

CASE STUDY

Empowering witnesses to the Gospel through the Sacrament of Marriage

The sacrament of matrimony is a fount of lifelong fulfillment and beauty—if we understand what we’re saying “I do” to. Parishes have a crucial part to play in helping couples understand the eternal aspect of marriage. That means they need faithful and compelling content to get that point across!

And at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Ohio, the *Beloved* video program is having a real impact on the way couples prepare for marriage. Through their parish FORMED account, each of the couples is given access to two thirty-minute episodes of *Beloved* to watch between every marriage prep session. The couples watch and follow the accompanying discussion questions afterward, and the priest reviews with further questions in the next session.

This adds about six hours of vital exposure to solid Catholic teaching for the many couples in the parish (up to 80 couples every year!)

“*The witness of the couples themselves, and their positive feedback, is very confirming of the whole process.*”

Fr. Sean Ralph
Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
Cleveland, OH

This is a vital tool to help couples understand the otherworldly beauty of matrimony and prepare to spend their life together. Just think about the impact that *Beloved* and FORMED could have at your own parish!



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Fresh Thinking to Engage Parents and Build Parish Community with the Sacrament of Baptism

At Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in St. Joseph, MO, most parents used to bring their children in for Baptism, and then they'd all but vanish until it was time for their First Communion. The parish leadership realized they needed a way to engage parents and help them feel like they belonged in their community.

They developed a new model based around the *REBORN* study on Formed.org. It starts with volunteer couples in the parish inviting parents preparing for baptism over for dinner where they watch the first half of the first session. Then they schedule a time to watch the rest of the videos and discuss them at the parish.

The host couples also attend the Baptism and commit to following up with the family every four weeks for the next six months. The parish priest also said he noticed a big increase in Mass attendance in the last 18 months alone! That's due in part to the fact that *REBORN* reaches everyone right where they're at. Whether you're new to the faith or a

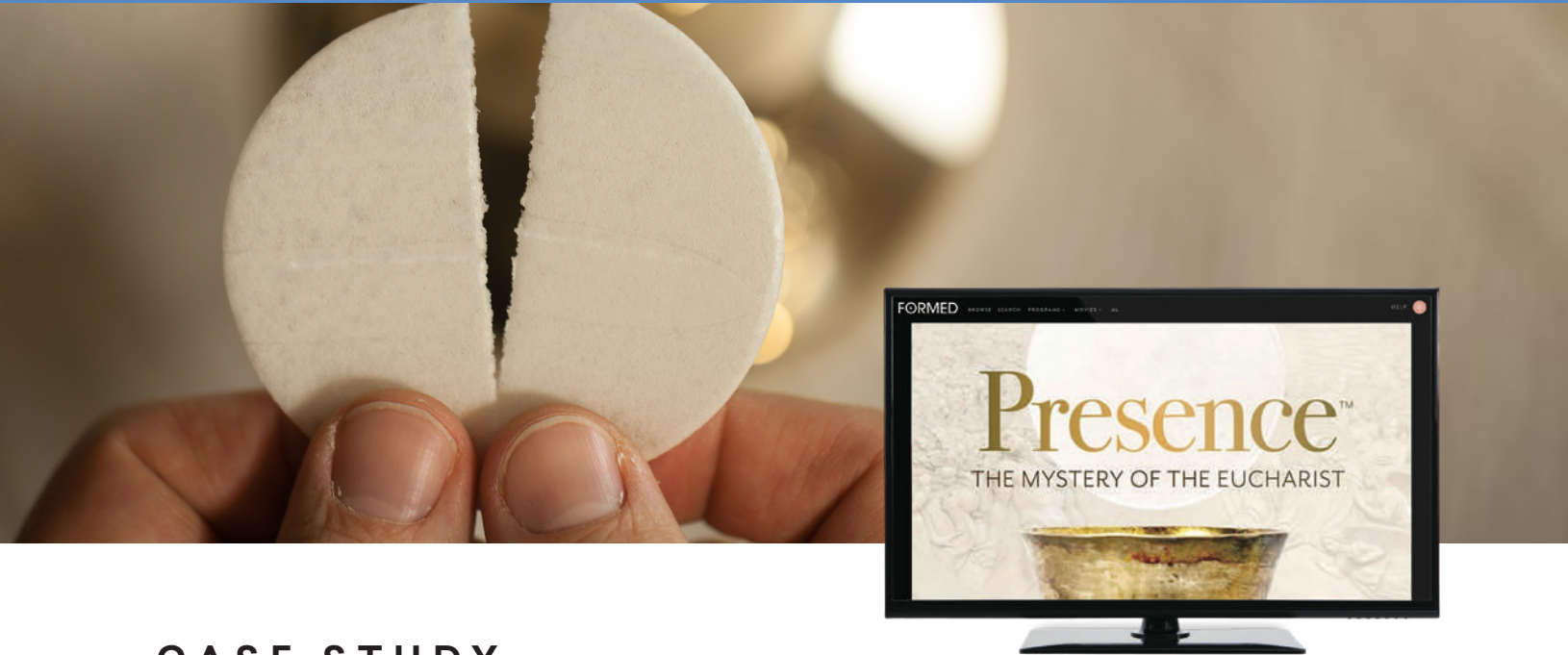
seasoned theologian, there is plenty to explore and reflect upon.

