Diverse Voices:

Children's Perceptions of Spirituality

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Children (N = 64; 6-11 years, 50% boy) from different religious and cultural backgrounds were interviewed using open-ended questions concerning their spiritual thoughts, beliefs, and experiences. Additionally, parents completed a demographic questionnaire and reported children's religious affiliation. Regardless of children's religious background, eighteen overarching themes emerged in the transcripts and include: 1) Feeling Good/Happy/Better when Praying/Thinking about God, 2) God's Location , 3) God Helps, 4) God the Creator, 5) God Listens, 6) Different People have Different Beliefs, 7) Soul and Spirit, 8) Prayer Location, 9) Description of God, 10) Thanking God, 11) God Watches, 12) Praying to God when Feeling Bad (sadness, loneliness, death), 13) God and Nature, 14) Body and Prayer, 15) Description of Faith, 16) God and Miracles, 17) God Grants Wishes, 18) Belief and Non/Belief. Children's understandings of the role of the divine and the purpose of prayer may influence social-emotional development, adjustment, and coping. In future research, the participants' coded responses will be developed into items for a children's spirituality measure.

Keywords: spirituality, children, diversity

Résume

Les enfants qui ont participé à la présente étude (N=64; 6 à 11 ans, 50% de garçons) proviennent de milieux culturels et religieux variés. Pour cerner l'affiliation religieuse des participants, leurs parents ont complété un questionnaire à caractère démographique. Par l'entremise de questions ouvertes, nous avons pu recueillir leurs pensées, croyances, et expériences spirituelles. Après avoir analysé les données d'entrevues, 18 grands thèmes énumérés ci-dessous font surface, et cela, sans corrélation avec l'appartenance religieuse identifiée : 1) Prier/penser à Dieu pour améliorer leur bien-être/humeur, 2) où Dieu se trouve, 3) Dieu aide, 4) Dieu est créateur, 5) Dieu écoute, 6) différentes personnes ont des croyances différentes, 7) esprit et âme, 8) endroits de prière, 9) description de Dieu, 10) remercier Dieu, 11) Dieu nous surveille, 12) prier à Dieu quand triste, seul, ou à cause de la mort, 13) Dieu dans la nature, 14) Corps et prière, 15) description de la foi, 16) Dieu et les miracles, 17) Dieu exauce les vœux, 18) croyance ou non croyance en Dieu. La compréhension des enfants sur le rôle de la prière et du divin dans leur vie pourrait vraisemblablement avoir une influence marquée sur leur développement socio-affectif, ainsi que sur leurs ajustements et comportements d'adaptation. Afin d'explorer davantage le sujet, l'étude aura comme objectif futur d'utiliser les réponses codées des participants pour les catégoriser et enfin développer une méthode qui permettra de mesurer la spiritualité des enfants.

*Mot Cl*és : la spiritualité, les enfants, la diversité

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Diverse Voices: Children's Perceptions of Spirituality

Spirituality is an integral part of children's lives. In early development, children formulate ideas about the divine, faith, and the meaning of prayer. However, these ideas about spirituality are viewed as constantly evolving as children develop (Coles, 1990; Fowler, 1981; Houskamp, Fisher, & Stuber, 2004). Despite research suggesting that spirituality may contribute to a child's development—providing moral formation, socialization, inner resources, and important organizing principles (Barnes, Plotnikoff, Fox, & Pendleton, 2000)—children's perceptions of spirituality and their implications on physical and emotional health remain beyond the scope of most studies (Barnes et al., 2000; Houscamp et al., 2004). As most research has focused on adults and adolescents (French, Eisenberg, Vaughan, Purwono, & Suryanti, 2008), studies exploring children's spirituality remain sparse (Ream & Savin-Williams, 2003).

Most research on spirituality has focused on religious practice, which does not adequately account for the nuanced nature of religious and spiritual experiences. Despite intricate constructs, research on religiosity and spirituality has often used unsophisticated and narrow measures such as church attendance, denominational affiliation, or self-reported religiousness (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Given that differences in religious beliefs, practices, and affiliations are interwoven with other cultural features, studies exploring children's religiosity and spirituality should reflect a greater awareness of cultural characteristics (Barnes et al., 2000; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Moberg, 2002). The need for contextually sensitive understandings of children's spirituality is thus clear given Canada's religious and cultural diversity (Moberg, 2002). The objective of the current project is therefore to explore children's spiritual experiences across diverse faith orientations to gain a better understanding of children's perceived role of spirituality.

Spirituality and Religiosity

Religiosity and spirituality are often used interchangeably in the literature: both of these constructs concern the meaning of life, moral order, values, and belief systems (Hill & Pargament, 2003). While Hill and Pargament recognize these terms as unique, they caution against polarizing religion and spirituality: both constructs unfold within a social context and have overlapping meanings. Certain understandings of spirituality encompass the definition of religiosity and vice versa. However, because these constructs are multifaceted in their own right, they are often defined as independent concepts (Houskamp et al., 2004).

Spirituality is an expression of beliefs and values—an inner belief system without social affiliation. Spirituality is often seen as the belief in a higher power, regardless of religious beliefs, practices, or affiliation (Worthington, Kurusu, McCullough, & Sandage, 1996). Spirituality, a broader term than religiosity, tends to appeal to both the religious and non-religious because of its overarching nature. A common example which highlights the broad appeal of spirituality is how individuals fully benefit from spiritual components of Alcoholics Anonymous programs, regardless of their connection to a religious community (Hatch, Burg, Naberhaus, & Hellmich, 1998).

After reviewing 73 articles, Chiu, Emblen, Van Hofwegen, Sawatzky, and Meyerhoff (2004) concluded that culturally focused studies reveal culturally specific characteristics of spirituality. For instance, they found Native American communities often highlight nature and harmony, Hispanic people frequently refer to religious faith as central to spirituality, and Buddhists emphasize the consequences of spirituality. However, the researchers found that connectedness, transcendence, existential reality, and power/force/energy were deemed as

universal characteristics of spirituality—rather than being culturally specific. Notably, a limitation of this review was that majority of studies consisted of adult participants.

Smith and et al. (1993) describe spirituality as a dynamic component of consciousness, through which individuals yearn for life's meaning, a union with all creation, and a genuine belief in a divine reality. Similar perspectives are held by other researchers, who propose spirituality as a growth process, through which individuals seek purpose and meaning (Hunglemann, Kenkel-Rossi, Klassen, & Stollenwerk 1996). O'Neill and Kenny (1998) differ slightly suggesting that spirituality is a relationship with God mediated through a community of believers. According to O'Neill and Kenny, this view of spirituality uses the language of institutional religion, referencing the need for community to maintain a relationship with God.

Certain views of spirituality capture basic tenets of religiosity. One definition draws heavily on the language of institutional religion, describing spirituality as a:

> […] system of attitudes, practices, rites, ceremonies and beliefs by means of which individuals or a community put themselves in relation to God, or to a supernatural world, and often to each other, and …derive a set of values by which to judge events in the natural world. (English & English, 1958, p. 45)

 Indeed, spirituality is sometimes thought to encompass religiosity, as individuals' manifestations of specific religious beliefs may be seen as forms of spiritual expression (Constantine, Lewis, Conner, & Sanchez, 2000). However, Houskamp et al. (2004) distinguish religion from spirituality, characterizing the former as consisting in specific beliefs, traditions, practices, and ethical codes shared by a particular community. In turn, religion connects individuals through a greater moral community whereas spirituality does not necessarily provide such relationships (Jenkins & Pargament, 1995).

William James, a prolific figure in the psychology of religion (1902/1961), associated spirituality with socio-emotional well-being (e.g., inner feelings of distress versus inner feelings of peace). James saw human experience as the means to understanding spirituality, which he defined as a personal attitude that inspires a desire for knowledge of the divine. James also proposed that regardless of religious affiliation, religiosity is often described in terms that transcend secular experience. For instance, despite differences in practices and traditions, religions often have similar interpretations of religiosity/spirituality, using terms such as divine, spirit, or transcendent. Instead of focusing on institutional religion, James connected religion with spirituality, conceiving religion as the "feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude […] in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (p. 42).

The literature posits both similarities and differences between perceptions of spirituality and religiosity. A study by Ubani and Tirri (2006) found most participants to associate religion with institutional features (e.g., traditions, religious practices) and spirituality with ethical ideals (e.g., values, beliefs). While Houscamp and et al. (2004) describe comparable differences between the terms, most researchers acknowledge varying degrees of overlap linking the concepts (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Roehlkepartain, Benson, King, and Wagener (2006) note that despite the growth in research on religiosity and spirituality, a consensus on these terms has yet to be achieved.

Indeed, developing a rigorous set of definitions and distinctions based on previous literature is warranted, but beyond the scope of the current study. However, Smith (2004) highlights that: "such a range of available definitions, however, greatly increases the likelihood that any two authors examining religion/spirituality may be considering different things" (p. 241). Therefore, it is important to discuss the current study's operationalization of these terms.

While the overlap between spirituality and religiosity will be considered, the terms will also be differentiated based on the literature.

Consistent with Houskamp et al. (2004) and other researchers (e.g., Ubani & Tirri, 2006) religion will be distinguished from spirituality, consisting of specific beliefs, traditions, practices, and ethical codes shared by a particular community. Aligned with the majority of literature, spirituality will be conceptualized a personal expression of beliefs and values— regardless of religious beliefs, practices, or affiliation (e.g., Worthington, Kurusu, McCullough, & Sandage, 1996). A broader term than religiosity, spirituality includes themes of existential reality, transcendence, connectedness, and power/force/energy (Chiu et al., 2004). While it is important to broadly define these terms for the purposes of the current study and for the interpretation of results, the purpose of this study is not to impose these definitions on the children, but to explore children's diverse perceptions of spirituality.

