

LEVERAGING YOUR *Data*



VIBRANT CHURCHES MATTER

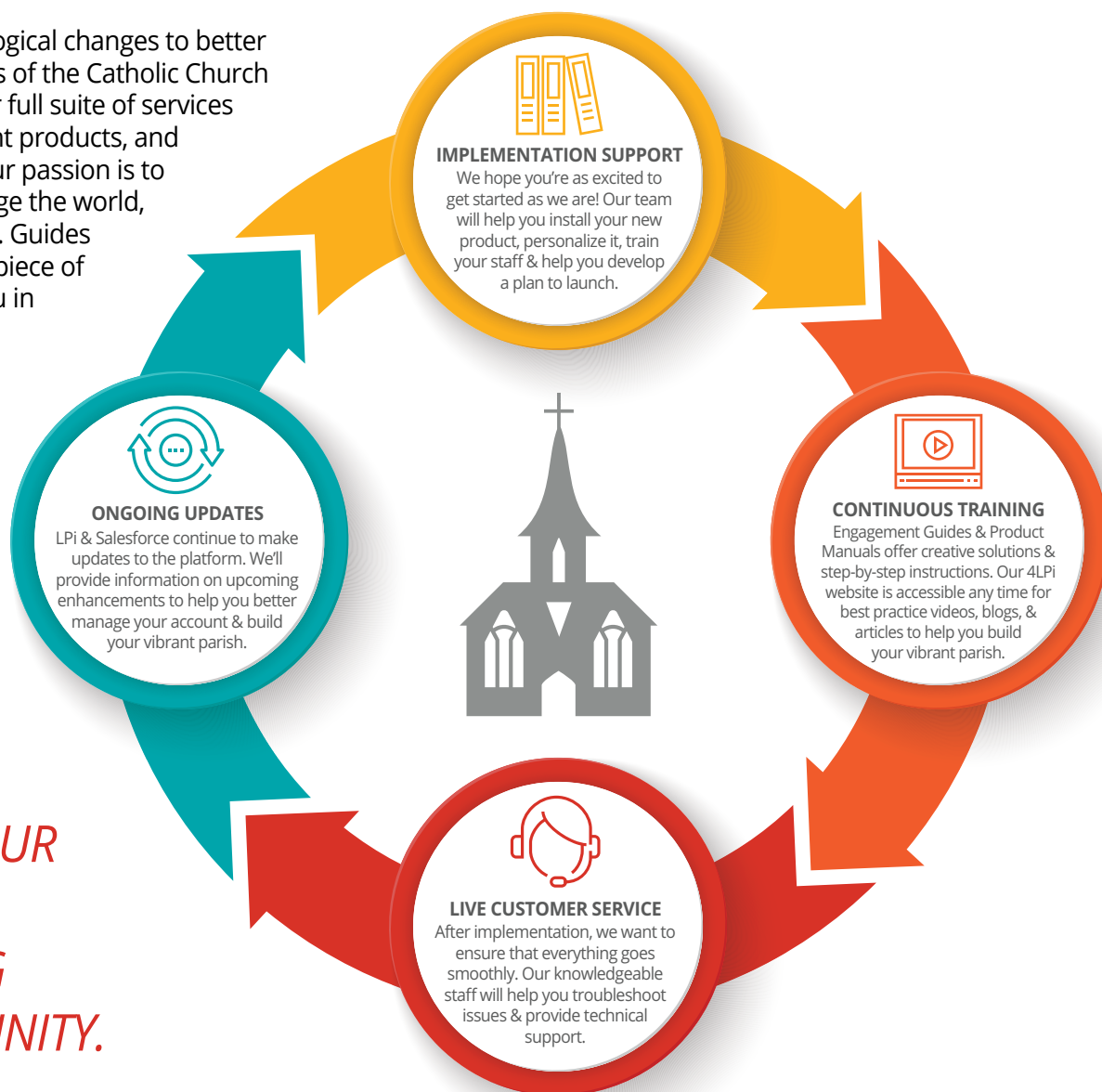


Your parish has hopes and dreams and plans to get there. At LPi, we believe that vibrant churches matter. Over nearly five decades, we've helped thousands of parishes across the country intentionally communicate with their parishioners, grow their engagement, and advance a stewardship way of life.

We've embraced technological changes to better serve the emerging needs of the Catholic Church in the modern world. Our full suite of services provides digital tools, print products, and stewardship coaching. Our passion is to help our customers change the world, one parishioner at a time. Guides like this one are just one piece of our efforts to support you in your mission.

At LPi, we're proud to offer the tools you need to integrate your data and enhance your communications. We know that when the infrastructure of a parish is operating smoothly, you have more time for what really matters —

***ENGAGING YOUR
PARISH AND
EVANGELIZING
YOUR COMMUNITY.***



What percentage of parishioners are involved in an established ministry?

Who in the parish is safe-environment certified?

