the findings may encourage adults, particularly parents be more effective in nurturing their children in faith.

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[36] John H. Westerhoff III, *Bringing up Children in the Christian Faith* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, Inc., 1980), 7.

[37] Westerhoff III, *Bringing up Children in the Christian Faith*, 7.

[38] Mitch Finley and Kathy Finley, *Christian Family in the Real World* (Chicago, IL: The Thomas Moore Press, 1984), 12.

The Importance of the Family

In the Christian tradition, the family is an important institution where every human being is granted the privilege to belong. It is the place where the character and the future of every child is shaped because the foundational experiences of every child happen in the family. This section explores how the family relates to children's spirituality.

"Children Learn What They Live"

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
he learns to find love in the world.[39]

This illustrates the role of the environment where the child grows up in the family. This relates to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory which explains how everything in a child and the child's environment affects how a child grows and develops.[40] The family's role as the primary locus of human identity and learned behaviour is substantiated by the biblical witness.[41] It is clear that in the world of biblical faith, the family is the primary unit of meaning which shapes and defines

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[39] Dorothy Law Nolte, "Children Learn What They Live" (Los Angeles: American Institute of Family Relations, n.d.); cited in Roy B. Zuck, *Precious In His Sight: Childhood and Children in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1996), 17.

[40] Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," in *Readings on the Development of Children*, 2nd ed, edited by M. Gauvian and M. Cole (New York: Freeman, 1993), 37-43.

[41] Schoelles, "Equipping Parents to be Spiritual Leaders in the Home," 67.

reality.[42] Over two centuries ago Jonathan Edwards identified the importance of the

family in the faith development, he stated: "Every Christian family ought to be as it

were a little church consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his

rule. And family education and order are some of the chief means of grace. If these

fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual. If these are duly maintained, all

the means of grace are likely to prosper and be successful."[43]

David M. Thomas, in his "Theological Reflection on the Christian Family"

declares:

> I find no other idea in the church's teaching on the family more supportive and challenging than the outright acknowledgment that the Christian family itself is a central embodiment of the church. This has come to be described under various titles in formal church teaching. Sometimes the family is referred to as "the domestic church," "the church of the home," "the household of faith," or "church in miniature (ecclesiola)." These titles all point to the same fact: the family itself is part of the church. It has the same functions as the rest of the church.[44]

Designating the family itself as an ecclesial community nullifies all thinking

that draws an absolute distinction between the family and the church. Thomas

believes that all events of the family are church events. It is the life of the family itself

that is its basic spiritual source.[45] In the home, all family members are priests by

virtue of their faith and baptism, and all celebrate the liturgy of the home through the

daily fabric of family exchange.

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[42] Walter Brueggeman, "The Covenanted Family: A Zone for Humanness," *Journal of Current Social Issues* 14, no.5 (1977): 18.

[43] Clyde A. Holbrook, *The Ethics of Jonathan Edwards: Morality and Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1973), 83.

[44] David M. Thomas, "Home Fires: Theological Reflection on the Christian Family," in *The Changing Family*, ed. Stanley L. Saxton, Patricia Voydanoff, Angela Ann Zukuwski (Chicago, IL: Loyola University Press, 1984), 16.

[45] Thomas, "Home Fires," 17-18.

In the family, parents are vital to the spiritual development of children. The Old Testament is Richards' basis for understanding the parent-children relationship. He says that in the Old Testament, the whole of God's people was organized to teach … the festivals, the laws, the daily patterns of work and worship. And it was to parents that God said, you [parents] shall teach your children. He continues to say, religious nurture was a family affair in the Bible times (Deut. 6:1, 6:9; Ps. 78:1-7).[46]

In his book *A Theology of Christian Education*, Richards describes the alternative model in the home setting as follows:

> Parents should be appropriate models of faith's life. This means that parents, as the effective socializing agents, must themselves be committed Christians for "to model faith's life, the words must be 'in the heart.'"
> The church, therefore, should help parents become mature Christians. Parents should accept responsibility for the Christian nurture of their own children.[47]

It is a loss to the whole family if parents cannot play a central role as beacons of hope and models of faith. For whether families are passing on faith or not, children absorb a spiritual perspective through the family. As Marjorie J. Thompson writes, "The family is the foundational arena of spiritual formation for children."[48] No matter the family condition, children generate a way of life. "Because children work out their earliest years of greatest dependency in these formative relationships, their family's ethos [way of life] and their family's mythos [perspective on life] will profoundly mold the values and faith of the child."[49]

The reason why the family is the foundational arena of spiritual formation for children can be explained by a study conducted by the Massachusetts Mutual Life

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[46] Richards, *A Theology of Christian Education*, 194.

[47] Richards, *A Theology of Christian Education*, 215

[48] Marjorie J. Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 1996), 20.

[49] Roland Martinson, "The Role of Family in the Faith and Value Formation of Children," *Word and World* 17, no. 4 (1997): 401.

Insurance Company.[50] The study confirms that family is the foundational arena of

spiritual formation for children. This study was based on the results of focus groups

and telephone interviews with 1,200 Americans, selected by random-digit dialing. An

overwhelming 97 percent of the participating subjects agreed that the family is the

primary place where people learn their values – religious, moral, and personal. Only

22 percent of the participants stated that religious leaders played a significant role in

their own religious and moral development, and only 14 percent stated that school

teachers were significant in the development of their personal values. This study

showed that there was popular support for a relationship between children's

perceptions of their families and their spirituality was investigated. This study

indicated that family is the primary place where children's spirituality can be

nurtured.

Another study by Hoge and Petrillo demonstrates that the religious attitudes of

the parents are among the most dominant influences on the overall development of the

religious attitudes of the offspring. This study involved the participation of 148

Methodist youth and their parents, 151 Baptist youth and their parents, and 152

Roman Catholic youth and their parents. The results of this study revealed that family

factors correlated twice as high as peer group factors and church program factors in

the religious development of the participating youth.[51] This study is important for the

current research, as it proved that family plays a significant role in passing on faith

through modelling in the family.

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[50] *Asheville Citizen Times*, 7 September 1991,section C: 1.

[51] D. R. Hoge and G. H. Petrillo, "Determinants of Church Participation and Attitudes among High School Youth," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*17 (1978):359-379.

These two studies show that children in the context of faith-centered families are connected with the work of God whether they are aware or even open to this. The current study investigated the strength of the relationship between children's spirituality and their self-perception of the following processes that influence the growth of faith: a sense of belonging in the family, parental model, biblical instruction and exercising personal choice.

The Context of the Chinese Family

The traditional Chinese society was family centered.[52] The family is the basic unit of the society, while individuals are only one part of the family. One of the essential features of Chinese familism is that the blood relationship between the father and son is the most important element of society.[53] The extended families of old had four generations living under one roof. The so-called "four generations under one roof" meant the cohabitation of the father and mother, son and daughter-in-law (or daughter and son-in-law), grandson and granddaughter-in-law, the great-grandson and the great-granddaughter. While modern families increasingly include only two generations living together. To gain knowledge on modern Chinese families, the Sixth National Population Census of the People's Republic of China in 2010 gives a brief introduction in terms of family structure.

According to the Sixth National Population Census of the People's Republic of China in 2010, there were 400 million families in China, of which 185 million families (46%) had children aged 0-17. Families with only one child accounted for two-thirds of all families with children, while families with two children accounted

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[52] Shu-Ching Lee, "Impact of Social Change on Familial Structure and Function: The Chinese Case," in *Selected Studies in Marriage and the Family*, rev. ed. Robert F. Winch, Robert McGinnis, and Herbert R. Barringer (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 138.

[53] Ching Lee, "Impact of Social Change on Familial Structure and Function," 139.

for 27%, and families with three or more children accounted for the remaining 6.6%.
In urban areas, more than three-fourths of families with children had only one child,
while in rural areas, this proportion was less than 60%.[54]

Table1: Structure of Children's Families, By Child's Sex and Migrant Status, 2010

Number of rural left-behind children 其中：农村留守儿童（百万人）	Total number of Children (millions) 儿童人口退算数 （百万人）	Female 女性 %	Male 男性 %	National 全国 %	
-	278.91	100	100	100	Total （合计）
-	194.46	69.5	69.9	69.7	Living with both parents 和父母双方居住
61.03	84.5	30.5	30.1	30.3	Not living with bothparents不和父母双方居住
10.29	14.42	5.1	5.3	5.2	Living with father 和父亲居住
22.21	29.91	10.9	10.6	10.7	Living with mother 和母亲居住
19.94	22.57	8.2	8.0	8.1	Living with grandparents 和祖父母一起住
2.06	3.04	0.9	1.2	1.1	Living alone 单独居住

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2010 Population Census

In terms of family structure, 70% of children lived with both parents, 16% of
children lived with one parent, 8% lived with either one or both grandparents, 3.5% of
children lived with siblings or alone, and about 3% of children lived with other
relatives. The distribution of family structure was similar for boys and girls (see Table
1).[55]

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[54] UNICEF, *What Census Data Tell Us About Children in China: Facts and Figures 2013*,
available in http://www.unicef.cn/en/uploadfile/2013/1216/20131216111141945.pdf; accessed in
December 16, 2013.

[55] UNICEF, *What Census Data Tell Us About Children in China*.

Table 1 shows that large-scale migration is the key factor behind variation in the structure of children's families. Based on long-form data from the 2010 Census, it is estimated that 30% of the child population, or 84.5 million children, did not live with both parents. While some children did not live with both parents due to primarily reasons such as divorce or parental death, migration was the most common reason for children not living with both parents. Children affected by migration include left-behind children with one parent or both parents working away from home, migrant children who migrated with one parent, and children who attended school or worked outside of their hometown and away from their families. The 61.03 million rural left-behind children accounted for the vast majority of children not living with both parents. Half of the rural left-behind children (47%) did not live with either parent, as bother parents had migrated from home. Some 70% of these children lived with grandparents, while most of the remainder lived with other relatives. 36% of rural left-behind children had migrant fathers and lived with only their mothers, while 17% of left-behind children had migrant mothers and lived with only their fathers.[56] Parental absence is detrimental to child development, especially in spiritual development. The Bible reminds us that children are a heritage of the Lord (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live.

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[56] *Left-behind children* refer to children who live in their original domicile, but do not live together with their parents, as either one parent or both parents have migrated. *Rural left-behind children* refer to left-behind children whose household registration locations are in rural areas.

China, as a non-Christian country, developed its own philosophy and cultural thought thousands of years ago, strongly influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. There are some Chinese who think that human life has no value.[57] They do not value the individual or see people as "fearfully and wonderfully made" in the image of God. On the other hand, Chinese tradition believes in a process of de-creation in which a myriad of gods, individual spirits, and humankind emerge from "the one." Life is a series of manipulation and appeasement of the gods, who are capricious and unpredictable. Life depends on fate. A person's goal is to be set free from the physical bondage of the world and to return to the unity of spirit.[58] With these strong cultures in China, which culture is nurturing children the traditional culture or the principles of the biblical Christian culture? Karen Marie Yust tells her readers that Christians must train their children to live a bicultural life where they will be in the world but not of the world (John 15:19; 17:14-16). While they live in the midst of the world, including the neighborhood, schools, friends, life in the city, and the nation, the other culture is that of the religious community: the family spiritual practices, local congregations, and the wider church.[59] Parents need to realize that raising children in the faith is truly teaching them to live in a second culture. In order for Christian culture to be the children's primary culture, it has to be the culture of their home. This is so, parents in China have responsibility to be an example to lead their children spiritually.

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[57] Darrow L. Miller, *Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures*, 2nd ed. (Seattle, WA: Youth With A Mission Publishing, 2001), 68.

[58] Miller, *Discipling Nations*, 80.

[59] Karen Marie Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 27.

This current study investigated the children's self-perception of their families in relation to their spirituality. This is why a discussion on developmental theories related to children's spirituality is essential.

