

## Religion 20 - Ethics: Contemporary Discipleship II

### *What Challenges Your Faith in a Complex World?*

Our faith formation program in Grades 9 - 12 is designed to engage students on a deeper level regarding who they are in God's story. This is a very personal journey of discovery for each student as they "*Learn, to shape God's world.*" While it isn't always a comfortable or easy journey, it is a significant one as they are asked to research biblically, think critically, and love God, others, and His creation *more*.

#### WHAT IS IT?

**Contemporary Discipleship II - *What Challenges Your Faith in a Complex World*** explores current and sometimes controversial topics through a series of presentations and mentored dialogues. Students are provided with a Christian framework for understanding the significance of the topic before other source materials or ideas - both biblical and secular - are added to the discussion. Each student's personal points of reference - their reading of the Bible, their parents' and churches' perspectives - are expected to be brought into the review process. In the end, students are asked to reflect on what they learned about themselves, others, and their Christian faith through the exploration of the topic.

#### WHY DO WE HAVE THIS COURSE?

Facing contemporary social, political, and ethical questions head-on in a safe and caring environment is part of our secondary school experience based on three lessons:

1. High School students express an explicit and authentic desire to explore topics that are or will affect them going forward. In a 2017 CCS survey, they specifically stated: "*We want more space to discuss topics that are important to us!*" Quite frankly, in most cases, they are already engaged in dialogue on these topics with peers and social media. Our intent at CCS is to provide a biblically-based format to shape these discussions in the context of faith.
2. CCS Alumni have repeatedly told us that they wish Christian high school had better prepared them for the discussions, challenges, and topics they encountered in university and in their daily lives.
3. Research shows that a previous lack of intentional engagement on topics of social, moral, or religious significance by Christian adults with young people has contributed to the decline of current generations identifying with the church or the Christian faith. At CCS, we believe it is important that we engage students in these crucial conversations *before* graduation in an attempt to reverse this trend.<sup>1</sup>

More than comparing and contrasting details or perspectives, the process in our Contemporary Discipleship class directs students to delve deeper into the Bible and their Church's traditions,

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<sup>1</sup> The Barna Group: <https://www.barna.com/research/six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church/>

encourages conversations at home and at Church, and challenges them to faithfully follow Jesus in our complex world. You can read more about the process and see some feedback [here](#).

### **WHAT WILL OUR TOPICS BE?**

Students will be involved in selecting the topics for conversation - and what they choose probably won't be too surprising to parents. Most will be drawn from headlines, sermons, chats with friends, family experiences, social media posts, and personal curiosities. Suffice to say, students through today's personal technology, are bombarded with information at an unprecedented level. Getting them to think about and address these topics within the framework of our Christian identity is the challenging goal before us.

Topics in previous classes have included (but are not limited to): Creation & Evolution; Abortion; Welfare; Divorce; Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity (SOGI); Women in Church Office; Sex, Purity & Marriage, etc. This is by no means a complete, limited, or exhaustive list.

***Parents and guardians will be made aware of the schedule of topics for the class. If they do not wish their student to participate in a particular discussion, alternate activities will be provided for their student during the correlating class periods covering the topic.***

### **HOW WILL CLASS DISCUSSIONS BE HANDLED?**

We recognize that CCS is a diverse Christian community, made up of more than 125 congregations representing dozens of denominations and many independent churches. As students begin to engage these topics from their distinct traditions, it will become apparent that not everyone thinks or responds alike. As part of mentoring and monitoring a safe space for personal expression and constructive dialogue, our instructors will prioritize mutual respect between participants. This includes their language, behaviour, questions, and other expressions. Our objective will be to guide students carefully through the process so that they can come to think critically, live by the power of the Holy Spirit, and articulate a position that is rooted in the Bible.

These guided and practiced discussions are shaped by our school's learning goals to be highly relational, rigorous, and relevant. goals of strengthening relationships and being both rigorous and relevant. Most importantly, we believe this approach will prepare students to talk and work with others - whether Christians or not - in ways that demonstrate their abilities to:

1. Root their thinking in the Bible
2. Respect diverse opinions
3. Reflect God's image in their living

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

The course occurs on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons along with alternating Friday sessions. It is taught by our Director of Faith Formation and supervised by Jadan Barthel.

### **FINALLY...**

As you can see, this engagement strategy is a process rather than a single destination. Please pray for us as we partner with home and Church to make disciples. If you have any encouragement, questions or concerns please email [info@calgarychristianschool.com](mailto:info@calgarychristianschool.com).