

CHILDSPIRIT 2002 CONFERENCE

PRESENTATION SUMMARIES

& PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Videotapes of most sessions are available as indicated on the order form (above)

Dr. Hanan Alexander

Constructing Children's Spirituality: A Shared Vision of Citizenship

What does it mean that so many today are on a "spiritual quest?" What would it mean to find it? This talk concerns itself with visions of the good and the answer to the spiritual quest. This talk makes the following claims: First, that we need to construct a vision of the good that is ethical, holistic, pragmatic, and synthetic. Second, that education has a significant role to play in helping children articulate a vision of the good life, but it must be massively reconceived.

This talk also addresses the question: "How should communities cultivate visions of the good life?" Answering this question will help the children of the future live in a world of diversity and difference without forcing them to turn their backs on their own faith traditions.

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Dr. Martin Ashley

Faith and Fatalism: Deep Beliefs of Children in the Risk Society

That the present generation of children is growing up in a risk society has been well documented and much discussed since the publication of Ulrich Beck's seminal work in 1992. That there is a spiritual dimension to this has been perhaps less widely considered. The context for this talk is that of environmental sustainability, a topic which has received much coverage during 2002, the year of the Johannesburg Earth Summit.

Martin Ashley, Ph.D.
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P.M.H. Atwater
Children's Near Death Experience

This talk, given by the researcher and author of *Children of the New Millennium: Children's Near-Death Experience*, discusses in detail both the characteristics of children's near-death experience and what deeper implications these have for our larger world-view.

This talk introduces the four types of near-death experience (initial experience or "non-experience", unpleasant and/or hell-like experience, pleasant and/or heaven-like experience, and transcendent experience), it gives tips on what to look for with child experiencers of near-death, and discusses "brain shift" - the transformation of consciousness that can result from any number of other worldly occurrences such as near death experience. The phases of integration that most experiencers go through as well as the major physiological and psychological changes which manifest as a result of a brain shift are also discussed.

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Nancy Baumgarten
A Subtle Energy Tool Box for Raising Multi-Dimensional Children

Both physics and metaphysics describe a world of subtle energy—whether characterized as vibration or consciousness. This workshop explores the relationship between consciousness and matter and describes the conscious use of subtle energy in child rearing. Many children are naturally aware of this subtle energy connection. With guidance, the structure of basic metaphysics, and various exercises, they can develop both an understanding and capacity of working with energy. Through experiences in raising her own daughter and through helping many others through the psykids.net website, Nancy will describe the five common difficulties that parents face in raising multi-dimensionally aware children and subtle-energy tools that parents can use in working with their children.

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Richard Beall
Consciousness-Based Education

From South Africa to Skelmersdale, England, from Taiwan to Iowa, in schools and after-school programs around the world, the innovative approach of Consciousness-Based education is providing holistic development of consciousness for students and teachers alike, featuring the Transcendental Meditation technique. This talk explores the nature of human consciousness, how it can be systematically unfolded in a school setting, the research results from its implementation, and the paradigm shifts from a Consciousness-Based perspective on education.

Co-presenters include Dr. Vernon Barnes, a widely published Research Scientist at the Georgia Prevention Institute at the Medical College of Georgia, Augusta and Marya Michael, who has been an elementary school teacher in VA and MD for 25 years, who has created school-wide peacemaker and teacher renewal programs, and who is currently an instructor of the Transcendental Meditation program in Arlington, VA.

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Dr. Jerome Berryman
A Key Element in Spirituality's Non-Verbal Nature:
Play, Pseudo-Play, & Grace

Play is common to mammals, big-brained birds and, perhaps, other species. Pseudo-play is common to humankind, because of our unique language development and is dangerous for the continuation of our species. When we become over-dependent on verbal communication the misrepresentation of play is possible, because the nonverbal system is overwhelmed. Grace is the term used by theology to indicate the shift from pseudo-play to play. This shift cannot be forced any more than play can be. It happens. How? Why? Whether or not one uses the term "grace" to indicate this shift, the experience is fundamental to human spirituality and is the focus of this talk and discussion.

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Carol Bowman
Children's Past Lives

Children's past life memories are a natural phenomenon. It happens all the time. Very young children, some as young as two, make spontaneous statements about a past life. The families are convinced the statements are genuine because the children reveal information they couldn't have possibly learned any other way. And they sometimes exhibit behaviors, such as phobias, that correspond exactly to the past life statements. Children's past life memories can be found in all parts of the world and in all cultures. Their appearance is not affected by the family's religious beliefs because many of these children are from families that do not believe in reincarnation.

It can happen to any one. But most people don't see it even when it happens right under their noses. They don't know that children's past life memories are possible and so they don't know what to look for. If they do see it in their child, they worry that it's too weird, don't know how to respond to their child, and are afraid to mention it to anyone outside the family. This talk, based on Carol's book, *Children's Past Lives* will help explain these memories and explore how to work with them.