Developmental Theories Related to Children's Spirituality

Theories of development explain how the individual changes over the childhood years. We can benefit from looking at the most useful theories of development. There are three general ways of looking at development: cognitive, social learning, ecological, psychosocial, and faith development theories. Together, these theories may help to illuminate how the various forms of development connect with children's spirituality. In this current study, participants who are between 8 to12 years of age were studied. Attention was given to the childhood life-span development.

Cognitive Developmental Theory and Its Relationship
to Children's Spirituality

Jean Piaget's cognitive development is a progressive reorganization of mental processes as a result of biological maturation and environmental experiences, and the process of equilibration. Children construct an understanding of the world around them, then experience discrepancies between what they already know and what they discover in their environment. This cognitive development describes four stages.

The concrete operational period is the third of four stages and it usually begins six or seven and continues to eleven or twelve, is related to current study's respondents' age group. In this stage, a child witnesses an increasing ability to think logically and achieves what Piaget referred to as conservation–the belief that amounts

of things remain constant despite changes in their appearance.[60] In other words, the

concrete operational child is less egocentric, more autonomous; able to understand

others' points of view, to communicate. Children's ability to communicate at this

particular age group equips them to articulate their perception of their families in

correlation to their spirituality.

<div align="center">

Social Cognitive Theory and Its Relationship
to Children's Spirituality

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In social learning theory, Albert Bandura states behaviour is learned from the

environment through observational learning. He describes the child adopts the

behaviour and attitudes of a model in order to possess the desirable attributes of that

model.[61] Observational learning refers to imitation and modelling.[62] He expounds

that the child acquires behavioural trains of parent through indirect, or vicarious,

reinforcement – a process by which the child's observation of the parent being

reinforced for certain behaviours or behavioural traits increases the likelihood that the

child will behave in similar ways.[63]

Most children's behaviour is learned observationally through modelling.

Children are surrounded by many influential models, such as the family, peer group,

and the school. These are the major socializations of agencies, children may pattern

other's thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviour after observing them in daily life.

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[60] Jean Piaget and Barbel Inhelder, *The Psychology of the Child* (New York: Basic Books Publishers, 1969), 92-129.

[61] Albert Bandura, "The Role of Modelling Processes in Personality Development," in *Readings in Child Behavior and Development*, ed. Celia Stendler Lavatelli (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), 334-344.

[62] Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, INC., 1977), 22.

[63] Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*, 23-55.

Modelling plays a significant role of children's development, includes spiritual development.

<div align="center">Ecological Theory and Its Relationship
to Children's Spirituality</div>

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory explains development in terms of relationships between people and their environment. He argues that in order to understand human development, lone must consider the entire ecological system in which growth occurs. This system is composed of five socially organized subsystems that help support and guide human growth. It involves five environmental systems – microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. [64]

A microsystem is a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and acting in, the immediate environment. Examples include such setting as family, school, peer group, and workplace.[65] This system is the small, immediate environment the child lives in. How people interact with the child will have an effect on how the child grows. A research by Morita Dialing in 2012on "The Effect of Visayan Nazarene Bible College (VNBC) Elementary School upon The Development of Its Selected Students from a Holistic Developmental Perspective" relates that there are many factors which helped the students spiritually.[66] One of them is environmental factor.

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[64] Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," 37.

[65] Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," 39.

[66]Morita Onofre Dialing, "An Analysis of The Effect of Visayan Nazarene Bible College (VNBC) Elementary School upon The Development of Its Selected Students from a Holistic Developmental Perspective," MARE Thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2013.

In her interviews, Dialing noted that one teacher pointed to the environment as the first factor affecting children's spirituality. Secondly, Dialing noted that in an interview with one of the respondents, the child did not mention his family playing a role in his spiritual development. The child said that it was only in school that he got a clear view and understanding of God and spiritual things.

And the mesosystem comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person. It is about the interconnections among family, school, neighbourhood, and peers.[67] Exosystem, as the socioeconomic context, includes the institutions of the culture that affect children's development directly or indirectly. It comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives.[68] The macrosystem is the broader cultural context where children are growing up. The children influenced by the beliefs and values of the culture.[69] A chronosystem encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives. It involves the patterns of environmental events and transitions over the lifetime.[70] For this current study, miscrosystem is the immediate context influencing children's development most. How people interact with children will have a profound effect on how the children grow. In this current study, the environment builds an essential part in the spiritual formation of a child.

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[67] Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," 40.

[68] Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," 40.

[69] Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," 40.

[70] Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," 40.

Psychosocial Theory and Its Relationship
to Children's Spirituality

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development describes how the

achievements and failures of earlier stages influence later stages. Erikson focused on

how people's sense of identity develops. His psychosocial development involves eight

stages. Ego identify is one of the main elements of Erikson's psychosocial theory.[71]

Ego identity is the conscious sense of self; it develops as the child successfully

resolves crises that are distinctly social in nature. These involve establishing a sense

of trust in others, and a growing trust in themselves and what they can do.

In Erikson's fourth stage, industry versus inferiority, one (roughly six years to

puberty) develops skills and abilities that help one feel useful, competent, and good

about oneself. If one masters tasks and facts, then a corresponding sense of

competency yields a grounded sense of self-esteem. If one is unable to master skills

and feel useful, then one develops a sense of inferiority and low self-esteem. One

feels as if one has nothing to offer and therefore worthless.[72] How does this

psychosocial theory relate to children's spirituality? A study by Chartier and Goehner

demonstrated a positive correlation between the dimensions of self-esteem and

concept of God, but also demonstrated the positive correlation in another dimension,

that of parent–child interaction.[73] Positive of self-esteem can be developed in the

family through parent-child interaction, and the relationship between parent and child

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[71] Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1968), 35.

[72] Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1954), 258-261.

[73] M. Chartier and L. Goehner, "A Study of the Relationship of Parent Adolescent Communication, Self-esteem, and God Image," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 6, no. 1(1978): 227-232.

may relate to the concept of God because most children seem to assume that God is like their parents.

A study by Chartier and Goehner in 1978, eighty-four tenth and eleventh graders from a Christian high school in southern California consisted of three paper and pencil tests administered to the subjects in order to measure the relationship of parental communication, self-esteem, and God concept.[74] The study found ample support in both the theory and empirical research touching on the area of self-esteem and parent-child communication. Other studies by J. M. Bienvenu and S. McClain,[75] and V. Gecas and Michael Schwalbe indicated that the quality of parent-child interaction has been a critical antecedent to the level of self-esteem in persons.[76] In fact, during preadolescence, it is the parents-child relationship that is most often identified as the major influencing component on a person's self-esteem.[77] These researchers all agree that high self-esteem is positively correlated to a person's receiving a high degree of constructive, growth-producing communication from parents. Low self-esteem, on the other hand, has been positively related to a person's receiving a high degree of destructive, growth-inhibiting communication from parents.

Who is responsible for the spiritual nurture of children? Thompson tells her readers that the ways family members relate to one another are profoundly formative. Thompson says the way we relate to one another is the most important spiritual

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[74] Chartier and Goehner, "A Study of the Relationship of Parent Adolescent Communication, Self-esteem, and God Image," 227.

[75] J. M. Bienvenu and S. McClain, "Parent-adolescent Communication and Self-esteem," *Journal of Home Economics* 62 (1970): 334-345.

[76] V. Gecas and Michael Schwalbe, "Parental Behavior and Adolescent Self-esteem," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 48 (1986): 37-46.

[77] Stanley Coopersmith, *The Antecedents of Self-esteem* (San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman, 1967), 15.

discipline in the life of a family. Healthy, health-giving relationships reflect God's love through seemingly simple but demanding practices.[78] Based on Erikson's psychosocial theory and other research on self-esteem, the current study also examined the relationship between children's self-perception of model and communication in the family and their self-esteem and how the relationship affected children's spirituality.

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Faith Development Theory and Its Relationship
to Children's Spirituality

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James W. Fowler described the faith development in terms of six structurally distinct faith stages. According to Fowler, faith is defined as a process of becoming, hence, it is continually growing through stages that are hierarchical, sequential, and invariant.[79] With each new level of development, persons have new capacities for relating to and trusting one another along with new potentials for a relationship with God. The children in this study are in *Mystical-Literal Faith Stage*.

The *Mystical-Literal Faith* is typically found in middle to late childhood which usually begins around the ages of six and continues to twelve.[80] This stage correlates with Piaget's "concrete operational" stage. The child's understanding of faith is still essentially a reflection of parental faith, but has widened to include the influence of others. Whether families are passing on faith or not, a child absorbs a spiritual perspective through the family. In this stage, children become aware of the stories and beliefs of the local community and use these to give sense to their own experiences. Story becomes the major way of giving unity and value to experience. When the child

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[78] Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center*, 59.

[79] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1981), 16-23.

[80] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 146-149.

encounters conflicts and contradictions in the stories he or she is interpreting literally, this may lead the child to begin reflecting on the real meaning.[81]

Story is at the center of a familial and personal understanding and as such is essential to living a spiritual life. Because story plays a primary role in human thinking, "religious narratives map onto human thinking," especially with children.[82] Story is a method of nurturing children in faith and Sofia Cavalletti encourages her readers: we have the privilege of becoming parents with God by assisting children in finding what they long for–experience with God.[83] Parents cannot hold back the scripture message thinking children are not ready for the story of God.

Processes that Facilitate the Nurture of Children's Spirituality

Children's spirituality can be nurtured in different ways. This section talked about the following processes that influence the growth of faith, namely, belongingness, parental model, biblical instruction, and personal choice. Psychologist Paul D. Meier notes:

> We are made up of body, soul, and spirit, so if we feed a child well and use healthy psychological principles, but ignore his spiritual development, we will be developing only two-thirds of a person… I believe that the development of the child's spirit is the most important of the three. Psychological development will enable our children live in a society and earn a living, but spiritual development will enable them to understand the meaning of life.[84]

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[81] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 135-150.

[82] Chris J. Boyatzis, David C. Dollahite, Loren D. Marks, "The Family as a Context for Religious and Spiritual Development in Children and Youth," in *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, ed. Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Pamela Ebstyne King, Linda Wagner, and Peter Benson (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006), 301.

[83] Sofia Cavalletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 15, 13-45, 47.

[84] Paul D. Meier, *Christian Child-Rearing and Personality Development* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 91.

Karen Marie Yust, in her book, *Real Kids Real Faith* defines faith as act of grace, in which God chooses to be in relationship with humanity. It presumes that, God seeks relationship with us long before we begin to wonder about God. It also claims that God graciously loves and cares for all people–infants, children, teens, adults–regardless of their mental ability to understand the myriad human ideas about the nature and activity of God in the world.[85]

The family is at the heart of spiritual formation for children and for their parents, and formation takes place in the flow of everyday life, according to Deuteronomy 6. The way parents love and relate to their children, day in and day out, in good times and bad, is the most powerful influence on their formation.[86] As Marjorie J. Thompson writes: it is virtually impossible to overestimate the importance of the family to a child's total development. The basic foundation of character and development of personality that occurs within the home covers all the bases: physical, emotional and spiritual.[87] Adults need to pay close attention to it in daily life.

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Communicating Belonging to a Vital Faith Community: A Process that
Facilitates the Nurture of Children's Spirituality

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Children are considered important, but in the reality people treat children less important in actions. So Richards says that children must feel that they belong in their faith community [family] as much as the adults and considered the love as the standard.[88]

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[85] Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith*, 4.

[86] Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannell, *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 152.

[87] Marjorie J. Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 1996), 20.

[88] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 77.

Dolores Leckey describes family as a place of acceptance, nurture and growth that empowers family members to participate in God's ongoing acts of compassion and salvation.[89] A complete and unconditional acceptance of each person as a precious and beloved of God is a reflection of God's unconditional love for us.[90] For the child the family should be the safest place on earth. It is the only place where the child can be absolutely who the child is and still know the child will be accepted and forgiven. In the family the child can express all feelings and desires the child wants to do and be without fear of being cast out. While the family may not deem all of these actions and desires appropriate, the family will still show the child unconditional love and acceptance, allowing the child to grow emotionally strong and confident in his own abilities. This acceptance of the child's identity, feelings, and actions by the family will mirror to the love and acceptance God feels for him, helping that child to fully experience God's love.