While recognizing the connection between religion and spirituality (Hill & Pargament, 2003), the current study focuses on spirituality in order to avoid discouraging children—who may have no religious affiliation—in their exploration of spirituality. Certainly, as noted by Hill and Pargament, the overlap and similarities between these concepts will yield discussions concerning religious beliefs and values, as religion and spirituality are profoundly intertwined for some children. Instead of focusing on religious affiliation, however, the current study will explore children's perceptions of spirituality with the aim of stimulating discussions surrounding spirituality—and if relevant—religious experiences.

Children and Spirituality

Spirituality is often defined as continually evolving as ideas surrounding spirituality change as one grows and matures (e.g., Coles, 1990; Fowler, 1981; Houskamp et al., 2004). The

fluctuating nature of spirituality is especially true for children, as cognitive abilities improve

throughout their development (Fowler, 1981).   James Fowler presents the most prominent faith-

development theory: Fowler discusses the development of children's spirituality in relation to

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Laurence Kohlberg's theory of moral

development, and Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. These developmental

frameworks acknowledge children as endowed with the capacity to progress from concrete to

abstract thinking as they grow older. Thus, as children mature and develop, they can more fully

engage with their spiritual life (Barnes et al., 2000).

Despite several studies in the Piagetian tradition which have reported children's

conceptions of God as moving from anthropomorphic to the abstract, these theories have been

contested (e.g., Barrett, Richert, & Driesenga, 2001). For instance, Kelemen (2004) diverges

from traditional developmental theory and explores children as intuitive theists, suggesting that

children innately view the world as a product of intelligent design. Barrett and Richert (2003)

propose a 'preparedness hypothesis', which contrasts the traditional anthropomorphism view,

which claims that children cannot think abstractly until they develop and mature. Barrett and

Richert state:

> In contrast to the anthropomorphism hypothesis, we argue that early-developing
>
> conceptual structures in children used to reason about God are not specifically for
>
> representing humans, and, in fact, actually facilitate the acquisition and use of many
>
> features of God concepts of the Abrahamic monotheisms. (p. 300)

For example, an anthropomorphic spiritual perspective would contend that children see God as a

giant human being living in the sky. Conversely, Barrett and Richert (2003) claim that children

have the cognitive ability to understand the supernatural and abstract nature of the divine;

children do not use the same cognitive constructs when thinking about humans as they do about God. According to Barrett and Richert, children have early cognitive biases that provide ideas about the metaphysical characteristics of God.

To stimulate more in-depth discussion about spirituality among children, some researchers have begun using prompts (e.g., Tamminen, 1994), such as specific interview questions. In a qualitative analysis of children's perceptions of spirituality, Tamminen (1994) found that children had a tendency to relate specific spiritual experiences to those of everyday life. Conversely, adolescents were largely found to discuss spirituality in more abstract terms: instead of using everyday situations to express their experiences, they frequently referred to examples from their spiritual life. Overall, Tamminen found that children more closely identified with questions concerning the imminence of God (e.g., God is near because God helps me with my problems) rather than questions concerning God's providence (e.g., God guiding one's life choices).

With a similar approach, Mountain (2005) conducted semi-structured interviews with 60 primary school children, which revealed prayer as a positive activity. Despite the religious and cultural diversity among the Australian children involved, prayer was perceived as having value to the majority of participants. Prayer was also seen to provide support in difficult moments, and children suggested that the thoughts and words used in prayer helped them identify and articulate feelings. Thus, prayer may serve as an adaptive coping mechanism, enabling greater self-expression and serving as a source of support and comfort.

Children's Spirituality: Coping and Social-Emotional Development

There is a renewed interest in children's spirituality and its role in adaptive coping and mental health (e.g., Benore, Pargament, & Pendleton, 2008; Houscamp et al., 2004; Oser,

Scarlett, & Bucher, 2006). While it is important to understand the impact of spirituality on

health and well-being, there is first a need to understand more fully how children conceptualize

spirituality. In other words, how children *understand* spirituality is a prerequisite to grasping

how children *use* spirituality. Nevertheless, reviewing the literature surrounding spirituality and

coping has two major benefits. First, the scarcity of studies on children's spirituality in coping

and social-emotional development underscores the need for further research in these areas.

Second, because studies examining spirituality and its role in coping exclusively focus on how

children *use* spirituality—rather than *perceive* spirituality—children's ideas concerning

spirituality are often overlooked. Thus, the need for research exploring children's perceptions of

spirituality is magnified as an essential precursor to exploring spirituality and its role in

children's coping and social-emotional development.

The role of spirituality on a child's physical and emotional health has certainly been

beyond the scope of most studies (Barnes et al., 2000; Houscamp et al., 2004). Few studies have

examined how children use spirituality to cope with critical challenges, such as living with a

chronic illness (Benore et al., 2008; Cotton et al., 2009; Donahue & Bensen, 1995), even though

the onset of a chronic illness in childhood can impact physical, psychological, and behavioural

development, as well as educational achievement, peer acceptance, and family relationships

(e.g., Suris, Michaud, Akre, & Sawyer, 2008). In recent years, interest surrounding the role of

spirituality in coping with stressful situations has prompted research on the impact of spirituality

in the lives of children and adolescents.

Both clinicians and researchers have begun to recognize the role of spirituality as a

coping mechanism in cases where children and adolescents are confronted with challenges that

trigger a reflection on their mortality (Cotton et al., 2009; Smith & McSherry, 2004). The

diagnosis of a disease often brings patients to voice a desire that their spiritual or religious

disposition be recognized by healthcare professionals. More specifically, one study found that

most adult patients in clinical settings would prefer physicians to inquire about their spiritual

beliefs, values, and lifestyle when being treated for a life-threatening illness (Ehman, Ott, Short,

Ciampa, & Hansen-Flaschen, 1999). In another study, adult patients reported that spirituality

and/or religiosity were important for physicians to acknowledge in critical health situations such

as medical emergencies, terminal infirmity, or chronic illness diagnoses and treatments

(VandeCreek, Grossoehme, Ragsdale, McHenry, & Thurston, 2007).

   These studies, however, explore the desires of adults, highlighting the scarcity of

research on children's general views of spirituality and their more specific interpretations of

spirituality and its role in pediatrics. In fact, many pediatricians feel uncomfortable breaching

topics of spirituality and religiosity with children (Barnes et al., 2000), and most healthcare

professionals lack the appropriate training to recognize children's spiritual coping mechanisms

and/or meet their spiritual needs (Fulton & Moore, 1995). Even though spirituality may play an

integral role in children's well-being, research has often overlooked children's understandings of

spirituality in healthcare environments.

   Barnes et al. (2000) argue that spirituality may play an essential role for children,

providing inner resources, moral formation, and socialization. Religious traditions and

spirituality may shape a child's understanding of illness, suffering, and death. In turn, children's

coping strategies may also be influenced by spirituality and religiosity. However, studies

exploring spirituality as a coping tool without first examining how children perceive spirituality

are missing an essential step. Understanding children's views and perceptions of spirituality

would certainly lead to more in-depth and comprehensive studies concerning how children use

spirituality to cope with challenges and difficulties. Thus, perhaps the lack of research concerning children's use of spirituality as a coping mechanism arises from the general scarcity of knowledge surrounding children's perceptions of spirituality.

Barnes et al. (2000) recognize that spirituality and religion may not always serve as an adaptive coping mechanism, as they may both facilitate and impede children's social adjustment (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshewar, & Swank, 2001). For example, children who accept suffering as a normal fact of life—which one can overcome through divine intervention—may be better suited to cope with adverse life events. Conversely, if children perceived suffering as punishment for misbehaviour or sinfulness, they might have a lower tolerance for coping with adverse life events. Moreover, religious affiliation can occasionally provide ammunition for children to victimize their peers. Cultural, racial, and ethnic prejudice can acts as a form of peer harassment, which can lead to victimization on the basis of religious or cultural identity (Graham & Juvonen, 2001). Notably, children's family and religious community plays an important role in determining the interpretations of religious or spiritual traditions and their influence (Barnes et al., 2000). Children's interpretation of spirituality will influence how they use spirituality when confronted with life challenges.

Spirituality and Adolescents

Few studies have explored children's perceptions of spirituality. Most of the literature examines the role of spirituality in relation to adolescents and adults (e.g., French et al., 2008, Gorsuch & Miller, 1999; Oser et al., 2006). As such, a brief review of the research on adolescents is warranted. To begin, there is growing support that religiosity/spirituality are associated with positive mental health outcomes in adolescent populations (Regnerus, 2003). Regnerus' findings were echoed by similar studies (e.g., Aalsma & Lapsley, 1999; Hill &

Pargament, 2003) and other researchers have highlighted that adolescents use religiosity to reduce risk behavior and/or promote positive outcomes (Donahue & Benson, 1995). In a review, Wong, Rew and Slaikeu (2006) found that ninety percent of studies between 1988 and 2004 show that higher levels of religiosity/spirituality are related to better mental health in adolescents. In another study (Sveidqvist, Joubert, Greene, & Manion, 2003) it was found that adolescents perceive spirituality as positive and beneficial to their mental health. Adolescents also saw potential risks to mental health for individuals lacking spirituality or adhering to extreme spiritual practices.

More recently Van Dyke, Glenwick, Cecero and Se-Kang (2009) examined the relationship between religious/spiritual coping and adjustment/psychological distress in urban early-adolescents. The middle-school participants completed self-report measures, which assessed their religious coping and daily experiences of spirituality. Participants also completed questionnaires assessing positive and negative affect, life satisfaction, and psychological distress. Van Dyke et al. (2009) found positive religious coping and daily spiritual experiences to be associated with positive affect and greater fulfillment. As predicted, negative religious coping was associated with negative affect and psychological distress.