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Richard C. Brown
***A Buddhist Perspective on the Spiritual Development,
Child Rearing and Education of Children***

In this talk, using a Shambhala Buddhist text, *The Education of the Warrior*, by Chogyam Trungpa, a few dimensions of children's spiritual development, child rearing, and education are explored. What do we mean by the spiritual nature of the child? How can we nurture those qualities? How can we honor both the child's individuality and her interconnection to the basic ground of being? What changes can we make in our communities, schools, and homes to foster spiritual unfolding in children?

This talk explores the Buddhist practices of mindfulness, awareness, and loving-kindness to glimpse how we can embody these spiritual qualities as teachers and parents and so more genuinely serve children.

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Litany Burns
The Sixth Sense of Children

Children have innate intuitive or psychic capacities. Drawing her new book, *The Sixth Sense of Children*, Litany helps parents and others identify their children's natural intuitive abilities and provides simple exercises to help nurture their development.

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Dr. Sonia Choquette
The Wise Child: Nurturing Children's Intuition

This talk, given by master intuitive and author of numerous best selling books including *The Wise Child: A Spiritual Guide to Nurturing Your Child's Intuition*, helps us to realize our own personal sixth sense endowment and learn ways to foster it within the children in our lives. This talk insists that with the onset of recent changes in the world we live in, using our intuition is, "no longer optional. Working with and strengthening our intuition is becoming more and more fundamental to our ability to live harmoniously with ourselves and others in the new world order."

The process of nurturing children's intuition depends upon three stages. In the first stage, *Expanding Your Awareness*, we find that the key to our sixth sense, our intuition, is to first become aware that it even exists. By sharpening and expanding our awareness, this sixth sense can be found in something as simple as realizing how you feel when you're around certain people, or in sensing when your children or family are in trouble. The second stage is *Embracing Intuition*, which simply means accepting intuition once it shows up in your life. "You must decide to trust the guidance you receive from your 'inner teacher,' accepting its counsel as a welcome influence in your life and your home." The final stage is *Asking for Support*, in which one helps children ask for guidance and teaches kids how to wonder and pray. For we each have angels, guides, and teachers available to help us through life, and we can teach our children how to connect with these beings.

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Pam Chubbuck
Woman Spirit: Teaching and Celebrating Young Women Coming of Age

Girls need much more than biological information about the profound changes they go through at puberty. They need teachings for their minds, bodies, and souls. A young woman's first blood, when treated with celebration, ritual and love, can alter the course of her entire life for the better.

Girls need nourishment for their hearts and spirits in order to grow to be emotionally and physically healthy young women. To help girls feel good about themselves, we need to celebrate them and be joyful about their lives. Create ceremony for yourself, or help your daughter, granddaughter or any young woman by creating celebration and ritual around the time of First Blood. This talk introduces a menarche myth describing woman's bleeding time as a gift from the Great Spirit.

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Kate Durda
Shamanism: Entering the World of the Shaman

Shamanism is an ancient and powerful spiritual practice utilized throughout history and still today to restore spiritual and physical health and obtain self-knowledge. The Shaman enters the world of the spirit through the shamanic journey, allowing him/her to alter consciousness, and access the spiritual plane. The Shamanic Journey has been called one of the, "most remarkable visionary methods used by humankind to explore the hidden universe otherwise known mainly through myth and dream." This spiritual practice is accessible to all, and possible for everyone to experience.

This talk gives both historical and scientific information about Shamanism and the altered states experienced in 'journeying'. In addition, this talk guides listeners to personally experience "how to enter the spiritual plane, or 'non-ordinary reality'" - the place of spiritual guidance and healing. The hope is that a powerful spiritual connection can be generated to help offer further insight into doing work with helping to heal children. Lastly, cross-cultural material will be presented regarding shamanism and children.

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Dr. James J. Dillon
The Role of the Child in Adult Spiritual Development

This talk provides theoretical and empirical support for the view that children play a large and often under-appreciated role in adult spiritual development. 100 parents and teachers were asked to discuss occasions when they learned something valuable from a child or when a child changed them in some significant way. Adults reported that children can cause them to: (a) shift their values or priorities, (b) integrate memories or experiences previously disowned or repressed, (c) become more creative and cognitively flexible, (d) look at the world with more wonder, awe, or curiosity, or (e) experience more "congruence in their emotional lives."

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Barbara Fedoroff
Imagery for Children

When children are exposed to events that threaten their safety - or when they constantly see these events on television and hear adults talking about them - they become stressed. Children who have had more than one of these events in their lives may feel powerless and lose their ability to cope. These events include death of a parent or close relative, friend or coach; a serious personal or family illness; separation of parents; loss of home and possessions through fire; a serious accident and more.