Family life contributes to spirituality to the degree that love is experienced in the real life of the family. Jesus taught that the true mark of discipleship is love (John 13:35). The apostle John admonished, "Let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and know God" (I John 4:7). A child who does not feel loved is apt to feel lonely and alienated. The apostle Paul says, "Love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5), such love offered to children, can nurture a sense of belonging and bring a sense of self-worth and dignity.

A person who has faith in God is at peace and able to trust other people. A sense that "things will be all right" pervades. Shelly believes without faith a person is

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[89] Dolores Leckey, "Sacred Shelters," in *Living with Apocalypse: Spiritual Resources for Social Compassion*, ed. Tilden H. Edwards (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1984), 172.

[90] Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center*, 60.

fearful and anxious. A child's relationship with parents and other adults in authority is foundational to developing faith in God.   Romans 5:6-8 shows how our heavenly father meets this need for unconditional love in our lives.[91] God made a decision to love us apart from any merit of our own. Every child not only needs to know that he or she is loved but also to feel loved by God. This can be explained by a research conducted by ShanShan Yang in 2012 on "The Spiritual Perceptions of Chinese Students in Grades 5-7 From a Selected Chinese Christian School in Manila, Philippines." When the respondents were asked "how do you feel when are you with God?" In her interviews, the respondents answered they felt they are loved by God when they get high grades, get well from sickness, were forgiven when doing wrong, were protected from harms, always felt happy, and joyful.[92]

What adults believe about God, and how they think and feel permeate the world in which children live and grow. Parents cannot shield them from that. In relationship with parents, children discover themselves and construct their God, whose valuing of them looks like the sense of worth they see reflected from us.[93] Consciously and unconsciously, parents communicate their images of God to their children.

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[91] Wayne Rickerson, "Building Healthy Families," in *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future*, ed. Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson, and Allyn K. Sloat (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991), 570.

[92] ShanShan, Yang, "The Spiritual Perceptions of Chinese Students in Grades 5-7 From a Selected Chinese Christian School in Manila, Philippines," MARE, Thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2013.

[93] Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, 130.

Facilitating Modelling on Members of the Faith Community: A Process
That Facilitates the Nurture of Children's Spirituality

From Lawrence Richards' studies of the social scientists' view on socialization,

modelling and identification, he describes the word "modelling" is the primary

mechanism through which socialization takes place. In the family [faith community],

a child lives with his parents, he grows into their culture, and becomes like them. As

the child grows, other models are presented as well with whom the child identifies,

and on whom the child models his own personality and behavior.[94] Bandura in his

book *Social Learning Theory* expounds children are careful observers, they remember

what they observed from models and later try out what they have seen.[95] The impact

of modelling on the children is powerful. This can be explained by the following

study.

In a study by M. H. Nelson and R. Potvin in 1977 of 2,774 male and female

early adolescents, the participants were asked to complete self-report measure of their

parents' religious activity such as prayer and church attendance.[96] Nelson and Potvin

found that parental religiosity correlated positively with adolescent religiosity. This

study demonstrates that parents have a profound effect on children's faith. A review

of literature on the role of parents says: parents as socialization agents serve as both

teachers and models. In the teaching role, the use of reinforcement, verbal statements,

and other behavioural characteristic lead to molding both the child's belief patterns

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[94] Richards, *A Theology of Christian Education*, 84.

[95] Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*, 23-55.

[96] M. H. Nelson and R. Potvin, "Gender and Regional Differences in the Religiosity of
Protestant Adolescents," *Review of Religious Research* 22 (1977): 268-85.

and overt behaviours in accord with cultural standards.[97] The child identifies with a

parental model and emulates the model's behaviour.

Most children learn through modelling. Thompson states that children learn

more from what adults do than from what adults say.[98] Do as I say, not as I do.

Children seldom live up to standards they do not see exemplified in their fathers and

mothers. On children's spiritual journey, before parents teach their children to love

the Lord and know the Word (Deut. 6:7; 11:19), they themselves need to set the

example by loving him and having his Word in their hearts (Deut. 6:5-6; 11:18;

32:46).[99] Because children are careful observes and see far more than we think they

do. They sense the inconsistencies in adult lifestyles, even though they may have

difficulty seeing the big picture. Modelling can be a dynamic influence of child's

development.

Ana-Maria Rizzuto believes that children first become conscious of God

between two and three years of age. "Childhood images of God," she asserts, "are

powerful and influence us throughout a lifetime."[100] Children form their image of

God in the context of relating to their parents and other significant adults. God is an

all-powerful, all-knowing parent who tends to take on the characteristics of parents, as

the child perceives them. Children mix together in their understanding of God both

facts and fantasies about their parents.[101] In 2000 Jane R. Dickie interviewed 49

children regarding their perceptions of parents and God's nurturance and power. The

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[97] John R. Dill, *Child Psychology in Contemporary Society* (Boston, MA: Holbrook Press, Inc., 1978), 331-2.

[98] Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center*, 22.

[99] Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, 115.

[100] Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 7, 178.

[101] Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God*, 7.

study also reported on discipline in the family. The participants included children ages 4 to10 from a Protestant Church. All children were interviewed individually in a 30-minutes session. In this study, the research found that perceptions of both parents were related to children's images of God. She said that when asked to rate parents and God on nurturance and power, children's perceptions of God were much like their perceptions of both parents. When children perceived their parents as nurturing and powerful, God too was perceived as nurturing and powerful.[102] This study also illustrated that without modelling, children may not be inspired to expression to their own spiritual lives. Parents need to be careful as they build relationship with children because the parental relationships interrelate with the child's image of God.

Ted Ward has said that in the Old Testament, parents were responsible for the spiritual and moral growth of their children. Through family experience children learn many of the most important values, the family is a strong shaper of values.[103] As Stonehouse writes in her book *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, God's design is to work through the everyday relationships of parents and children to provide children experiences that prepare them of faith.[104] From the ways in which parents and other adults respond to their efforts, successes, and failures, children build their assumptions of how God will respond to them. Foundations for faith are being laid through the everyday interactions of children and adults.

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[102] Jane R. Dickie, "Parent-Child Relationships and Children's Images of God," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36, no. 1 (January 2001): 25-43;available in Ebscohosthttp://content.ebscohost.com/pdf10/pdf/1997/SSN/01Mar97/9705104481.pdf?T=P&P=AN&K=9705104481&S=R&D=rlh&EbscoContent=dGJyMNHr7ESeqK84zdnyOLCmr0qeprFSsKm4TLGWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMOzprkmwqrZIuePfgeyx44Dt6fIA (Accessed in Oct 21, 2012).

[103] Ted Ward, *Values Begin at Home* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1984), 19.

[104] Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, 63.

Providing Biblical Instruction as Interpretation-of-Life: A Process
That Facilitates the Nurture of Children's Spirituality

Richards puts a great emphasis on Bible study, for the spiritual nurture of

Christians. Richards states that the Bible teaches that God has revealed His thoughts

and plans and decisions to men through the Holy Spirit, and that spiritual growth

always begins with knowledge of His Word.[105] He believes as persons come to know

God's will through the Bible that they have the possibility of personal experience with

God. Consistent with Fowler, storytelling is a good way to experience God. Part of

biblical instruction can be done through storytelling. Story is at the center of familial

and personal understanding and is so essential to living a spiritual life. Because story

plays a primary role in human thinking, religious narratives map onto thinking,

especially with children.[106] The best stories are spiritual, helping to connect children

with deeper truths and ultimate meaning in life.[107]

Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen assert that (1) God intends for

the biblical story to shape children, (2) God intends that children meet God in his

story, and (3) God intends that his story become their story. Believers are encouraged

to find their place in the story and to live into it as "the true story of the world."[108] In

a clear sense, the story interprets the reader more than the reader interprets it, as "It is

the diving author's intention to shape our lives through [the Bible's] story. To be

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[105] Richards, *Creative Bible Teaching*, 92.

[106] Chris J. Boyatzis, David C. Dollahite, and Loren D. Marks, "The Family as a Context for Religious and Spiritual Development in Children and Youth," in *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence*, ed. Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Pamela Ebstyne King, Linda Wagner, and Peter Benson (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 301.

[107] Donald Ratcliff and Scottie May, "Identifying Children's Spirituality," in *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications*, ed. Donald Ratcliff (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), 12.

[108] Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 12.

shaped by the story of Scripture we need to understand two things well: the biblical story is a compelling unity on which we may depend, and each of us has a place within that story.[109] When we enter deeply into the story of the Bible, God will be revealed to us. We will also find ourselves called to share in the mission of God and his purposes with creation.[110] As Hebrews 4:8 explains, God's story is living and active and penetrates the soul.

> And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deut. 6:6-7, RSV)

> Do not forget the things your eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart all the days of your life; rather, tell them to your children and to your children's children. (Deut. 4:9, JB)

> According to the Bible passages, parents take the primary role in the spiritual formation of their children. Scripture teaches that parents must express their faith to their children as they walk, sit at home, lie down, and get up. May be the next generation will grow up to know God truly and to know all He has done for us. Proclamation of the gospel messages is necessary for children to know new things. One way they experience God is to enter the stories of Scripture and see God in action, discover God's character event by event, and hear God speak to them in the story.[111] Regarding the benefit of storytelling, Thompson in her book *Family: The Forming Center* states:

> One of the beauties of scripture is that we can find ourselves in its stories in fresh ways throughout a lifetime. We may identify with different characters at various stages of life. We may also identify with the same

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[109] Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 12.

[110] Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 12.

[111] Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May, "The Story and Spiritual Formation of Children in the Church and in the Home," in *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008), 5.

character in different ways over figure because of changed self-perception or life circumstance. If we approach scripture as a living word, we will find that it both embraces and expands our own experience.[112]

The entire Bile is a rich mine of God's honest, loving, and direct communication with His children. Living into the divine story is more than reading the story but is acting it out in daily practices. Children need to be taught how to understand and visualize their own stories as a means of positive spiritual growth.

Encouraging Growing Exercise of Personal Choice: A Process that
Facilitates the Nurture of Children's Spirituality

Richards believes that as free and responsible beings, persons must and will exercise choice.[113] In the ministry with children, opportunities should be provided for children to strengthen their ability to make responsible choices. Rather than engaging in a war to break the child's "sinful will."

Choice honors the different ways children like to learn and the unique ways they are gifted, but it should not be a rigid value. Because cooperation and community are also important, sometimes children should be assigned to work on tasks together.[114] Many children rarely have that opportunity; adults make most decisions for them. They are told what to do, when do it, and how to do it.

The Holy Bible tells readers: God wants us to realize that He wants us to choose life, but it is our choice to make. In the Old Testament, Deut. 30:11-20 says that Moses is preaching some of his final words to the people of Israel before they enter the Promise Land. He knows that they will be faced with choices, the most important choice being to follow God or go their own way; which leads to

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[112] Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center*, 106.

[113] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 80.

[114] May, Posterski, Stonehouse, and Cannell, *Children Matter*, 279.

destruction. Choices are given and always come with responsibility. God's desire and hope for his people is that they would always choose blessing and life. Deut. 30:19-20 says, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." Moses called Israel to choose life, to obey God and therefore continue to experience his blessings. God does not force his will on anyone. God allows us to decide whether to follow him or reject him. It is a time to make a responsible choice.

In the New Testament, the most important choice is given to everyone. John 14:6 says, "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (NIV). All of us must choose life or choose death. Making right choice is important. Richards encourages his readers to provide opportunities to children for responsible choice including for their own faith response.[115] Children may exercise personal choice from small things in their family life.

