

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

CASE STUDY

The Diocese trains church personnel and volunteers about preventing child abuse with a web-based learning solution.

CHALLENGES

Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg serves nearly a quarter million parishioners in 15 counties and 89 parishes in Central Pennsylvania. The Diocesan Office of Youth Protection needed a training solution to teach over 12,000 clergy, teachers and volunteers how to create a safe environment for children and protect them from abuse. The training needed to be efficiently distributed to a diverse and geographically dispersed audience. In addition the learning content had to be consistent and the training for each learner had to be documented with the Diocese and reported to local church officials.



Creating a Safe Environment provides training for identifying child abuse and how to report it.

The application certifies that everyone in the Diocese who works with children has completed the course.

INSIGHT

Working closely with the Diocese, a JPL instructional designer evaluated the existing video program, analyzed the audience and defined the learning objectives. JPL's technology consultant worked with the Diocesan staff to determine a compatible approach for program delivery, security and tracking. Since the audience varied in age and technical skills, JPL focused on easy-to-use and highly compatible approaches.

STRATEGY

JPL designed and developed an easily accessible learning program and web-based tracking application. The program delivered the sensitive material in a variety of engaging and appropriate ways using audio, video, photos and interactive graphics. The web-based tracking application captured the learner's name, parish, role and e-mail address, tied it to the training application and reported it to the Diocesan database.

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SOLUTION

From home computers or computers at their local parish, the clergy, teachers and volunteers log in to the training application from the Diocesan website. The login information is carried into the web-based, multimedia training program that features an introduction from the Bishop and presentations from a variety of spiritual, social and legal experts. Learners are taught how to recognize signs of abuse, prevent opportunities for abuse and how to report suspected abuse. After completing the training, the learner must successfully complete an online assessment. When the learner passes the assessment, a record is created within the Diocesan database and an e-mail certificate is sent to the learner. The learner uses the e-mail certificate to show the local church official that he or she has completed the course.

RESULTS

The diocesan on-line Safe Environment Training program was completed by more than 3,300 people in the past year, and by more than 16,000 people since it was launched in 2008. The Diocese and local church officials are now assured that individuals interacting with children have completed a comprehensive training program on creating a safe environment and preventing child abuse. The program is also now available in Spanish and future refresher programs are planned to keep the material current.

The web-based approach meets all of the goals of the Diocese and makes it easy to quickly train new staff and volunteers.

“Implementing a new way of training using technology to a large and diverse population comes with challenges. JPL worked through those challenges with us and now we have a training platform that can take us into the future.”

Joe Aponick

Director of Communications
Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg

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