Religious education enrollment is in decline, but baptism numbers are increasing. What's going on?

Parish life is unfolding all around you. Visitors come and go. Ministries thrive or flounder. Donations ebb and flow. Behind each of these movements are hundreds, even thousands of data points. A wealth of information lives in your spreadsheets, databases, and collective staff memories. When you know how to read that data, you've acquired a powerful tool for making smart decisions for your church. In order to leverage your data for mission engagement, there are some important things you need to know.



KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE

Comprehensive data understanding is critical to being able to use the information properly. Know what platforms your data lives on, and know which data points live where. While some information is on a need-to-know basis, make sure the entire team knows where to find what they need.



KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Determine which data is most necessary to your solution and target your search accordingly. This objective alignment requires a level of proactivity. Consider implementing data fields that are relevant to information you want to know. For example, if tracking the transition of newly registered parishioners into consistent donors is important to you, make sure you have a field for "registration date" in your database.



KNOW ITS ACCURACY

Make sure it's clear how frequently data is updated on each platform — does it require manual entry or does information auto-populate on the backend? Data quality can vary from platform to platform, depending on the margin left for human error and time constraints. It's important to set data standards across all of your platforms.

Your parish's data gives the hard facts of engagement. It can show you important information that opinions never could. Data can tell you what people are actually doing, and it invites you to think of new, creative solutions to grow.



CASE STUDY

THE ENGAGEMENT PROBLEM

The Holy Spirit Parish festival is months away. Another parish has opened up just outside Holy Spirit's boundaries, drawing away some parishioners. Attendance and the weekly offertory have been in decline, and the festival team is feeling the pinch. Less volunteers, less early sign-ups for the special events, and less buzz around town. The pastor knows that for this event to be a success, the parish will need to collaborate.

THE DATA POINTS

The festival planning team has access to their own historical files, primarily tracking budgets, activities, and past raffle donors. With the pastor's encouragement for the Holy Spirit staff to share their data, the festival team has access to a lot more information.

- The Business Manager can provide giving trends across parishioners, including the higher-level donors.
- The Parish Secretary has access to historical registered parishioner data, including information for those who have since left the parish.
- The Faith Formation Coordinator maintains the list and contact information for all families with children enrolled in the program, as well as the status of confirmation service hours.
- The Stewardship Council keeps track of parishioners' interests and the results of a recent parish-wide spiritual gifts workshop.
- Readily available are analytics for the parish's social media page and website.

THE MISSION-ORIENTED SOLUTION

The festival team turned first to the Stewardship Council. Seeing which parishioners scored highly in hospitality, helps, and other related gifts provided an excellent start to draw parishioners to engage. They also reached out to the Faith Formation Coordinator, who was happy to provide engaging teen-tailored volunteer requests once she had the festival details.

The team knew they needed to strategically invite key stakeholders to important festival events. With data from the Business Manager, higher-level donors received personal invitations to the live auction. Cross-referencing registered parishioner data with recent donor lists helped the team estimate who had left the parish in the last few years. A targeted email campaign was created just for them. With faith formation and baptism data, another email went out to younger families emphasizing the children's games and free baby-sitting on auction night.

Checking the digital data points helped the festival team communicate better online. They noticed that many hits to the parish website came from national and diocesan databases, likely nearby Catholics looking for Mass times in the busy metro area. The festival team placed digital ads on some of these sites, as well as created an attractive banner image for Holy Spirit's home page promoting the parish festival. Seeing the highest traffic times for social media engagement, the team spent a few dollars to strategically boost Facebook posts promoting the event.

With inviting, data-driven communication, Holy Spirit found more parishioners excited about the parish festival than ever before. They were ready to engage!



START BUILDING YOUR VIBRANT PARISH, ONE PARISHIONER AT A TIME

Behind each data point is a story. Knowing your parishioners' needs, interests, and current situations is essential to engaging them effectively. Data doesn't hide people behind a spreadsheet. Data helps you gather people strategically, in a way that maximizes your church's disciple-making capabilities.

Throughout their life, the average parishioner connects with most areas of your parish office. Information about their family structure, church involvement, and giving habits is distributed across a broad swath of people. Taken individually and together, this parishioner data points tell a story — the story of the life of your parish.

- Family relationships, birthdays, and contact information
- Attendance at parish events
- Involvement in ministry groups, councils, and volunteer opportunities
- Religious education registration history
- Giving patterns and history
- Sacramental records, safe environment status, and certifications

Knowing what data you have helps you understand what you can look for and how it can help you build your vibrant parish. The next few pages examine different goals your parish might have and look at which data points you may want to track to succeed.





FACILITATE DISCIPLESHIP GROWTH BEYOND SUNDAYS

As a pastor, you know there are plenty of moving parts in the life of a vibrant parish. With access to quality data, parish leadership can track engagement patterns and monitor the spiritual health of the community.