A family is an educational environment and the most educationally stimulating experience in a child's background. Parents need to show children the connection between their education and their Christian faith.[116] Whether intentionally or not, the belongingness, parental model, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice indeed relate to children's spirituality in the family.

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[115] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 80.

[116] Gray R. Collins, *Living and Growing Together: Today's Christian Family* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976), 20.

This chapter presented a review of literature and studies relevant to certain aspects of the family. Furthermore, the chapter also examined the biblical view of children and family, the Chinese family, developmental theories related to the children's spirituality, and processes that facilitate the nurture of children's spirituality. The next chapter presents the methodology and procedures of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter presents the method of the study, sources of data, research-gathering procedures, data-gathering instruments, and the statistical treatment of data.

Method of the Study

This research was descriptive in design. I employed the survey method using a questionnaire as the main instrument in the collection of data.[117]This quantitative research measured the strength of the relationship between the children's self-perceptions on the processes that influence the growth of faith, namely, belonging in the family, parental model, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice to their spirituality. The value of the spirituality variable was correlated with the measurements of the other values. The questionnaire was administrated by two Sunday Schoolteachers who have taught more than three years in the selected church in Qingdao, China. These teachers are not the current Sunday School teachers of the respondents.

Sources of Data

The actual respondents were composed of thirty-four (34) children who are between eight to twelve years of age since their thoughts and perceptions of their family more fully than when they were younger. The researcher floated 50 questionnaires but only 34 were gathered. Sixteen children were not able to answer

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[117]See Appendix B for the questionnaire.

because they were not able to come during the conduct of the questionnaire. These
children live with both parents and are currently attending the Christian church in
Qingdao, China. The particular age group was selected on the belief that this age
group is beginning to understand and order their worlds in a logical fashion and are
capable of adequately completing this survey. This research used convenience
sampling. Convenience sampling "enables the researcher to work with those who are
available or volunteer or can be easily recruited and are willing to participate in the
research study."[118] The sample consisted of those who were present during the survey
and have agreed to participate.

Research-Gathering Procedures

A pre-test was conducted before the actual administration of the
questionnaires to the children in China. Two Chinese children, one 8-year-old and one
9-year-old, from a Chinese Christian fellowship in the Philippines,[119] completed two
versions of the questionnaire one with 6-scale, and the other with 3-scale response
options. They completed the 6-scale test first and then did the 3-scale test. The whole
process took them 14 minutes. They said the scale of 6 was difficult, that they felt
confused with the various numbers. Therefore, I decided to use the questionnaire with
a scale of 3 for the actual respondents of the study.

The data-gathering procedure included several steps in order for this study to
be completed. First, the researcher asked permission from the parents of the
respondents by sending them a letter.[120] Second, after permission was secured from

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[118] Burke Johnson and Larry Christensen, *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2012), 230.

[119] I cannot mention the exact name of the fellowship.

[120] See Appendix A.

the respondents' parents, I gave the respondents a chance to withdraw from answering

the questionnaire if they wanted. I have in my safekeeping the 43 permission letters

from respondents' parents. However, only 34 children were able to attend the survey.

All respondents filled out the questionnaire at one place, at one time. Two selected

teachers at the church administered the questionnaire. The questionnaire was written

in English with Chinese translation using vocabulary suitable for this age group. The

completed questionnaires were coded. Thus, no children's names were written.

Finally, after compiling the data from the completed questionnaire, the researcher

interpreted the data with the help of a statistician.

Data-Gathering Instruments

I asked two teachers from the church to administer the questionnaire to

measure each child's self-perceptions of the processes that facilitate the growth of

faith, namely, sense of belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, exercising

personal choice, and their spirituality. The questionnaire is adapted from Richards'

processes in nurturing a child's faith.[121] The portion on "spirituality" is taken from

the book of Catherine Stonehouse, *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey*.[122]

Table 2. Design of Survey Parameters

Variable Name	Type of Data	Value Range	Parameter
Gender	Nominal	N/A	Boy / girl
Age	Nominal	N/A	Year
Sense of Belonging	Interval	-5 to 5 (composite score)	5 pairs of descriptive words
Parental Model	Interval	-5 to 5 (composite	5 pairs of descriptive

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[121] See Appendix B. All the sections in the questionnaire except for the section on "Spirituality" are taken from Lawrence Richards.

[122] Stonehouse, *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey*, 141-143.

		score)	words
Biblical Instruction	Interval	-5 to 5 (composite score)	5 pairs of descriptive words
Exercise of Choice	Interval	-5 to 5 (composite score)	5 pairs of descriptive words
Spirituality	Interval	-5 to 5 (composite score)	5 pairs of descriptive words

The questionnaire has two sections. Section one includes the demographic information and section two asks the respondent to describe each of the five variables. In response to a question, five pairs of words of opposite meaning are given to describe the variable. A scale of -1 to 1 was used. All words with negative connotations will be on the side of the value of negative one with the words having positive connotations will be on the side of the value of one. Neutrality will be a value of zero. The child's survey will not show the numbers to avoid confusion. The questionnaire will have circles to be marked. A child will be able to answer whether the positive or negative word applies as a description of the variable. If neither word applies they will mark the middle value of zero. A positive composite score of the five pairs of words will denote a positive value of their perception of the variable. A negative composite score will denote a negative value. The questionnaire will be written using words that are common to the age group being surveyed. Using five pairs of words means that the test is not long and is simple to finish in a short period of time due to children's shorter attention spans. Stuart S. Cook says, "The use of the fewer words in a children's questionnaire is advisable for easy understanding."[123]

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[123] Stuart S. Cook, "An Instrument to Measure Attitude toward Sunday School," *Christian Education Journal* 10 (Autumn 1989): 112.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The research used correlation analysis to compare the self-perceptions of the respondents on the processes that facilitate the growth of faith, namely, belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, and exercise of choice to their spirituality. With the help of the statistician, Excel, Microsoft Office 2013 was used to calculate the correlation values.

This chapter has presented the research methodology and procedures. The succeeding chapter includes the presentation and interpretation of data.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This study was designed primarily to describe the relationship between the variables of having a sense of belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice in their families, to the respondents' spirituality. Statistical analysis as a research tool has helped the researcher interpret the observed phenomena. The statistical test employed in this study was the correlational method utilizing the Pearson product-moment correlation to express in mathematical terms the degree of relationship between any two variables.

This chapter includes the following: the demographic characteristics of the respondents, self-perceptions of the respondents toward their families in terms of the processes that nurture faith, self-perceptions of the respondents of their spirituality, correlation of the self-perceptions of the respondents' spirituality and the processes that nurture faith, and the treatment of the null hypotheses.

The Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section deals with only two demographic characteristics of the respondents, namely, gender and age of the respondents.

Gender of the Respondents

The population of the study was composed of 34 children whose ages are between 8 and 12. Table 3 shows 14 boys or 41.2% of the population, and 20 girls or 58.8% of the population.

Table 3. Profile of Respondents in Term of Gender

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Boys	14	41.2%	41.2%
Girls	20	58.8%	58.8%
Total	34	100%	100%

Age of the Respondents

Table 4 shows that the age of the respondents is varied. The percentage of the age of the respondents was as follows: 8 years old (23.5%), 9 years old (11.8%), 10 years old (20.6%), 11 years old (11.8%), and 12 years old (32.3%). All of these children attend the 8-to-12-year-old Sunday School class in the Chinese Christian church in Qingdao, China.

Table 4. Profile of Respondents in Term of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
8	8	23.5%
9	4	11.8%
10	7	20.6%
11	4	11.8%
12	11	32.3%
Total	34	100%

Comparisons between the responses of girls and boys, and children of different ages were examined for two of the variables, the one with the highest Standard Deviation on mean score, and the one with the highest correlation to the child's perception of spirituality."[124]

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[124] These findings are found in Tables 10 to 13 and 22 to 25.

**Self-perceptions of the Respondents Toward Their Families in Terms
Of the Processes that Nurture Faith**

The variables measured were the respondents' self-perceptions of their family in terms of having a sense of belonging, their parental model, their biblical instruction, their freedom to exercise personal choice and their spirituality. Each variable was measured by the terms or statements that describe its characteristics. The children were asked to respond by choosing whether they perceive a characteristic is existing or not. If the characteristic did not exist the value was -1. If the characteristic existed the value was 1. If not sure if the characteristic was correct, the child could choose the middle or neutral circle (value of 0).

Each variable is the total of the values of the five characteristics of how the child perceived the quality of family life and their personal spirituality. And each of the five characteristics are used to assess the four main variables, namely, sense of belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice.

Self-perception of the Respondents toward Their Families
in Terms of Their Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging had five characteristics: not loved – love, not respected – respected, not honoured–honoured, not accepted – accepted, and not feel belonging – feel belonging. The total perception value of 5 was calculated as the sum of the five values of the respondents' perception of each of the five characteristics. The mean value of the group was 4.41 (S.D = 1.11) which is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Respondents' Self-perception toward Having a Sense of Belonging

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Having a Sense of Belonging	34	0	5	4.41	1.11

Standard Deviation (S.D) is one of the measures of variability that "has mathematical properties which make much more useful in higher-order statistics. The procedure involves summing up squared deviation in order to eliminate negative value. The pathway of standard deviation moves from deviations to the sum of squares to variance to standard deviation."[125] The finding shows that the respondents felt that they were loved, respected, honoured, accepted, and felt belonging in their families because the mean indicates that the respondents had a positive perception of their sense of belonging. A complete and unconditional acceptance of each person as a precious and beloved of God is a reflection of God's unconditional love. Based on these findings, the parents of the respondents may be encouraged to accept their children as they are and to show their unconditional love in the family.

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Self-perception of the Respondents toward Their Families
in Terms of Parental Model

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In this research the characteristics that were included in the parental model questionnaire were: do not share together – share together often, do not talk together – talk together often, do not listen to each other –listen to each other often, do not have

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[125] William R. Yount, http://www.napce.org/documents/research/-design-yount/10survey4th.pdf (Accessed in October 12, 2012).

family gaming time – have family gaming time often. The total perception value of 5

was calculated as the sum of the five values. The mean value of the group was

3.35 (S.D= 2.03) which is shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Respondents' Self-perception toward Parental Model

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parental Model	34	-4	5	3.35	2.03

The research reveals that parental model did not play a key role to the

respondents' spirituality because the mean indicates that the respondents had a lower

positive perception of their parental model. The finding demonstrates that parents do

not share with the respondents together often, talk together often, listen to each other

often, have family worship time often, and have family gaming time. In a way, the

finding is related to the context of Chinese Family in Qingdao, China. Because of

parents busy working, grandparents may have more influence over many of the

children than their parents even though they live in one roof. Given these findings, the

respondents' parents may be encouraged to have regular family bonding time to be

intimate with their children as the impact of modelling on the children is powerful.

Self-perception of the Respondents toward Their Families
in Terms of Biblical Instruction

In this research the characteristics that were included in the biblical instruction

questionnaire were: do not pray – pray often, do not forgive other – forgive others

often, do not tell Bible stories – tell Bible stories often, do not talk about Bible stories

– talk about Bible stories often, and do not share thoughts on story – share of thoughts

on story. The total perception value of 5 was calculated as the sum of the five values. The mean value of the group was 3.03 (S.D= 1.95) which is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Respondents' Self-perception toward Biblical Instruction

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Biblical Instruction	34	-1	5	3.03	1.95

The data depicts that biblical instruction in the family had a positive influence on the respondents. In other words, the respondents had a positive perception toward their biblical instruction in the family. This finding implies that the respondents may be able to put themselves in the stories, listen to God's voice along with the characters and crowds, make decisions, and practice living the faith together with all those who have gone before them.