Imagery is a simple and effective process for helping children regain their sense of power. It has been used successfully in Israel to stabilize children who have been exposed to war most of their lives. Children ages three and over can express themselves through Imagery. It also gives you a tool to help them cope. By going through a series of Imagery exercises, you will be able to give most children a renewed sense of power and allow them to connect with their own divine essence where they can receive the support they need to function in today's challenging world. These exercises are also effective tools for identifying and healing stress and as activities for unlocking creativity.

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Helen Garabedian
Baby Yoga

This talk touches upon the following issues: expanding our understanding of a baby's divine and yogic nature, exploring the relationship between Infant Development Movements & Hatha Yoga, discussing the benefits of yoga for parents and their babies as they grow together, and exploring spiritual traditions, gifts, and lessons of babies in their first year of life. This talk also allows for time to teach a number of Baby-Yoga postures to the audience (including yoga for newborns, yoga for head-holders, yoga for crawlers, etc.). This talk will be of interest to anyone, but especially parents, who is interested in helping children remain in touch with their spiritual nature as they begin to move physically.

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Terri Glass
Children's Poetry: Language of the Awakened Heart

What is a language filled with heart? Many people have forgotten that the power of words has a strong impact on our experience of reality. Slang, profanity, negative criticism permeates our media and creates a cacophony of sound, a discord felt in the heart. Returning to a language filled with heart requires a feeling of connection to oneself and a connection larger than the self - the whole fabric of life. Within the act of writing poetry, lies an amazing gift - it is the gift of metaphor and the gift of the image. These two incredibly important poetic tools stretch our normal perceptions and allow us to see connections rather than differences, unifying our experience of the world.

This talk explores the innate ability which children seem to have to feel this sense of connection. You can see it in their overflowing energy at play, their love for animals and their awe of their encounters with the simplest rock or a star filled sky. The talk also shares stories and poems that were the result of an innovative poetry program for children called Language of the Awakened Heart.

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*Elizabeth N. Goodenough and Peggy Ellsberg
Secret Sacred Spaces of Childhood*

Carl Jung has said that, "the child is one hand delivered helpless into the power of terrible enemies and in continual danger of extinction while on the other he possesses powers far exceeding those of ordinary humanity." One question which this talk asks is, where does this power come from? Children know the importance of hiding out, of finding the "just for me" place where they can't be seen, where they can withdraw to for meditation and renewal. Children, envisioned as triumphant go-betweens or heroic survivors, shelter the imagination and sustain the hope of adults. Learning about their fantasies and place-making activities is essential as we grow in population and space shrinks.

This 50-minute slide presentation and talk focuses on fort culture in different eras, from 18th Century Robinsonnades to Paula Fox's Monkey Island (1991); public places such as doll house museums and playgrounds which sustain secret spaces for a child; stories which graft pastoral renewal on urban settings; finding a life-affirming ethic in a technological and synthetic age; gender differences in world-building. Ultimately, this talk examines the hideaways of childhood as a threshold to sacred spaces in private and public domains.

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*Rev. Leanne Hadley
The Use of Spiritual Manipulatives in Education*

This talk discusses an approach to helping children in need by starting from the assumption that children possess an innate spirituality which can be tapped into to help them discover their authentic strengths, coping skills, and the ability to make healthy choices in times of stress, crisis, and hurt. This method of spiritual reflection uses a technique called "spiritual manipulatives". These are concrete tools which help children identify and describe their spiritual awareness and help them to focus on their inner thoughts by focusing on objects. Some of the spiritual manipulatives include a small sand box, various oils, chimes, and stones with symbols etched on them. This talk also shares some of the stories of success which have come from the use of these tools with children at the First Steps Spirituality Center.

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Dr. Tobin Hart
The Varieties of Children's Spiritual Experiences

What are the varieties of children's spiritual experiences and what significance do these events have in shaping a life? This talk describes the results of a four-year long research project exploring children's spiritual experience. Through in-depth interviews with nearly two hundred children and parents and from a sophisticated survey of six hundred adults, the variety, frequency, and significance of childhood spiritual moments are uncovered. The data provides surprising evidence that children have rich and important spiritual experiences that shape their lives in profound and enduring ways. In addition to the phenomenological descriptions of the experiences themselves, the long-term significance of these events in the formation of a worldview is explored.

Five general dimensions of children's spiritual experience are identified from this study: Wonder - moments of awe and profundity; Wisdom - a capacity and access to surprising insight and intuition; Wondering - radical questioning in which children reveal surprisingly sophisticated metaphysical questioning as well as such qualities as tolerance for paradox and ambiguity; Relational Consciousness - in which compassion and deep empathic relations with others in the sense of Buber's "I-Thou" meetings are commonly described; and "Seeing the Invisible" - a capacity to perceive multi-dimensionally.