Other research diverges from examining the role of spirituality with respect to coping and health and explores spirituality and its connection to social and psychological development. The nascent research in this area reveals that religion affects social competence by supporting and motivating some outcomes (e.g., prosocial behaviour) while at the same time inhibiting others (e.g., antisocial behaviour). Empirical findings have also shown that religious involvement and commitment tend to assist adolescents with academic achievement, school attendance, and self-esteem (Ream & Savin-Williams, 2003). Good and Willoughby (2006) also explored the impact

of spirituality and religiosity on psychosocial adjustment found that regardless of an adolescent's

level of spirituality, identifying with religion yielded greater positive adjustment. The

researchers concluded that spirituality may not have as strong of an impact as religiosity on

psychosocial adjustment. Similarly, one study found that those who frequented worship services

exhibited fewer depressive symptoms than those identifying solely with spirituality (Baetz,

Griffin, Bowen, Koenig, & Marcoux, 2004).

Evidently, there exists considerably more literature on adolescents' spiritual experiences

than children's spirituality. Research surrounding spirituality and its relationship to coping and

social-emotional development is far more prominent with adolescents than with children

(Regnerus, 2003). However, similar to the gap in explorations with children, research

surrounding adolescents' spirituality fails to account for the diversity of religious traditions,

spiritual practices, and beliefs. Given Canada's cultural diversity, contextually sensitive research

is highly warranted for children, adolescents, and adults.

Diverse Faith Orientations

Canada is a heterogeneous nation with regards to spiritual and religious practices.

Christianity is the dominant religion with approximately twenty-two million adherents from

different denominations. In Canada, there are more than one and a half million Buddhists, Jews,

Hindus, and half a million Muslims. There are also one and a half million individuals affiliated

with less prominent religious communities (Statistics Canada, 2003). Despite the increasing

religious pluralism (Shafranske, 1996), the majority of measures used in North America are

derived from Christian-based ideologies (Roehlkepartain et al., 2006). As such, Judeo-Christian

based measures appear to inadequately reflect the variety of religious and spiritual identities,

which populate multicultural societies (Moberg, 2002), such as Canada. These measures paint a

myopic picture of how spiritual and religious experiences are perceived. Thus, Canada's highly diverse religious communities underline the need for further research across faith orientations.

The Current Study

Spirituality and religiosity are complex constructs; however, researchers continue to employ imprecise indices to measure spirituality, such as church attendance (Hill & Pargament, 2003). While these measures can be useful indicators of participation in organized religion, external measures of religion and spirituality often overlook the richness and variety of individual experience. As concerns children, external measures inadequately represent spirituality, as parents often dictate church attendance and organized religious participation (Barnes et al., 2000). As a result, children's perceptions of spirituality and the complexity of their experiences are often overlooked. Considering the lack of empirical research in children's spirituality (e.g., Houscamp et al., 2004) combined with an increasingly diverse spiritual landscape (e.g., Moberg, 2002), especially in Canada, the current study will make a unique contribution through recognizing children's perceptions of spirituality across diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds. The aim of the current project is to better understand children's spirituality across diverse faith orientations through semi-structured interviews.

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Method

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Ethics and Recruitment

Ethics approval was obtained from McGill University (Appendix E). Most participants were recruited from two sources: McGill Infant Research Group (MIRG) research database and advertisements. The MIRG database lists parents interested in being contacted about on-going research studies with children at McGill. Since a primary goal of this research was to explore the spiritual experiences of children from different cultural, religious, and spiritual orientations, advertisements were also used to attract a diverse sample. Advertisements (Appendix E) were

widely distributed around Montreal's religious and spiritual centres. A notice of the current

study was also emailed to several religious and spiritual directors at McGill University and in the

greater Montreal area.

Participants

  Age. Sixty-four participants (ages 6-11) from different religious and cultural

backgrounds were interviewed on their conceptualization of spirituality (50% boys). The

youngest participant was 6 years 7 months; the oldest participant was 11 years 11 months. The

average participant age was 9 years, 4 months.

  Reported level of religiosity and place of worship. Parents were asked to complete a

demographic questionnaire and to rate their children's level of religiosity (e.g., very religious,

somewhat religious, not at all religious). In total, 30% of parents rated their children as very

religious, 36% of parents rated their children as somewhat religious, 6% of parents rated their

children as somewhat/very religious, and 28% of parents rated their children as not very religious

at all. Parents were asked to report the frequency with which they attended worship services

(e.g., mosque, synagogue, church). Approximately 38% of parents reported going to their place

of worship once a week, 6% of parents reported going to their place of worship once a month,

28% of parents reported going to their place of worship 3-4 times a year, 6% of parents reported

going to their place of worship once a year, and 22% of parents reported never going to their

place of worship.

  Religion, ethnicity, and language. While 81% of parents reported speaking more than

one language at home, all interviews were conducted in English. Parents were asked to report

their ethnicity, which reflects Canada's cultural diversity (see Appendix A, Table 1).

Furthermore, parents were asked to report their children's religious affiliation (see Appendix A, Table 2).

  Income. Parents were asked to indicate their income level. Combined annual income ranged from 0 to more than 80 000 dollars. Notably, 39% of parents reported having a combined family income of over 80, 000 dollars annually, while 5% reported having no income and 3% did not report a family income (see Appendix A, Table 3).

Procedure and Interview

  A semi-structured open-ended interview (Appendix B) was developed for children. Parents completed a consent form (Appendix C), which outlined the objectives of the study and provided examples of the questions found in the semi-structured interview. Additionally, parents completed a demographic questionnaire (Appendix D).

  Before the interview, researchers informed the participants of the purpose of the study. Children were told that the study was being conducted to understand what kids think about God, praying, and spirituality. Children were informed that they were not required to answer any questions that made them uncomfortable and were made aware that they could stop the interview at anytime. Children were notified their interview would be recorded, but that everything they discussed would remain confidential. Assent was obtained and children were asked if they had any questions or concerns. The interviews were conducted without the parents (with the exception of three cases in which the parents' presence was desired). The researchers also reiterated that there were no right or wrong answers and continually encouraged the child's personal narrative to guide the interview. Children were debriefed upon completing the interview and given a toy for their participation. Parents were compensated for travel and parking costs if necessary.

The main interview guide consisted of eleven thematic clusters with potential probes. For example, one thematic grouping consisted of questions focused on the perception of God. Notably, the word God was substituted with the term used by the child (e.g., Jesus, Allah, Hindu Goddess). Questions such as "tell me what you think about the word God?" were used to stimulate a reflection on the nature of the divine. Another thematic cluster focused on the nature of prayer. Children were asked "Why do you pray?" and "Does God listen when you pray?". These questions encouraged children to discuss their prayer habits and share how they felt prayer functioned in their lives (see Appendix B for full interview guide). Although there were thematic clusters addressed in the semi-structured interview, the child's personal narrative was strongly encouraged—even if it deviated from the interview structure. Interviews ranged in time. While the shortest interview was 6 minutes 57 seconds, the longest interview was 38 minutes 6 seconds. The average interview time was 16 minutes 11 seconds.

Data Analysis

A digital voice recorder with a small microphone was used to record the interviews. The interviews were then transferred from the digital recorder to a computer in the Child Development Research Laboratory at McGill University. The interviews were transcribed verbatim using the software, *Expresscribe*. Subsequent to transcriptions, the interviews were coded using *Nvivo* software.

A social-constructivism paradigm was used as the interpretive world view (Bronfrenbrenner, 1979) given that the emerged themes are grounded in the views and perspectives of the children (Creswell, 2007). Open coding was used to code the transcripts. During the open stage of coding, prominent themes in the text were identified. Following open coding, each interview was read a second and third time and the codes were grouped into

thematic clusters. Once themes had emerged, the interviews were analysed a fourth time and linked to major themes and subthemes. In total, over 40 broad thematic clusters were created and sorted into 18 major themes with subthemes. Note that Corbin and Strauss (2008) state that the terms 'categories' and 'themes' are interchangeable: themes will therefore be used to describe the findings. A reliability coder randomly coded 25 percent of the interview transcripts. Inter-rater reliability ranging between 80 percent and 100 percent was obtained on all interviews.

Instead of examining the relationship between pre-determined variables, this study allowed participants to express their opinions and share diverse ideas on the topic of research (Creswell, 2007). Thus, the way in which the categories are described and labelled draws on the language of the participants' voices as collected in the interview transcripts (Creswell, 2007; Willig, 2007). In addition, the qualitative method of open-ended questioning allows researchers to collect data, which can then be used to produce the necessary criteria for the development of a questionnaire, a scale, a structured interview, or even a theoretical model (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Findings

Gleaned from the 64 semi-structured interviews with children across diverse faith orientations, the resultant themes will be described and supported with representative quotations. Eighteen overarching themes emerged, some of which contain subthemes, and include: 1) Feeling Good/Happy/Better when Praying/Thinking about God, 2) God's Location , 3) God Helps, 4) God the Creator, 5) God Listens, 6) Different People have Different Beliefs, 7) Soul and Spirit, 8) Prayer Location, 9) Description of God, 10) Thanking God, 11) God Watches, 12) Praying to God when Feeling Bad (sadness, loneliness, death), 13) God and Nature, 14) Body and Prayer, 15) Description of Faith, 16) God and Miracles, 17) God Grants Wishes, 18) Belief

and Non/Belief. Themes, percentages, and selected quotations are presented in Table 4

(Appendix A).

Feeling Good/Happy/Better when Praying/Thinking about God

Children frequently spoke about praying feeling good/happy/better when thinking about

God or praying to God (78%). Some children mentioned that they generally feel good, happy, or

better when talking or praying to God. When asked about how they feel when thinking about

God, children said they felt good/happy. Children were often not able to articulate what

specifically provoked these positive feelings, but insisted that these feelings were present when

praying to God or thinking about God.

God's Location

A significant theme that emerged among most participants concerned the location of

God. While some children spoke of God as an entity inside their heart, mind, or body (20%),

other children described God as living in a specific place (59%), such as the sky. Half of the

children (50%) indicated that God exists everywhere, suggesting that God is an omnipresent and

ubiquitous entity occupying multiple places at once. There was also notable overlap between

these subthemes. For instance, some children would say that God lived in a specific place in the

sky and then subsequently mention that God is ever-present.