The correlation between biblical instruction and the spirituality of the boys is higher (r=.6017) while the Pearson calculation for girls is only (r.3533). There was a strong positive correlation between the boys' spirituality and their self-perceptions on biblical instruction while for the girls, there was only a slightly positive correlation.[126]

Self-perception of the Respondents toward Their Families
in Terms of Exercising Personal Choice

The respondents' self-perceptions toward exercising personal choice were measured by five characteristics: do not have chances to make a choice – have chances to make a choice, not given any options – given some options, not encouraged to make decisions alone – encouraged to make decisions alone, do not

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[126] This is further discussed in Tables 22 to 25.

have right to decide – have right to decide, and not taught to take responsibility –

taught to take responsibility. The total perception value of 5 was calculated as the sum

of the five values. The mean value of the group was 3.82 (S.D= 1.60) which is shown

in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Respondents' Self-perception toward Exercising Personal Choice

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Exercising Personal Choice	34	-1	5	3.82	1.60

The finding indicates that the respondents had a positive perception toward

their freedom to exercise personal choice in the family. It could be said, that the

respondents had chances to make a choice, were given some options to make a

personal choice, were encouraged to make decisions on their own, had right to decide,

and were taught to take responsibility for the choices they made in life. These findings

were significant to this current study for the opportunities should be provided to

children to strengthen their ability to make responsible choices,[127] even spiritual

decision.

Among the four variables, parental model's standard deviation is the highest

one which indicates that the respondents had lower positive perception of their

parental model in the family. The distribution is illustrated in Table 9 below.

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[127] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 80.

Table 9: Respondents' Self-perception toward All the Processes

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Having a Sense of Belonging	34	0	5	4.41	1.11
Parental Model	34	-4	5	3.35	2.03
Biblical Instruction	34	-1	5	3.03	1.95
Exercising Personal Choice	34	-1	5	3.82	1.60

Self-perceptions Between Boys and Girls toward Their Families
in Terms of Parental Model

Table 9 reveals that the Parental Model variable has the highest standard deviation score. The researcher examined the responses on this variable more fully by looking at the separate responses of boys and girls, 8-10 year olds and 11-2 year olds. Girls perceived that the parental model they receive from their parents are higher than boys because the finding in Table 11 reveals that the mean score for the girls on Parental Modeling was 3.55 (S.D = 1.47), and for boys it was 3.07 (SD = 1.23). It could be said that both boys and girls had a positive perception toward their parental model. However girls perceived higher positive influence than boys.

Table 10. Respondents' Self-perceptions toward Parental Model for Boys

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parental Model	14	-4	5	3.07	1.23

Table 11. Respondents' Self-perceptions toward Parental Model for Girls

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parental Model	20	0	5	3.55	1.47

Self-perceptions Between 8-to-10-year-old Children and 11-to-12-year-old Children toward Their Families in Terms of Parental Model

Children aging 8-10 years old perceive positive influence from their parental model as indicated by the finding in Table 12 showing a mean score of 4 (S.D = 1.45) is positive.

Table 12. Respondents' Self-perceptions toward Parental Model for age 8-10

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parental Model	19	0	5	4	1.45

Table 13 shows that the mean score for 11-to-12-year-old respondents on parental model was 2.53 (S.D 2.33), it means the perception of the 11-to-12-year-old respondents were lower than the perception of the 8-10 year olds on this variable.

Table 13. Respondents' Self-perceptions toward Parental Model for age 11-12

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parental Model	15	-4	5	2.53	2.33

Self-perceptions of the Respondents on Their Spirituality

Child educators hold different perspectives on the spirituality of children. Spirituality according to David Hay and Rebecca Nye is a "relational consciousness" which is reflected in how the child relates to things, other people, himself or herself, and God.[128] Spirituality affects children's view of God, the world, and the people around them. In this section, the respondents' perceptions toward their spirituality were shown by measuring the following five characteristics:

1. I do not love God **O   O   O** I love God

2. I do not talk to God **O   O O** I talk to God often

3. I do not feel God close to me **O O O** I feel God close to me often

4. I have not experienced God guiding me   **O   O O**   I often experience God guiding me

5. I do not love worshiping God at home **O O O** I love worshiping God at home

The Respondents' Perception of Feelings toward God
"Loving God"

Matthew 22:37-39 says, "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (NIV).

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[128] Hay and Nye, *The Spirit of the Child*, 112-113.

That is to say, love God first. By loving God first, a person is empowered to love one's neighbour. A person cannot love one's neighbour, without loving God first and a person cannot love God without seeking to share that love with others. Richards explains that love is linked with Christian spirituality.[129] However, love is not spirituality. But true Christian spirituality could not conceivably exist apart from a deep and overflowing love. In this study, the respondents' level of spirituality is measured through investigating their self-perceptions of loving God or not. The findings are shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14.Respondents' Self-perception Toward Loving God

Sub-criteria	N	Positive (n/%)	Neutrality	Negative (n/%)	Cumulative Score
1. Love God	34	34 or (100%)	0 or (0%)	0 or (0%)	34

Table 14 reveals that among 34 respondents, all (100%) respondents chose love God. It demonstrates that all respondents love God. However, there was a limitation to the findings in this current study as there were no exact reasons to know why all the respondents chose they love God because of the research instrument, but there might be some possibilities to help know the reasons why they did so. Based on the research conducted by ShanShan Yang describes that Chinese students in Manila, Philippines they felt they were loved by God as they were asked "how do you feel when are you with God."[130] In one way or another, these might be also be the cause as to why all the respondents in this current research chose they love God. The

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[129] Richards, *A Practical Theology of Spirituality*, 26.

[130] Yang, "The Spiritual Perceptions of Chinese Students in Grades 5-7 From a Selected Chinese Christian School in Manila, Philippines," 2013.

researcher believes that there must be other factors which made the respondents rate that particular section on the questionnaire.

Based on the biblical truth, the Old Testament and Jesus stress the high priority of loving God and their neighbour (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:34-40). The love theme is also tightly woven through every New Testament Epistle. The finding is significant to this study for love is a true measure of Christian spirituality.[131] It is clear that love–for God and from God–is the wellspring which vitalizes and characterizes the truly Christian life. Love comes from God, everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God (1 John 4:7, NIV). Based on the findings of this current study, the respondents may be encouraged to keep searching for God's love and continuously practice loving God in daily life.

<div align="center">The Respondents' Perception of Praying
"Talking to God"</div>

Prayer is one way of communicating with God and building relationship with Him. Prayer also could be one factor to check a child's relationship with God. This section measured the respondents' perception of praying, the finding was shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15. Respondents' Self-perception Toward Talking to God

Sub-criteria	N	Positive (n/%)	Neutrality	Negative (n/%)	Cumulative Score
2. Talk to God	34	26 or (76.5%)	7or (20.6%)	1 or (3%)	25

Table 15 reveals that 76.5% of the respondents chose "I talk to God often," 20.6% of the respondent chose neutrality, and 3% of the respondents chose "I do not

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[131] Richards, *A Practical Theology of Spirituality*, 27.

talk to God." Statistically, the finding indicates that 76.5% of the respondents pray to God often in the family, 20.6% of the respondents were not sure whether or they pray to God, and 3% of the respondents do not pray to God in the family.

Every child may have different perceptions toward talking to God according to their spiritual formation. First, 76.5% of the respondents might consider prayer as their daily routine, they might have been influenced by their parents or other significant adults, and they might have acknowledged the significance of prayer in building relationship with God. Second, 20.6% of the respondents might pray but only limited with negative situations, or they forgot to pray because of pressure to have high academic achievement. Finally, 3% of the respondents may not be trained how to pray, or taught how to build relationship with God in the family.

Prayer is a conversation with God that may nurture and support children's spiritual lives. Lois Rock in her children's book, *A First Look: Prayer* says, "Prayer is a way of making friends with God."[132] We tell God about our hopes, fears, needs, beliefs, struggles, gifts, and general state of being. Thompson said prayer is absolutely central and indispensable to the spiritual life.[133] The finding, 20.6% (neutrality) and 3% (negative) indicated that the 20.6% and 3% of the respondents' relationship with God might be weaker than 76.5% of the respondents. It will be well for the 20.6% and 3% children to practice more on talking to God in the family that would reinforce their spiritual growth. It is Richards' concern on Christian spirituality. He states that prayer is the very heart of our encounter and relationship with God.[134] Without prayer, there is no mutual relationship, no communication, no growth. Prayer is the

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[132] Cited in Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith*, 120.

[133] Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center*, 73.

[134] Richards, A *Practical Theology of Spirituality,* 100.

inward expression of our faith; it is the means of communion with our Maker, a means God graciously gives us through the Holy Spirit.[135] Based on the findings of this current study, the respondents' parents may be encouraged to teach and nurture their children to grow in faith through building relationship with and experiencing God in prayer.

<div align="center">

The Respondents' Perception of Feeling God's Closeness
"Feel God Close to Me"

</div>

Are the children conscious of God's presence with them? The responses in Table 16 relate to a sense of God's closeness.

Table 16. Respondents' Self-perception Toward Feeling God Close to Me

Sub-criteria	N	Positive (n/%)	Neutrality	Negative (n/%)	Cumulative Score
3. Feel God close to me	34	28 or (82.4%)	6 or (17.6%)	0 or (0%)	28

Table 16 illustrates that 82.4% of the respondents chose "feel God close to me," and 17.6% of the respondents chose neutrality. This means that 82.4% of the respondents felt God close to them, and 17.6% of the respondents were not sure the characteristic was correct or was not sure what the feeling is like. The finding indicates that the majority (82.4%) of the respondents have a positive relationship with God, and the minority (17.6%) of the respondents may not understand what God's closeness means, or they may be unsure of whether or not they have had were God being close to them. Based on the findings of this current study, the respondents'

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[135]Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center*, 73.

parents might be encouraged to teach in a way to help their children feel God's closeness by prayer, worship, or sharing Bible stories.

The Respondents' Perception of Experiencing God's Presence
"Experience God Guiding Me"

The respondents' perception of "experiencing God guiding me" was shown in Table 17 below.

Table 17. Respondents' Self-perception Toward Experiencing God Guiding Me

Sub-criteria	N	Positive (n/%)	Neutrality	Negative (n/%)	Cumulative Score
4. Experience God guiding me	34	23 or (67.6%)	9 or (26.5%)	2 or (6%)	21

Table 17 shows that 67.6% of the respondents chose they "have experienced God guiding me," 26.5% chose neutrality, and 6% chose I have not experienced God guiding me. The finding indicates that 67.6% of the children have experienced God's guidance in their lives and had a closer relationship with God; 17.6% of the respondents were not sure they have experienced God guiding them, and 6% of the children have not experienced God guiding them.

Children may experience God's guidance through their parents, church, prayer, worship, and the Bible. The entire Bible is a mine that is full of God's loving and direct communication with His children. Based on the findings of this current study, the respondents might be encouraged to have more Bible reading, devotions with their parents or have devotions on their own. On the other hand, the respondents' parents might also be encouraged to share God's stories, or help their children live out God's stories in their lives.

The Respondents' Perception of Worshiping God at Home
"Love Worshiping God at Home"

The respondents' perception of "loving to worship God at home" was shown in Table 18 below.

Table 18. Respondents' Self-perception Toward Loving Worshiping God at Home

Sub-criteria	N	Positive (n/%)	Neutrality	Negative (n/%)	Cumulative Score
5. Love worshiping God at home	34	24 or (70.6%)	10 or (29.4%)	0 or (0%)	24

Table 18 shows that 70.6% of the respondents chose "love worshiping God at home," and 29.4% of the respondents chose neutrality. The findings demonstrate that 70.6% of the children love worshiping God at home, and 29.4% of the children indicated sometimes worshiping God at home. First, the majority (70.6%) of the respondents may be shaped by their family culture as characteristic of a Chinese Christian family. In addition, the minority (29.4%) might have other reasons for their perception.

Family worship is an important expression of celebrating God's presence in the midst of home life. It need not be long or formal, but regular.[136] Based on the findings of this current study, the respondents' parents might be encouraged to help their children experience and celebrate God's presence in the family, maybe not on a daily basis but at least, they will have regular have family worship with their children through family bonding time.

