

2023-2024

UPDATE



cff

*CENTER FOR
FAITH & FAMILY*

at Olivet Nazarene University

A Successful Inaugural Year



THESE ARE EXCITING DAYS at the Center for Faith & Family.

We have completed our first year of striving to provide practical resources to help parents and caregivers pass their faith to their children.

The Christian Parenting Initiative, which was funded through a generous grant from Lilly Endowment and is the focus of the Center, has completed initial research, developed several podcast series, and is now in the process of developing small group curriculum.

I am grateful to those who have supported this project from the very beginning, including the Olivet administration, faculty and staff, as well as individuals from the community. I am especially thankful for the following individuals who have dedicated many hours to the success of this work: Dr. Mark Frisius, Dr. Lance Kilpatrick, Dr. Kristian Veit and Pastor Lindsey Bush. I feel incredibly fortunate to have academic experts in a host of relevant fields to work alongside.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve as director of the Center and to live out my life's passion for helping parents and caregivers pass their faith to their children.

We are better together.

*Leon Blanchette, Ed.D.
Director, Center for Faith and Family*

Looking Ahead to Year Two

What is the background and purpose of this significant grant?

“The grant from Lilly Endowment to establish the Center for Faith & Family (CFF) officially launched in January 2023, so the project has been up and running for just over a year now. After a \$50,000 award for the initial research and planning stage, the major grant of \$1 million plus an additional \$250,000 was awarded to support the study and resourcing of parents educating their children in the Christian faith.

Over the five-year life of the grant, the goal is developing research-based tools and curriculum to equip Christian parents in passing on their faith to their children.”

Tell us about the podcast.



“The Faith Together podcast explores topics related to parenting and faith — from the history of teaching in the early Christian Church to Advent traditions to share at home to aspects of self-care for healthy parenting.”

How has your background in scholarship, ministry and education equipped you for this work?

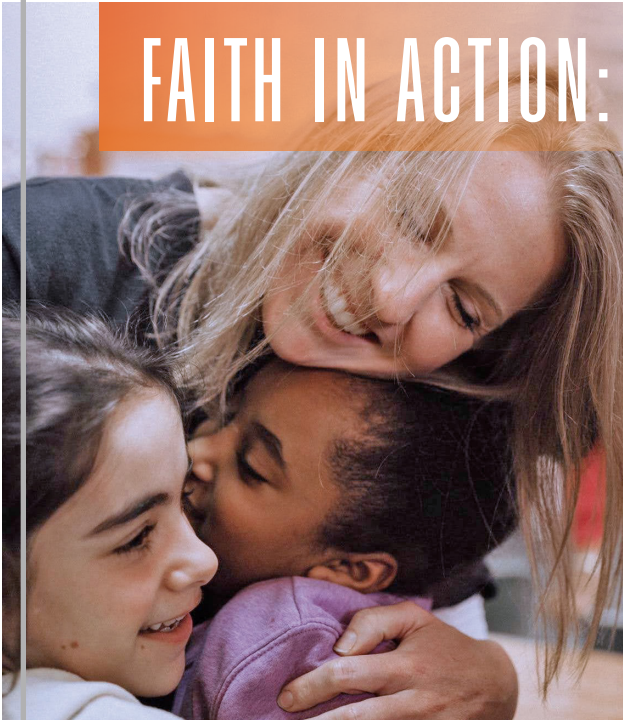
“My published research on methods and issues in children's ministry, as well as 40 years of children's ministry experience, have prepared me to serve God in new and rewarding ways through this project.”

What are the next steps for the Center?

“In the coming year, our goal is to continue cultivating relationships with our local churches and listening to parents as needs are shared.

In the next phase of the project, we will focus on developing online curriculum that will be made available for small groups to help equip parents and caregivers to confidently pass their faith to their children.”

FAITH IN ACTION: THE WORK AND IMPACT OF THE CENTER



It is our hope that this project will give parents and caregivers the confidence and support they need to make a significant spiritual difference in the lives of their children, thereby impacting the entire family.

