

Preparing for the Sacrament of Baptism



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Sara Kraft

Parish volunteer, Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Joseph, MO

When Fr. Christian Malewski, the pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, approached Sara Kraft and her husband with a request to increase engagement with the families who were bringing children to Baptism, the situation in the St. Joseph, Missouri, church was one familiar to many parishes.

“At that time,” Kraft said, “parents would bring their children for Baptism, and we wouldn’t see most of them until their next child needed Baptism, or until it was time for First Holy Communion.”

The couple agreed to take on the task and developed a prototype that emphasized connection to the parish and its faith community.

The model, using *Reborn: You, Your Child, and the Heart of Baptism* on formed.org, worked “very, very well,” Kraft said.



“The Participant Guides in *Reborn* have been really helpful. Preparation time for our meetings [when using] other programs would take 1½ to 2 hours. With *Reborn*, preparation for our sessions takes about ten minutes! It has made attracting volunteers easier.”



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The Krafts assigned parishioners as “lead couples” to accompany those bringing a child to the church for Baptism. The lead couples invited the baptismal parents to their home for dinner and then watched the first half of *Reborn, Session 1* together. Together, they scheduled a time—usually one to two hours—to meet at the parish to watch the rest of the videos and have further discussion.

The lead couples committed to attending the child’s Baptism and following up with the family every four weeks for a period of six months. The relationship between the two couples was further nourished by simply visiting with one another for a few minutes after one of the weekend Masses.

“I’ve watched *Reborn* all the way through six or seven times,” Kraft said, “and every time I catch something that I didn’t catch before. *Reborn* reaches people right where they are. Whether they’re new to the Catholic faith or very advanced, there is plenty for them to explore and reflect upon.”

Eighteen months after starting the program, Kraft said that Fr. Christian noted a large increase in Mass attendance by those seeking Baptism for their children.

“It used to be that a couple would get a child baptized and then come back to church for the next kiddo or for First Communion,” Kraft said. “A majority of the time, we are now seeing them weekly at Mass.”



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