

## FFWPP USA Blessing and Family Ministry's Blessing Workshop in Barrytown, NY

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On August 12-14 the National Blessing and Family Ministry (BFM) conducted a Level 2 Blessing Workshop in Barrytown, New York, at the UTS Conference Center, right after the Blessed Culture and Sports Festival (BCSF). The workshop welcomed 40 participants, including single First and Second Generation Unificationists, Parents and Matching Supporters. While the majority of the participants traveled from the nearby North East states, participants also traveled from as far as California, Florida, the Midwest, and Western Canada.



Staff members for the workshop included: Crescentia DeGoede BFM Director, Debby Gullery BFM Consultant and Presenter, Tina Zelada BFM Administrative Assistant and Jessica Sattinger BFM Community Liaison.



Participants had the following to say about their overall experience at the workshop:

"Inspiring and refreshing. Even though I've attended a couple of Level 2 workshops, I felt like I was able to understand clearly about the meaning and value of the Blessing."

"Coming into this workshop I was looking for direction and answers...I was able to get a clearer vision and understanding of everything."



After an orientation and icebreaker activities in small groups, the participants began day one of the workshop with a presentation from Crescentia DeGoede on Matching Smarts. During the presentation, Crescentia encouraged participants to consider their own blocks and concepts that might interfere with or confuse the Matching Process for them. Several common challenging situations Matching candidates face were presented, and participants had the opportunity to discuss the various challenges in groups, and suggest possible solutions throughout the presentation.



Day 2 began with a presentation from Crescentia on My Heritage, My Legacy, which explored the meaning and the value of lineage and the Marriage Blessing, and encouraged participants to reflect on what kind of legacy they want to leave behind in their life.



One participant shared that, "Before the workshop, I was uncertain and unclear about the meaning and value of the Blessing. After Crescentia's presentation "My Heritage, My Legacy", the testimonies, and Aunt Debby's "What I Bring to the Table", I have hope and a better understanding of the meaning and significance of the Blessing for myself."



After enjoying some recreation and relaxation in the early afternoon, participants listened to a presentation from Debby Gullery on Getting Real, which gave information and solutions for growing up in a pornified culture. Participants also had the opportunity to safely ask questions about the topic in an anonymous QandA session with workshop staff.



Before dinner participants met in groups with their gender and discussed challenges they face in feeling prepared for the Matching and Blessing, and shared ideas for how to address challenges. Participants appreciated the time to connect with their own gender and discuss some sensitive issues with one another.



One participant expressed that, "I came two years ago and am grateful to find that I received more depth. This Blessing workshop was real, informative, and thought-provoking. I am glad discussions were organized by age and thought all the presenters and testimony givers were well prepared and wanting to give. I felt that I was able to learn about myself more deeply, and was given the space to ask questions and be involved in important discussions."



Participants spent the evening listening to testimonies from Blessed individuals, Raymond Burns, Lena and Christoph Yasutake, and Tina and Freddy Zelada, about their unique Matching Processes, and current experiences as Blessed Couples. Through their testimonies, the speakers were able to impart the wisdom they have accumulated through their experiences with the matching process and Blessing, as well as, dispel some of the fears participants had about their own future processes. These testimonies were a huge hit with the participants.



Day 3 opened with a presentation on Understanding the Matching Process from Crescentia, followed by Q and A. The presentation outlined the stages and steps of the matching process and offered ideas and suggestions for how candidates and their Parents/Matching Supporters can develop a clear plan for approaching the Matching Process.



Debby closed the workshop with a presentation on What Do I Bring to the Table? In the presentation, Debby introduced and expanded on four areas in which a participant can reflect and work on to prepare internally for the matching process and marriage. The four main areas covered were faith, motivation, maturity and the capacity to love. Following the presentation, participants filled out a questionnaire about their vision, values, life purpose, lifestyle, relationships with others, and ability to communicate effectively.



"I found the workshop to be clarifying for me in a lot of ways. Coming in I knew I valued the Blessing and why, but that understanding deepened and expanded actually to encapsulate my purpose in life as a whole. It connected some dots and showed me that I'm actually am more ready than I thought."  
~Workshop Participant



The BFM staff is grateful to all those who participated in this workshop and contributed to its success and look forward to continuing to serve the members of the Unification community. They wish the very best to each workshop participant on their journey towards the Blessing and offer their continued support every step of the way.