

## Children's Spirituality

A discussion series at St. Barnabas Anglican Church  
95 Lorne Ave., St. Lambert



My name is Rhonda Waters and I am a theology student, currently studying at McGill University and doing a practicum at St. Barnabas Anglican Church in St. Lambert. I am also a mother. In fact, I became a mother only six weeks after I became a theology student so my experience of the one is wrapped up in my experience of the other. As a result, I have spent a lot of time thinking about the spirituality of parenting and how my new identity as a mother has changed how I understand God. As my son, Gilbert, has gotten older, however, I have started to wonder more about *his* spirituality.

Gilbert was born just over two years ago and, of course, life for my husband, Thomas, and I was changed forever. Our time was no longer our own. Our sleep, our meals, our comfort all took the back seat to Gilbert's. While there was certainly a period of adjustment, we've managed to get it (mostly) sorted out. We know how to make sure Gilbert is fed and clothed. We're generally successful at making sure he gets enough sleep and enough cuddles and enough independence and enough stimulation. But it has become increasingly obvious that Gilbert is doing something much more.

I am sometimes overwhelmed by the sensation of being studied by a very small and very dedicated scientist. I am being observed not only to discover how to use a fork or express frustration or interact with the bus driver but, more deeply, I am being observed to discover how to be fully, healthfully, beautifully human. This is an awesome responsibility and one that bears more careful attention.

The question of how to be fully human is, I think, at the centre of the church's observance of the season of Lent. You may be familiar with traditions about giving up sweets or alcohol or other indulgences but Lent is really about taking time to focus on God and our relationship to God. We are invited to notice the holiness that surrounds us, affirm what is truly good and important, and also acknowledge our failings and weaknesses. This Lent, I invite you to spend some time reflecting on the spiritual lives of our children and how we might be able to help them in their efforts to figure out how to be human.

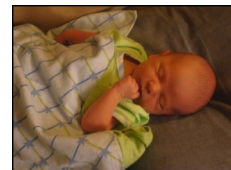


My friend and colleague, the Rev'd Jennifer Bourque, will join us in this three-part series. As a chaplain at the Montreal Children's Hospital, Jen has encountered the diverse spiritualities of many children and their families. With her help, we will discuss our understandings of our own spirituality and the spirituality of our children, ways in which we can nurture a healthy spirituality, and ways to draw on those spiritual resources to support our children and our families during times of change and crisis as well as in our daily lives together.

We will meet at **St. Barnabas Anglican Church, 95 Lorne Ave, St. Lambert** from **3:00pm-5:00pm**.

Feel free to sign up for the whole series or one at a time:

- \* **Sunday, March 7** (RSVP by March 6)
- \* **Sunday, March 14** (RSVP by March 13)
- \* **Sunday, March 21** (RSVP by March 20)



**Babysitting and a light supper will be provided.**

To RSVP or to get more information, please email or call me  
rhonda.waters@mail.mcgill.ca or 514-842-5074