“*We see practically every couple we've worked with in preparation for Baptism now coming to Mass regularly.*”

Sara Kraft, Parish Volunteer
Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish
St. Joseph, MO

Not only are they seeing better results and more engagement, but with the full-color Participant Guides, getting ready for sacramental prep has never been easier! *“Preparation time for our meetings with other programs would take 1½ - 2 hours. With REBORN, preparation for our sessions takes about ten minutes! I think it has made attracting volunteers easier,”* Sara added.

If you're looking for an effective way to get families coming back to Mass after Baptism, try *REBORN* on Formed.org!



CASE STUDY

Effective Catechesis with the Power of the True Presence

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* beautifully states in paragraph 1324, “*The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.”* As recent studies have tragically shown, there is a crisis of understanding and of faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. We need catechesis that shares the profound mystery and beauty of the sacrifice of the Holy Mass. Parishes are finding that the *Presence* program on Formed.org is a uniquely effective tool for speaking to the head and the heart, especially for candidates for Confirmation.

Fr. Michael Duffy at Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Malvern, NY, uses *Presence* to prepare his parishioners for Confirmation. A mother of one of the students sent him an email that day thanking him for going the extra mile on his sacramental prep: “*The video you shared at today’s confirmation meeting was truly moving. It moved me to tears*

because it presented the importance of the Eucharist so beautifully and in such a compelling way. As I look back on my own religious education experience, I sense that it was limited somehow...”

“ *[Presence] is on a whole other level. . . . I am deeply grateful to know that my children are receiving such a thoughtfully structured and meaningful religious education.*

Parishioner
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish
Malvern, NY

This year, try integrating *Presence* into your Confirmation program and see the difference it can make.



CASE STUDY

Bringing the Sacraments of Communion and Reconciliation to Both Students and Parents

Georgina Kotz, a Director of Religious Education in New Jersey, shared the story of how her Formed subscription transformed sacramental prep in her parish.

Before they discovered Formed, their parish had extremely low Mass attendance from children in their sacramental prep program—roughly one or two students per class. Georgina said that when she saw *Signs of Grace*, she was hopeful. When classes began in September, sadly, attendance was still low. But as the year went on, something changed.

More kids were attending Mass. More parents lined up to receive the sacrament at the First Penance service. There were fewer absences, and when Georgina watched classes, she could see that the students were always engaged—and better yet, they were giving more correct answers and retaining much more of the information than they used to!

“One catechist,” mentioned Georgina, *“said that almost everyone in her class was attending Mass,*

which is nothing less than miraculous, as far as I’m concerned!”

One student would share every week at Mass how in love he was with Jesus. Another dad said that he had noticed a real change in his son, too, and that *Signs of Grace* had truly impacted him.

Formed also solved their problems with parent meetings: since many parents worked nights and weekends, meetings were virtually impossible to pull off. Parents were given the option to watch *Forgiven* and *Presence* online. “You would have thought we handed them a million dollars! They were so happy to be able to do it, even though they weren’t able to come out to a meeting.”

Georgina said that they fully expect *Signs of Grace* to continue having a great effect on their children, their parents, and their parish as a whole. Try using *Signs of Grace* on Formed.org for sacramental prep and see the difference it can make in just a few months!