

Using FORMED to Reach Every Fish in Every Pond



“The programs on FORMED have been designed around the truths of the Church. The material gets across big, mysterious concepts in a true way, and it’s done with great presenters who are able to connect with people in the pews.”

Barbara Austin

Director of Evangelization, St. Mark Church, Maryland

Fallston, Maryland, is a key-shaped town of just under 9,000 residents, about 30 miles northeast of Baltimore. When Barbara Austin took the role of Director of Evangelization at St. Mark Church in Fallston, she was already familiar with FORMED. She and her husband had previously lived in the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, which had purchased a FORMED subscription for every parish to use. The couple had watched a great deal of the content on formed.org and incorporated it into their Baptismal preparation and Confirmation classes.

Settled into her job in Maryland when the COVID-19 pandemic began, “we needed access to resources that other people could get to online,” Austin said.

Now in the second year of having a FORMED subscription, the church of 1,400 families makes abundant in-person use of the online resources for family faith formation, sacramental preparation, adult Bible study, and men’s and women’s groups.



“Conversation leads to conversion. We begin to see the face of Christ in other people.”



Barbara Austin

Twelve people in the parish made the 20-week commitment to watch and study the *Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained* program; one is an RCIA candidate.

Members of the SYMBOLON group tell Austin, “Wow, we really wish we had this program when we came into the Church,” she said.

St. Mark’s marriage preparation program uses BELOVED, the parish’s second graders use SIGNS OF GRACE to prepare for their First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, and St. Mark’s seventh, eighth, and ninth graders are immersed in Chris Stefanick’s THE SEARCH. Appropriately, St. Mark’s adult Bible study group chose *Lectio: Mark* as its topic.

“Such great things come out of the Augustine Institute,” Austin said. “It’s sound doctrine, and you don’t have to reinvent the wheel.”

Austin facilitated THE SEARCH with the parish’s adults last Lent.

“The participants have gone deeper and deeper into their faith,” Austin said. “People realize they belong to a community—Christ’s community.”

This Lent, the parish is offering four different programs in recognition that each person is in a different place regarding his or her faith. Two of the four programs are from FORMED: THE SEARCH and *Into His Likeness*.

“Every fish isn’t in the same pond,” Austin said. “We’re trying to offer every person in this parish a pathway to grow in their faith, to draw closer to Christ.”

“Thanks be to God, FORMED is allowing us to do that.”



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