

CARP USA: 2024 Midwest CARP Winter Workshop in Chicago, Illinois

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On January 5th - 8th, the Midwest CARP chapters including Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, and Ohio collaborated to host the 2024 Midwest CARP Winter Workshop in Chicago, Illinois. A total of 21 participants joined the workshop, including 5 new CARP members who recently finished studying the Divine Principle.



The first day was filled with liveliness and high spirits as participants took part in icebreakers and team building activities. It started off with competitive games of "Would You Rather" and Pictionary. The afternoon was then followed by a reflective activity where individuals had the opportunity to set intentions for the workshop. Afterwards, each person shared about the goals that they had set for the weekend and the growth they hoped to achieve.

The mornings began with a small group reading of *Mother of Peace*, a memoir by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, one of CARP's co-founders. The participants learned about her life and the contributions she made for the world at large. The day was followed by three lectures including "The Essence of God" by Rosia Schmidt (CARP Chicago director) and "Creating a Life You Love" by C. Katayama (Midwest CARP coordinator). The last lecture of the day was based on the life of Rev. and Mrs. Moon, who are lovingly called True Parents. Many of the participants were inspired by the struggles they both overcame through their love for God and the people. One participant was so moved by the sacrifice and spiritual investments made by True Parents that he couldn't stop himself from proclaiming all of their successes as a couple working towards peace.



In addition to the lectures, the members enjoyed some energetic games of bowling. There was healthy competition among the members despite it being some of the participants' first time bowling. Bubble tea was awarded to all the individuals, and it was an enjoyable afternoon for everybody.



The evening of the first day concluded with praise and worship. There was inspirational music played by some of the CARP members, and the audience was moved by the soul-stirring lyrics. The praise and worship session was followed by a "Letter to God" activity. The participants were instructed to write a letter to God on three topics: gratitude, repentance, and determination. Each person took time to reflect on the points of the letter and later had the opportunity to share with their teams.



The next day, the final lecture was given on the topic of "How to Practice a Life of Faith" by Chungbom Katayama. He shared about the significance of life of faith habits and encouraged the participants to start taking responsibility for the life that they wished to lead. The workshop was then concluded with a goal setting session, discussions, and testimonies. Many shared about the inspirations they received from the lectures and activities, and the meaningful relationships they created over the weekend. Some of these are shared below.



"Our letter to god activity was nice as I felt I really opened up and exposed myself to God. I enjoyed everyone's company and learning God's grace through everyone... I want to forgive and love unconditionally. Care for everyone like they are my brother and sister."
Felix, University of Minnesota



"I think more than points from the lectures, [the speakers'] hearts were what struck me the most. I learned more about the ideal and that first I have to receive love and understand it before I can give it and live in it. I felt God's hands tugging at my heart and asking me to know that I am loved. Quickly believe that you are loved!"

Anonymous, Indianapolis CARP member



"After the workshop, I want to start teaching and giving unconditional love to everyone. Forgive a hundred and more times."
Samuel, University of Minnesota

