

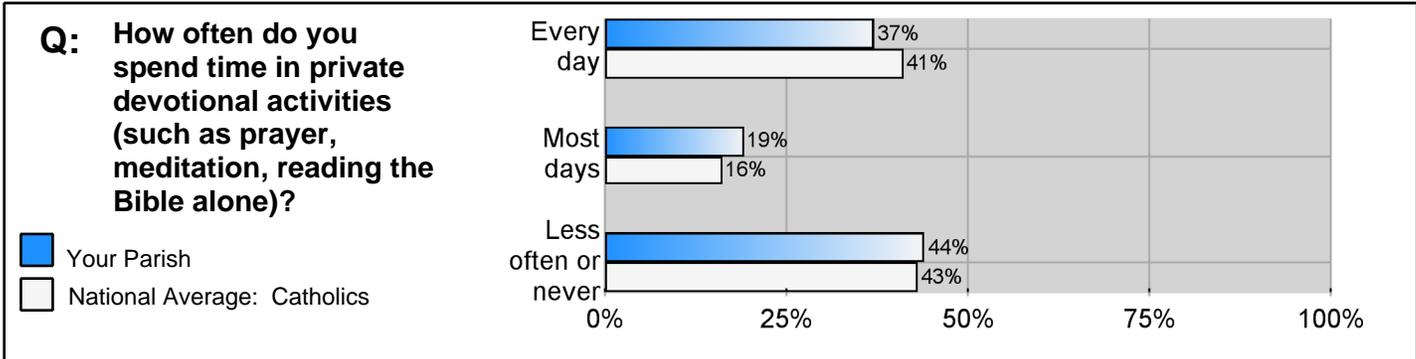


## Building Spiritual Connections

Spiritual connections are made through worshipers' private devotional activities and their participation in parish activities such as worship.

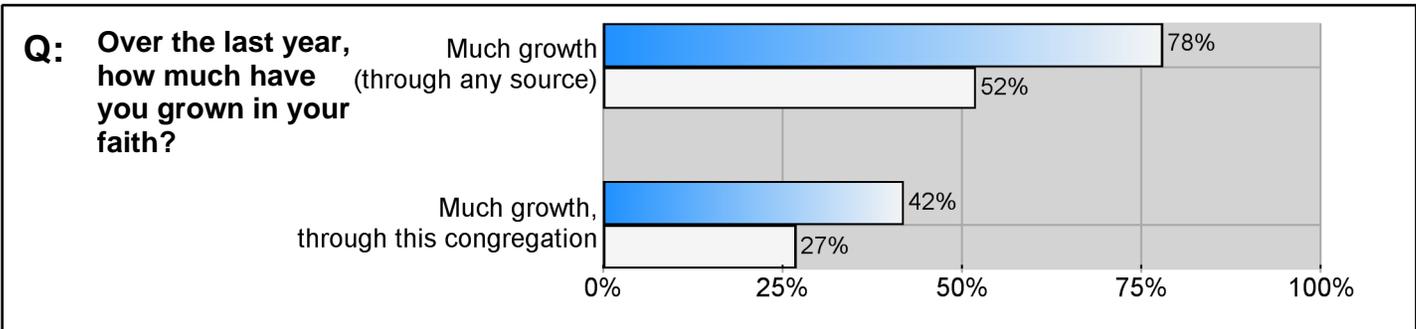
### 1 Private Devotions

About 37% of the people in your parish spend time every day in private devotional activities (such as prayer, meditation, or reading the Bible alone). Your worshipers are about as likely to spend time in these activities when compared to worshipers across the country (the national average is 41% who spend time every day in private devotional activities).