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Daniel Helminiak
Spirit, Spirits, God, Children, and Adults: Sorting out the Issues

The greatest challenge to a coherent treatment of spirituality is theoretical. There is need to define what spirituality is and then to specify how it relates to religion, theology, and inner human experience. Only then can discussion turn to different kinds of spiritual experience, including a comparison between that of children and adults.

To address this theoretical question, this talk presents a psychology of spirituality that extricates the discussion, at least initially, from religious and theological considerations and proposes an account that supposedly applies to all humans and, thus, equally to children and adults. Going further, then, this talk also delineates some issues that might clarify the developmental issues specific to child and adult spirituality.

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*Linda Heron Wind and Beth Garrigus
Harmony Goes to Earth School*

This talk presents the framework for a "mystery school" of sorts that supports parents and teachers who are engaged with helping children learn how to operate with multi-dimensional awareness as beings of love and light on the Earth plane. The framework has four general headings: harmony within, harmony in relationships, harmony in groups and community, and harmony with the universe. Woven throughout the curriculum are principles such as authenticity, self-responsibility, co-creation, seeing and hearing with inner eyes and ears, living from the heart, connection vs. separation, healing, ritual, and ceremony. These principles are taught in a fun and engaging way through stories, activities, meditations, movement, songs, and games. This paper makes clear that our survival on Earth depends on our willingness to give our children a true picture of who they are and specific tools for working with their multiple gifts to enhance not only their own journey but also assure the future of human kind.

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*Patricia Hoertdoerfer
Parents, Grandparents, and Children as Spiritual Companions*

Most parents and grandparents can be excellent spiritual guides if they take some time to honor their own wonderings, reflections, and yearnings and share them with the children in their lives. The goal of this talk is to explore ways to provide spiritual experiences for children and to appreciate our role as companions to children's spiritual development. This talk begins with the familiar words of Antoine de St. Exupery, "In a house which becomes a home...it is needful to transmit the passwords from generation to generation." This talk explores some of the passwords we hope to pass along to our children, such as family, heritage, stories, rituals, and celebrations.

Through reflection and sharing, wondering and dialogue this talk hopes to penetrate everyday existence to discover the spiritual substance of wonder, courage, compassion, justice, and hope. As spiritual companions with the children in our lives we will learn together about the meaning of transcendence - "climbing over" imagined boundaries and moving beyond real limits - to experience the holy place where every child is known by name and loved.

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Norma Thompson Hollis
The Labyrinth: Developing Children's Intuitive Capacities

This talk highlights the importance of recognizing children's gifts and talents while they are in the early childhood age group. Keeping in mind the labyrinth as the vehicle for the expression of spiritual gifts, participants will view videotape of young children on the labyrinth to gain an understanding of their freely expressed spiritual expression and how it varies in age groups from toddler to teenage. This talk is based upon the following four main beliefs: 1.) We each have a purpose. 2.) Our gifts are related to our purpose. 3.) By developing our gifts we fulfill purpose and live with greater ease. 4.) This is best accomplished when it begins in early childhood.

The overall outline for the talk includes understanding children's intuitive capacities, recognizing children's intuitive capabilities, developing children's intuitive capabilities, and a discussion of what implications these have for society as a whole.

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Linda Iribarren
***Reality Shift: An Experiential Workshop for Parents & Educators
of Multi-Dimensional Aware Children***

How does a parent work with a child who perceives multi-dimensionally? How does a teacher recognize and accommodate to a child who knows intuitively? Children have intuitive capacities and perceptual depth that have not been adequately accounted for. This workshop helps to describe the hidden world of children and open that world within all of us through meditative questioning and descriptions.

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Lisa S. Johnson
Partnership Education: Nurturing the Spirit of Every Child

Today more than ever our children are faced with a growing number of complex dilemmas. In facing them, our children will either recognize their potentials to create positive change and develop their spirits based in this premise or feel their spirits smothered by the overwhelming and awesome responsibility of the future. As educators, parents, and community members we must face this challenge with children and give them the tools they need to transform their future. The groundbreaking work of partnership education leads us in this vision and reminds us that educational systems can and do foster these two possibilities.

Today's economic, environmental, and spiritual crises gives us reason to believe that our culture places too much emphasis upon a dominator approach to social and cultural possibilities. This talk identifies the major role education plays in balancing this trend and shifting our perspective into a partnership oriented framework. This talk will discuss examples of the partnership-dominator continuum in educational systems and their implications for educational process, educational structure, and educational content. The vision of this talk is to see, "school as a place of exploration, a place to share feelings and ideas, an exciting community of educators, students and parents working together to ensure that each child is recognized and valued, that the human spirit will be nurtured and grow" (Eisler 2000, 11).

