



Using LECTIO Studies in Your Parish

“I consider these LECTIO studies the best. I wouldn’t hesitate using any of them. They’re the best and highest quality out there—aimed at the head and heart. Participants are not only gaining knowledge; their hearts are being transformed and set on fire.”

Dr. Kathy Johnson

Volunteer Faith Formation Leader, Holy Spirit, Duncanville, TX

Although Catholics hear a large chunk of the Bible from the readings at Mass, they’ve traditionally had a bit of an inferiority complex when compared to their Protestant brothers and sisters, about how well they know Scripture.

To walk the faithful through the Bible, using contemporary research and scholarship, the 10 LECTIO studies from the Augustine Institute offer parishes a uniquely Catholic Bible study program. Parishes that have used LECTIO studies report tremendous fruits that grow from inviting people to hear and meditate on the Word of God through the Church’s ancient prayer practice of *Lectio Divina*.

Debbie Shearn’s Louisville, Kentucky, parish—St. Albert the Great—has used three LECTIO studies: *Eucharist*; *Mary*; and *Evangelization and the Acts of the Apostles*. The studies have drawn a core group of 20 to 25 women, with two to three new members joining each time.

Shearn said that the studies first filled a human need—that of women to spend time together and share their faith. Participants watched each weekly video and then used the full-color study guides for their daily prayer, reflection on the week’s lesson, and daily “Commits” that incorporate a detailed examination of sacred art and stories from the lives of the saints.

When the women met in small groups, Shearn was impressed with “how deeply the women were sharing.”



“Knowledge I’ve acquired from LECTIO helps me speak more confidently when I share my faith, be it with fellow Catholics, non-Catholics, or those who don’t believe in God. It gives me more fuel for my fire—as inspired by the Holy Spirit!”



Ann Hundt

After participating in *Evangelization* with Dr. Mary Healy, Shearn heard the women asking: “What can we do to get our parish excited?”

“It’s neat to see how the series are animating and exciting our ladies,” Shearn said.

Katie Frandsen, Bible study facilitator at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Lansing, Kansas, praised the LECTIO series for being “more in-depth” than previous studies the parish had used and offering “a nice combination of Scripture study and faith formation.”

The Scripture study is something for which many Catholics hunger.

Dr. Kathy Johnson’s Duncanville, Texas, parish, Holy Spirit, has used *Philippians; Prayer; Mary; and Eucharist*. Johnson observed that some participants had an early-on catechesis that was “not adequate.” Over and over again, she said, “We had people say, ‘Why didn’t anybody tell us this before?’” Some, she said, considered themselves “biblically illiterate. They were so hungry for more.”

Patrick Spiering, the FORMED coordinator at St. John Vianney Parish in Brookfield, Wisconsin, echoed Johnson’s point.

After every session of the *Eucharist* series, he said, participants would say, “I did not know that.”

Ann Hundt, the adult education commission chair at St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Johnson Creek and Lake Mills, Wisconsin, said that in the LECTIO series, “It’s what people like—knowing the foreshadowing of the Old Testament. It’s a kind of an ‘aha’ experience when you see New Testament stories in light of the Old Testament. It causes us to want to dig more.”

“Catholics are thoroughly surprised at how biblical the Mass is,” Spiering said, whose parish is now studying *Lectio: The Case for Jesus*.

After participating in that study, Spiering said, “You’ll be able to give good reasons why Catholics believe in the Real Presence.”

And that deeper understanding of the Real Presence leads to the ultimate fruit.

Shearn’s *Lectio: Eucharist* study group watched the videos on formed.org and, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, had to communicate with one another via email and Facebook.

“It was amazing,” Shearn said. “There were no Masses being held, and people were saying, ‘I can’t wait for Mass again; I’m hungering for the Eucharist.’”



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