God Helps

A prevalent theme among children concerned God's direct and indirect help in response

to prayer. This theme encompassed three understandings of help. Some children saw God as a

transcendent being capable of intervening directly (39%) in the world (e.g., cure illness),

whereas others suggested that God had the ability to indirectly provide the necessary tools (59%)

to help them deal and cope with challenges and difficulties (e.g., God gives courage to stand up

to a bully, God gives advice through prayer). While most children provided examples of God

helping them both directly and indirectly, some children (41%) mentioned that God helps them,

but could not provide specific examples.

God is the Creator

Children frequently referred to God as the creator (75%), having created the world and all

human beings. Overall, this theme was represented by homogeneous quotations, as all children

referred to God's creation as consisting of the earth and its inhabitants.

God Listens

When prompted about God's ability to hear their thoughts and prayers, children (67%)

indicated that God listens. Children were asked to describe how they knew God listens. While

some children were confident that God listens to their prayers on account of past fulfillment,

others claimed to have a strong sense that God is always listening. Lastly, some children said

that they could sometimes hear a quiet voice in their heads.

Different People Have Different Beliefs

Most children (66%) recognized that other people have different beliefs about God and

spirituality. Some children spoke about their faith as unique, and how they can share their

religious and spiritual values, beliefs, and traditions with others from different religions. Some

children accepted spiritual and religious pluralism as normal and did not have any strong feelings

about non-believers. Other children discussed feeling sad or mad when hearing that some people

do not believe in God. While varying in nature, this theme encompassed children's recognition

of people having different beliefs than their own. Notably, children did not indicate the desire to

change other's beliefs with violence or hostile behaviours, but communicated tolerance and

respect.

Soul and Spirit

Almost half the children (59%) spoke about the soul /spirit as an entity that lives in the body and that continues to live after death, suggesting that children can conceive of the possibility of an afterlife. Further, children's ability to perceive the soul/spirit as eternal, and the body as temporary, highlights children's ability to distinguish between mortal and spiritual life. When asked about the soul/spirit, some children (25%) identified the soul/spirit as representing the supernatural (e.g., God is a spiritual entity).

Prayer Location

Some children discussed prayer and indicated that they can pray anywhere (45%). Often, children stated that since God is everywhere, people can pray anywhere. Places included traditional places of worship such as church, temple, synagogue, and other non-traditional places like outside, at school, or in transit. Other children (52%) referred to specific places of prayer, like in church or in their bedroom.

Description of God

While some children (36%) described God in human terms through the ascribing of human characteristics (e.g., God is like a human, God has a long white beard), other children (50%) viewed God as a supernatural entity (e.g., bright light, supernatural entity).

Thanking God

When children were asked about their reasons for praying, some children (36%) said that they prayed in thanksgiving. Children prayed in gratitude for a variety of things, such as performing well on an examination, living in a safe home, having a healthy family, and being surrounded by loved ones.

God Watches

Children often indicated that because God is the creator, he is omniscient; some children (34%) spoke of God as keeping watch over the world and its people.

Praying to God about Feeling Bad (sadness, loneliness, death)

Almost half of the children (48%) reported praying when they were feeling sad, lonely, or when they experienced illness or death among their family and friends. They described having God to talk to about these gloomy feelings. While some children mentioned feeling better as a result of confiding in God, others simply used God as a source of comfort.

God in Nature

God in nature emerged as a theme among some children (34%) who proposed that admiring nature was a spiritual experience that connected them with God. Other children discussed nature as reminding them of God, whom they believed created the natural world.

Prayer and Body

Upon being asked what they do when praying, children (33%) indicated that they use their body. Although the use of their body ranged, most children talked about closing their eyes, sitting still, and involve their body to convey signs of respect and reverence to God (e.g., kneeling, bowing).

Description of Faith

Faith was described in three main ways. First, faith was described by children (22%) as believing in God without tangible proof or living in accordance with religious traditions; faith was thus having a belief in God. Second, some children (30%) did not know what faith meant and struggled to provide a definition (e.g., conceptually, children did not understand the word). Third, some children (14%) only referred to faith in interpersonal terms (e.g., children expressed having faith in themselves or others).

God and Miracles

A theme that emerged with some children (27%) concerned God's ability to perform miracles. Some children described miracles as God's ability to heal people (e.g., Jesus curing the blind), while others saw the creation of the world as miraculous. Overall, the participants expressed God's supernatural ability to achieve the impossible.

God Grants Wishes

Some children (23%) indicated that God grants wishes. The participants spoke of wishes in a variety of ways, such as wishing for a specific gift or wishing for a good day. Children frequently spoke of making wishes in the context of prayer. Therefore, a main motive for praying among these children was to make wishes.

Belief and Non-Belief

Some children spoke overtly about believing in God (19%) and expressed a belief in the supernatural without having proof of its existence. A small percentage of children (5%) explicitly discussed their non-belief or lack of certainty about the existence of God.

<div align="center">

Discussion

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The objective of the current project is to explore children's spiritual experiences across diverse faith orientations to gain a better understanding of children's perceived role of spirituality. Gleaned from voices of the participants, the key themes suggest that children's thoughts and feelings about the divine, the purpose of prayer, and ideas about spirituality play a real role in the lives of children. Children's understanding of God as a helper, the value of prayer, concrete and abstract interpretations of spirituality, spiritual innateness, and spiritual diversity will be addressed and implications for clinical and school settings will be explored. Future research directions will also be discussed.

God and Help

Similar to Tamminen (1994) who found that children spoke colloquially about specific spiritual experiences relating them to everyday life, the current study found that children often gave examples of God helping them both directly and indirectly with problems in daily living (e.g., difficulty in school, illness in the family). Tamminen also found that children identified more with questions of God's immanence (e.g., God is near because God helps me) rather than questions of God's guidance (e.g., God is guiding one's life choices). In the current study, God as a source of help in dealing with challenges and difficulties was one of the most prominent themes among the interviews conducted; however, children did not only discuss God's ability to directly help them, but also engaged in more abstract conversations concerning God's ability to indirectly help through guidance.

Strikingly, children (59%) in the current study referred to God's assistance as more an indirect influence—which is more consistent with God guiding one's actions—rather than helping through direct intervention. Nevertheless, children (39%) still pointed out specific occasions when they felt God provided direct assistance. Furthermore, other children (41%) mentioned that God helped them, but could not provide examples. While Tamminen (1994) found that children tended to speak of God helping them in a more concrete manner, the current study found children referring to God helping them in both concrete and abstract forms. Thus, God was perceived as both a guide and a source of intervening assistance, which surely impacts how children perceive God.

Children and Prayer

Similar to the current study, Mountain (2005) conducted semi-structured interviews with 60 primary school children and found that prayer is a positive activity. Mountain's findings were

consistent across a culturally diverse sample of Australian children. Overall, children perceived

prayer as valuable and used it to seek help and articulate feelings. The current study echoes

these findings, as most children (78%) reported feeling good or happy when praying to, or

thinking, about God. Children (48%) discussed talking to God when experiencing sadness,

loneliness, or the death of a loved one. Furthermore, children (67%) felt assured that God

listened to their prayers, reinforcing their belief that God hears their prayers and answers them.

Children also discussed wishes (23%) and praying in thanksgiving (36%) as valuable

components of prayer. Indeed, prayer seems to offer children a way to express a wide range of

emotions: happiness, sadness, desires, and gratitude. These findings suggest that children do not

only pray to God for help or console, but also pray to thank God and share their happiness, which

illustrates children's multidimensional relationship with God.

Children also spoke about *where* and *how* they pray. Some children (52%) specified a

specific place for prayer (e.g., temple, bedroom), while others suggested that prayer is

spontaneous and can happen anywhere (45%). Upon being asked if they do anything specific

while praying, some children (33%) described physical gestures and actions. Such a description

of how one should pray revealed that prayer is seen as a pious and reverent act (e.g., sitting still,

bowing one's head, kneeling).

Anthropomorphic to Abstract

Fowler (1981) suggests that as children develop they are progressively enabled to engage

more fully with their spiritual life. Conversely, Barrett and Richert (2003) propose a

'preparedness hypothesis' in response to the traditional anthropomorphic perspective, which

suggests that children lack abstract thinking. Barrett and Richert argue that the conceptual

structures used to understand the nature of divine are different from the cognitive structures used

to represent humans. The current study's emergent themes reveal that children understand God in both concrete and abstract ways. Themes concerning the description of God, God's location, God in nature, descriptions of faith, and perceptions of the soul/spirit all attest to both concrete and abstract levels of thinking.

While some children (36%) described God in more concrete terms—seeing God as a person with human characteristics (e.g., God has a big white beard, God wears white clothes)— half of the children (50%) viewed God more abstractly and ascribed God supernatural qualities (e.g., bright light, spirit, invisible). In regards to God's location, many children (59%) relegated God to a particular location, proposing that God lives in a specific place (e.g., the sky), while others (50%) described God as a more elusive and ubiquitous entity that is everywhere at once. Further, some children (20%) claimed God was in their body (e.g., heart, mind, soul)—an abstract manner for interpreting God's location. Indeed, both concrete and abstract interpretations of God suggest that children between the ages of 6 and 11 have the ability to engage in both naive and sophisticated cognitive processes. Perhaps this mixture of abstract and concrete understanding of God is a reflection of the religious and cultural diversity in the study, and how various religions conceptualize God (e.g., Jesus the human son of God, First Nations spirits, Hindu Goddesses).

A child's awareness of the connection between nature and spirituality demonstrates both concrete and abstract thinking. Children (34%) indicated that nature reminded them of God. Some children associated nature with the spiritual experience of admiring God's creation, while others associated God with nature, given that God is seen as the creator (75%). Perceiving God as the creator involves a certain level of abstract thinking, as it leads one to infer intelligent design. Furthermore, some children (27%) even referenced God's transcendent power to

perform miracles. While some children referred to miraculous parables in the Bible, other

children mentioned stories of family members who were miraculously cured of illness.

