

Growing FORMED Awareness in Challenging Circumstances

“Say you’re a convert or your faith hasn’t been strong. You watch what’s on FORMED and it lays out the Catholic faith and helps explain the sacraments.”

Deborah Rankin

FORMED administrator, St. Francis of the Tejas Church, Texas

A few years ago, Deborah Rankin was asked to take over the management of her St. Francis of the Tejas Church’s website. To get ideas for her parish’s web page, she went online and studied other parishes’ websites. In doing so, she kept running across parishes that had subscriptions to FORMED.

Intrigued, Rankin got her own FORMED subscription.

“I loved it,” she said, “and thought it would be great for the parish as a whole.”

Rankin talked her pastor into signing up for a parish subscription, but there was just one problem.

“We found Internet access for parishioners to be a real challenge,” Rankin said.

The town of Crockett, Texas, lies within the Diocese of Tyler in east Texas. The towns have little or no Internet access, except on cell phones. Even within the church buildings in town, reliable access to the Internet was a struggle.



“There’s so much on FORMED that can mesh in with the Catechism.”



Deborah Rankin

Undeterred, Rankin has found creative ways to get parishioners on FORMED.

Rankin conducted mini-classes showing people how to access FORMED on their cell phones. The women in the parish's Ladies' Guild were early adopters.

"They have been ecstatic over FORMED," Rankin said. "They watch it all the time."

The parish staff encouraged parishioners with Internet access at home to watch FORMED videos during family gatherings, such as Sunday dinner, and to have the children and grandchildren watch the "kid-related materials" when visiting.

Staff members handed out flyers after Mass, instructing parishioners how to subscribe to FORMED through the church's website, including FAQs. Each week, the parish publishes the FORMED "Pick of the Week" on the website and uses Facebook to publish links to various content on FORMED on a regular basis as well.

The parish has upgraded its Internet connection so that groups meeting at the church can tap FORMED content.

The Ladies' Guild and catechism classes have watched *THE SEARCH*, some have participated in *SYMBOLON*, and catechists are beginning to use programs on FORMED as part of their certification training by the Diocese of Tyler.

Due to the pandemic, Rankin said, many of the area schoolchildren received tablets to use at home. If they attend religious education classes and watch a video on FORMED, Rankin sends home a flyer that explains how to log onto FORMED at home.

Rankin's goal for next year is to work with the various catechists to determine what content on FORMED would be a good fit for catechetical lessons.

"One of the great strengths of FORMED," Rankin said, "is there's such a wide variety. There's something for everybody, and the Augustine Institute is constantly adding content."



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