

Life changes for first-time mom

There was no question about it. When Amanda and Nick Barrick married in April 2007, they were ready to begin a family.

“We dated for such a long time,” said Mrs. Barrick, the youth minister and director of religious education at St. Agnes, Catonsville. “We knew we wanted kids right away.”

The young couple didn’t have to wait long, as they welcomed their son, Ben, to the world about 10 months later.

As it does for many women, life changed when the 24-year-old became a mom.

Although she once walked or ran as quickly as she liked, she began walking slowly to avoid tripping with the baby. Other worries began to cross her mind every now and then.

“The second we had Ben, it was like a switch went off,” she said. “Every night every mom checks to make sure (the baby is) still breathing. It’s just amazing how many awful thoughts pop into your head.”

Despite friends’ warnings that she wouldn’t get any sleep while taking care of a newborn, Mrs. Barrick said Ben kept a good sleep schedule. She described her son, now 9 months old, as mild-tempered, adding that he only cries when something is wrong.

The 2006 graduate of College of Notre Dame of Maryland was also glad to have a little help during her transition to motherhood. Her mother-in-law, who once worked as a nurse, stayed with the young couple when Ben first came home.

When Mrs. Barrick had some problems feeding Ben, her mother-in-law was there to help.

“She didn’t want to be pushy. She knows a lot of mothers-in-law try to jump in,” Mrs. Barrick said of Mary Kay Barrick, who is the office manager at St. Agnes. “She was really sincerely helpful.”

Amanda Barrick advises other first-time moms to ask for help when they need it.

"I know I've never had a problem asking questions," she said. "And I think that's key because I know you want to take it on and you'll learn as you go, but it's helpful."

Along with changes, motherhood has also brought an important lesson about God's love, which Mrs. Barrick described as the most rewarding part about being a mom.

"I was just sitting there realizing how much I loved (Ben)," she said, knowing that he would never do anything that would make her stop loving him.

So the first time Ben pushed away from her, she felt a sting - even though she didn't take it personally - because she wanted to spend time with him and he wanted to do something else.

"One day it just hit me," she said.

Mrs. Barrick finally understood something she had always known: Just as she loves her son, God loves her, and when she felt hurt after her son pushed away, God is hurt when we push away.

"It just made me understand how much God loves us," she said. "My 9-month-old little genius taught me that."