When children were asked to discuss the term faith, some (30%) struggled to provide a

definition. Others (22%) spoke of faith as believing in God and associated faith with

religiosity/spirituality. Finally, some children (14%) only discussed faith in terms of

interpersonal relationships (e.g., I have faith in you). Although some children indicated

familiarity with the word, most children found the concept abstract and difficult to discuss.

Children showed the ability to think abstractly when asked about the soul/spirit. More

than half of the children (59%) spoke about the soul/spirit as an entity that lives in the body.

Although invisible, children believed that the soul/spirit dwells in the body and continues to live

after death, suggesting that children differentiate between body and spirit/soul. Other children

also spoke of the soul/spirit as a representation of the divine—for example, some children (25%)

believed God reveals himself as a soul/spirit. Clearly, children have the ability to understand the

transcendent and supernatural nature of God and engage abstractly with various spiritual topics.

Children's Spirituality in a Diverse Society

The budding research in the field of spirituality and social-emotional development

reveals that religion impacts social competence; empirical findings have shown that religious

involvement and commitment encourages academic achievement, prosocial behaviour, and

improve self-esteem (Ream & Savin-Williams, 2003). While questions concerning social

competence were not the focus of this study, more than half the children interviewed (66%)

recognized that people from different religious and cultural backgrounds have varying spiritual

beliefs and practices.

Some children expressed pride in their distinct religion and discussed how they can share their special values, beliefs, and traditions with others. While some children expressed that spiritual and religious diversity was normal, others discussed feeling sad when considering others who do not believe in God. Despite varying in nature, this theme encompassed children's awareness of people having different beliefs than their own—demonstrating sensitivity to the diversity of their society. Moreover, children tended to respond to this religious pluralism in a pro-social manner. Although some children expressed being mad or sad because of other's lack of faith, they did not refer to any type of violent behaviour or any desire to forcefully impose their beliefs on others.

Regardless of religion, culture, and spiritual background, most children (78%) mentioned praying to or thinking about God as being important to their spirituality, stating that praying to God or simply thinking about God made them feel good, better, or happy. Similarly, Tamminen (1994) and Mountain (2005) found that prayer plays an important role for children, providing an outlet for expressing feelings. More specifically, Mountain found that prayer was perceived as valuable across a culturally diverse sample of Australian children, suggesting that prayer is vital to spirituality regardless of one's religion or culture. William James (1902/1961) also highlights similarities in spiritual practices among faith traditions: he proposed that different religions have comparable interpretations of religiosity/spirituality, maintaining similar views of the supernatural, such as divine or spirit. Echoing the notion that spirituality has common practices among faith orientations, most children identified prayer as a positive and helpful activity.

Children and Innate Spirituality

Strikingly, a number of parents (28%) described their children as 'not religious at all'. However, few children (5%) explicitly mentioned a disbelief or scepticism about the existence of

the divine. Thus, even lacking religious affiliation and being rated as 'not religious at all', very few children spoke about an overt disbelief in God. Therefore, it is plausible that parents—regardless of religious affiliation—do not provide the most accurate account of their children's ideas about the divine, the value of prayer, and spiritual experiences.

Furthermore, because very few children (5%) voiced uncertainty about God's existence—in spite of parents (28%) rating their children as 'not at all religious'—the notion of intuitive theism merits discussion. As Kelemen (2004) proposed, children may be innately spiritual. In a review, Kelemen found that children have intrinsic tendencies to see the world as a consequence of non-human intelligent design. Kelemen posits that children have an a priori spirituality that enables an understanding of spirituality. The current study's findings suggest that without religious affiliation or upbringing, most children identified elements of spirituality as having value or positive benefit. The notion of spirituality as innate to children merits further exploration, as the current study found that regardless of how 'religious' parents rated their children, most children discussed the importance of spirituality and described their unique engagement in spiritual practices, such as prayer.

Reflexive Stance

Willig (2001) discusses two main types of reflexivity: personal and epistemological. Personal reflexivity emphasizes how assumptions, beliefs, and biases mould research questions and interpretations. Personal reflexivity also prompts a reflection on how studies influence the researchers themselves. Epistemological reflexivity challenges researchers to examine their questions, methodology, and analyses, to explore how their research framework and focus can impact findings. Both personal and epistemological reflexivity will be discussed.

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) highlight two main aspects of reflexive research. The researchers propose that "[…] one is to avoid or minimize naive and problematic elements in research work; the other is to see new and interesting possibilities" (p.332). Ultimately, the purpose of a reflexive section is to discuss rationales and decisions made throughout the analysis, which have had an impact of the findings: as a result, the study becomes transparent (Cutcliffe, 2003). While the reflexive process has shortcomings and flaws, accounting for every idea and thought throughout the qualitative process is unnecessary. However, reflexive engagement ought to be discussed in order to promote a critical self-awareness and transparency in the current study.

Personal reflexivity prompts a critique of how beliefs and experiences influence research, and how the research process can affect the researcher. Throughout the current study, I have kept notes and memos reflecting on my assumptions and beliefs concerning children's spirituality. Being familiar with the field before I began my data collection provided the confidence that spirituality played a significant role in the lives of children. More specifically— as supported by existing research with adolescents and adults—I hypothesized that children experiencing critical challenges, such as illness or a death in the family, would engage with spirituality as a means of coping. Therefore, in the semi-structured interview, I often asked questions concerning the role of spirituality during stressful and difficult times. I may have unintentionally showed feelings of surprise when some children did not use spirituality to cope with stressful challenges and circumstances, given that adults and adolescents use spirituality to cope with difficulties—the conclusion proposed by most studies.

With regards to epistemological reflexivity, I continually sought advice from experts in the field of child/adolescent spirituality and moral development. More specifically, the semi-

structured interviews were created with collaborators of different religious and cultural

backgrounds. Through subsequent revisions and piloting, I am confident that the interview

protocol appealed to a diverse religious, spiritual, and cultural audience, and when necessary,

was modified to accommodate children adhering to different traditions and beliefs. For instance,

before interviewing children I inquired as to their preferred religious/spiritual terms. As a result

of the pilot interview, I became more aware of the range of spiritual terms used across religious

traditions. Therefore, before children were interviewed, they were asked how they referred to

the divine (e.g., Christ, Allah, Baha'u'llah), how they referred to their place of worship (e.g.,

temple, synagogue, church), and if they had any reservations about certain terms (e.g., some

adherents to Orthodox Judaism do not say the word God). Through continual self-examination, I

feel that my research avoided potential pitfalls and sought out creative alternatives.

　　　　To promote epistemological transparency, I had a reliability coder randomly code 25

percent of the interviews over the course of the data collection to ensure that the themes were

grounded in the text. Our inter-rater reliability was between 80 and 100 percent for all

interviews. Notably, coding was a process that took place over several months. Several phases

of coding were conducted to ensure that each transcript was comprehensively reviewed and

coded. On several occasions, the reliability coder and I critically self-assessed the development

of and emergence of new codes, and discussed how to cluster themes.

Limitations

The current study used a qualitative-exploratory approach. The semi-structured

interviews were administered by two graduate students and yielded in-depth information on

children's spiritual experiences. However, the use of focus groups could be useful in gaining

further insight into the unique experiences that children may only share with their peers. Some

participants may have been intimidated by the laboratory and may not have spoken as candidly as they would have if surrounded by other children discussing spirituality. More specifically, having children converse with peers of both the same and different religious groups would yield interesting results.

Future Research and Implications

      School-based implications and considerations. Since children spend most of their day in school, the role of children's spirituality in the classroom deserves further research. Regnerus (2003) proposes that spiritual/religious beliefs and values may impact children's learning and socio-emotional development. Moreover, Barnes and et al. (2000) suggest that spirituality is integral to moral development and serves as a key organizing principle. Based on the current study's results, most children (78%) identified engaging with spirituality by thinking about and praying to God and reported positive feelings. Indeed, more research on the role of children's spirituality is warranted as the moral imperatives unveiled may shape children's attitudes and behaviours—particularly in school settings. A more holistic use of spirituality in education is important, as it may encourage "children's predisposition for meaning and relational consciousness, finding sources to the survival of human dignity and developing a hope education" (Sagberg, 2008, as cited in Bussing et al., 2010, p. 41). Therefore, research should explore the role of children's spirituality—specifically in schools—in order to promote the development of holistic and inclusive educational programs that support spiritual, moral, and social-emotional development.

      Development and validation of children's spirituality measure. The current study highlights the need to better understand children's perceptions of spirituality across different faiths. Likewise, Barnes and et al. (2000) agree that the exploration of spirituality ought to avoid

relying on specific religious traditions to understand a child's spiritual engagement. Barnes et al. propose that future research should focus on developing measures sensitive to the diversity of religious and spiritual experiences:

> Valid and reliable measures of diverse religious and spiritual beliefs, practices, and processes for children and their families must also be developed. These measures may need to be tradition-specific to avoid the bias that can result from assessing one form of spirituality or religion according to the criteria of another. (p. 904)

Similarly, Hill and Pargament (2003) discuss how religiosity and spirituality have relied on unsophisticated and narrow measures, such as church attendance or religious affiliation. Since research in children's spirituality is still in its beginnings, there have yet to be any valid and reliable self-report measures assessing the spiritual and religious experiences of children in the context of cultural diversity (Houskamp et al., 2004) and accounting for differences in religious and spiritual experience remains inadequate (Hill & Pargament, 2003).