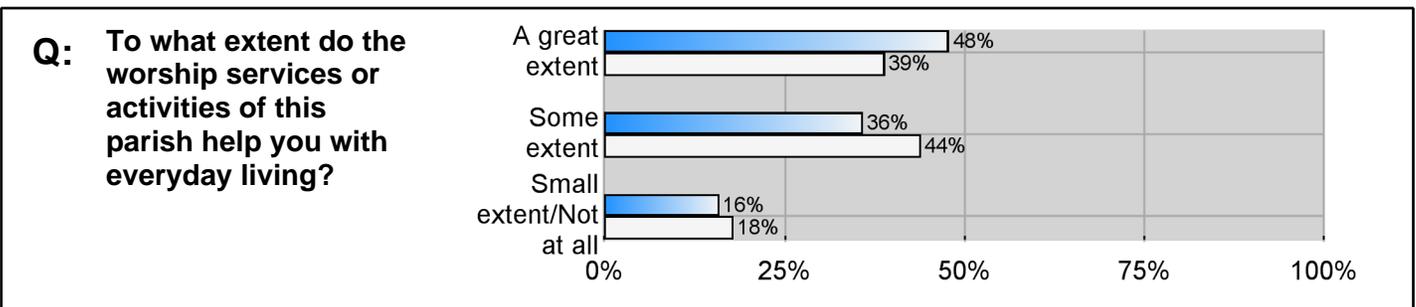
### 2 Growing in Faith

About half of the people in America's congregations (52%) and 78% in your parish report they have experienced much growth in their faith over the last year, through any source. Worshipers in your parish (42%) are more likely to say their spiritual growth comes from involvement in your parish. Some of your worshipers reported growing in their faith through other groups (11%) or through their own activities (25%).



### 3 Help with Everyday Living

To what extent do the worship services or activities of your parish help worshipers with everyday living? 48% of your worshipers reported that they are helped "to a great extent" by worship or parish activities. This compares to the national average of 39% who report finding worship services or activities helpful with everyday living.



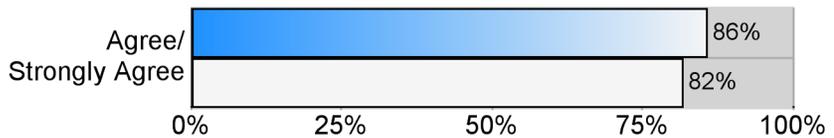


■ Your Parish  
 National Average: Catholics

**Meeting Spiritual Needs**

**4** Like the majority of worshipers in the U.S., 86% of your worshipers feel that your parish meets their spiritual needs. Across the U.S., 82% of worshipers feel this way.

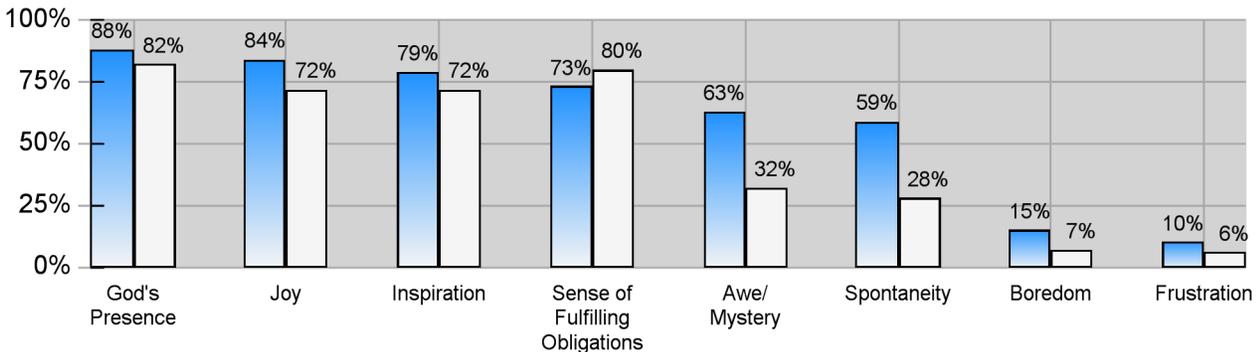
**Q: My spiritual needs are being met in this parish. (% who "agree" or "strongly agree")**



**Worship Experiences**

**5** Meaningful worship experiences are central for most congregations and their members. In your parish, the largest number of worshipers "usually" or "always" experience God's presence during worship. Fortunately, the smallest percentage of worshipers "usually" or "always" experience frustration.

**Q: How often do you experience the following during worship services at this parish? (% who say "always" or "usually")**



**Making Music**

**6** Worshipers in your parish prefer the following styles of music in parish worship: praise music or choruses (54%), music from a variety of cultures (27%), and traditional hymns (22%). Across the country, worshipers reported the following preferences most often: traditional hymns (58%), contemporary hymns (26%), and praise music or choruses (24%).

