

Creators say ‘American Bible Challenge’ fills need for family programs

By Chelsea Weikart

Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON - The “American Bible Challenge” has been watched by more than 2 million people in the United States every Thursday night since its debut Aug. 23, making it the most successful show in Game Show Network in history.

And to the surprise of its creators, an app based on the cable TV show is doing almost as well.

Stephen Croncota, executive vice president and chief marketing officer for GSN, said in an interview with Catholic News Service that he knew there was a market for the app, but not one this great.

“We were hoping for 100,000 game players, now it’s about a month and we have 300,000 players and over 3 million game plays,” he said.

The show is sponsored by the New York-based American Bible Society, a 200-year-old nonprofit organization whose mission is to make the Bible available and understandable to everyone. Hosted by comedian and TV personality Jeff Foxworthy, best known for his role in the Blue Collar Comedy Tour, “American Bible Challenge” is a trivia game where the winners give away their prize money to a charity of their choice.

“We’ve always believed there was a big opportunity for interractment in the show because of the number of Christians and Catholics who have a lifetime of knowledge” of the Bible, said Croncota, a former altar boy and Catholic school

student himself.

The app for iPhone, Android, iPad, and Facebook currently is the No.1 Bible trivia game among the top-10 free trivia games on iTunes.

The sudden popularity of the show, Croncota said, is in part because there is a hole in American entertainment for something the whole family can enjoy.

“The audience feels their faith and the role it plays in their lives is being respected and validated,” said Croncota. “So parents feel comfortable sitting down with their kids in the room for a show this is something parents and kids can watch together.”

“It’s such a big hit we are thinking of how to make the show bigger and better for many years to come. I would say that the Catholic community and others who have been passionate are the reason it can continue,” he told CNS.

One of the 300,000 players who downloaded the game app is Alison Shaffer, a New Jersey mother and author of a blog called “Kitchen Table.” She says she isn’t a game player, but this is different.

“It brings the Bible off the bookshelf and into your life. It’s a modern kind of Bible learning,” she said.

Whether she’s in a doctor’s office waiting room or waiting for her children somewhere, Shaffer said the app is a good alternative to looking at Facebook or emails all the time.

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