Therefore, to best way to provide an account of Canada's religious diversity, a primary goal of this research project was to explore the spiritual experiences of a religious, spiritual, and culturally diverse sample. As such, the current study is a part of larger comprehensive study, which will use the discovered themes to develop items in a child spirituality measure. The themes derived from the interviews will help create a contextually sensitive measure of children's spirituality, which could be used in future research to examine the connections between children's spirituality and social-emotional adjustment, coping, and well-being. Three-hundred participants will be recruited to validate this measure, which is a recommended number for conducting factor analysis (DeVellis, 1991). Subsequent to validation, the children's

measure of spirituality will be used in a study examining the role of spirituality in the lives of children with and without chronic illness.

  Clinical implications and considerations. Themes of praying to God for help were salient in the interview transcripts. Thus, it is plausible that children with chronic illness may pray to God for a cure to their condition or for assistance in coping with their ailment: this area of research is warranted and will use the newly validated measure to assess children's identification with spirituality. For some children, spirituality may play a significant and positive role in their ability to cope with their illness. For others, it may play little or no role, and still for others it may negatively impact (e.g., fears of punishment) their coping abilities (Barnes et al., 2000). Future research ought to focus on knowledge translation in addition to yielding practical benefits in clinical settings. Through the application of ethically-sound knowledge, this future research aims to improve the health of Canadian children by providing more culturally, spiritually, and religiously sensitive health services to children. Ultimately, this study will serve as a stepping stone to future research exploring children with chronic illness and their perceived role of spirituality in their lives.

<center>**Conclusion**</center>

  The current study makes a unique contribution through recognizing children's perceptions of spirituality across diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds. The lack of empirical research in children's spirituality juxtaposed with an increasingly diverse spiritual Canada highlights the importance and timeliness of the current study. Gleaned from voices of the participants, the key themes suggest that children's thoughts and feelings about God, their reasons for prayer, and interpretations of spirituality may influence perceptions of the meaning of life—which surely have an impact in school and clinical settings. Since the majority of children

highlighted the value and usefulness of spirituality in their daily lives (e.g., the value of prayer, praying for help), children's spiritual thoughts, beliefs, and experiences may plays a role in children's social- emotional development, coping, and overall well-being.

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2909.119.3.448

Appendix A

Table 1

Demographic Information: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Participants' Ethnicity (%)
South Asian	11%
Canadian/Irish/Scottish	8%
Arab	7%
Jewish	7%
Indian, Canadian	5%
Canadian/Irish/English	5%
Armenian	3%
Jewish/Romanian-Moroccan	3%
Italian/German	3%
Iranian/Persian	3%
Czech-Hungarian	3%
Iranian/Persian	3%
Russian	3%
Canadian/Italian/German	3%
Canadian/French/Irish/Scottish/English	3%
African American	3%
Latin American/French Canadian	3%
English, Middle Eastern, Scottish, Canadian	3%

Canadian/French/Scottish/English	3%
French Canadian/Lebanese	1.5%
Canadian	1.5%
Aboriginal	1.5%
Irish/German/Jamaican	1.5%
Scandinavian/Acadian	1.5%
Indian/Arab/Persian/French/Belgian	1.5%
Italian	1.5%
Canadian, Black, Jamaican, Czechoslovakian	1.5%
Canadian/Irish/Italian/Scottish/English	1.5%
Black	1.5%
Scottish/German/Lebanese	1.5%
Canadian/Polish/Scottish	1.5%

Table 2

Demographic Information: Religious Affiliation

Religion	Children's Religious Affiliation (%)
Roman Catholic	23%
No Religion	22%
Jewish	11%
Hindu	9%
Baha'i	9%
Muslim	8%
United Christian	5%
Armenian Apostolic	3%
Sikh	3%
Evangelical Christian	3%
Eastern Orthodox	2%
Lutheran	2%

Table 3

Demographic Information: Participants' Reported Income

Income	Participants' Reported Income (%)
0	5 %
10 000- 14 000	2 %
15 000- 19 000	3 %
20 000 – 24 000	0 %
25 000 – 29 000	5 %
30 000 – 34 000	4 %
35 000 – 39 000	4 %
40 000 – 49 000	6 %
50 000 – 59 000	13 %
60 000 – 69 000	5 %
70 000- 79 000	11 %
>80 000	39 %
Unanswered	3 %

Table 4

Themes and Percentages and Selected Quotations

Themes and Percentage	Selected Quotations (Participant Age and Gender)
Feeling Good/Happy/Better because of Praying /Thinking about God (78%)	Well it makes me feel happy because, like, somebody's actually caring to help me when other people can't. (female, 6 years 7 months)
	I just feel like happy, and it just makes me feel better. (male,10 years 6 months)

<div align="center">God's Location</div>

Inside body (20%)	He lives with everyone, even if they're dead, like alive and dead, and all those people, everyone, cause he's in everyone's heart. (female, 9 years 11 months)
Specific Place (59%)	[He is] a person in the sky and He has binoculars. (male, 10 years 5months)

Everywhere (50%)

God's everywhere. He's in your heart, he's in your brain, he's everywhere around you. (male, 8 years 1 month)

God Helps
_____

God Helps Me—General (41%)

He'll help you in your time of need. (male, 11 years 5 months)

God Helps Me—Indirectly (59%)

He can give me the courage to do good, but he can't really teach me how to do it exactly. He can't come down and open my math book and say so you add this together and then you subtract that. (male, 11 years 9 months)

Well, God, he could like, help you a bit, but you have to do most of the talk, or the job. Like, you have to listen more, or whatever your wish is, you have to get better at it. And then if ever you're having any difficulty, well Allah will help. (female, 6 years, 7 months)

God Helps Me—Directly (39%)

Somebody in my class treated me like singe, like monkey, 'cause my last name is "Sing", […] and that's why I didn't feel very good and....every time they started like that there and I didn't like that […] God listened to me and he did make stop it for me. (female, 10 years 10 months)

[…] my dad had a stroke, and I went to the synagogue and   I went on my knees and started praying and praying and praying and after my dad did survive. So, I felt like God has helped me. (female, 11 years 4 months)

God the Creator (75%)

God created the big bang to make a world, a new one. And he created the world and put people on it. He did everything. (male, 10 years 5 months)

God Listens (67%)

Well, I know. I have this sub-subconscious saying to me—I

can't hear the voice, I don't have schizophrenia but I do feel it. I know He's there and I know He'll be there. (male, 11 years 5 months)

Like, if... it's a bit weird but if you go and you feel sad and you want something to tell, you just talk to yourself and He can hear. (female, 10 years 5 months)

In the most difficult time I do pray, I do know He's there. He's going to listen to me even if I don't actually say it out loud. He can hear my thoughts. (male, 11 years 5 months)

Different People Have Different Beliefs (66%)

[...] you can believe in whatever you want. I think He exists, you can think that He doesn't. He can have another God, like if he doesn't believe in God he can believe in somebody else that resembles God for him, or he can

just not believe in God period. It doesn't really matter; it's up to him to choose what he believes in. (male, 11 years 5 months)

Because she told me that their God was named God and mine was named Allah. [...] I am the only one in my class. So it's like they get to teach me stuff about their religion and I get to teach them stuff about my religion. (female, 11 years 5 months)

Soul/Spirit
_____

Spirit/soul lives inside and lives after death (59%)

It's a known fact in my religion that the body's like the cage and the soul is like the bird. Once the cage gets broken the soul is free. (male, 8 years 7 months)

Spirit/Soul is God (25%)

I bet they would think He's this guy, not necessarily a physical object, just a spirit floating around. I don't really have an explanation. (male, 11 years 5 months)

Prayer Location

Praying Anywhere (45%)

I can do it wherever I want but you have to be reverent at all times. (male, 11 years 5 months) Anywhere; in the corner at school, at home, outside—anywhere! (male, 9 years 9 months)

Praying in a Specific Place (52%)

Well, most of the times when I go to bed, before I go to sleep, we pray some prayers—the bedroom. (female, 6 years 11 months)

Description of God

God is like a Person /Human (36%)

He had long, long hair. He died because we have a "croix" (cross), He had a white like skirt, kind of skirt. (female, 10 years 5 months) We're like the same. We both care

about stuff… poor people and kids who—who lost their parents. (female, 11 years 5 months)

God is Supernatural (50%)

Well he's different than a normal person because […] well normal person didn't create the world. (male, 11 years 11 months)

He's bigger than a human, he can listen—he istens from far too. And he's, and he's not, you can't see him like a human. (male, 7 years 4 months)

I don't really know because like my Hebrew teacher always told me that like god isn't like a person so he's kinda like a spirit. (female, 9 years 0 months)

Thanking God (36%)

I thank him for my health, my food, my cat, my house, my big backyard. (female, 7 years 8 months)

Coincidences really. Whenever a certain thing happens like I ride a bike and I accidentally crash and I survive, I say …oh my gosh, thank-you God that I didn't die. Thank-you God that I didn't break my arms or my legs. (male, 11 years 5 months)

Okay, I always say thank you for keeping my family safe, and help my grandma not have cancer anymore, and then Amen. (male, 9 years 9 months)

God Watches (34%)

[He is] helpful, watches over you, kind of like a guard. (female, 11 years 0 months)

I guess he watches everything. (male, 10 years 7 months)

God and Nature (34%)

Peace. Peace on earth. When you

go in to a forest or sit by a lakeside and see a beautiful view you'll say to yourself –God did an amazing job of landscaping. He should have gotten a job with that. (male, 11 years 5 months)

Well sometimes I see things inside the trees and all the leaves make a face or something. Maybe it's the face of God sometimes, sometimes no. (male, 9 years 11 months)

Cause God like made nature. (male, 7 years 4 months)

Praying to God when Feeling Bad (sadness, loneliness, or death) (48%)

Sometimes when I'm all alone I talk to him, cause when my mom's in the shower and my dad's at soccer, my sister's at dance, I can't talk to my mom or I don't want to, so I talk to God, and I say oh how are you doing, or what's your favourite color, or what do you wear or something? (female, 8 years 6 months)

God and Nature (34%)

