

Recently Released™ in Operation for Over Two Years at Bradenton, FL



Recently Released™ in Bradenton, FL is a joint effort of FIT and Journey Assembly of God, where FIT President Don Pratt is Care Pastor. The church donates classroom space for the two-hour sessions on Thursday nights as well as the services of Pastor Pratt. The church fully supports the FIT interdenominational focus. As a result, those in addiction recovery or recently released can find a mentor to attend a church of their choice. Both Protestant and Catholic volunteers work side by side on a regular basis. How has this worked out? Beautifully. There is such a spirit of unity as everyone focuses on the true focal point – Jesus Christ. In the jails and prisons, there are no denominational barriers, and there are none here, either. This makes for effective ministry. The whole is truly greater than the sum of the parts. Since February, 2008, 230 individuals have registered with this group and there have been 62 certificates issued, representing 1052 contact hours. We have been pleased as graduation certificates have satisfied probation requirements as well as being used in regaining custody of children.

The photos in this issue are from the four classes going on simultaneously at the June 10, 2010 meeting. In the photo above, Don Batterman, second from left (Grandpa), is facilitator of the Handling Loss and Grief Unit. In this group are leaders in training and those learning to live “grown up” Christian lives. At right, Melissa is leading a Godly Parenting session.





Another room...Another class. Above is second Godly Parenting Class. This class responds to the need for a different lesson from the same unit. Clients from local (Manatee and Sarasota) county jails and programs continue where they left off upon release. A fourth room (below) is used for the Free to Grow unit. These folks have been regulars for a long time. All told, the individuals in these photos make up the bulk of the active volunteer staff of the Sarasota region. They regularly minister at the Manatee County Jail, Sarasota County Jail, and Recently Released™.

The meetings are more than just meetings. The joint opening sessions features testimonies. On the day of these photos, for example, a female said she received Christ in the Sarasota County Jail through our program and that she might be dead now if she had not had her life turned around. The next person to speak was a male who said the same thing happened to him (at the Sarasota County Jail). He also stated he might have been dead by now. Aside from testimonies, leaders conduct the business of distributing graduation certificates and materials for jail ministries.

