



Ambassador Family Initiative Training

Ambassador Family Initiative (AFI) is the biblically-based pre-service training curriculum developed in collaboration with clinical staff at Arrow Child & Family Ministries. The curriculum was implemented in 2003 to prepare families for fostering and/or adoption. It also provides a guide for parents in any season of life who are involved in the lives of children. The curriculum consists of 7 three-hour classes, which are summarized below:

AFI Session 1 – Orientation

During this introduction to Arrow and the ministry of foster care and adoption, we take a look at the story of Esther. As we know, Esther was raised by her older cousin Mordecai and his mentoring of Esther led to a legacy for the two of them that has rung down through the generations. We hope that Mordecai's example is encouraging to others who wish to make a difference in the life of a child. We will also discuss how the child welfare system works and provide families with the information needed to initiate the verification process if they feel God's calling to serve children in need.

AFI Session 2 – Child Development

The Bible tells us that "Jesus grew in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). This verse is the cornerstone of this class as we address the four areas of child development noted in the verse: intellectual growth, physical growth, spiritual growth, and social growth. We will also introduce the concept of trust-based relational parenting as we talk about how trauma impacts early childhood development and how committed parents can help a child heal.

AFI Session 3 – Communication

We can all use reminders on how to better communicate with our friends, loved ones, and all those around us. The Bible has many references to the tongue. In this class we review a myriad of the Scripture references that address how we should communicate with one another. We will provide strategies for effectively communicating with children from hard places.

AFI Session 4 – Separation, Loss, & Grief

Loss is a part of life, and an all too real part of life for many of the children and families we serve. In this class we take an extensive look at the life of Job, the losses he experienced, the stages of grief he went through, and finally, how God restored him. During this class, we will also discuss the importance of attachment and building a connected relationship with children in care.

AFI Session 5 – Child Maltreatment

The Bible tells us that there is nothing new under the sun, and unfortunately that includes sexual abuse. In this class we discuss healthy and unhealthy sexuality, as well as how to help a child deal with issues related to sexual abuse, in addition to the other types of trauma and maltreatment children have likely suffered. We will provide tools so that the parent can be part of the healing process for children in care.

AFI Session 6 – Connecting & Correcting

It is a parent's responsibility to correct their children, as it says in Proverbs 3:12, "For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom He delights." However, when disciplining children one should always remember the cornerstone verse of Arrow that reminds us that "children are a gift from God." It is also the parent's responsibility to initiate a connected relationship with the child, and we will provide strategies and techniques on how to connect, then correct, with children placed in your home.

AFI Session 7 – Regulations & Documentation

Things come full circle in this final class as we once again turn to the book of Esther. Mordecai helped overthrow a plot to kill the king. Though not immediately rewarded, he was eventually elevated to a position of authority in the kingdom . . . all because some faithful scribe had documented the incident. We will review the required documentation for foster parents and go over the regulations for our homes.