

## Supporting Parish Programs and Ministries with FORMED Resources

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**Alan Padlock**

Head of Formation, St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, Kenosha, Wisconsin

Alan Padlock describes St. Anthony of Padua Church in Kenosha, Wisconsin, as “a parish in transition.”

Over the course of the past decade, many of the traditionally Slovakian parish’s members moved away or died off. At the same time, the parish made a dedicated effort to clean up its rolls to get an accurate count of its membership. But even as its numbers looked to be dwindling, new and young families began joining the parish. Today, St. Anthony offers two weekend Masses to serve its 230 registered families.

Seven or eight years ago, St. Anthony’s pastor asked Padlock—the Parish Pastoral Council chair—to serve as head of formation, with the goal of providing religious formation from Baptism through adult education.

To support his work, Padlock was looking for “good, solid resource material.” His familiarity with Lighthouse Catholic Media talks introduced Padlock to FORMED.

“One thing after another led me in the direction of FORMED,” Padlock said.

Gradually, the parish added programs: a weekly men’s Bible study, RCIA, and sacramental preparation. Much of the content came from FORMED.

Between a dozen and 25 people came to the church on 20 Sunday evenings to participate in SYMBOLON, which then became the primary source for the parish’s RCIA program. *Mary: The Bible and the Mother of God* in the LECTIO series was the subject of an evening Bible study.



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Members of the Knights of Columbus watched and discussed the 12-episode video series *Into the Breach*, which seeks to answer what it means to be a Catholic man in today's world. The pastor uses BELOVED as part of marriage preparation—a six-month process at St. Anthony—while Padlock uses REBORN and Fr. Michael Schmitz's *Changed Forever* in baptismal preparation for couples.

This past Lent, during the pandemic, the parish encouraged the formation of small at-home groups to watch THE SEARCH. The parish has purchased some of the Augustine Institute's \$1.50 books and CD's as Christmas or Easter gifts for parishioners. SIGNS OF GRACE is on Padlock's radar for sacramental preparation in second grade.

"What's most important to me," Padlock said, "is you can watch anything on FORMED and know it's rock-solid Catholic theology. It makes my life so much easier; I don't have to preview everything before recommending it."

"We've made a commitment to use FORMED as formation for the whole parish," Padlock said.

Padlock commended the video programs on FORMED, in contrast with early Catholic productions, for their "professionalism."

"It hits you from the opening presentation," Padlock said. "It looks like a regular movie."

FORMED's content includes material "for a broad range of people—different ages, different stages in their faith journeys," Padlock said.

He receives positive feedback from parishioners.

When adults came to the parish to listen to Fr. Michael Gaitley's *The Second-Greatest Story Ever Told*, Padlock said, many reacted by saying, "I never knew that," to the revelation of some aspect of the faith that had never occurred to them before.

When the parish hosted a Lenten program showing the videos from FORGIVEN, one participant invited her dad who had not been to Confession in a very long time. During the series, her elderly father went to the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time in 30 years.

"I love FORMED," Padlock said. "Anything that the Augustine Institute puts out is very well done."



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