

A New Facilitator's Insight

Hello, my name is Ashley Darrow and I am a new facilitator of the Family Integrity Training program. I was introduced to the program through Victory Church in Lakeland, Florida. After expressing interest, I was contacted by the leaders of the ministry. They walked me through everything and set me up with the training course. The training was thorough and highly informative. The course leaders covered the training books, how to purchase materials, how to facilitate a class and answered the many questions I had. After the initial course, I was excited about this new ministry opportunity and received a certificate shortly after in the mail. Next, I had to go through the application process, background screening and orientation with the Florida Department of Corrections. This took about a month but once everything was completed, I was ready to begin.



I have always felt a tug toward incarcerated people. Growing up, I had several family members in and out of jail and even some that wound up in prison for various reasons. I myself also had an experience in a jail cell. When I was in my early twenties after a life threatening medical emergency and a month long stay in the hospital, I found myself introduced to narcotic pain medication. Due to prolonged prescribed use, I quickly became addicted and left wanting more. I spent 6 years in an addiction to narcotic pain killers and it wreaked complete havoc in my life. However, through that experience and the intervention of a loving God, I gave my life to Jesus Christ. Learning to live a Christian life hasn't been easy. I have had to learn a great deal about life with God and how to overcome the barriers of my past. I grew up in a dysfunctional family and had little life skills. I needed help with how to live a sober life, how to be a Godly parent and role model for others. There was a lot stacked against me. I could have easily looked at my ash heap of a life and think, "there's no way I can recover from all of this." However, I kept pushing forward and being willing to grow and learn from other people. God sent beautiful servants to help teach me how live a Godly life and be more than an overcomer!

Because of my personal experiences, my heart is for the lost, the hurting, the broken, the person that feels they have everything in life stacked against them but want an opportunity to change. They need God to send a person to help teach them about how to have a victorious life in Christ. I believe that is exactly what the FIT program aims to do and I am honored to now be a part of the life changing ministry it offers to such people!

To be honest, when I went into the all male prison with other volunteers for the first time I was very intimidated. I saw the high fencing and so much razor wire my heart was pounding. I had many preconceived ideas about prison, mostly from TV and felt nervous about facilitating a class to all men. I felt a bit of fear as I checked in with the guards, went through the metal detector, had to take off certain items of clothing and let them pat me down. As I walked in the chapel classroom and began greeting the men, something changed. I was overcome with a sense of purpose. These men were polite, many were hungry to learn more about God and were just grateful we were there! I realized even deeper that these men are God's children. These men are God's sons and deserve honor and respect. They are royalty and need someone to tell them they're loved. They need an opportunity to learn and grow as individuals and as Christians. The Word of God is for everyone and I am thankful to be a part of delivering God's message to incarcerated men through the wonderful FIT program.

Hebrews 13:3 says, "Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies." As the body of Christ, we can't forget those who are imprisoned and in pain. We must remember and treat them how we would want to be treated. My prayer now is that God sends more willing hearts to serve in this ministry and it continues to grow and meet funding needs so that more people than ever can be reached for Christ.

United Together!



Family Integrity Training (FIT) President Donald Lynn Pratt and FIT Office Manager Betty Horne Drawdy were married in a beautiful service at Dream Church in Bradenton on December 21st. We extend our sincere wishes for God's blessings upon Don and Betty. May they cherish each day together in their journey through life.

Thank You!

The Family Integrity Board and staff extend their sincere thanks for those who contributed to our fundraiser. Together we raised \$3,850 in support for our ministry.

November/December Anniversaries

Teresa Ohara	Nov 1	Elizabeth Sherrod	Nov 4
Charlene Davis	Nov 4	Sharlet Remis	Nov 4
Tom Spannagle	Nov 5	Hannah Menacof	Nov 9
Lisa Harris	Nov 9	Donna Noble	Dec 30

Take our one-day, online training course and learn how you can put your love for the Lord and your love for people to work.

As a result of your day with us, you can

LEARN

- how to effectively lead a small group
- how to generate interest with the material and questions in our course books
- how easy it is to use the structure and suggestions in our course materials
- how our program can fit into your ministry

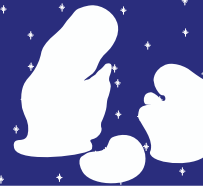
GET

- a free 102 page Facilitator Handbook
- a one-year paid up membership with its perks
 - free course books for your group members to use
 - a free matching leader's course book
 - free custom completion certificates for each class member
 - member support

Our next training is scheduled for February 1st, 2025.

Something To Be Thankful For

John Ringleb



As I pondered the miracles of Christmas, I was led to the stories of Joseph and Mary during two sermons delivered a week apart by our two Adult Plus leaders. It made me think about the miracles shown in the lives of two people we may take for granted. It is also interesting to me that these stories are told in two New Testament books. Joseph's story was told in Matthew while Mary's is in Luke.

Matthew is thought to be written primarily for the Jews around AD 60. After the genealogy of Christ is established in Matthew 1, Joseph's story begins in verse 18 of the first chapter. Imagine the shock when Mary tells him she is pregnant! He loved her and trust was being built up during the betrothal period. Then, she tells him it isn't another man, but the Holy Ghost! Now there is a new one! I wonder if he knew what the Holy Ghost was. After all, it had been 700 years since God spoke to his people.

So here he is thinking about this event. What should he do? Jewish law said that she should be stoned for the offense. But I believe that he knew she was indeed a good woman and he should put her away quietly. Maybe he said, "I'll sleep on it." Then the angel of the Lord appears and leaves no doubt.

Luke's gospel was written somewhere before AD 70 and may have been written for the Gentiles. Chapter 1 starts out with the story of John the Baptist and begins with the angel Gabriel being sent to Nazareth to tell Mary that she will be Jesus' mother in verse 26. He tells her that Jesus will rule over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will not end. Mary knows that she can't have a baby without being with a man. Then the supernatural steps in. The Holy Ghost will come upon her, the power of the Highest will overshadow her and the child will be called the Son of God. A few verses down Mary says, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

What jumps out to me is that God picks just the right people and then makes impossible things happen. Mary could have been stoned or divorced. She could have worried to death as to what to tell Joseph. Instead she believed what she was told, informed Joseph and knew it would be fine. I believe Joseph stayed committed to her throughout life. In Matthew 2, they fled to Egypt. I believe that he remained with her and taught Jesus how to be a carpenter. I reflect on our FIT representatives as people who God picks and empowers to minister to an amazing group of people who He loves and has never left.

We are thankful for you!