

Let Us Welcome New Members of Lovin' Life

In Jin Moon
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Each month 25-35 people join our church in America. Who are these new members? The following personal testimony, the first of many to come, introduces one of the many who are joining our church across America. These people range in age from 15-52, and represent a diversity of races and backgrounds. They are students, doctors, professionals, and business owners. They are America.

These individuals met the church through natural witnessing; they had a friend or relative, either 1st or 2nd generation, who is a member. They met us on the internet, in a post office, on the street, in the workplace, on a sports team. Some met a member close in age and others met a member with an age difference of two or more decades. But what they all felt was incredible love, acceptance, and the culture of heart that flows from True Parents to all people.

Some new members first experienced our church in New York City, and others attended a satellite service in a venue as small as a home where several families gather to watch Lovin' Life.

From these stories emerge important lessons: People are longing to meet True Parents and anyone, anywhere, can be successful in witnessing. Age doesn't matter; it's about heart and the willingness to put oneself out there so that our Heavenly Parent can work through a person. We also see the impact of our national broadcast. New members love In Jin Nim's sermons and the powerful music of Sonic Cult.

Matthew (19), Arkansas



Matthew from Arkansas

I'm a sophomore at the University of Arkansas, majoring in nursing with a minor in Spanish. I've done a

lot of church-hopping. I've visited all the temples, cathedrals, Bible fellowships – everything. Before I hit the Unification Church I declared myself an agnostic atheist, because I was so disappointed with other churches. I never experienced the kind of love there is in the Unification Church.

I met the church by being on a soccer team with the pastor's oldest son, Sean. I gave him rides home, and one evening he told me he's a Unificationist. I asked him about it, and it sounded interesting. We would often sit in my car in their driveway, and he answered my questions, and I became really interested. After a while I'd hang out with all their kids. Their family was so nice. They'd do anything for me. I'd never seen such love. I spent a lot of time with their family. I could feel God's presence with them. I started going to their church and I never experienced anything like it.

The music was perfect. The sermon touched me. I could feel God's presence for once in my life. I talked with Uncle John about joining, and he guided me. To me, he's not Rev. Jackson or Pastor John; he's Uncle John. On Saturday nights, I'd stay the night and he'd teach me Divine Principle 'til 3 a.m. or 4 a.m., one on one. He revealed to me Father's heart and the trials he's been through. I learned about the creation, give-and-take action, the spirit world. Just the fact that someone would sit down and tell me this was so touching.

I really like the Lovin' Life broadcast. Then I attended the closing event of Father's European tour in Las Vegas. Lovin' Life is inspiring, but to see it in person is a whole new level. And to hear Father speak is so amazing!

Rev. In Jin Moon is so strong. She's my hero. I've heard what she's been through to be the head of the American movement. You don't see many strong women step out and be as brave as she is. She's doing a great job – please tell her that. Don't change a thing.

Now I'm sharing with my own dad about the church. I'm building up to the point of Divine Principle lectures by trying to live the Principle. I throw out hints about the spirit world, that life is give and take action; that it all runs on love, and so forth. He is gradually getting it.

The Unification Church is a beautiful thing. I love and adore it with all my heart.

A Church That Works: Designing Ministry for Church Growth





Every one of Lovin' Life's new members has a special someone who took an incredible interest in his or her life and explained the love of True Parents in a very personal way. Because of In Jin Nim's vision to create a Sunday Service that can reach all Americans, brothers and sisters have a place to which they can bring their spiritual children to be nurtured and connected. In Jin Nim's sermons make True Parents accessible to us and show us how to apply their teachings in our daily lives.

Church growth has occurred through Lovin' Life Ministries because we are creating a church home for people to join that is alive and exciting. Church doesn't just happen on Sunday, but all week long through the various activities that enable members to inspire, empower, connect, and contribute. When people are experiencing personal growth, naturally the church will grow too! This is what In Jin Nim calls natural witnessing. Her priority is our health and wellbeing.

