

**2016 Research Week Proposal Instructions and Template**  
**Posters and Presentations**

**Proposal**

**Title** - Spiritual Attitudes and Values in Young Children

**Program of Study** – Psychology

**Presentation Type** – PowerPoint

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**Category:** Experimental (Basic)

**Abstract:** Research measuring the development of spirituality within children is scarce, even though research evaluating spirituality levels in adults is not difficult to obtain. Research has shown that spirituality is an important function of a child's social, emotional, and personal development. Nevertheless, minimal research exists on spiritual attitudes and values in young children. This study examined children's development and spirituality using a modified version of the Attitudes and Values Questionnaire (AVQ). The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) developed the AVQ with dimensions of Conscience, Compassion, Social Growth, Emotional Growth, Service to Others, Commitment to God, and Commitment to Jesus. Commitment to God and Commitment to Jesus were optional dimensions later added by ACER

to focus specifically on Christian principles. Following permission from ACER to adapt the AVQ for younger children, researchers contacted family members and various Christian schools in their home states across the eastern United States and asked if they would be willing to administer the modified AVQ to their students. The AVQ was modified using the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale to allow for better question comprehension for the children, aged 5-14, completing the questionnaire. The intention was to expand upon knowledge about young children's attitudes and values related to Christian spirituality. Specifically, the researchers were trying to find if there were relationships among children's view of self, view of others, and spirituality. Correlations were run in order to determine if different dimensions, specifically the social growth dimensions and the Christian dimensions, were significantly related. A correlation chart compared all variables. The results indicated that there were strong correlations among all five dimensions.

**Christian worldview integration:** Spirituality from a Christian perspective is more than just a personal quest for meaning. It is more than just an inner process that allows for an opening to the sacred aspect of knowledge. Understanding spirituality comes from a place of desiring a deeper connection with God. When people have a relationship with the Creator, there is not only a change of mind, but a complete change of inner being. Through a Basic research design, the researchers kept in mind that the most essential aspect of spirituality from this worldview is Jesus Christ. By using the AVQ to measure social, moral, and spiritual development within children from ages 5 to 14, the researchers were able to determine whether children have the ability to hold responsibility for their decisions, but also look at their level of spirituality and commitment to God and Jesus. Although the topic of spirituality must be operationalized due to

its abstract concept, measuring social dimensions including conscience, compassion, emotional growth, social growth, and service to others can help open proper dialogue for further questions concerning God and Jesus. This specific study was concerned as to whether there is a correlation among these five dimensions and spirituality. Since these dimensions show consistency, the researchers can infer that children are in a place where social development and emotional maturity can correlate with spirituality. With the combination of these five social dimensions and commitment to God and Jesus, the researchers conducted this study with the total knowledge that Jesus plays a role in every aspect of an individual's life in a way that surpasses the idea of religion being the only link to Him.

This research gives a view into the attitudes and values of young children and adolescents. The understanding of the attitudes and values of future generations can allow for educated predictions on the future state of the country and its global interactions. Seeing the status of their moral compass can also show places where society has or has not been successful in providing proper moral instruction.