**Q: While you may value many different styles of music, which of the following do you prefer in worship? (Mark up to two.) Responses for your parish:**

Praise music or choruses	54%	Other contemporary music or songs	8%
Music from a variety of cultures	27%	Contemporary hymns	6%
Traditional hymns	22%	Sung responsorial psalms	4%
Gospel music	10%	Contemplative chants	2%
Classical music	9%	No music	2%

**Making the Connections**

Review the six spiritual connections in your parish and consider these discovery questions for group discussion:

- \* What are your parish's strengths in nurturing the spiritual lives of those who attend here?
- \* What faith connections require new wiring?
- \* What can your parish offer to meet the spiritual needs of those who are not attending worship anywhere?
- \* How can your parish build on its spiritual strengths?

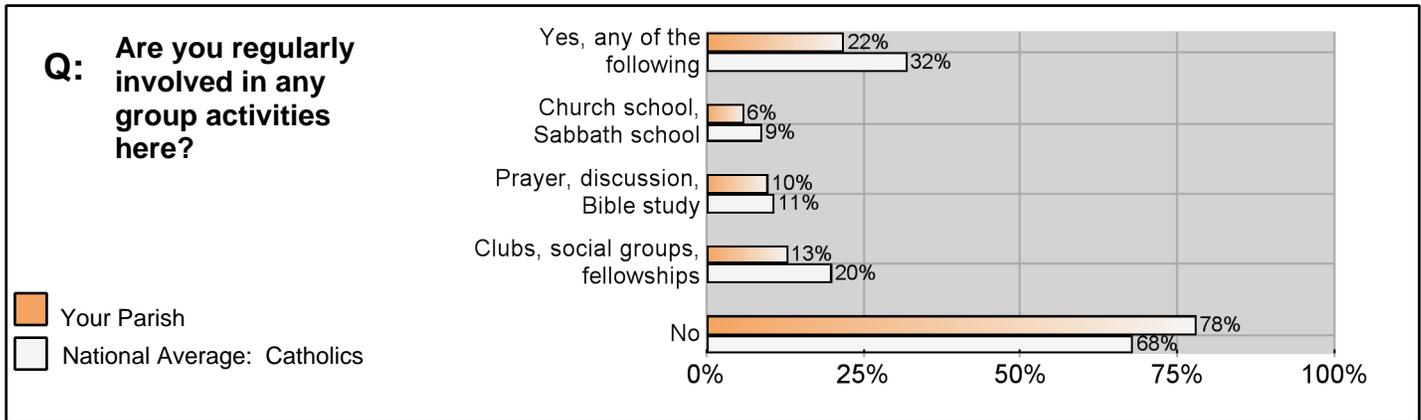


## Building Inside Connections

Worshippers connect with others in the parish through group activities (such as church school, prayer and study groups, and fellowships or clubs), serving in leadership roles, and financial support.

