

CO-PARENTING WITH GOD: A MONTHLY SPIRITUAL DIRECTION GROUP FOR PARENTS

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THE PROBLEM

Parents are anxious—anxious to do the right thing, say the right thing, provide a safe and happy environment for our families.

We want to refrain from giving our kids too many rigid demands—as were put on us—and we want to promote their creativity. We worry that they're overscheduled, immediately after worrying that we haven't signed them up for enough activities and that they'll be left behind.

Then there are the reports about the perils of too much time in front of the TV and the computer, and how little time children spend outdoors—right next to the news stories about kidnappers and child molesters lurking around the corner.

We spend a lot of time second-guessing ourselves. We feel certain we are the only ones who yell too much or want to get away from our kids so much, or rely on the TV too much. And, too often, we feel alone.

THE SOLUTION

What we need is to reconnect. With ourselves. With each other. With God.

We need a safe space to think about these issues and to speak honestly with one another. We need to listen to our own insights on how to handle the mundane and the serious: chores, teacher conferences, friendships, health problems, substance abuse, sexuality. We need to see the innate beauty in our children and reconnect to their essence, despite the short-term challenges and the pressures of daily life.

We need to turn off our minds and our electronic devices and go inside, to a place beneath the surface, and listen for the answers. Some people call it God. Some call it our deep inner knowing. But whatever it's called, if we can confront the fears and the negative voices together, we'll discover a much wiser wisdom within.

Co-parenting with God is an opportunity to sit with one another in a quiet and safe space and explore how we want to parent. The group has been meeting monthly since January 2013. We speak with each other. We listen to each other. We pray together. We create a safe space to connect with each other about our children, our spouses, and anything else on our minds. Together, we seek the deeper spirit that guides us all.

THE BIOGRAPHY

I am excited to be offering this group, which brings together many of my passions: group work, spiritual exploration, and parenting. I've worked as a psychologist for 20 years. For much of that time, I've led therapy groups and taught group therapy. I wrote the chapter on group therapy for *Psychotherapist Revealed: Therapists Speak about Self-Disclosure in Psychotherapy*. (over)

In my private psychotherapy practice, I see children, adults, couples and families who have a variety of issues. The mother of children ages nine and twelve, I was a member of a spiritual direction group for parents of children with special needs for five years. In August 2013, I completed the Lev Shomea program in Jewish spiritual direction.

THE WHEN AND WHERE

When: The second Friday of each month, from 12:45 to 2:45 p.m.

Where: 114 Forrest Ave., Suite 101, Narberth, PA 19072.

Fee: \$36 per meeting.

If you are interested, please contact me at 610-405-4903 or meredith.barber@verizon.net.