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Rachael Kessler
Teaching Presence: The Soul of Education

This talk addresses such questions such as "What is 'soul' anyway?", "Whose definition are we using?", "Why should schools consider addressing inner life?", "How do we nurture the souls of teachers?", and "Doesn't the separation of church and state mean leaving all of this alone?".

Based upon the framework of *The Soul of Education* this talk offers educators the opportunity to reflect upon their own relationship to experiences which nurture the souls of students: deep connection, silence and solitude, meaning and purpose, joy and delight, creativity, transcendence, and initiation.

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June Mack
A Discussion of Imaginary Friends

Part of what inspires this talk is the question "Where do ideas come from?" It explores the connection between imagination, spirituality, and the creative process. It proceeds from the view that the phenomenon of imaginary friends is an external manifestation of the inner dialogue process.

Case studies documenting the phenomenon of imaginary friends and the initial research findings are discussed. Though it is early in this research, much evidence indicates that, to many children, these friends are "invisible" rather than imaginary - and there appears to be no confusion between the two. This talk includes informal discussion about the increased occurrence of the phenomenon of "imaginary" friends, the nature of these friends, and the roles they play in the lives of the children and their families.

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Patricia K. Manthey
Children in Service - Social Consciousness Starts Young

This talk focuses upon nurturing the process of developing social consciousness in children, given the prime motive of understanding that our soul purpose rests in individual expressions of serving others. That children possess innate sensitivity and are more closely knit to the unseen spirit world than the material world is highlighted by a number of stories of sensitive children who "broke" through to service of their own volition and soul force. Developing social consciousness starts when the child's focus on fairness and equality toward themselves, which develops early on, is nurtured and encouraged such that it is expanded outward to include others.

This talk draws upon principles from the Quaker belief system - community, equality, harmony, and simplicity as they relate to social consciousness and also gives attention to Maria Montessori's concept of "absorbed environment", which refers to the way in which children learn through example and repetition. In addition, this talk emphasizes practical understanding by giving suggestions for service project for children and adolescents, by giving examples of compassionate action initiated by children, and by giving practical guides for connecting to those in need in your community. Developing social consciousness in children is another way of developing the spiritual voice from within. Overall, a strong theme of *taking action* is emphasized.

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Dr. David Marshak
***Conscious Parenting: What the Common Vision of Sri Aurobindo,
Hazrat Inayat Khan, and Rudolf Steiner Tells Us About the
Unfoldment of Whole Persons***

Sri Aurobindo, Hazrat Inayat Khan, and Rulolf Steiner give parents and teachers a number of key insights into the unfoldment of their child. These insights provide a means for the conscious parent to more fully support the unfoldment of their child so as to allow them access to their full potential. Ultimately, parents and teachers need to help their child learn to recognize and validate their own inner knowing and their own inner teacher.

First, each child is composed of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual elements and qualities that are interrelated and inextricable. Second, the process of human becoming from birth through age 21 is an unfoldment of inherent potentials that require proper nurturing if the young person's nature is to evolve to its full capacity. Third, each child is an organismic whole who contains their own innate wisdom and motive force; their soul acts as an inner teacher to guide and power their unfoldment. Fourth, the unfoldment of the child follows a course that is relatively consistent, regular, and foreseeable in its large outlines with three major eras, each about 7 years in length. Fifth, each era or stage in the unfoldment of the child must be lived fully, explored for what it can be and valued for itself. Sixth, the common vision

explains that children learn most profoundly from who their parents, care-givers, and teachers are as people, from the wholeness and rightness of these adults' qualities and actions. Seventh, the common vision tells us explicitly that everything that children experience has an impact on who they are and who they become. And eighth, the parent's primary purpose is not to train the child or impart knowledge but to help them learn to develop their own instruments, faculties, and capabilities.

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Dr. Gareth B. Matthews
The Child as Philosophical Theologian

Adults often do not hear the deep philosophical questions that children ask. But if you take the time and the energy to listen, you will hear two major types of questions: 1) questions of 'natural theology' in which the child reasons from common experiences to arrive at general truths, and 2) faith-based theology in which a particular religious tradition is guiding and informing the child's philosophical inquiry. Whichever variety is in appearance, adults must develop the capacity to enter into this philosophical space with the child.

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Ulrich Meyerratken
Emotional Bonding Between Father and Child

This talk treats two topics:

1.) Emotional bonding between father and child: By touching the mother's belly and "melting" the consciousness with the embryo, the father gains as much contact as is possible for a father. This physical-mental contact leads to strong prenatal emotional bonding. I conclude that the power of bonding between father and child is more dependant on the amount of time they spend kindly together esp. in the first years of a child's life, and much less upon genetic factors. Many people think the mother-child relationship is naturally more intense, but this is due to the amount of time they normally spend together.