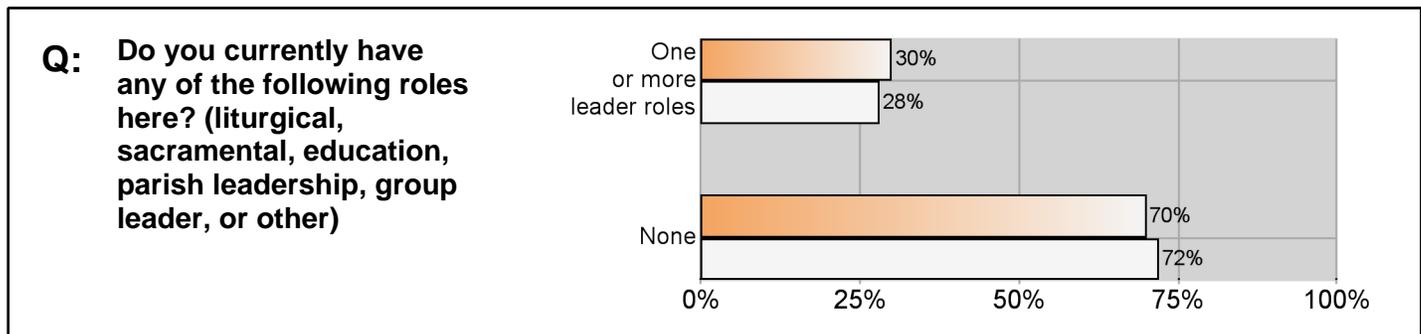
### 1 Involving Worshipers

How are worshippers involved in your parish? Overall, 22% of your worshippers join in small group activities. Some take part in group activities like Sunday school, church school, or Sabbath school (6%); prayer, discussion, or Bible study groups (10%); or fellowships, clubs, or other social groups (13%). Your parish's percentage is lower than the national average where 32% engage in some small group activity.



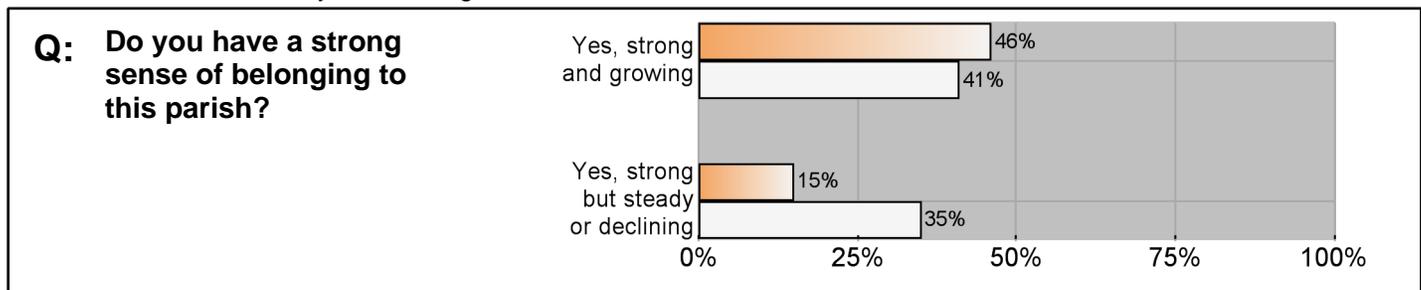
### 2 Involving Leaders

How many worshippers serve in leadership roles in your parish? 30% hold at least one leadership position in your parish (such as liturgical, parish leadership, group leader, etc.). About 28% of worshippers across the U.S. serve as leaders.



### 3 Belonging Here

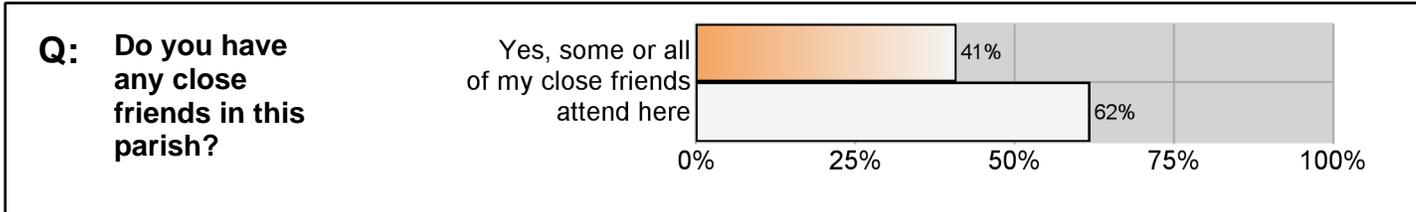
Do worshippers in your parish feel like they belong? 61% report a strong sense of belonging to your parish, which is less than in the typical congregation. 46% in your parish said this sense of belonging has been growing and 15% said it is steady or declining.





