

## ENERGIZING A PARISH WITH THE SEARCH

***“THE SEARCH is a great gift for a parish. Catholics are hungry for the beauty of their faith. THE SEARCH reinforces how powerful of a gift we have with our faith.”***

### **Irene Lindemer**

Director of Communications and Stewardship  
St. Thomas More Catholic Parish, Centennial, CO

After receiving an Augustine Institute email that introduced THE SEARCH, Irene Lindemer, a member of her parish’s leadership team, checked out the promotional material and forwarded it to her pastor at St. Thomas More Catholic Parish in Centennial, Colorado. At the group’s next monthly meeting, the team members decided to offer the FORMED video series examining the meaning of life’s journey as a parish-wide study to St. Thomas More’s 4,000 registered families.

“Every one of you is going to be in a group,” the pastor told his team members.

Support from a church’s pastor is something that Lindemer thinks is “absolutely critical” when a parish commits to participation in THE SEARCH.

“THE SEARCH wouldn’t have taken off if the pastor hadn’t endorsed it and firmly encouraged it,” Lindemer said. “That inspired us. We began thinking: ‘Who’s in our circles of life that we want to share this with?’”

Lindemer cited the parish’s director of music, the father of eight children, as an example. He became a member of five groups—three with his various choirs, one with his family, and one that he and his wife attended with other couples.



**“This is the best event our parish has ever done to engage parishioners.”**



**Irene Lindemer**

Lindemer credited the Augustine Institute with making the task of setting up the program and small groups easy with “great trailers and marketing materials.” Using Flocknote and the parish’s email list, word went out promoting THE SEARCH. The pastor created a video encouraging participation that was emailed to parishioners and shown at the parish’s eleven weekend Masses. One weekend at Mass, parishioners viewed a clip from Episode 1 of THE SEARCH. Once the program began, weekly emails included the trailer for the coming week’s episode and promotional material from the leader’s guide.

“We think we have at least 80 groups and 430 participants,” Lindemer said.

To sign up, parishioners went to a page on the parish website that listed the groups that were meeting on campus. Lindemer said that the parish is blessed with plenty of space to spread out—the original church that now functions as a large meeting space and multiple rooms where small groups can meet and still maintain social distancing. The parish’s director of marriage and family ministry took charge of setting up at-home groups. All participants received the link to formed.org, and the at-home groups had access to Zoom for virtual meetings.

Several weeks in, Lindemer heard positive reviews.

Presenter Chris Stefanick has “a great, engaging personality,” Lindemer said. “People are impressed with the production, and they’re learning a lot.”

“I was pleasantly pleased with the number of Catholic scientists in the series,” Lindemer said of her own reaction. “It makes you proud to be a Catholic.”

For Lindemer, the most telling success of THE SEARCH is what *hasn’t* happened.

“No one’s gotten bored; no one’s left,” Lindemer said. “That’s not typical of a parish event.”

A number of the parish’s older members are participating in THE SEARCH, mostly from home, where they learned how to use Zoom. Because each episode is on formed.org, even the homebound can participate, Lindemer said.

“We’re definitely going to do THE SEARCH again because we didn’t reach everybody,” Lindemer said.



To learn more, contact **Brian Truckenbrod**  
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