

## A Journey Through RCIA With the Markert Family

After moving from Arkansas to Ohio to California and back to Ohio, the Markert family finally found their home in the Catholic church through the RCIA process at St. Brigid of Kildare. After parents Stephen and Traci had their children in several schools in several cities, their first experience with Catholicism was through their children attending Mission Basilica Catholic School in Orange County, California. It was there that their oldest daughter Lauren (11 at the time) really felt a part of the Catholic religion. She enjoyed her experience so much that she wanted her whole family to feel what Catholicism had given to her. As their family again learned they would be moving back to Ohio, living near a Catholic school and church community became the number one priority in their search for a home. That is how they ended up at St. Brigid of Kildare and journeyed through the RCIA process to become a family fully Confirmed in the church. Their story is best told through the point of view of their daughter Lauren, 8th grade student at St. Brigid of Kildare School:



Markert Family: Jacob (11), Stephen, Kyle (7), Traci, and Lauren (13)

*"The environment of the Methodist church, the religion we were a part of before we converted to Catholicism, was nothing compared to the energetic, boastful, happy lifestyle of the Catholic Church. My mom only got the idea of Catholic schools through one of her friends, Mrs. Heit. Before we met the Heit's, I had no clue what the word "Catholic" meant. It sounded like a science experiment... scary, unknown, and unusual. So, out of the blue, my mom went to go tour this school after hearing such high praises from Mrs. Heit. The next thing you know, we are taking the entrance tests for Mission Basilica Catholic School."*

*"The Mission was the first school where I truly felt at home. And looking back on that day and experience, that is truly where my pilgrimage to Catholicism began. With school going well, and social life pretty steady, I was ready to take my next leap of faith. I one day asked my mom about what I needed to do to become Catholic, and then, she did some research, and we went to talk about it with the parish office staff. With spiritual and physical preparations, I was scheduled to be Confirmed and receive my First Holy Communion on Easter, 2012."*

*"One Friday after school, at pick up, I abruptly stopped in my tracks. I grabbed my mother's arm and told her I wanted Mrs. Yeager to be my sponsor. So, we went to find Mrs. Yeager, and she was honestly so shocked by the news. She seemed surprised, of course, but she also seemed honored. She accepted the role the following day, and that is truthfully the day I think both of my parents started to believe in the marvels and glory of God's power."*

*"Then it was time to move back to Ohio. With the move to St. Brigid, my parents both made the decision to become Catholic through the RCIA program. I was very proud and shocked when my parents announced their soon-to-be conversion. We would all go to Mass and take Communion together as a family. There was nothing in the world I wanted more than for my family to feel the amazing powers of God. So every Thursday night, and occasionally other, random days, my parents set off on their version of a 'date'."*

*"We went through questioning times with God, and we finally learned the true meaning of love and family. As a group, we now attend Mass every weekend, and my mom usually joins my two brothers and I at School Mass on Thursdays. I am so grateful that my parents decided to take a huge gamble and become Catholic. It made me so happy and proud that they did it together, as a team. God has blessed this family, with small, significant, daily miracles, and I am a truly blessed girl with a blessed and holy family."*

Stephen and Traci Markert, who completed RCIA last Easter at St. Brigid of Kildare, couldn't be happier with the path their daughter led them.

*"Looking back on my RCIA experience, I think the one thing that stands out most to me is that being Catholic is a life long journey. You are never finished learning about this faith. We had people who would choose to attend our Thursday night meetings who just wanted to learn more....these parishioners really made an impression upon me. Just because RCIA is over, there is still so much to learn,"* Traci says of her experience.

*"This has been a really comfortable process for us,"* says Stephen. *"We have gotten to know the parents of other students who attend St. Brigid school in addition to our RCIA group. Paul [Zemanek] has made for a very comfortable process for us."*