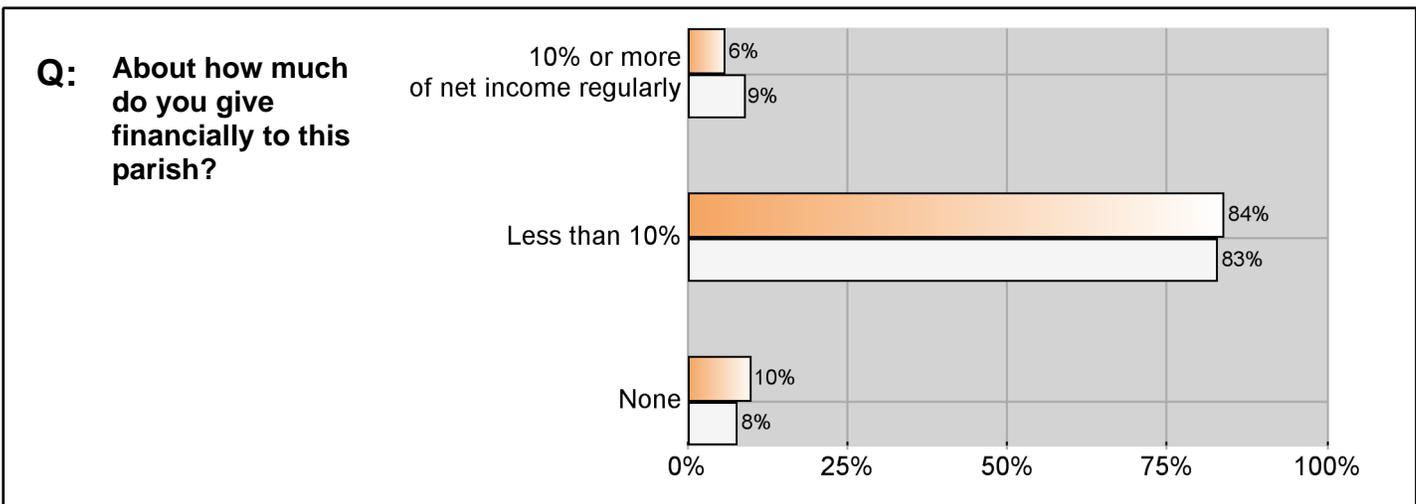
**4 Making Friends**

Are worshipers developing friendships with others in the parish? About 41% of your worshipers say some or all of their close friends attend there. This is not typical of the national picture where 62% of worshipers say they have some close friends in their congregation.



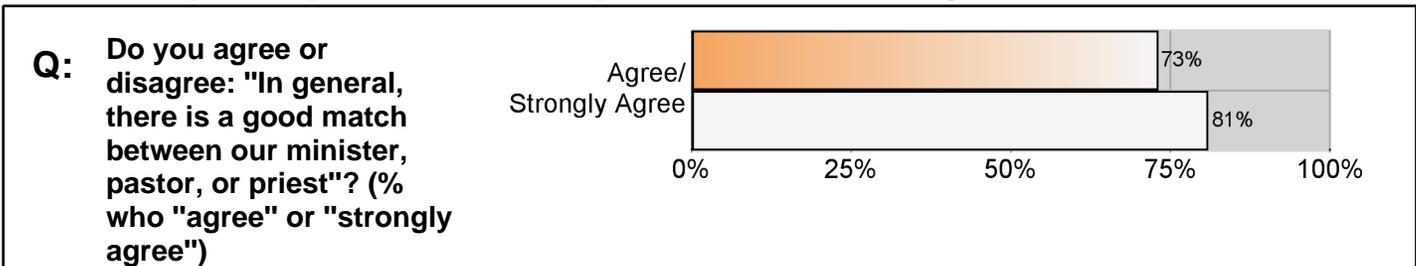
**5 Giving**

Financial support connects people to the parish and its mission. In your parish, 90% make financial contributions including 6% who regularly give 10% or more of their net income to your parish. Nationally, 92% of worshipers make financial contributions, and 9% give 10% or more of their net income.



**6 Being a Team**

Do worshipers feel there is a connection between leaders and worshipers in your parish? Most worshipers in your parish (73%) agree with the statement "In general, there is a good match between our parish and our minister, pastor, or priest." Across all worshipers in the U.S., about 81% agree with this statement.



**Making the Connections**

Review the six inside connections in your parish and consider these discovery questions for group discussion:  
 \*What are your parish's strengths in this area?  
 \*What connections inside your walls need attention and maintenance?  
 \*How can your parish build on its relationship strengths?