To facilitate the development of a full ministry in each of the more than 100 Lovin' Life locations, our National Ministry Support office developed the LAUNCHpad. This Ministry tool is a user-friendly manual that is sent out quarterly and acts as a guiding force for the look, feel, and focus of the ministry for the next three months. It's a practical how-to manual that helps local communities structure their ministries to create a church that works! The LAUNCHpad includes starter packs on every aspect of the ministry, such as Guest Care, Small Groups, Volunteer Management, and Communication to name a few. Local churches can then implement these strategies according to their size and stage of development. The LAUNCHpad has flexibility built into it, because we know that America is a large and diverse country, and one size does not fit all.

The five purposes of the ministry, which are Inspire, Empower, Connect, Contribute and Inherit, should remain constant, but the face of the ministry needs to stay fresh and interesting. If a company wants to keep the attention of its customers, it comes out with a new product, has a sale, or creates a new promotion in its store. We are not a company, but we too need to develop our message each quarter to keep our community engaged. Last spring the theme of the quarter was "I Care" and the LAUNCHpad was packed with materials and resources to help communities utilize this theme. Members in Sarasota, Florida, showed that they care by helping remove invasive plants disrupting the native wildlife in Myakka River State Park.

This summer's theme is "Live Out Loud," which encourages us to be proud of who we are as Unificationists and to find creative ways to share our faith. Each successive LAUNCHpad will provide communities with something new, refreshing, and stimulating. It is a great way to focus our efforts and to keep church interesting.

The LAUNCHpad is a tool for the local ministry leaders and teams to use. Behind every celebratory event at the local level, there are workbooks, checklists, flowcharts, and communications tools to assist leaders

to think about building ministry. Rather than be burdened with administrative minutia, the members will experience the theme of caring, the newly designed bulletin, the promotional materials for the small groups of the coming season, and other opportunities to study and learn. The LAUNCHpad helps the ministry take off, beginning with the LAUNCH party, which is the event welcoming the community to become engaged and excited about what it can be a part of and contribute to in the upcoming months.

Supporting Guests to Become Dedicated Members

Unificationists are very capable of inviting new people to programs that give them a good first impression or experience. Our challenge is to turn these new guests into fully devoted members. Lovin' Life Ministries has developed an educational model to support people's spiritual journeys as sons and daughters of True Parents prepared to receive the Blessing.

How it all works

We offer the Vision Class, which is based on church attendance and a two-day, Divine Principle education, and through which people can become members. We then assimilate new members into the mainstream of church life. We do this through an educational journey that includes further study of the Divine Principle, regular church attendance, opportunities to give and connect, as well as experiential learning in small groups. These growth groups, called "Connect" groups, are an integral part of the assimilation process, as it is in these small groups that new members open their hearts to one another and begin to grapple with what it means to apply the Divine Principle in their daily lives. It is in these groups that new members and young Unificationists experience the relationships that define our church family and learn what it means to be true brothers and sisters, supporting each others' spiritual journeys to inherit the true love of God.

Starting Point

"Starting Point" is where it all begins for new members as they focus on developing their hearts for God. This 10-week, small-group curriculum provides practical guidance for those looking to build deeper relationships with God and to develop their life of faith, by applying the Divine Principle to their daily lives. Starting Point is just one part of the Heart-for-God Series and is the first step in the four-part educational journey at Lovin' Life Ministries. Starting Point is designed to empower new members and young Unificationists.

To find the Vision Class and other Lovin' Life educational curriculum, go to: www.familyfed.org or click on the Empower tab under the Ministry-Support Section of the website.

In Jin Nim's vision of a national broadcast ministry is cutting-edge and designed to bring True Parents' message to the nation. Lovin' Life is committed to sharing the Breaking News with America and giving all people the chance to meet their True Parents.

Testimonies and pictures of new members will be published in incoming days.