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[136] Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center*, 89.

**Correlation of the Self-Perceptions of the Respondents' Spirituality
and the Processes that Nurture Faith**

This section measured the correlation of the self-perceptions of the

respondents' spirituality and the processes that nurture faith in following aspects:

correlation between the variables of the respondents' spirituality and their sense of

belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice in their

families. Pearson correlation is used to measure the relationship between two

variables.[137]

Correlation Between Spirituality and a Sense of Belonging

Table 19 shows the correlation between the variables of a sense of belonging

and spirituality for the respondents.

Table 19. Correlation of Self-perceptions of the Respondents' Spirituality
and a Sense of Belonging

		A Sense of Belonging	Spirituality
A Sense of Belonging	Pearson Correlation	1	.3393
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	.3393	1
n = 34			

The Pearson was calculated to analyze the data gathered on the respondents in

order to assess the strength of the relationships between the variables of a sense of

belong and spirituality. The Pearson (r=.3393) indicates that the relationship is slight

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[137] In the computation for the correlation between spirituality and the four processes that nurture the growth of faith these values are used: The values of two variables are given between +1 and -1. 0 is no correlation, and -1 is total negative correlation, 1 is total positive correlation. Degrees of correlation: 0.01 - 0.24 very slight correlation; 0.25 - 0.49 slight and moderate correlation; 0.5 - 0.74 strong correlation; 0.75 - 0.99 very strong correlation; 1 is perfect correlation; cf. Pearson's Correlation, [online], available from http://faculty.quinnipiac.edu/libarts/polsci/statistics.html.

positive between the respondents' perception of their sense of belonging in the family and their perception of their level of spirituality. Therefore, null hypothesis 1 which says: "There would be no correlation between the variables of the sense of belonging in the families and spirituality of the children" is rejected for this current study. This means that there was slight positive correlation between the variables of sense of belonging and spirituality for the respondents in this study who came from Qingdao, China.

A sense of belonging was measured by five characteristics: not loved – loved, not respected – respected, not honoured–honored, not accepted – accepted, and not feel belonging – feel belonging. The finding in table 14 indicates that the respondents' spirituality is weakly related to their sense of belonging in their families. It could be said that the children are loved, respected, honoured, accepted, and felt belonging in the family but these might not be the main factors that shape the children's spirituality. There might be other factors related, such as, grandparents' involvement in child rearing or intimacy with the peer group in church school. From my personal experiences, spending more time with my grandmother in my childhood tells me that I feel more belonging with my grandmother in my life. In other words, the respondents may have different self-perceptions of sense of belonging with their grandparents because they also spent more time with their grandparents due to their parents' work. Another reason could be the influence of the peer group in the church. Regarding these findings, a research by Morita Dialing con firms that the environment is one of the main factors to affect children's spirituality.[138]

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[138] Dialing, "An Analysis of The Effect of Visayan Nazarene Bible College (VNBC) Elementary School upon The Development of Its Selected Students from a Holistic Developmental Perspective," 2013.

This particular result of this current research is related in a way to the Chartier and Goehner's study on the relationship of parental communication, self-esteem, and the concept of God.[139] The research demonstrated that high self-esteem is positively correlated to a person's receiving a high degree of constructive, growth-producing communication from parents. Low self-esteem, on the other hand, has been positively related to a person's receiving a high degree of destructive, growth-inhibiting communication from parents which may relate to the concept of God. However, in this current study, there was no strong positive correlation between the respondents' perception of their sense of belonging in the family and their perception of their spirituality.

Correlation Between Spirituality and Parental Model

Table 20 shows the correlation between the parental model and spirituality of the respondents.

Table 20. Correlations of the Self-perceptions of the Respondents' Spirituality and the Parental Model

		Parental Model	Spirituality
Parental Model	Pearson Correlation	1	.3242
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	.3242	1
n = 34			

The Pearson calculated the strength of the relationship between the variables of parental model and spirituality. Pearson (r=.3242) indicates that the relationship is slightly positive between the respondents' perception of the parental model in the

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[139] Chartier and Goehner, "A Study of the Relationship of Parent Adolescent Communication, Self-esteem, and God Image," 227.

family and their perception of their spirituality. The correlation between these two variables is slightly positive and indicates that null hypothesis 2 which says that "There would be no correlation between the variables of modelling by parents in the families and spirituality of the children" is rejected for this current study. This means that there was slight positive correlation between the variables of parental model and spirituality for the respondents in this study.

The parental model was measured by the five characteristics: do not share together–share together often, do not talk together – talk together often, do not listen to each other –listen to each other often, do not have family worship – have family worship often, and do not play games with family–play games with family often. The finding described in Table 20 demonstrates that the respondents' spirituality is weakly related to their parental model in the family. It can be said that when assessed using the perceptions of children on the above practices, the parental model in the family was slightly helpful in the children's spiritual growth or other factors caused the finding. Richards states that as a child lives with parents, the child grows into their culture, and becomes like them.[140] Children form their image of God in the context of relating to their parents and significant adults.[141] Parents should pay careful attention to have relationship with their children in the family.

A number of research studies demonstrated that the parental model plays a significant role in nurturing children's spirituality. A study conducted by Nelson on parents' religious activity such as prayer and church attendance found that parents have a profound effect on the children's faith.[142] Another research conducted by Hoge

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[140] Richards, *A Theology of Christian Education*, 84.

[141] Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God*, 7.

[142] M. H. Nelson and R. Potvin, *Review of Religious Research* 22 (1977): 268-85.

and Petrillo regarding the attitudes of the parents showed that parental attitude is a

dominant influence on the overall development of the religious attitudes of the

offspring.[143] This research finding revealed that family factors correlated twice as

high as peer group factors and church program factors in the religious development of

the participating youth. Whereas, in this current study there was no strong positive

correlation between the variables of parental model in the family and spirituality for

the respondents who came from Qingdao, China. This is significant to this study.

Based on the findings of this current study, the respondents' parents might be

encouraged to play a positive role in the family.

Correlation Between Spirituality and Biblical Instruction

Table 21 shows that correlation between biblical instruction and spirituality of

the respondents.

Table 21. Correlation of Self-perceptions of the Respondents' Spirituality
and Biblical Instruction

		Biblical Instruction	Spirituality
Biblical Instruction	Pearson Correlation	1	.4697
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	.4697	1
n = 34			

The Pearson (r=.4697) reflects the strength of the relationship for the variable

of biblical instruction to the variable of spirituality of the respondents. The

relationship is moderately positive between the respondents' perception of their

biblical instruction in the family and their perception of their spirituality. This means

that the correlation between the variables of biblical instruction and spirituality is

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[143] D. R. Hoge and G. H. Petrillo, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 17 (1978): 359-379.

moderately positive for the respondents who participated in this study. Therefore, null hypothesis 3 which says, "there would be no correlation between the variables of biblical instruction in the families and spirituality of the children" is rejected.

Biblical instruction was measured by five characteristics: do not pray – pray often, do not forgive others – forgive others often, do not tell Bible stories – tell Bible stories often, do not talk about Bible stories – talk about Bible stories often, and do not share of thoughts on story – share of thoughts on story.

The respondents' perceptions show a moderately positive strength in its relationship of biblical instruction to spirituality. This means that parents of the respondents in a way try to help children grow spiritually. It could be said also that children's spirituality can be nurtured. Richards affirms that spiritual growth always begins with knowledge of God's Word.[144] One way the children experience God is to enter the stories of Scripture and see God in action, discovering God's character event by event, and hearing God speak to them in the story.[145] Parents are in the best position to walk with children spiritually through storytelling in the family. Based on the findings of this current study, the respondents' parents might be encouraged to share God's story to their children more effectively in the family.

Since Biblical Instruction had the highest correlation to perceived spirituality of all the variables, the researcher studied the findings in more detail. Separate correlations were run for boys, and for girls, for the younger children, and the older children.[146]

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[144] Richards, *Creative Bible Teaching*, 92.

[145] Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May, "The Story and Spiritual Formation of Children in the Church and in the Home," in *Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008), 5.

[146] See also Tables 22-25.

Table 22. Correlation of Self-perceptions of the Respondents' Spirituality
and Biblical Instruction with Boys

		Biblical Instruction	Spirituality
Biblical Instruction	Pearson Correlation	1	.6017
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	.6017	1
n = 14			

The Pearson (r=.6017) reflects the strength of the relationship for the variable of biblical instruction to the variable of spirituality of the boys. This means that there was strong positive correlation between the variables of biblical instruction and spirituality for the boys in this study.

Table 23. Correlation of Self-perceptions of the Respondents' Spirituality
and Biblical Instruction with Girls

		Biblical Instruction	Spirituality
Biblical Instruction	Pearson Correlation	1	.3533
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	.3533	1
n = 20			

The Pearson (r=.3533) reflects the strength of the relationship for the variable of biblical instruction to the variable of spirituality of the girls. This means that there was slightly positive correlation between the variables of biblical instruction and spirituality for the girls in this study. The correlation of biblical instruction with spirituality is considerably stronger than for the girls.

Table 24. Correlation of Self-perceptions of the Respondents' Spirituality
and Biblical Instruction with Children Aging 8-10

		Biblical Instruction	Spirituality
Biblical Instruction	Pearson Correlation	1	.5635
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	.5635	1
n = 19			

The Pearson (r=.5635) reflects the strength of the relationship for the variable of biblical instruction to the variable of spirituality of 8-to-10-year-old respondents. This means that there was slightly strong positive correlation between the variables of biblical instruction and spirituality for 8-to-10-year-old respondents in this study.

Table 25. Correlation of Self-perceptions of the Respondents' Spirituality
and Biblical Instruction with Children Aging 11-12

		Biblical Instruction	Spirituality
Biblical Instruction	Pearson Correlation	1	.3103
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	.3103	1
n = 15			

The Pearson (r=.3103) reflects the strength of the relationship for the variable of biblical instruction to the variable of spirituality of 11-to-12-year-old respondents. This means that there was slightly positive correlation between the variables of biblical instruction and spirituality for 11-to-12-year-old respondents in this study. It is interesting that the correlation of the biblical instruction with Spirituality is considerably stronger for the 8-10 year olds than for the 11-12 year olds.

Correlation of Spirituality and The Freedom to
Exercise Personal Choice

Table 26 shows that correlation between exercising personal choice and

spirituality of the respondents.

Table 26. Correlation of Self-perceptions of the Respondents' Spirituality
and Exercising Personal Choice

		Exercising Personal Choice	Spirituality
Exercising Personal Choice	Pearson Correlation	1	.2827
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	.2827	1
n = 34			

The Pearson calculation describes the strength of the relationship between the

variables of exercising personal choice and spirituality. The Pearson (r=.2827)

indicates that the relationship is slightly positive between the respondents' perception

of their exercising personal choice in the family and their perception of their

spirituality. This means that the correlation between the variables of exercising

personal choice and spirituality is slightly positive for the respondents from Qingdao,

China who participated in this study. Therefore, null hypothesis 4 which says that

"there would be no correlation between the variables of exercising personal choice in

the families and spirituality of the children" is rejected.

Exercising personal choice was treated by five characteristics: do not have

chances to make a choice – have chances to make a choice, do not give any options –

given some options, not encouraged to make decisions alone – encouraged to make

decisions alone, do not have right to decide – have a right to decide, and not taught to

take responsibility –taught to take responsibility. The finding in Table 26

demonstrates that the children's spirituality has a slightly positive correlation to their freedom to exercise personal choice in the family. It can be said that first, the respondents might not be trained to make personal choice or spiritual decision in the family; second, the respondents were not taught the connection between making responsible choice and their spirituality; finally, the respondents might not have been given opportunities to practice personal choice because culturally many Chinese parents make decisions on behalf of their children. Richards affirms that in the ministry with children, opportunities should be provided to children to strengthen their ability to make responsible choices because faith itself is never a mere intellectual assent.[147] He also mentions that human life means to accept fully the reality of personal responsibility and accountability to others. Christian spirituality calls us to live responsibly and accountable in union with God.[148] None is responsible for the actions of another. Though there was not a very strong positive relationship between the respondents' perception of their freedom to make personal choices in the family and their perception of their level of their spirituality, still this is important to this current study. Accordingly, based on the findings, the respondents' parents might be encouraged to provide ample opportunities for children to practice their faith by exercising personal choice in the family.

