

KNOWING & DOING

C · S · LEWIS INSTITUTE



A Teaching Quarterly for Discipleship of Heart and Mind

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FELLOWS FEATURE

A Fellow's Journey *Interview with Annie Nardone*

1. Tell us how and when you came to Christ. There has never been a time when I wasn't involved in church. I was born, baptized, and raised in the Presbyterian Church. My faith was fairly typical of an average Christian. I continued to attend a church in my college years, but no Bible study or reading. Post-college, I fell away from my faith, but during that time God began to pursue me. After mucking through some horrible choices and difficult years, in 1995 I went to a church and said, "OK God. I need your help."

2. What led you to enter the Fellows Program? I kept seeing notices in our church newsletter that were promoting speakers and programs at CSLI. I had the chance to talk to another acquaintance who had just started the Year One Fellows Program and she said it was a wonderful challenge. I prayed about it and talked to people who I respected to get their advice. They encouraged me to apply.

3. How did the C.S. Lewis Institute's Fellows Program equip you to become a more mature and effective disciple of Christ? The program gave me the tools to think of a response when someone would question me about my faith. The primary reason I applied to the program was to sharpen my apologetics. I knew what I believed, but I didn't have a firm answer if someone would challenge me. Now when I'm involved in a discussion, I can *gently* communicate my faith, understand more where the other person is coming from, and ask the right questions. Because of the books that we've read, my own faith has been strengthened as well.

4. Give an example as to how the Fellows Program helped you in your life as a follower of Jesus. In order to train my kids to avoid making the same mistakes as I did (losing my temper, having nothing factual or valid with which to counter a point), I build apologetics into regular conversation with them and their friends. I ask them to think. We practice by talking about the day's events and listening to the radio. What would you say if someone told you that God doesn't exist? How can you find the motivation behind the words? What about that person on the radio? What do you think they believe? What's wrong with their logic? What is their understanding? What could you tell that angry person about Jesus? Actually, I do the same thing with my own friends!

5. How has your experience with the Institute influenced your approach to sharing the gospel message with others? The solid, challenging monthly Bible studies have filled out what was once a very skeletal knowledge of scripture. The picture of grace and mercy, and seeing the thread of Christ throughout the entire Bible, has built my faith and given me a bigger and eternal vision of God and why we are here. I can encourage others, especially people who have no hope, that they are loved by a God who has their lives in His hand. It keeps me praying, which brings me closer to God.

6. How did the Fellows Program help you integrate your faith and your professional life? Your family life? What I've learned has become an integral part of my teaching and personal life! I never imagined that it would alter the way I teach, talk, and think every day. Near the end of my Year One program, I had prayed for a way to use what I had learned through the year. As I sat and listened to one of our Saturday lectures, I noticed that many adults had questions that should have been answered when they were in school! I felt called to teach teens how

to critically listen and evaluate what people say and how to keep their Christian worldview in an increasingly difficult culture.

I teach several homeschool enrichment classes at Harvester Teaching Services-art from K-9th, science for K-1st, and a Humanities/cultural history class. After talking my idea over with several other people who I respect, I dropped one art class in order to teach a logic/apologetics class for 9th-10th grade. This is the point in a child's education where they have serious questions and when they may start slipping away from Christianity. I use quite a bit of what I learned in the Fellows Program to engage my students to think and discern. Near the end of the year, after we've discussed how to identify several types of fallacy and how to find fact, we will use the CSLI Conversational Apologetics course for discussion. The kids are really enjoying it!



7. What was the biggest impact of the Fellows Program on your life? What would you tell a friend or work colleague about the Fellows Program?

"Every scrap and every view of my life has been changed for the better!" That best sums it up. I would tell a friend or co-worker to pray about the decision to be involved in the program. Then I would tell them that all of the reading, writing, and study was worth every second. It is a serious commitment, but the richness of what it offers is priceless. ✠



***Annie Nardone** is a teacher of young minds, a lover of the arts, and a culinary enthusiast who delights in finding the extraordinary in the midst of the ordinary. Annie obtained her B.S. in Art and Graphic Design at the University of Wisconsin. She has spent over ten years teaching enrichment classes in science, art, logic, and the humanities at Harvester Teaching Services. She most recently wrote and photographed a historically accurate cookbook as a companion volume to The Mystery of History II. Annie is in her second year in the C.S. Lewis Institute Fellows program. Annie resides in northern Virginia with her husband, Angelo, and their children.*

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In the legacy of C.S. Lewis, the Institute endeavors to develop disciples who can articulate, defend, and live faith in Christ through personal and public life.