

Gather Family Church, Mobile, Alabama hosts Energize Couples Retreat

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June 8, 2019



On June 7-9, an Energize Couples Retreat co-hosted by the Blessed Marriage Project (BMP) and BFM was held in Mobile, Alabama, supported by Gather Family Church Pastors, Jario and Leena Vincenz-Gavin. This retreat included lots of firsts. This was the first Energize retreat held in a local church setting, with out of state couples staying in a nearby hotel. 13 couples participated, with the majority being young couples, another first in the history of Energize Retreats. It was also the first time that on-site childcare was offered, which allowed for couples with young children to participate that might otherwise not have been able to. In addition to several Alabama couples, couples participated from New Jersey, Ohio, South Carolina, Georgia and Louisiana. The retreat included Unificationists as well as new friends in faith.



Reflecting on his experience at the retreat, a male participant shared that:

"The experience was great. My life has been work all day, get kids to bed, repeat for a long time. This helped broaden my view of the real goal of marriage and possible enhancements. My wife and I have not talked about anything other than the kids, dishes, etc. for a long time. It was good to get in time together, reconnect, and remember things we can do for each other to make us happy. I liked the reminders of more conceptual principles from the excellent presentations from John Williams,

coupled with a wide variety of practical techniques. I would recommend this to other couples because the concepts presented were amazingly beneficial and the time spent with my spouse was so needed. I didn't realize HOW badly this time was needed until I was experiencing the numerous benefits and joys of being here." (Husband, 30-39)



BMP Staff included: BMP Co-Directors, Mari and Richard Curry, Counselor and BMP presenter, John William's, BFM Community Liaison, Jessica Sattinger, and BMP presenters, Lena and Christoph

Yasutake.



Gather Family Church Pastors Leena and Jario expressed that, "The retreat offered a nice balance of marriage enrichment presentations, discussions, application and fun. Couples were able to take a good look at their relationship and share their deepest hearts together. John William's spoke with passion and engaged the audience with tremendous heart, life experience and lots of relevant examples. Mari and Richard Curry did a fantastic job emceeing, being vulnerable up front and demonstrating different scenarios. The Sex, Health and Happiness presentation and discussion by gender facilitated by Lena and Christoph Yasutake

via Zoom was also a big hit! Participants found Lena and Christoph to be so engaging and warm. They made it comfortable and fun to talk about what can often be an awkward topic."



Another first was that the local Sunday Service was incorporated into the retreat. Retreat participants joined Gather Family Church's Sunday Service, and John William's gave a sermon on Applying Real Love in Marriage. This made it possible for local community members who weren't able to participate in the retreat to catch the spirit of the retreat and receive some marriage guidance.



There were lots of positive reflections from participant couples about their experience. Here are a few:

"I am very grateful that my wife and I could attend this marriage retreat. The content reminded me greatly of the Level 3 Blessing Workshop material, in a very good way, allowing my wife and I to revisit and strengthen those skills like active listening, raising the water level, and communicating about topics like sex and finances! It was refreshing and made me cry seeing/hearing from happy couples who I believe are living like

the presentations encouraged. Thank you, especially to John Williams." (Husband, 20-29)



"The opportunity to be together with my spouse away from children to listen to entertaining and inspiring information was great. We needed this time! The energy and flow and relaxed environment were awesome." (Wife, 30-39)



"I gained hope that we can change and improve things in our couple. I will listen and attend my wife's love languages more diligently. I also liked meeting new couples who are going on this journey too." (Husband, 30-39)



"I learned so much from the retreat that will be of great benefit to our marriage! Each topic was interesting and full of valuable and "actionable insights" that I can now use every day to tune up and keep our marriage running smoothly! I absolutely recommend this retreat to other couples. My husband and I both received many nuggets of information that we each can use daily! Things we would not have thought of." (Wife, 40-49)



The BMP and BFM are very grateful to Pastors Jario and Leena for all of the investment they made for many months leading up to this retreat. They did an amazing job advertising and recruiting participants, preparing the atmosphere ahead of time, and providing Southern Hospitality throughout the retreat.

If your community is interested in hosting an Energize Couples retreat, please send a message to the BMP team at blessedmarriageproject@gmail.com, and a BMP staff member will get in touch with you.