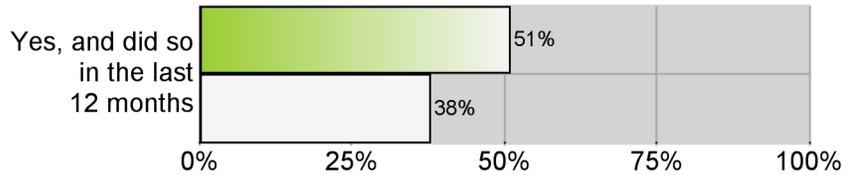
## Building Outside Connections

How does your parish connect to the community and non-members? Outside Connections consist of inviting others to attend, caring for neighbors, and welcoming new people.

### 1 Inviting Others

**1** Do your worshipers invite others to attend Mass? In the past 12 months, 51% invited a friend or relative who does not attend a parish to your worship services. This is greater than the average congregation where 38% asked someone to attend worship services.

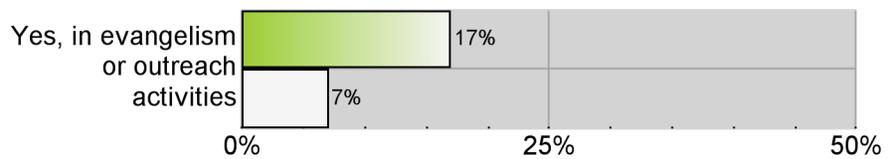
**Q:** Would you be prepared to invite to a Mass here any of your friends and relatives who do not now go to church?



### 2 Reaching Out

**2** How many worshipers contribute to your parish's outreach or evangelism efforts? In your parish, 17% join in these types of activities to reach out to the wider community. This percentage is unlike the national picture where 7% report being involved in evangelism or outreach activities.

**Q:** Do you regularly take part in any activities of this parish that reach out to the wider community?



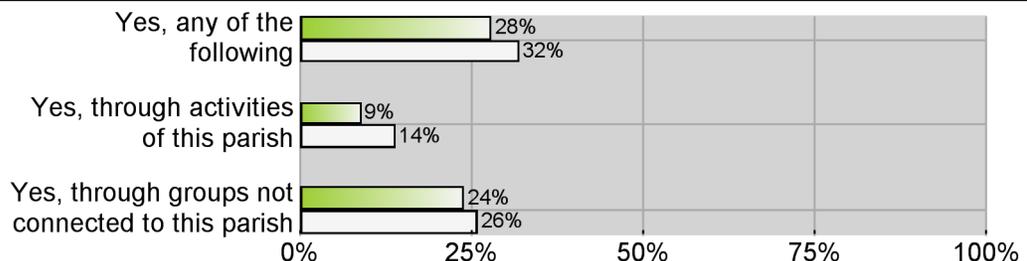
### 3 Your Parish's Inviting Activities

**3** From a list of 15 possible activities, a typical congregation reports using 6 strategies to reach out to non-members in the previous year. The most common strategies are: placing an ad in the phone book, keeping a web site for the congregation, and encouraging members to invite new people. Your parish listed 8 outreach strategies: mailing newsletters, placing a paper ad, placing an ad in the phone book, keeping a web site for the congregation, holding a neighborhood activity, encouraging members to invite new people, trying to contact people new to the area, and having a committee to recruit new members.

### 4 Serving the Community

**4** Are your worshipers involved in any community service, social justice, or advocacy activities? 28% of your worshipers take part in service or advocacy activities. Some join in community service activities organized through your parish (9% in your parish take part in such groups). Some of your worshipers (24%) participate in social service or advocacy groups not connected to your parish. This is about the same as the national average for all U.S. worshipers where 14% overall get involved in service or advocacy through their congregation, and 26% serve their communities through groups not connected to their congregation.

