

HOW TO INCREASE *Giving*



 **WeShare**
by Ministry Brands®



HOW TO INCREASE GIVING

THE CHURCH

When St. Boniface Catholic Church in Waukee, Iowa, a growing parish of over 1,300 families, began to receive parishioner requests to make donations online by credit card into the different church campaigns and funds, parish leaders decided it was time to research some new options.

Making donations without a check and envelope wasn't new to St. Boniface's parishioners. Nancy, the business manager, had already implemented a program with their bank, giving parishioners the option to donate through a direct electronic withdraw from their checking account. In fact, 20% of families had opted to use this donation method.

The problem with the program was twofold:

- The parish was limited to only one bank account for all church funds collected.
- The parish was responsible for the security of their parishioners' bank account data.

So the finance council and parish leaders set out to research possible credit card solution options. They

were looking for a solution that would be the most cost effective, be the easiest to use, and provide parishioners with the option to make donations with credit cards into multiple church funds.

THE CHALLENGE

When Nancy sought advice from St. Boniface's bank, she discovered the parish would need to open its own Merchant Account to process credit card transactions through the bank. The problem was that having its own Merchant Account meant the parish would be responsible for data privacy and PCI compliance. This means managing credit card disputes and charge-backs and paying fees, including variable credit card transaction fees, PCI Compliance certification fees, and possible surcharges and taxes. They would also have to accept the liability of possible fraudulent transactions. With all of these requirements, parish leaders decided not to become the Merchant of Record and to look for a third-party online giving vendor.

St. Boniface determined it would need to find an online donation tool that would support multiple bank accounts for:

- Different collection funds
- Credit card transactions without assuming ownership of a Merchant Account

THE SOLUTION

Parish leaders started by reviewing a neighboring church's research on potential online donation vendors. When they recognized WeShare on the list, they set out to learn more about the online donation solution.

After viewing a demonstration and evaluating WeShare, Nancy found the solution to be extremely:

- User-friendly
- Visually pleasing
- Competitively priced

She also learned of WeShare's customizable event registration capabilities. With St. Boniface's dynamic and growing suburban community, she would be able to support its faith formation and social event registration in the same location as she managed donations — saving her both time and money.

Moving onto evaluating other vendors, Nancy discovered they didn't all:

- Assume ownership of the Merchant Account
- Offer multiple bank accounts for different collection funds
- Offer event registration options

After finalizing its evaluation of numerous online donation solutions, the finance council decided the WeShare product would be the best fit for their parish.

THE RESULTS

After only three months of offering the option to donate online through WeShare, St. Boniface saw a steady increase in monthly online donations. In fact, from its parish kickoff through the third month, it saw an astonishing 61% increase in online donations. Its decision to listen to and support the requests from its parishioners for the ability to donate online using credit cards led St. Boniface down a path that literally doubled the financial benefits to the parish.

With ongoing support of WeShare through training, technical support, and printed promotional materials — combined with St. Boniface's commitment to promote WeShare on its website and through email — the parish is continuing to see significant increases in monthly participation.

"The merchant agreement I think is what really got to us the most," Nancy said. "It was so in depth, and we would have to do so much to set it up and get in place all the things needed for getting approved.

We were not ready for that. We just didn't have time to think about all that."

St. Boniface also benefited from some unexpected advantages when it introduced WeShare:

- Not only did the parish solve the credit card need, but it was able to implement an online solution for multiple collection of funds and event registration opportunities — a bonus to its initial goal.
- Another unexpected benefit was that one of the recurring online donations that they received was from a parishioner who no longer lives in the area. "She saw us online and set up a recurring payment. So that's money we would never have had."
- The extremely user-friendly interface for parishioners and staff made it easy for even the least tech-savvy member to use.
- Customizable collections and registration form capabilities provided even more options for online donations than originally planned.
- Including event registration through WeShare helped St. Boniface to fulfill another part of its vision that it hadn't expected: "An important element of increasing spirituality of lifestyle is by advancing ways that members of the parish can get together in smaller communities." Creating events and easy sign-up access will help support building those smaller communities within the parish.

BECAUSE BUILDING A VIBRANT CHURCH MATTERS

Interested in learning more about how we can help your parish?
Visit www.WeShareGiving.com or call 877.316.0260.