

# LAY FORMATION INSTITUTE TESTIMONIALS

## SOME MEMBERS OF CLASS OF 2025



### MATTHEW PICKARD

ST. STEPHEN – STEVENS POINT

“I’m on the OCIA team at our parish and I have been a sponsor, but now, having gone through the LFI, strengthening my knowledge, I would really like to teach one of the classes. Also, I’d like to get my feet wet with religious ed. I’d like to teach the older kids, but I want to do anything the Church may need. I’ve learned over the last two years that it’s not about me, it’s never been about me. It’s about what I can do for others, and that’s where I find joy.”

### KARAMINKA (MINKA) BOURNER

HOLY SPIRIT – STEVENS POINT

“I came in as a convert from the Baptist faith. Starting LFI, I just felt like I needed more head knowledge about the Catholic way. But the biggest thing I learned is that God is a living, breathing presence within me. Just trusting that God is always with me is one of the biggest things that I got from this program. It was an internal cleansing, like God saying, ‘These are the things I am working within you, Minka. Yes, I want you to have the head knowledge, but I also want you to know who I am within you, so you can introduce me to others.’”

### JOHN AND DEBORAH

ST. MARY’S – COLBY

**DEB:** “We’ve grown so much in these two years. Our teachers were amazing, and we all became a big family. Now we work to bring it back to the parish. I’ve talked to our pastor and we’re going to sit down also with the deacon and determine what’s the best fit, what we can do to take this to the next level.”

**JOHN:** “I was not always Catholic, so this was a great learning experience for me. I was a catechist a few years ago, but I was very green, compared to what I know now. That’s what I hope to get into at the parish. I’m very grateful that our pastor asked us to go through LFI!”

### BECCA SHEEHAN

ST. JOSEPH – MENOMINEE

“I’m the Director of Campus Ministry at UW Stout, and before that I was a graphic designer for five years, so I wanted to dig more deeply into my faith. Being part of Lay Formation has really allowed me to connect the pieces, to have a deeper understanding of Church teaching and how to explain it to others. In LFI we’ve also done a lot of discernment of our spiritual gifts and how to share them with others. The knowledge we’ve gained isn’t meant to just stay in our heads, it’s meant for us to really go out and serve and impact the world.”

### BRYAN AND EDNA DEVRIES

OUR LADY OF PEACE – MARSHFIELD

**BRYAN:** “We encourage married couples to do this. We have grown so much from it over these last two years. As we went through the classes and did our reading, we were able to talk about it and gain each other’s insights. That made it so much richer.

**EDNA:** “Our classmates have become part of our family and we pray for each other. It’s wonderful to know that others are praying for you, for your health and your marriage, and the discernment of what gifts God has given you and what he is calling you to do.”

### LINDA SCHWARTZ

MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH – LA CROSSE

“Lay Formation for me has been an opportunity to engage with other active Catholic adults who are seeking the Lord and really want to run the race and get to heaven. There’s just so much joy when I think about the time together as a class. We had an opportunity to step away for two days a month and really focus on our faith and deepening our relationship with God. Through the two years we’ve all grown closer to the Lord, and we leave here on fire to bring him to the rest of the world.”

### ANNE MARIE ELWING

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO – GENOA

“I would characterize my experience with LFI as ‘bold.’ Bold, that I’ve come to not only accept the Holy Spirit in my life, but bold to be able to share that and feel confident in all aspects of my life. I feel like I can now evangelize better. Before, I felt there was a weakness in my faith and my understanding. And ‘bold’ because I’ve stepped out of the box and made new friends and connections. And today we even decided to form an email group to solidify that.”

### DARRELL AND JUDY NIETZEL

QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES – TOMAH

**DARRELL:** “I wish every Catholic could go through this, because I see a big void between what we learned when I was young versus what we are seeing now in courses like this. It was incredible. It made our faith much deeper, and we are a lot closer in our prayer life together.”

**JUDY:** “We studied a lot of subjects, but one of the things I liked best was the Liturgy of the Hours with Chris Carstens. There was just something special about that. I had been praying it before, but not as well as he taught us. That was good for us, and we pray it together.”

## LFI Classes Start Sept 2025

**For more information, or to apply: Visit [diolc.org/lay-formation](https://diolc.org/lay-formation)**  
*Questions? Call 608-791-0161 or Email [ministries@diolc.org](mailto:ministries@diolc.org)*



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LA CROSSE

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