- **Parish Life Involvement:** Measure faith formation, ministry, and event involvement across time. Have leaders and teams note, track, and report on the numbers.
- **Sacramental Records:** Keep digital records of how many people are getting married, baptized, and passing way. How do the marriage numbers in recent years compare to baptism numbers now?
- **Digital Formation:** If pastors record homily videos or blog with inspirational posts, check the analytics to see online engagement.

BUILD A VIBRANT ONLINE PRESENCE

The Gospel message of Jesus Christ is timeless and always relevant. To communicate it, a vibrant web presence is increasingly necessary. With accurate web site analytics, you can adapt your online presence to maximize engagement.

- **Visitors:** Analytics sites can track new versus repeated “sessions” on your website, helping you see what percentage of your traffic are returners.
- **Page Views:** Monitor which pages besides the home page receive the most hits. Make sure these pages are attractive and easy to find in your top-level navigation.
- **Devices & Referrals:** Track how people are viewing your website (desktop, tablet, mobile) and where they’re coming from. Do they reach your site directly or through the diocesan website, another database, or social media?
- **Social Media Metrics:** Compare your website analytics to your social media engagement to determine time, type, and level of activity.

MAKE SMARTER FINANCIAL DECISIONS

If you manage your parish’s finances, you know the value of accurate numbers. Measuring giving patterns across time and across parish demographics can help you strategize in funding the future.

- **Commitment Levels:** Regularly assess your parishioner giving levels. How many give annually or sporadically? How many are weekly givers? How does the rhythm of these gifts support or hinder the rhythm of life in your parish?
- **Pledges:** If your parish operates on a pledge system year-round or for a specific campaign, accurate tracking of their fulfillment is essential.
- **Project-Driven Funds:** Measure the success of individual funds against one another and over time.



COORDINATE WITH MINISTRY LEADERS & VOLUNTEERS

Data management doesn't need to be the sole purvey of parish staff. When parishioners run ministries, train them in the value of data. Tracking volunteer sign-ups, event registration, and final numbers make it easier to spot patterns and trends. Knowing where your parishioners tend to gravitate — as participants and as volunteers — can help you plan for a better return on your investment of time, talent, and treasure.

- **Volunteer Demographics:** Knowing the age, interests, and family status of your volunteers and attendees can help you see who is engaged and who isn't.
- **Event Attendance:** Having online RSVP and in-person check-in means you can track interest and follow through in real time. Compare the numbers to other events across ministries and time.
- **Ministry Involvement:** Keeping centralized records of ministry members makes it easier for the parish staff to collaborate.

FOSTER EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP WITH INDIVIDUAL GIFTS IN MIND

Whether you're a communication coordinator, youth minister, or director of faith formation, having data on interest and talents can help you run a more effective ministry.

- **Strengths Inventories:** These assessments are offered by a variety of providers. Keep your parishioner's answers on file!
- **Intention to Action:** When new parishioners select their areas of interest, keep track of your follow-up to see where people actually engage.
- **Certifications:** Keep safe environment statuses and other certifications in the same database as the rest of your information.
- **Email Database:** An accurate, centralized email database that syncs with the rest of your parishioner data can be a lifesaver for communication.
- **Social Media Engagement:** Keep an eye on who engages on social media and what captivates their interest.

INTEGRATE YOUR DATA, ENGAGE YOUR PARISH, EVANGELIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

No matter your role on the staff or your objective, data can empower your contribution to the parish mission. In even the most vibrant of parishes, there is a risk that parishioners can slip through the cracks when they walk out the doors. Engaging others in their faith community is more important than ever. By examining past trends and measuring current engagement, parishes can creatively innovate for the future. Leverage your data and empower your parish to grow!



INTEGRATE YOUR DATA ENGAGE YOUR PARISH EVANGELIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

As a parish, we open doors in welcome as strangers become family. We observe, absorb, and assess. We create new solutions. We till the soil of human hearts. We sow the seed of the Gospel. We reap a harvest and celebrate as community. Together we grow, together we celebrate, together **WeGather**.



DYNAMIC WEBSITE

Welcome visitors with a state-of-the-art web presence.



INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY

Gather parishioners in an online social network with member profiles, family relationships & ministry groups.



ONLINE GIVING

Harness the power of Salesforce to manage your giving opportunities & analyze the results.



CLOUD BACKUP

With auto-updates to the cloud guaranteed by Salesforce, never fear a data loss.



MULTIPLE PERM. LEVELS

Offer people the functionality they need while protecting sensitive information.



CONNECTED BACKEND

Every donation, community action, or mobile update syncs instantly.



SACRAMENTAL LIFE

House your records, schedule religious education & provide formative content to your parishioners.



MANAGE FACILITIES

Schedule rooms & track your calendar for all parish events.



PARISH LIFE

Easily manage volunteers, events & ministries to connect & grow together as a parish.

INTERESTED IN LEVERAGING YOUR DATA?
Contact us to learn more: WWW.4LPi.COM/WEATHER