Among the four variables, three of them have a slightly positive correlation, but the highest correlation among the four processes is in biblical instruction and the lowest one is exercising personal choice in the family illustrated in figure 3 below.

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[147] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 80.

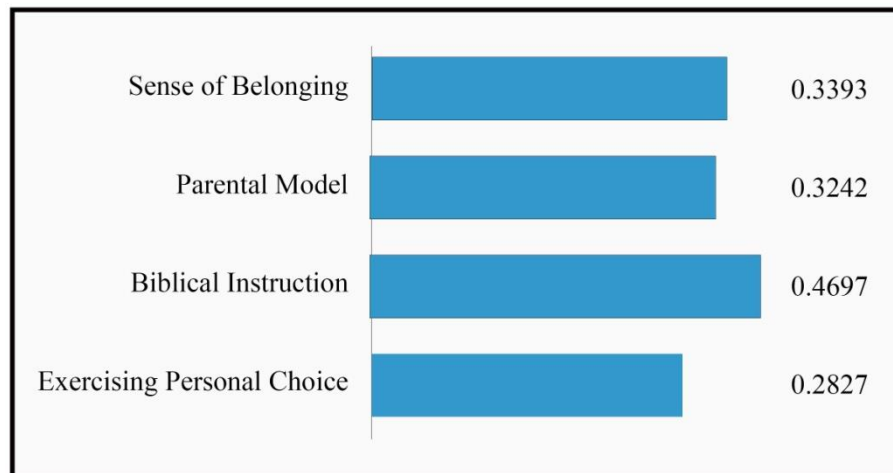[148] Richards, *A Practical Theology of Spirituality*, 74.

Figure 3. Correlation of Perception Values to Spirituality Self-perception

The figure above illustrates that the variables, sense of belonging, parental model, and exercising personal choice have a less positive strength of relationship with spirituality than biblical instruction. Biblical instruction has a moderately positive correlation with spirituality. The differences are not significant.

Since the study statistically describes that there was a slight positive correlation between children's spirituality and their perceptions of the following processes that influence the growth of faith, it can be sated that these four factors indeed affect the children's spirituality.

This chapter presented the following: the demographic characteristics of the respondents, self-perceptions of the respondents toward their families in terms of the processes that nurture faith, self-perceptions of the respondents of their spirituality, correlation of the self-perceptions of the respondents' spirituality and the processes that nurture faith, and the treatment of the null hypotheses. The final chapter gives the summary, conclusion, findings, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. The summary is begun from the problem and its background, followed by the description of five challenges: spiritual formation of children according to the book of Deuteronomy, the importance of family, developmental theories related to the children's spirituality, and processes that facilitate the nurture of children's spirituality.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived influence of the family upon spirituality among selected children from Qingdao, China. To reach the purpose of this study, the respondents' self-perceptions of their sense of belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, freedom to make personal choice. The survey items to which the children responded all focused relationships with in the family. The respondents' self-perception of their spirituality was measured. The level of the respondents' spirituality in terms of loving God, talking to God, feel God close to me, experience God guiding me, and loving to worship God at home were examined. The strength of each relationship between the respondents' self-perceptions of their spirituality toward as following variable: Sense of belonging, Parental model, Biblical

instruction, and Exercising personal choice were also treated. Based on the findings, the null hypotheses were rejected.[149]

Spiritual Formation of Children According to the Book of Deuteronomy

The study surveyed children's spiritual formation according to the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy tells readers that God's goal is that Moses teach the present generation in a way that their children and their children's children would respect (fear) God and live out God's law (v. 6:1-2). Living out God's commandments, the spiritual formation of children would be significantly influenced if they observed the people of God living out God's commandments (v. 6:7-9). It encourages parents to continually teach their children essential truths and guide them to grow up in faith. The family was the best place for children to develop their faith. Parents were commanded by God through Moses' teaching to live an example so that children can be nurtured through faith modelling and practices.

The Importance of the Family

The findings of this current study also point to the important influence of the family. Family as the most importance institution of the society plays a key role in spiritual forming for the foundational experiences of every child happen in the family. In a way, child's learning of truth and faith formation starts by reflecting on the child's environment.

Processes that Facilitate the Nurture of Children's Spirituality

The findings of this current study are significant to this study, because the family as a place of acceptance can empower children to participate in God's ongoing

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[149] Please refer to the section on Findings, number 10-13.

acts of compassion and salvation. In addition, a complete and unconditional acceptance of each person in the family can be a reflection of God's unconditional love for children.

Concerning the nurture of children's spirituality, this study described four processes that influence the growth of faith, namely, sense of belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, and freedom to exercise personal choice in the family.

First, sense of belonging –Richards says that children must feel that they belong in their faith community [family] as much as the adults.[150] This acceptance of the child's identity, feelings, and actions by the family will mirror to the love and acceptance God feels for him, helping that child to fully experience God's love.

Second, parental model – children need to see faith practiced in the life of the parents, so that children can understand through observation what it means to ones trust in God. Parents should pay careful attention to be positive role models toward their children.

Third, biblical instruction through storytelling is a good way to experience God. One of the most critical functions of storytelling is to help children make connections between their personal stories and God's great story. No doubt, the family is in a unique position to tell God's story to children.

Lastly, exercising personal choice –as free and responsible beings, persons must and will exercise choice.[151] Christian nurture must strengthen the will for obedience by building personal responsibility, because faith itself is not just an intellectual exercise.

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[150] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 77.

[151] Richards, *A Theology of Children's Ministry*, 80.

Findings

This study was composed of 14 boys and 20 girls. There were 19 children who were between 8 to 10 years old and 15 children who were between 11 to 12 years old. There were thirteen (13) particular findings in this study in relation to the sub-problems posed in this study:

Table 27: Respondents' Self-perception toward All the Processes Nurture Faith

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Having a Sense of Belonging	34	0	5	4.41	1.11
Parental Model	34	-4	5	3.35	2.03
Biblical Instruction	34	-1	5	3.03	1.95
Exercising Personal Choice	34	-1	5	3.82	1.60

First, the respondents' perceptions towards their families in terms of their sense of belonging show positive with mean value of the group was 4.41 (S.D= 1.11). The finding illustrates that they felt that they were loved, respected, honoured, accepted, and felt belonging in their families.

Second, the respondents' perceptions towards their families in terms of their parental model show low positive with mean value of the group was 3.35 (S.D= 2.03). The finding means that parental model did not play a key role to the respondents in their families.

Third, the respondents' perceptions towards their families in terms of their biblical instruction show positive with mean value of the group was 3.03 (S.D= 1.95). The finding demonstrates that the respondents had a positive influence toward their biblical instruction in the family.

Fourth, the respondents' perceptions towards their families in terms of their freedom to make personal choice show positive with mean value of the group was 3.82 (S.D= 1.60). It could be said, the respondents had chances to make a choice, were given some options to make a personal choice, were encouraged to make decision by their own, had right to decide, and were taught to take responsibility for the choices they made in life.

Table 28: Respondents' Self-perception of Spirituality

Sub-criteria	N	Positive (n/%)	Neutrality	Negative (n/%)	Cumulative Scores
1. Love God	34	34 or (100%)	0 or (0%)	0 or (0%)	34
2. Talk to God	34	26 or (76.5%)	7or (20.6%)	1 or (3%)	25
3. Feel God close to me	34	28 or (82.4%)	6 or (17.6%)	0 or (0%)	28
4. Experience God guiding me	34	23 or (67.6%)	9 or (26.5%)	2 or (6%)	21
5. Love worshiping God at home	34	24 or (70.6%)	10 or (29.4%)	0 or (0%)	21

Fifth, the respondents' perceptions toward their spirituality in terms of loving God show that among 34 respondents, all (100%) respondents chose love God. It demonstrates that all respondents love God.

Sixth, the respondents' perceptions toward their spirituality in terms of "talk to God" show that 76.5% of the respondents chose "I talk to God often," 20.6% of the respondent chose neutrality, and 0.03% of the respondents chose "I do not talk to

God." In other words, 76.5% of the respondents pray to God often in the family, 20.6% of the respondents were not sure if the characteristic was correct or they pray to God sometimes, and 0.03% of the respondents do not pray to God in the family.

Seventh, the respondents' perceptions toward their spirituality in terms of feeling God close to me show that 82.4% of the respondents chose feel God close to me, and 17.6% of the respondents chose neutrality. This means that 82.4% of the respondents felt God close to them, and 17.6% of the respondents were not sure the characteristic was correct. The finding indicates that the majority (82.4%) of the respondents have a better relationship with God, and the minority (17.6%) of the respondents may not be taught what the God's closeness feel like in the family, or they only felt God's closeness in negative situations.

Eighth, the respondents' perceptions toward their spirituality in terms of experiencing God guiding me show that that the respondents from Qingdao, China67.6% chose have experienced God guiding me, 26.5% chose neutrality, and 0.06% chose I have not experienced God guiding me. The finding indicates that 67.6% of the children have experience God's presence and had a closer relationship with God than those chose negative and neutrality respondents; 17.6% of the respondents were not sure they have experienced, and 0.06% of the children have not experienced God guiding them.

Ninth, the respondents' perceptions toward their spirituality in terms of loving to worship God at home show that 70.6% of the respondents chose love worshiping God at home, and 29.4% of the respondents chose neutrality. The findings indicate that 70.6% of the children love worshiping God at home, and 29.4% of the children indicated sometimes worshiping God at home.

Tenth, the strength of the relationship between the variables of a sense of belonging and spirituality for the respondents is slight positive with Pearson (r=.3393). The finding indicates that the respondents' perception of their spirituality is weakly related to their sense of belonging in the family. Therefore, null hypothesis 1 which says "there would be no correlation between the variables of the sense of belonging in the families and spirituality of the children" is rejected for this current study. The study statistically describes there was slight positive relationship between the variables of sense of belonging and spirituality for the respondents in this study who came from Qingdao, China.

Eleventh, the strength of the relationship between the variables of parental model and spirituality for the respondents is slight positive with Pearson (r=.3242). It demonstrates that the respondents' perception of their spirituality in the family is weakly related to their perception of their level of their parental model. The correlation between these two variables is slight positive and indicates that null hypothesis 2 which says "there would be no correlation between the variables of modelling by parents in the families and spirituality of the children" is rejected for this current study. The study statistically describes that there was slight positive correlation between the variables of parental model and spirituality for the respondents in this study who came from Qingdao, China.

Twelfth, the strength of the relationship between the variables of biblical instruction and spirituality for the respondents is moderate positive with Pearson (r=.4697). The finding indicates that the respondents' perception of their spirituality in the family is moderately positive related to their perception of their biblical instruction. The study statistically describes that the correlation between the variables of biblical instruction and spirituality is moderate positive for the respondents who

participated in this study. Therefore, null hypothesis 3 which says "there would be no correlation between the variables of biblical instruction in the families and spirituality of the children" is rejected in this study.

