

Maryanne Spillane McInturf.

I've been a parishioner for three years at St. Agatha's. After church shopping, we decided St. Agatha's was the parish for s b/c of the vibrant community. Two years later, we were still sitting in the pews at Sunday Mass and not doing much more than that.

**Looking for a way to better engage in the church community and meet people.**

Saw the Arise Program in the Bulletin and thought immediately that this could be something I could do. **Then I immediately thought of reasons why I couldn't or shouldn't do it.**

**Thought I would start here and give you those reasons since you might have the same things floating in your mind, and perhaps I can dispel some of the misconceptions.**

**OLDER PARISHONERS ENTRENCHED IN PARISH – No Diversity**

- Thought I'd be the youngest person in the group.
- Entrenched community that had certain points of view where I might feel like a minority.

**REALITY:**

- Nice mix of ages and gender with one brave male in our particular group. Everyone brought a great perspective to each session and very open to hearing where you were coming from in terms of your perspective.
- I wasn't the only new person in the parish and I wasn't the youngest (which kind of disappointed me since it made me feel older that I wanted to feel)

**BIBLE READINGS AND LESS DISCUSSION**

- Thought it would be more prescriptive and less participatory.

**REALITY:**

- Weekly Readings Supplemented the messages and themes on Sunday.
- Time to sit and reflect and discuss with other people problems both big and small in your lives.
- Great support network to find out how other people live their faith with similar life challenges.
- Very approachable structure for putting into play how I could put into play God's word in today's world.

## TIME COMMITMENT

Too much. Can't fit in another thing in my life with work, school, friends, family, house renovations. Etc. If I had 90 minutes to spare, I'd rather watch Dancing with the Stars and relax.

Irony is that the time spent with my group each week helped me to better **prioritize things in my life and spend my time in ways which were more fulfilling to me.**

**Tend to forget the scripture come Monday morning after Sunday mass. It was a great refresher and time to reflect during the week, and with other people, how to better accomplish what I always strive to do which is live the life that God wants me to live.**

## CLOSING

In closing, if you are sitting in the pew today and thinking about joining a six week session and have some of the same thoughts that I did, I hope I was able to dispel some of the misconceptions about the ARISE program for you.

**I hope you consider joining and I promise that you will feel more connected to your faith and your fellow parishioners and will not be disappointed!**