When I'm like sad, and I don't feel good, and I just need somebody to talk I just speak to God, or mom. (female, 10 years 9 months)

Because I don't really like to say my sadness with other people but I know God, He's going to keep it to himself. (female, 10 years 5 months)

When I'm sad sometimes that my grandparents die I just say dear God, I'm sad that my grandparents die and I don't like it a lot. (female, 8 years 9 months)

Peace. Peace on earth. When you go in to a forest or sit by a lakeside and see a beautiful view you'll say to yourself –God did an amazing job of landscaping. He should have gotten a job with that. (male, 11 years 5 months)

Well sometimes I see things inside

the trees and all the leaves make a face or something. Maybe it's the face of God sometimes, sometimes no. (male, 9 years 11 months)

Cause God like made nature. (male, 7 years 4 months)

Body and Prayer (33%)

Close their eyes, tune out everything else. (male, 11 years 0 months)

Praying you get, like, on your knees and you say, and you do that sign I don't know what it is. Then when you talk you don't need to do a lot of moves. You just sit down and you can be wherever you want and just talk to Him. (female, 10 years, 5 months)

They go on their knees and put their hands together and close their eyes. (male, 7 years 3 months)

Description of Faith

Faith—believing in God (22%)

Um, it means trusting without

knowing. (male, 11 years 9 months)

[…] faith as in a certain religion like the Baha'I faith. Me, I use the word faith less in the religious term, like, "I have faith in you", but certain ways of saying faith is like, "the way, the creed" …that's the way I think it would be. (male, 11 years 5 months)

Faith—do not know what it means (30%)

I've heard of spirit, faith not as much. Faith is like, something that you're, I don't know. It's like you're... I don't know. I've heard of it but, I don't know what it means. (male, 10 years 6 months)

Well, I don't know about faith that much. (female, 6 years 11 months)

Faith—believing in yourself/others (14%)

Faith means that if you're like a rock star or something you have lots of faith in you that you could raise money for charity. (male, 9 years 11 months)

Miracles (27%)

Uh, things like creating the earth for us, opening the red sea for us, other kinds of miracles like that. (male, 7 years 3 months)

God and Wishes (23%)

Sometimes I say, like I wish that I had a horse because horse is my favourite kind of hairy kind of animal. (female, 8 years 6 months) Well I like to talk to him before I go to sleep because in the morning you start fresh and he has given you that wish that you had asked for. That's how you can realize when you wake up and start fresh and have an energy in your body that you feel like- if you feel like your wish has been answered than maybe he has answered your wish and that's why you talk to him at night. (female, 11 years 3 months)

Belief/ Non-Belief in God

I believe in God (19%)

Like if I have Hanukah like I do it

I don't believe in God/ I'm not sure I believe in God (5%)

straight or Porum I do it right. I think its kind of telling him we believe. (male, 11 years 6 months) Some people think he's fake- but he ain't. He's real. (female, 9 years 9 months)

Well I don't really believe in God but my friends God is like a Catholic or a Christian God like, but that's like their God and they go to church and if they have like a wish they'll ask Him to grant it and sometimes ask how they pay you back and yeah. (female, 10 years 8 months)

I don't believe in Him that much but I think He's real [...] what I mean by that I think He's a little real I'm not so sure. (female, 8 years 6 months)

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview: Children's Perceptions of Spirituality

We are doing a study to find out what kids think. In this study, we are interviewing children about different aspects of their beliefs and experiences. We are going to ask you some questions and we want to know what you think. These questions will be about what you believe in and how you feel. We will ask you what you think about different things like what makes you happy, sad, and how you feel about God.

There are no right or wrong answers; we just want to know what you think. If you do not have an answer to a question you can say: "I don't know". If you decide that you don't want to answer questions anymore we can stop. Anytime you want to stop, just say so and we will stop. If you want to take a break, we can do that too.

We are going to record what you say on audio tape so that we don't forget all the important things you say. We will not play this tape to anyone else and everything you say will be confidential. 'Confidential' means that your name will not be given to anyone; your name will not be written on anything either. Please remember that you have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions. This means that you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to. You can also stop the interview whenever you wish. Do you want to participate in this study?

Ice Breaker: "Tell me Who I am!" I stick a piece of paper on my forehead with a word (i.e Barney, Winnie the Pooh, Aladdin). The child will be asked to give me hints to help me determine what the piece of paper says. This will encourage conversation at the beginning of the interview. The child will also be asked to tell a story to encourage narrative in the interview. Potential stories 'Tell me about a fun time you had with your family? Tell me about your last birthday party? Tell me about a time when you were really happy?

Semi-Structured Interview

Theme: IMPORTANT THINGS **"Now we are going to talk about some things that you think are really important!"** 1. What things do you care about the most? 2. What makes you feel important and special? 3. What as the happiest moments of your life? 4. What was the saddest moment of your life?	Prompts: 1. Why do you think these things are important? 2. Can you tell me about a time that you felt special? 3. Who were these happiest moments with? What did you do? Where did you go? 4. Can you tell me how being sad make you feel? How did you feel better? Who made you feel better?
Theme: MEANING OF GOD **"Now we are going to talk about the word God" (replace God with child's word of choice)** 1. Can you tell me about the word God? 2. What do you think about God? 3. What do other people think about God? 4. What do your parents think about God? 5. Can you tell me a story about an experience you had with God?	Prompts: 1. Where did you hear the word God? Who said the word God? 2. Why does God mean these things to you? 3. Does everybody think of God the same way?
Theme: GOD AND FEELINGS **"Now we are going to talk about how God makes you feel"** 1. Tell me how you feel when you think about God? 2. Tell me about a time when God made you feel something?	Prompts: 1. Do these feelings make you feel happy, sad, or something else?

Theme: **PERCEPTIONS AND GOD**	Prompts:
"Now we are going to talk about what God means to you and how you "see" or "imagine" God" 1. Tell me what God looks like? What does God feel like/smell like? 2. Tell me about a time when you have talked to God? Could other people hear you and God talking? Why/why not? 3. How is God different or the same as a person?	1. Why does God mean that to you? 2. Does God mean different things to other people? 3. Does God look like us? Or does he look different? 4. How did talking to God make you feel? 5. What makes God different or the same?
Theme: **GOD AND SPACE** **"Now we are going to talk about where you can find God"** 1. Where do you talk or pray to God? 2. Where do you go if you want to find God? 3. Have you ever been anywhere special with God? 4. What is the best time to talk to God? 5. Where does God live? Who does God live with?	Prompts: 1. Where are these places? Are you alone or with other people? 2. Where were you? How did you get there? 3. Is it easy or hard to find God? 4. When are these times? In what places is it hard to find God? 5. Is God always there? 6. Does God live close or far away?
Theme: **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD** **"Now we are going to talk about your friendship with God"** 1. How do you know God? 2. How does God know who you are? How does God know who your friends or family are? 3. When you talk or pray to God, what do you talk to God about? 4. Tell me about a time when you	Prompts: 1. Can you see or talk with God? 2. Does God know your name? 3. Is your relationship good, bad or something different? 4. Does God make you feel happy, sad or something else? 5. Do you say things to God that you would not say to anyone else? 6. Are there special things you say to see/talk/find God?

have told God a secrets or something special? 5. When you need to talk to God, what do you do? 6. What words do you think of when you think of God?	7. Do you go to a special place? Do you say a special word? 8. Why do you do this? 9. Why do you do this?
Theme: GOD AND NATURE 1. What things around you remind you of God? 2. What things in nature remind you of God? 3. Tell me about the things in nature that you feel close to?	Prompts: 1. Why do these things remind you of God? 2. What are these things? Can you tell me about them? 3. What are these things?
Theme: GOD AND HELP **"Now we are going to talk about some times that we might need help in our lives"** 1. Lots of people find certain things hard in life. Can you tell me about a time you found something hard? 2. What can God do anything about the things in your life that are hard? 3. Lots of people feel scared, angry or sad sometimes. Can you tell me about a time when you felt scared, angry or sad? 4. What can God do anything to help you feel less scared, angry or sad? 5. What can your friends, family or people in your community do to help you?	Prompts: 1. What about these things make them hard or difficult? 2. What can God do about the hard things? What can't God do? 3. Can you tell me about a time you felt scared, angry or sad? 4. What does God do/not do to help you? 5. What kinds of things do they do to help you?
Theme: PRAYER AND GOD **"Now we are going to talk about praying- can you tell me what you think about praying?"** 1. What does someone do when he/she prays? 2. Why do people pray?	 1. Can you show me what someone does when they pray? 2. What do people pray about? 3. What do you pray about? 4. Show me what you do when you pray? 5. Do you pray in the morning,

3. Do you every pray? Why or why not?
4. What do you do when you pray?
5. When do you pray? Why?
6. Where do pray? Why?
7. How do you feel when you pray?
8. Does God listen when you pray? How do you know?
9. Do you say anything special when you pray to God? Do you read from any books or say special prayers?
10. What do you do with your body when you pray?

afternoon or evening?
6. Can you pray anywhere? Or only in certain places?
7. Do you feel good, bad or something else?
8. How do you know God is listening?

Theme: GOD AND RELIGION

"Now we are going to talk about religion- have you ever heard that word? What do you know about that word?"

1. Have you ever gone to ******e.g. Church, temple, synagogue)?
2. How does going to ***** make you feel?
3. How often do you go to *****?
4. Who goes with you to *****?
5. What do you know about religion? Who told you about this?
6. How does going to ***** make you feel about God?
7. Why do you go to*****?
8. How is church different or the same as other places?

Prompts:

| Themes: GOD, FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY

"Now we are going to talk about some special words"

1. Can you tell me about faith? What does it mean?
2. Tell me a story about a time that you had faith?
3. Can you tell me about the word Spirit?
4. Can you tell me about a time you talked about spirit?
5. What does 'spirit' make you think about?
6. Where is a spirit? | Prompts:

1. Can you explain that more?

2. Why or why not?

3. Where do you see faith?
4. Can you feel/see/hear faith?
5. Where have you heard the word spirit?
6. Tell me about a time when you talked about spirit?
7. Tell me some words that you think about when you hear the word spirit?
8. What does a spirit look like? Do you have a spirit?
9. Is a spirit inside you? Or outside you? |
| **Theme: GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

"Now we are going to talk about God in your everyday life!"