Thirteenth, the strength of the relationship between the variables of freedom to make personal choice and spirituality for the respondents is slight positive with Pearson (r=2827). The finding demonstrates that the respondents' perception of their spirituality in the family is weakly related to their perception of exercising personal choice. The study statistically describes that the correlation between the variables of exercising personal choice and spirituality is slight positive for the respondents from Qingdao, China who participated in this study. Therefore, null hypothesis 4 which says "there would be no correlation between the variables of exercising personal choice in the families and spirituality of the children" is also rejected in this study.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn: first: the respondents had positive perceptions toward their family in terms of their sense of belonging, biblical instruction, and freedom to make personal choice. Second, the respondents perceived lower positive perceptions toward their parental model (share together often, talk together often, listen to each other often, have family worship often, and have family gaming time often) in their families. Statistically the findings demonstrated that their parents do not share with them often, talk together often, listen to each other often, have family worship time often, and have family gaming time.

I believe that many Chinese Christian churches and parents have limited understanding on children's spirituality. This study found out that there was a slight positive correlation between the respondents' perceptions of their sense of belonging,

parental model, exercising personal choice in the family and their level of their spirituality; and a moderate positive correlation between the respondents' perceptions of their biblical instruction in the family and their level of spirituality. Children's spirituality is indeed influenced by their sense of belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice in the family.

<div align="center">

Children's Perceptions of Their Families in Terms of
the Processes that Nurture Faith
</div>

The study investigated the children's perceptions of their families in terms of the processes that nurture faith. Specifically, it concentrated on children's perceptions toward their sense of belong, parental model, biblical instruction and exercising personal choice. The findings reveal that children had positive perceptions toward their sense of belonging, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice in the family. However, they had lower positive perceptions toward their parental model which demonstrates children's spirituality less shaped by their parental model than other three variables.

Children's perception of the parental model was measured by five characteristics: sharing together, talking together, listen to each other, and family gaming time. Statistically the study describes the sample as having no strong positive perception toward children's perception of their parental model, but the finding is still significant for the impact of modelling on children is extremely powerful.

<div align="center">

Children's Perceptions of Their Spirituality
</div>

The children's spirituality was examined by focusing on their perceptions toward loving God, talking to God, feeling God close to me, experiencing God guiding me, and loving to worship God at home. Statistically the study describes that majority of the children had positive perceptions toward these five variables of their

spirituality. It demonstrates that the children love God, talk to God, feel God's

closeness, experience God's presences in the flow of their daily lives.

Recommendations

This research has recommendations to the church, to the parents, and

recommendations for further study.

Recommendations to the Church

First, since the study found out that children have a lower positive perception

toward their spirituality in terms of their parental model, the church can encourage

parents to act as Christian models to their children. The church may do this through

preaching, special seminars on effective parenting, and other related programs that

can be sustainable.

Second, there is a need for the church to have a heightened awareness on the

importance of childhood and the spiritual life in the home. Children are now

becoming the persons they will be and are laying the foundations on which to build

life and faith. They are being formed through what they experience in their homes,

schools, and the faith community, which is the church. We must not be satisfied with

giving them one or two lessons a week in formal Christian education settings. The

formation of children must embrace the family and the school as well as the church.[152]

Third, churches have a responsibility to equip parents to be spiritual leaders in

the family and also nurture the faith of children through building sense of belonging,

modelling, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice. The church may

conduct seminars on the role of the parents in the nurture of children by using the

framework of Lawrence Richards. Furthermore, the church can also nurture children

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[152] Stonehouse, *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey.*, 62-3.

by helping the family engage more on biblical instruction by providing special "Take Home" sheets, for example in such a way that both the home and the church are united in the nurture of children.

Finally, the church as faith community should equip parents to be spiritual leaders in the family so that children's spirituality could be formed through daily life. To support the family in its spiritual vocation, churches need to identify and make available good resources on child rearing, home worship, prayer, ritual, seasonal celebration, family retreats, service opportunities, and other practices fitting to family spiritual development.[153]

Recommendations to the Equipping of Parents

First, according to the findings, children have a lower positive perception toward their spirituality in terms of their parental model, so there is a need for parents to be aware that the family is a place of parental teaching and child learning. Parents need to have regular family bonding time to be intimate with their children. Deuteronomy 6 describes the Israelite home was indeed an educational institution– a place of parental teaching and of child learning. Second, based on the findings of this current study, the parents should teach and nurture their children how to grow in faith through building relationship with and experiencing God in prayer. Third, parents must assume the main responsibility for the spiritual formation of their children. Fourth, the parents must share God's stories, or help their children live out God's stories in their lives. Fifth, based on the findings of this current study, the parents should help their children experience and celebrate God's presence in the family, maybe not on a daily basis but at least, they will have regular have family worship

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[153] Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center*, 141.

with their children through family bonding time. Finally, based on the findings, the parents should provide ample opportunities for children to practice their faith by exercising personal choice in the family.

Recommendations for Further Study

I believe that there is a need for further study on the following related issues:

a. Relationship between children's spirituality and the church in terms of sense of belonging, modelling, biblical instruction, and exercising personal choice to the faith community in China;

b. Relationship between children's spirituality and their grandparents' life involvement in China;

c. A qualitative study on the perceived influence the church upon parenting in China;

d. A qualitative study on how the churches are nurturing the faith of children in China; and

e. A quantitative study on the differences of the self-perceptions of spirituality between boys and girls.

APPENDIX A

Letter to the Parents of the Respondents

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary
Ortigas Avenue Extension, Kaytikling, Taytay, Rizal

Dear Parents ;

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

I am Yingzi Piao, one of the students in Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. I am in the process of earning my Master of Arts in Religious Education with concentration on Holistic Child Development. The title of my thesis is "THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY UPON SPIRITUALITY AMONG SELECTED CHILDREN FROM QINGDAO CHINA" The main focus of this study is to find out the eight-to-twelve- year-old children's perception upon the processes that facilitate the growth of faith, namely, a sense of belonging, parental model, biblical instruction, exercising personal choice, in correlation to their spirituality.

I am requesting your permission to conduct survey research with your children. The completed questionnaires will be coded, thus, no children's names will be written so privacy and confidentiality will be ensured. If you would grant permission for your child to participate, please allow him to be at the church Sunday School on March 2, 2014 by 9:30am. Your child has the right to withdraw his or her answers from the study until March 8, 2014. The questionnaires will be collected and sealed in an envelope to be scanned to me. The teachers administrating the survey will not see the individual responses.

I hope this study will enhance the spiritual growth of your child by providing helpful insights for you as Christian parents. I humbly request for your support and I am looking forward to your favourable reply. Thank you so much for your kind consideration and support.

Sincerely yours,
Piao, Yingzi

Please sign below if you are will to allow your son / daughter to respond in this study.
Signature
Printed Name
Date

亚太拿撒勒神学院
尊敬的各位家长;

主内平安!

　　我叫朴英子，是亚太拿撒勒神学院的一名学生。我现在就读于基督教教育学的儿童全面发展教育专业。我的论文题目是"孩子们对家庭的感知，与属灵成长的关系"。这次论文的目的是找出8-12岁的孩子们对家庭的感知与属灵成长的关系，主要针对家庭归属感、父母的榜样、圣经指导、个人选择和属灵状态方面进行调查。

　　在此，我请求各位家长允许我和您的孩子一起完成这次调查。为确保孩子们的个人隐私安全问题，孩子们的名字不会显示在问卷调查上。如果您同意您的孩子参加这次得调查研究，请允许你的孩子于2014年3月2日9:30在教会的主日学集合。您的孩子有权不参加这次问卷调查截止到2014年2月份的第四个周日。这份问卷调查结果将会收集起来一起密封后转交给我本人。监督的老师们也不会看到个人的调查结果。

　　我希望通过为基督教父母提供有利的见解，这次的调查将会提高孩子们的属灵成长教育。在此我谦卑的等待您的回复。谢谢您的理解和大力支持。

　　此致
敬礼!

朴英子

如果你愿意让您的儿子/女儿参加这次问卷调查，请在下面签字。
签字:
正体:
日期:

APPENDIX B附件B

QUESTIONNAIRE（问卷调查）

Coded Name编号

Circle the correct answer.圈上适合你的正确答案

1. What is your gender?你的性别　Girl（女）　　Boy（男）

2. When were you born?你几岁了？ 8　9　10　11　12

DESCRIPTION OF THE NURTURE IN YOUR FAMILY对家庭的描述

A Sense of Belonging
家庭归属感

Not LovedOOOLoved
不被爱 O　OO被爱

Not Respected　OOO　Respected
不被尊重 O　O　O 被尊重

Not HonoredOOOHonored
不被尊敬　O　O　O　被尊敬

Not Accepted OOO Accepted
不被接受 O　OO被接受

Not Feel BelongingOOO Feel Belonging
没有归属感　O　O　O　有归属感

Parental Model
父母的榜样

Don'tShareTogether OOOShare Together Often
不一起分享OOO经常分享

Don't Talk Together OOO Talk Together Often
不在一起聊天O OO经常一起聊天

Don't Listen to Each Other OOO Listen to Each Other Often
彼此不倾听对方的话 O OO经常倾听对方的话

Don'tHave Family Worship O OO Have Family Worship Often
没有家庭敬拜时间O OO经常有家庭敬拜时间

Don't Have Family Gaming Time O OO Have Family Gaming Time Often
没有家庭游戏时间O OO经常有家庭游戏时间

Biblical Instruction
圣经指导

DonotPrayOOOPray Often
不祷告OOO经常祷告

Do not Forgive Others OOO Forgive Others Often
不饶恕人O OO经常饶恕人

Do not Tell Bible StoriesOOO Tell Bible Stories Often
不讲圣经故事O OO经常讲圣经故事

Do not Talk about Bible StoriesOOOTalk about Bible Stories Often
不讨论圣经故事O OO经常讨论圣经故事

Do not Share of Thoughtson Story O OOShare of Thoughts on Story
不分享对故事的想法O OO分享对故事的想法

Personal Choice
个人选择

Don't Have Chances to make a Choice OOO Have Chances to Make a Choice
没有机会自己做选择OOO有机会自己做选择

Don't Give Any Options O OO Give Some Options
不提供任何选择做参考OOO提供一些选择做参考

Don't Encourage to Make DecisionsAlone OOOEncourage to Make Decisions Alone
不鼓励自己做决定 O OO鼓励自己做决定

Don't Have Right to Decide OOO Have Right to Decide
没有权力自己决定O OO有权力自己决定

Don't Teach to Take Responsibility O OOTeach to Take Responsibility
不教育对自己的选择负责任O OO教育要对自己的选择负责任

Spirituality
属灵状态

I Don't Love God OOOI Love God
我不爱神OOO我爱神

I Don't Talk to God OOOI Talk to God Often
我不向神祷告OOO我经常向神祷告

I Don't Feel God Close to Me OOOI Feel God Close to Me Often
我不亲近神OOO我亲近神

I Don't Experience God Guiding Me OOOIOften Experience God Guiding Me
我没有经历过神的带领OOO我经常经历神的带领

I Don't Enjoy Worshipping God O OOI Enjoy Worshipping God
at Homeat Home
我不喜欢在家敬拜赞美主 O OO我喜欢在家敬拜赞美主

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CURRICULUM VITA

Name:	Yingzi Piao
Date of Birth:	February 23, 1983
Place of Birth:	Heilongjiang Province, China
Civil Status:	Married

Educational Attainment

Elementary:	No.4 Elementary School, Jidong Town, Heilongjiang Province, China
Middle School:	No.4 Middle School, Jidong Town, Heilongjiang Province, China
High School:	Dongfang High School, Jixi City, Heilongjiang Province, China
University:	Heilongjiang University, Haerbin, Heilongjiang Province, China
Seminary:	Northeast Theological Seminary

Work experience

Sunday School Teacher:	Love China Fellowship, Makati City, Philippines. (2011-2013)
Awesome Kids	Teacher: Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (2011)
Sunday School Teacher:	Minlian Church, Shenyang, China (2010-2011)
Youth Leader:	Qingdao First Church, Qingdao, China (2009-2010)
Business Manager:	Global Real Estate Inc., (2007-2009)
Production Chief:	Qinglin Xiangbao Inc., (2005-2007)
Office:	Fuhao Group (2003-2005)