2.) Categories of natural interest: Children ask metaphysical questions demanding answers which the parents have also been exploring their whole lives. If the child asks, for example, "Where have I been before I was born?" one may feel invited to explain one's own concept. But instead of doing this immediately, one may return the question: "What do you think?" We may investigate together the great questions of life. Children's explanations are sometimes so stunning, fresh, poetic and humorous. We can find out much from the philosophy of children and from their world-views. We may get reconnected with the magic (or connected with the post-rational) world of wondering. Applying this technique the presenter recorded a list of small stories and beautiful thoughts expressed by his son, written down from memory or recorded on tape. In the course of this talk the presenter discusses some of the themes which arose in his son's questions such as: death and rebirth, good and bad, the functioning of the world, the conception of God, and the existence of spirits, monsters, angels, etc.

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Cecily Miller
How to Develop Your Child's Intuition,
Emotional Intelligence, and Self-Esteem

This talk focuses upon ways for parents and teachers to develop their children's intuitive capacities. During the first part of the talk the following topics are touched upon: self-awareness tools to be used with children; fun games and activities to play with children to allow them to hear, feel, see, and/or sense their intuition; everyday ways to practice listening to and acting upon the inner sense/inner voice; and activities to develop and support a child's expression of their unique voice. During the second part of the talk the DO's and DON'T's of fostering a child's emotional intelligence and self-esteem are explored.

Many shining examples are shared from Cecily's book, *Children's Messages to the World*, due out in the Spring of 2003. These real life stories of children's triumphs are truly insightful and inspiring.

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Dr. Anne Mize
Remembering Childhood Spiritual Experience
Through Guided Visualization

The spiritual lives of our children are a direct reflection of our own spirituality. How we live and explore our own spiritual journeys as parents and teachers can foster the development of our children's connections with the divine. Using guided visualizations, this talk takes us back to our own numinous experiences as children. The first half of the talk focuses on the development of spirituality and how we manifest our unique spiritual qualities in our daily lives; it uses guided visualizations, writing, and small group interaction. The second half of this talk focuses upon the developmental stages of children's spiritual growth and includes practical tools for fostering children's moral and spiritual development, including a variety of rituals, stories, and games appropriate for children from 5 months to 15 years old.

Interwoven into these two parts, Dr. Mize shares inspiring stories and examples from her doctoral research with over 80 children in South Africa and the United States which help to illustrate both the awe and suffering of children and emphasize the importance of the natural world as it relates to children's perspectives of themselves and the world.

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Dr. Rebecca Nye
Subjects in the Kingdom of Heaven:
Directions & Difficulties in Researching Children's Spirituality

Children can have a fairly predictable set of feelings about conventional spirituality. But, children associate a wide range of feelings with *their* spirituality. For some it feels wishful, for some the predominant mood is uncertainty, for some it feels like a dream, for some it feels vivid and real, for some it feels like a treasured secret insight, for some it feels ominous and better avoided, for some it feels overwhelmingly beautiful and refreshing. Adults often have difficulty 'hearing' the feelings that can represent the child's spiritual approach. Attending to feelings rather than content may help us get to the heart of the matter.

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Joseph Chilton Pearce
The Mind Heart Connection for Education and Parenting

This talk, given by the author of best selling books such as *Crack in the Cosmic Egg*, *The Magical Child*, and *The Biology of Transcendence*, explores cutting-edge research on the nature of human development and the changing needs of children in our modern world. This talk explores the biological foundation for what we think of as 'spiritual' development, the next stage in our human evolution.

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Mary Peterson
***Signs of the Spirit: An Experiential Workshop on
Learning with Children***

This talk is an investigation of how children's spiritual capacities and development can be nurtured. Attention is given to the ways in which adults can learn from the spirit of the child. Opportunities are also given for discussion and exploration of possibilities relevant to each individual in their own context.

This talk examines data from a survey of the variety of models of ministry with children and families currently used in churches. Particular attention is given to the ways in which churches, teachers, and parents can respond to the spirit of the child and nurture and develop children's spiritual capacities. While the survey data and examples come from New Zealand, there are significant international connections to be made.

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James Pewtherer
The Spirit of Waldorf Education

Waldorf education aims to meet the child as a being of body, soul and spirit. First, we teach the child how to understand and work in the world around her/him. Simultaneously, a teacher who is really going to serve the children needs to reckon, then, with the concept of karma not as pre-destination but as each individual's intention and opportunity to grow—the tasks and goals which were assumed when she/he was in the spiritual world. In our view, only by awakening an understanding of these two sides of reality in adulthood can a human being develop true freedom. With such aims, we teach using not only age-appropriate cognitive methods of learning, but we also use the arts and practical activities as learning tools and means of expression. This means that we work out of a picture of the human being that recognizes and engages different kinds of intelligence in the child.