GRANT ACTIVITIES

The Faith Together podcast began airing on October 15, 2023, to provide practical tools to help parents and caregivers pass their faith to their children.

The development of a curriculum template has been completed. This online curriculum is seen as the heart of the project and will continue to be developed as a training instrument for parents and caregivers.

A website (centerff.com) has been developed that houses the podcast, and general information about CFF and its initiative, and will serve as the location for our online curriculum.



REFLECTION

The research examined the catechetical process of early Christians to determine how they taught the principles of the faith (theological concerns) and how to live out those principles (praxis concerns) within an apathetic and even antagonistic society. We believe that there are principles of faith that can be learned from this period and contemporized with American culture in the 21st Century.

Study of the literature continued to confirm what we already know; that parents are the most significant influence on their child's spiritual development. Literature affirms that faith is more caught than taught (formally), therefore, the everyday moments in the life of a family are among the most important influences.

Faith can be understood as a "three-legged stool" comprised of cognitive (mind or head), relational (heart), and volitional (hands or lifestyle) components. This is sometimes referred to as "know, be, do." As we consider how best to pass faith to our children, these three elements must be considered to develop a strong, lasting faith in our children.

PROJECT PURPOSE

Christian faith can be learned and taught simultaneously. The skills that are developed will give parents confidence that what they are teaching their children is making a spiritual difference in their lives.

In the short term, parents and caregivers will be able to immediately implement the training they receive.

In the long term, the project will bring attention to the need for parents and caregivers to be intentional about passing faith to their children.

Through the Christian Parenting Initiative, Olivet is working with local churches and district leadership to train parents on how to teach and practice Christian faith with their children.



COMMUNICATION

The primary form of communication with our parents and caregivers, our constituents, and others who may be interested in our work has been through our podcasts. In addition to our podcasts, workshops and training sessions have been conducted and the work we are doing has been communicated in several printed and online articles.

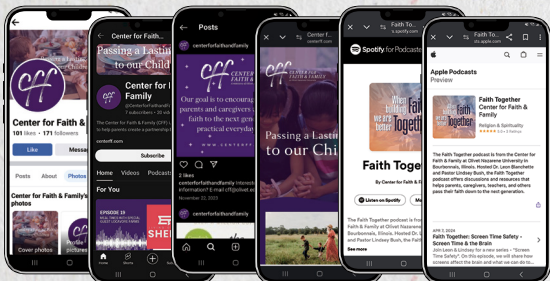
IMPACT

In the first two and a half months of the podcast, there have been 150 followers on Facebook, 21 followers on Instagram, and 17 subscribers to our website.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps in the project include the ongoing development of the podcast, the creation of an online curriculum, engagement with 100 families in the use of the curriculum in a longitudinal study, and training of pastors and church leaders to use the curriculum in small groups.

Expanding the Reach in 2023



FACEBOOK

9,500 Reached — *times our content has been seen*

1,240 Profile Visits — *times our page or profile was visited*

150 Followers — *people who signed up to see our content*

YOUTUBE

455 Impressions — *times our video thumbnails were shown*

35 Total Views — *times our videos have been viewed*

3 Subscribers — *people who signed up to see our content*

WEBSITE

760 Visits — *times anyone has visited the site*

440 Unique Visitors — *how many individuals have visited the site*

17 Email Subscribers — *people who signed up to see our content*

INSTAGRAM

45 Reached — *times our content has been suggested*

73 Profile Visits — *times our page or profile was visited*

21 Followers — *people who signed up to see our content*

PODCAST

768 All-time Plays

21 Audience Size — *on average*

19 Impressions — *last 7 days on Spotify*

811 Followers — *last 30 days on Spotify*

26 Plays — *Oct. 1–Dec. 1, 2023*



THE FAITH TOGETHER PODCAST

Tune in for
**engaging discussions and
invaluable resources**

Led by Dr. Leon Blanchette and Pastor Lindsey Bush, the Faith Together podcast is aimed at helping parents, caregivers, teachers and others pass their faith to the next generation.



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