1. How many times do you think about God in your day? Do you ever talk to God at school? If yes, what do you talk about?
2. How does God help you with everyday things (like homework, friendships at school, problems at home?
3. How do you talk about God with your family?
4. How do you talk about God with your friends?
5. How does God help you with problems in your life?
6. How is your life different or the same because of God?
7. How does it make you feel to know that other people don't believe in God? | 1. What did you talk about with God?
2. Do you think about God a lot, or not a lot?
3. Can you pray to go anywhere, or only in certain places.
4. How does God help you or not help you?
5. How often do you talk about God with your family?
6. How often do you talk about God with your friends |

Appendix C

McGill

Consent form

Dear Parent/Legal Tutor

We are members of the McGill Education Child Development Research Team. We are presently conducting a study and wonder if you would give permission for you and your child to participate. The purpose of the study is to examine children's spirituality and their conceptions of various themes related to spirituality.

What would I/my child have to do?

This study involves interviewing the child using open-ended questions and having a conversation about children's feelings/concepts of different aspects of spirituality. For instance, children may be asked questions such as "What does praying mean to you? How do you experience God in your daily life? What things are most important to you? Describe the worst moment in your life up to this point? What kinds of things do you think of/do to make yourself feel better? Describe the best moment in your life?" Children will be free to answer whatever way they like and if they wish to stop at anytime in the interview, we will stop the study. In addition, we will ask you to fill out a short demographics questionnaire. This study will occur over one session at the McGill Education Child Development Research Lab and last between 30 and 60 minutes depending upon the child. Your child will receive a small toy for participating in the study and you will receive recompense for parking.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you or your child may withdraw from the session at any time. The risks to participants are minimal. If, however, your child experiences any negative feelings during the procedure, we will stop the study immediately. You and your child are not required to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or you do not wish to answer. While there are no expected benefits for individual children, it is expected that this research will help psychologists understand the role of spirituality in children's social adjustment.

The purpose of this study is to explore general patterns of responses among groups of children of different ages rather than the response of any particular child. The results of the study will be shared at academic conferences and in peer-reviewed journals as well as on our website. In all cases, the responses of participants will be kept confidential and anonymous. All information and data collected will be protected for confidentiality by assigning a random identification code to each participant. Data will be kept in a locked cabinet at our McGill research lab which can only be accessed by our research team. The session will be audio taped and will only be reviewed by members of our research team. The audio tapes will be used to accurately record children's answers. We will not play the audiotapes to anyone else without your written permission. If you have any questions or concerns about your/your child's rights or welfare as a participant in this study please contact the McGill Research Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact Kelsey Moore (514) 554-9807
Thank you for your cooperation.
Sincerely,
Dr. Victoria Talwar, Dr. Jeeseon Park, Dr. Sandra Bosacki and Kelsey Moore
_____

Yes. I, _____agree to participate in the study and give permission for my child
_____ to participate in the research as described above.
Signature of Parent/Legal Tutor: _____Date: _____
Birth date of child: ____ / _____/ _____   (D/M/Y)   Home Phone #_____
Yes, I agree to allow my child's interview to be audio taped and understand that these recordings will be only used by the research team. _____(Signature). No, I do not agree to allow my child to participate and be audio taped _____ (Signature).

Appendix D

McGill **Demographics Questionnaire**

Questionnaire for Parents
(adapted from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children,
Statistics Canada Human Resources Development Canada)

Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and only used for statistical purposes. While

participation is voluntary, your assistance is essential if the results are to be accurate.

Thank you.

1. What is your child or children's name, date of birth, and sex?

    Child 1: Name_____ Sex: Male   Female

        Date of Birth (D/M/Y): _____

    Child 2: Name_____ Sex: Male   Female

        Date of Birth (D/M/Y): _____

    Child 3: Name_____ Sex: Male   Female

        Date of Birth (D/M/Y): _____

    Child 4: Name_____ Sex: Male   Female

        Date of Birth (D/M/Y): _____

2. Please list a) the number of adults (18 years and older) living in your household _____

    Relation to you:_____

    b) the number of people 6-17 years of age in household_____

    Relation to you:_____

    c) the number of people younger than 6 years of age in household _____

Relation to you:_____

3. To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did your child or children's ancestors belong?

____ Canadian	_____American	_____ Chinese
_____ French	_____ Latin	_____ English
____ Jewish	_____ Polish	_____ German
_____ Portuguese	_____ Scottish	_____ South Asian
_____ Irish	_____ Inuit/Eskimo	_____ Black (African American)
____ Italian	_____ Mexican	_____ Arab
____ Ukrainian	_____ Metis	____ Dutch (Netherlands)

If ancestry is not listed please specify, _____

4. What, if any is your child or children's religion?

____ No religion	____ Hindu
____ Roman Catholic	____ Jehovah's Witness
____ United Church	____ Sikh
____ Anglican	____ Presbyterian
____ Lutheran	____ Baptist
____ Eastern Orthodox	____ Jewish
____ Islam (Muslim)	____ Buddhist

If not listed please specify, _____

5. Do you think your family is _____ very religious?

_____ somewhat religious?

_____ not religious at all?

6. Other than special occasions (such as weddings, funerals or baptisms), how often did your child or children attend religious services or meetings in the past 12 months?

____ At least once a week

____ At least once a month

____ At least 3 or 4 times a year

____ At least once a year

____ Not at all

7. Please list ALL languages spoken at home _____

_____

8. What is your marital status?

_____ single (never married)   _____dating a significant other, not living together

_____ living with significant other   _____married, since when (date: D/M/Y)_____

_____ common law   _____separated, since when (date: D/M/Y)_____

_____ divorced   _____ widowed, since when (date: D/M/Y) _____

9. What is the highest level of education that you have attained?

____ High school diploma

____ Some trade, technical or vocational school, or business college

_____ **Some community college, CEGEP, or nursing school**

_____ **Some University**

_____ **Diploma or certificate from trade, technical or vocational school, or business school**

_____ **Diploma or certificate from community college, CEGEP, or nursing school**

_____ **Bachelor or undergraduate degree, or teacher's college (e.g. B.A., B. SC. LL.B.)**

_____ **Master's (e.g. M.A., M.SC., M.ED.)**

_____ **Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry (e.g. M.D.,**

      D.D.S., D.M.D., D.V.M., O.D.)

_____ **Earned Doctorate (e.g. PH.D., D.SC., D.ED.)**

_____ **If other please specify.**

10. If applicable, what is the highest level of education that <u>your partner</u> has attained?

_____ **High school diploma**

_____ **Some trade, technical or vocational school, or business college**

_____ **Some community college, CEGEP, or nursing school**

_____ **Some University**

_____ **Diploma or certificate from trade, technical or vocational school, or business school**

_____ **Diploma or certificate from community college, CEGEP, or nursing school**

_____ **Bachelor or undergraduate degree, or teacher's college (e.g. B.A., B. SC. LL.B.)**

_____ **Master's (e.g. M.A., M.SC., M.ED.)**

_____ **Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry (e.g. M.D.,**

      D.D.S., D.M.D., D.V.M., O.D.)

_____ **Earned Doctorate (e.g. PH.D., D.SC., D.ED.)**

_____ **If other please specify.**

11. What do you consider to be your current main activity?

_____ **Caring for family**

_____ **Working for pay or profit**

_____ **Caring for family and working for pay or profit**

_____ **Recovering from illness/on disability**

_____ **Looking for work**

_____ **Retired**

_____ **If other please specify.**

12. If applicable, what do you consider to be <u>your partner's</u> current main activity?

_____ **Caring for family**

_____ **Working for pay or profit**

_____ **Caring for family and working for pay or profit**

_____ **Recovering from illness/on disability**

_____ **Looking for work**

_____ **Retired**

_____ **If other please specify.**

8. Can you estimate in which of the following groups your <u>household</u> income falls?

_____ **Less than $20, 000? Please specify,**

_____ **Less than $5, 000?**

_____ **$5,000 or more ($5, 000 to $9, 999)?**

_____ **$10, 000 or more ($10, 000 to $14, 999)?**

_____ **$15, 000 or more ($15, 000 to $19, 999)?**

_____ **$20, 000 or more? Please specify,**

_____ **Less than $25, 000 ($20, 000 to $24, 999)?**

_____ **$25, 000 or more ($25, 000 to $29, 999)?**

_____ **$30, 000 or more ($30, 000 to $34, 999)?**

_____ **$35, 000 or more ($35, 000 to $39, 999)?**

_____ **$ 40, 000 or more? Please specify,**

_____ **Less than $50, 000 ($40, 000 to $49, 999)?**

_____ **$50, 000 to $59, 999?**

_____ **$60, 000 to $ 69, 999**

_____ **$ 70, 000 to $ 79, 999?**

_____ **$ 80,000 or more?**

_____ **No income**

Appendix E

ATTENTION PARENTS!!!

| Children's Diverse Voices: Spirituality and its Relationship with Identity and Social Adjustment |

Child development researchers at McGill University are looking for children to participate in research studies examining their understanding of spirituality and their social adjustment.

We are looking for children aged 7-11 years to participate in our studies.

The study involves interviewing children and parents filling out questionnaires. The study is one session and will take 30-60 minutes depending on the child.

Parking will be compensated.
A small toy will be awarded.

If you are interested, please call us at 398-8059 for more information.
Appointments are made to fit your schedules.

McGill Eduation Child Development Research Team:
Dr. Victoria Talwar
Dr. Jeeseon Park
Dr. Sandra Bosacki
Kelsey Moore