Rudolf Steiner showed that the developing human being learns in different ways at different times of life. Following this, the child from birth to about age seven learns best by doing and through imitation (the "will" phase of life). From seven to about fourteen years of age, the child learns most effectively if the feeling life (enthusiasm, reverence, engagement, etc.) is appealed to. The older child or the adolescent is best taught through work with clear thoughts and ideals that will oblige her/him to think and to reason. In all these stages, however, thinking, feeling, and willing are intertwined. It is only the emphasis that changes from stage to stage. The application of these ideas does not ask for an "orthodoxy" of view, but for an openness to see what the child is asking of teacher and parent on a deeper level.

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Gail Radley *Spiritual Quest in the Realm of Harry Potter*

Reactions to the series of Harry Potter books put out by J.K. Rowling have been passionately mixed. Comments have ranged from cries that they are a glorification of witchcraft, that they are without any "coherent moral order", or serve only as "great escapism" to praise of the books as "sheer pleasure" and a "raging success". This talk first endeavors to explore the ways in which Rowling's seminal volume *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is capable of "enriching the inner life of the child" (Bruno Bettelheim) by addressing relevant developmental issues such as coping with isolation and adversity, the presence of good and evil, the triumph of morality, and the "recovery from deep despair, escape from great danger, but, most of all consolation" (Bettelheim). Next this talk draws upon the works of Joseph Campbell and Christopher Vogler to explore the extent to which Rowling's first Harry Potter book can serve as a mythic or religious hero-tale.

Questions addressed in this talk include the following: How well does Harry fulfill the role of the hero of a mythic quest? What spiritual qualities does he exemplify? How satisfying is his tale as a developmental tool in a child's spiritual growth?

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Deb Redman
Investing in Adult Understanding of Special Children

This talk focuses specifically on the spirituality of today's children and provides very practical holistic ways of working with them. It is very much a synthesis of the holistic philosophies and modalities that many people have worked with for years but also presents a whole new way of applying them and using them in daily life as well as with others. The basis of the work comes from many different sources including, but not limited to, the works of Jan Tober and Lee Carroll, Doreen Virtue, Gregg Braden, Deepak Chopra, Patricia Evans, John Gray, and a host of others. Topics for this talk include aspects of health, conscious parenting, conscious teaching, conscious counseling, ego needs, physical differences, and characteristics of today's children that make them different. Throughout the talk, it is emphasized that it's the children's connection to the Source that guides how we as adults work with them.

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Robert A. Rees
The Heart and Children's Spirituality

In ancient cultures as well as in most traditional societies the heart is seen as central to spirituality. New scientific research into the relation of the heart to the entire human system seems to validate this understanding. We now know, for example, that the influence of the heart on the mind is much more extensive and significant than was heretofore thought. Researchers at the Institute of HeartMath are currently engaged in exploring the heart as the pathway of the spirit. HeartMath has developed a set of

practical tools and techniques which enhance cognitive, emotional, and spiritual coherence in both adults and children.

This talk reviews the research of the Institute of HeartMath and its implications for developing and enhancing children's spirituality

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George Scarlett

Health and Pathology in Spiritual Development

The objective of this talk is to gain a clearer understanding of what we mean by healthy spiritual development, the conditions supporting healthy spiritual development, and how spiritual development can turn pathological.

Through an exploration of case studies from Abraham Lincoln and Adolf Hitler, this talk shows both the strengths and weaknesses of the structural-developmental theory of spirituality. The major weakness is that one can be highly developed in a structural developmental sense, and highly pathological at the same time. This talk argues that what is needed is a combination of structural development and actual content (specific beliefs and practices) to solve the problem.

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Dianne Stark

Parenting Education for Contemporary Issues

Our children's engagement with the world around them is threatened on all fronts by such things as the accelerated pace of life, runaway consumerism, breakdowns in family life, and largely passive-aggressive and control oriented approaches to parenting. This talk suggests that a new model of parenting is needed to provide positive engagement between all family members and to facilitate children's positive engagement with their own future. This talk discusses a theoretical model for parenting that empowers adults to overcome passivity and adversariality to connect with children authentically and immediately.

The model discussed is based upon viewing the child as a locus of energy which is highly malleable. In bringing positive energy, or higher frequency energy, to bear on children in every way possible, we get the desired results of good health, good feelings, good behavior, and rich bonding. If, when a child behaves badly, we choose to identify them as someone who has kindness and wisdom that is very much needed and that we are distressed to hear that this child's contribution is being lost for no good reason. the child experiences a total shift in her feelings and thoughts, resulting in a higher vibratory frequency in the subtle energy, resulting in a child who shows up more generous, more sociable, and more connected to adults in their world.

