

58 Parents Receive Matching Education In Seattle!

Crescentia DeGoede
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“Very worthwhile. I’m very happy that I made the right decision to attend, even though we have gone through the matching process with our children. I feel that this experience has given us a new start for our next two children’s matching process” said one participant of the Parents Matching Convocation.

“I received much more than I expected. The PMC answered all of my questions, even questions that I didn’t know I had” shared another participant.

58 parents participated in a Parents Matching Convocation held in the beautiful Kent, Washington from January 23 – 24. Participants traveled from all over Washington and as far as Oregon and Alaska to participate, network, and have a memorable learning experience. In a collaborative effort between the national Blessing & Family Ministry team and local Seattle BFM Coordinator, John DeGoede, the convocation was filled with insights, laughter, and a spirit of community. Parents left feeling uplifted, confident, and empowered to navigate the matching and Marriage Blessing process with their children.



The program began on Saturday morning with a warm welcome and orientation from Crescentia DeGoede, Director of the National Blessing and Family Ministry, who shared about the value of a God-centered family matching process. Following her welcoming remarks, Marjorie Buessing, Matching Advisor Coordinator, discussed the **Family Matching Process** in detail. The presentation empowered parents who were not yet familiar with the matching process. One parent shared, “I am glad I participated in the PMC. The guidance was very helpful to get a clear overview and a beginning point to the process.”



In the next presentation, Mrs. Buessing presented on **Deepening the Parent-Child Relationship**, where she shared practical advice about communicating more effectively as parents and children. She particularly emphasized the importance of active listening. At the close of the presentation, Mrs. DeGoede, led the participants in an active listening exercise and a reflection on the importance of really listening to those you love. One participant expressed learning that, “I need to make a better relationship with my children, and learn to ask deeper questions to get more information from them about how they are feeling and what they are inspired about.”



The participants were also given many opportunities to share with each other in small groups. One segment of the schedule involved break-out sessions which ranged in various topics. Participants remarked how precious this time for sharing was, saying that it was a “great way to build a sense of community.” One parent expressed that, “The group discussions were the best part. Sharing and hearing from other couples was very inspiring and encouraging.”



On Saturday evening personal testimonies were shared from local young couples who have navigated the matching process: Zachary and Yuka Rogers and Kevin and Ariella Downey, and from parents who successfully matched their children: David and Karen Rogers, Will and Patty Couweleers, and John Abelseth. Through these testimonies, parents were able to better understand the practical application of the guidelines for matching process, and learn from the challenges and victories of others who have gone through the process.

On Sunday morning, Mrs. DeGoede began the day with a personal testimony about her life, relationship with her parents, and her experience with the matching process. She shared intimately, affirming to the parents that God's love is present in all of our families, despite the difficulties we may face.



On Sunday afternoon, John Abelseth, Matching Advisor Coordinator, gave an informative technical presentation to the parents, informing them on how to utilize the various resources and websites available, such as Matchbook through blessedfamilies.org, the international matching website on bcmatching.org and the applications on bfm.familyfed.org.

With the participants inspired and determined to initiate a healthy matching discussion with their children, another group discussion was held where parents discussed what their first action steps will be when they return to their homes.

With plenty of time to network, discuss, and meet other parents, the parents felt inspired and empowered by the end of the program. At the closing of the PMC, Mrs. DeGoede invited anyone up to the front to share some insights from the experience. Many shared their feelings of strengthened connection and support within the community that occurred because of the convocation, as well as a new determination to work on the relationships with their children and spouse.

The community was immensely grateful for the chance to experience the PMC in Seattle, Washington. One participant shared, "It was well worth the time spent! Very uplifting to build more confidence in participating more actively in the matching and Blessing process." The program would not have been a success without the hard work and organization of John DeGoede, the local BFM Coordinator, and the support of Seattle Family Church Pastor Nelson Mira. With 58 newly educated parents, Seattle is on its way to becoming a community with families that our Heavenly Parent envisions.

In addition to the Parents Matching Convocation, Seattle also hosted a two-day Matching Advisor Training prior to the PMC. At this training, the Blessing & Family Ministry certified 13 new Matching Advisors.



In their evaluations, the participants shared much appreciation to the Blessing & Family Ministry staff that organized and led the PMC:

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