

### **How is this class different from the Childbirth Class offered at the hospital?**

This is an active class that prepares for the process of birth, delivery and the postpartum period. Through a variety of activities you will learn to be an informed consumer that participates actively in care decisions instead of a patient who accepts what is offered. You will learn how to make informed choices, how to advocate for yourself and effectively communicate your needs to your birth team. You will learn how to utilize a variety of comfort measures including breathing, relaxation exercises, environment and physical comfort techniques. You will learn how to successfully utilize potential interventions, pain medication, and alternative methods of pain management. This is a unique and innovative class that prepares couples for the immense changes a new baby brings to a family and incorporates postpartum planning to help alleviate some of the early stress of the postpartum period.

### **Is this class for those who are only interested in unmedicated childbirth?**

No! Holistic Childbirth explores a variety of birthing options with the understanding that each woman has unique desires when it comes to choosing their childbirth experience. The class allows participants to engage in a variety of activities and exercises that will provide assistance in determining which options fit best for your personal birth plan. You will enter the birth experience confident and capable of matching the unique challenge of your labor.

### **What does Holistic Childbirth really mean?**

Childbirth is a multi-dimensional experience; it impacts our being on every level: physical, emotional, social/cultural, and spiritual. Much of my experience has shown that many programs focused on the physical experience of labor with limited attention to the other aspects of birth. Using my knowledge in Human Services and my experience working with pregnant and postpartum families, I developed a curriculum that addresses these issues. By approaching the experience of childbirth from a multi-dimensional approach, clients are able to create realistic expectations of the experience, their team and themselves and are able to adapt to changing situations. While research has not been done on this particular method of teaching, research consistently indicates that unrealistic expectations are related to depression and anxiety during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Past clients have said:

“Thanks so much for the childbirth classes. I almost made it without the epidural, but decided I needed it about 45 minutes before L. was born, after 30 minutes of pushing. His birth was a wonderful experience—I felt prepared, confident, and in control, and L. was alert and ready to bond with us.” M.

“Class was fun.” C.

“What did you like most about the classes? Extensive amount of information, practicing labor and what if’s, birth plan, and personalized classes.” L.

“Great job! Very informative.” G.

**What do you mean by spiritual preparation? Is this class geared to a specific religion or faith?**

By spiritual preparation, this class focuses on your connection to a universal or higher power. No specific religion is discussed and no scriptures are read. This class is designed to help you embrace your unique beliefs and ideas and how they pertain to your birthing experience. We do discuss how some religious practices may be utilized in the process of labor and delivery, however, these are suggestions and it is up to the couple to decide which techniques and ideas will work best for them.

**At what stage in my pregnancy should I take the class?**

This class can be begun anytime after the 22<sup>nd</sup> week of pregnancy. Since relaxation exercises and comfort techniques take practice to learn and perfect we recommend taking classes early. You will be provided a manual with handouts and worksheets to help in your practice and memory of the information you learn in class.

**How can I prepare for class?** Be sure to dress comfortable in clothing that will stretch and allow for flexibility. Be sure to bring a pillow for relaxation exercises. Participants are encouraged to read “The Complete Book of Pregnancy and Childbirth” by Sheila Kitzinger prior to the first class session. Check out our recommended reading list for other great titles about childbirth and newborns.

**About the Instructor:**

Jamie has a Master's degree in Human Services and has developed a holistic approach to childbirth and postpartum. Jamie has 4 years of experience as a birth doula and 3 years experience teaching childbirth education and newborn care. She has worked with couples seeking a variety of birth experiences including unmedicated, medicated, cesarean section, and vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC). She is an ALACE and DONA trained Birth Doula, ALACE Certified Childbirth Educator, Happiest Baby on the Block Educator, and recently earned a Certificate in Perinatal Mood Disorders.