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Peter Sutton

Education Into Worship

This talk explores an Induction Course designed for new members (13 year olds) in a school to give them immediate ownership of the spiritual life of the community whether in the Assembly or the Chapel setting. The aim of the course is to be totally inclusive and whilst commissioning new members of the school, staff, and students alike to make the most of the opportunities which the worshipping life of the community presents it also aims to re-commission existing members to reflect on the part that they still have to play in this ongoing process. Ultimately, Education Into Worship seeks to view each new member of the school as a unique asset to be treasured, to listen to that person's story and to make them feel that they belong to a very special collection of people.

This talk follows the course through a series of seven classroom lessons which enable students to reflect upon 'their own stories' and understand their life experiences to date within the context of The Seven Sacraments. Nicolas Poussin's series of paintings *The Seven Sacraments* are used as illustration since they depict seven precise moments in the journey of the body from birth to death and thus represent per Anthony Blunt, "the basic truth which runs through all forms of religion, whether Christian or Pagan and as such would have expressed the belief in religion as above sect or creed." Provision is made in each lesson to draw on the experiences of all major World Religions through use of the Channel 4 *Worlds of Faith* educational resource. The experiences and pupil input from these lessons are then shared in a whole school act of worship e.g., the new pupils explain what it feels like to be new and what sort of welcome they are receiving from the rest of the community.

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Ann Trousdale
Exploring Concepts, Making Connections:
Using Children's Literature in Children's Spiritual Development

This talk presents children's books as a means of spiritual education in the sense of drawing forth from children insight and understanding through engaging with them in mutually respectful dialogue. The books to be presented go across age levels, from picture books for pre-reading children to novels for secondary-level students. Many of the books are non-sectarian, treating such issues as care of the earth; religious tolerance; social justice; personal qualities of honesty, hope, and love; spiritual quest; and esteem of the self and others. Other books will reflect specific spiritual traditions, including Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Native American traditions.

The potential for engaging children with spiritual questions through story can be understood on a number of levels. First, the capacity for story is already "wired into" the child, into that primary narrative impulse of the human brain (Bruner). Second, a well-told story invites the listener or reader to fill in certain "gaps" or "blanks" in the text (Iser); engaging the imagination to fill in these gaps provides one with a sense of "ownership" of the story, an authentic, personal interpretation. Third, stories offer children vicarious experience through identification with another person who is dealing with conflict, discovery, or moral choice. It is largely out of these dynamics between story and listener that narrative discourse achieves an "interior persuasiveness" (Bakhtin) that authoritative discourse does not offer. As Moore has pointed out, narrative is a "potentially profound and far-reaching educational method." It engages the imagination, crosses cultural boundaries, gives meaning to abstract concepts, enfleshes social critique, and binds people together in a depth of understanding.

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Julia Ann Williams
Spirituality in the Classroom

It is believed that fostering characteristics of caring and a sense of "family" can make a significant impact on educating children. What children need is a classroom that fosters unconditional love, connections, compassion, safety, hope, and trust.

This talk explores the following topics: 1.) Spirituality and the social/emotional connection. 2.) Small group "brainstorming"/creating "webs" on how to nourish the inner self of the child in the classroom setting. 3.) Classroom strategies that can be used to foster

spirituality in the classroom including journal writing reflections, journal drawings for reflection and discussion, reading/telling stories for character building, classroom "community sharing" time, and "thought of the day" quotes from different cultures.

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Nancy R. Williams
How Runaway Youth Navigate Troubled Waters

Runaway and homeless youth often experience severe trauma in their lives that may include a sense of deep betrayal by primary caregivers, ineffectual community responses and behaviors that reflect a journey into the darkness of self-destruction. An exploratory study drawing from in-depth interviews with 20 formerly runaway and homeless youth was designed to discover the factors that enabled these same youth to transcend their difficult circumstances and to survive their troubled times. Spirituality emerged as an explicitly stated conceptual construct weaving its way through their rich stories as they described experiences of unconditional love, hope, meaning, community, and a desire to serve others. The purpose of this talk is to share the findings from this study that describes the role spirituality played in helping the participants cope with and even transcend their difficult circumstances.

Themes emerging from the data include the following: a belief in divine intervention, an active relationship with a higher power (including prayer), a sense of receiving unconditional love and acceptance, participation in an established religion, finding a sense of meaning in life, gratitude for the opportunities for growth that they found in their adversity, and a desire to "give back" to their community.

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Barbara Vitale
From the Inside Out: Helping Spirituality
Gifted Children and Adults Survive

The world's spiritual traditions, including Shamanism, describe many realms of existence. Children and adults can have awareness of these multiple realms and some children are innately open to and sensitive to these worlds. While this provides a powerful viewpoint, it is also a delicate and demanding path that requires support and guidance. This workshop will provide a view of that inner world and what one might do help support and nurture children and adults who perceive in a multi-dimensionally.

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