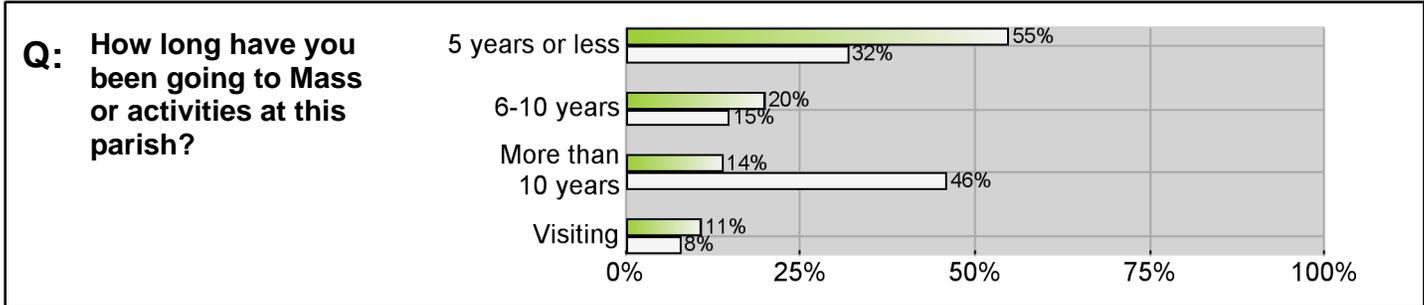
**Q:** Are you involved in any community service, social service, or advocacy groups?





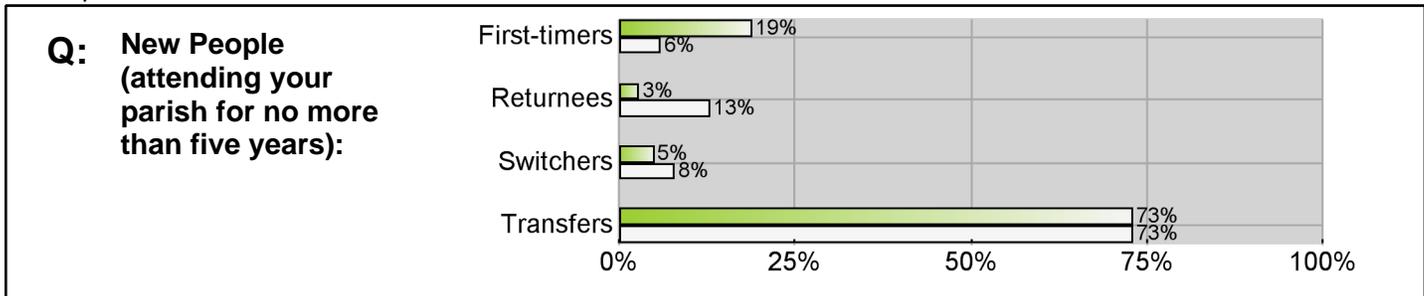
**5 Welcoming New People**

How many new people attend Mass in your parish? About 55% of those attending worship services at your parish have been coming for 5 years or less. Nationally, about 32% of all worshipers report attending 5 years or less. Visitors make up 11% of your worshipers. This compares to a national average of 8% of worshipers who are visitors.



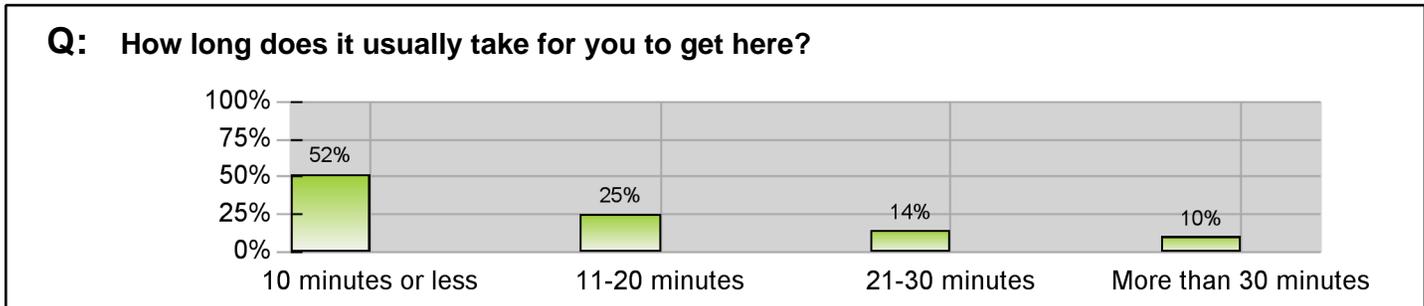
**6 Knowing New People**

What type of faith background is typical of the new people in your parish? New people (those attending five years or less) come from 4 different faith backgrounds: first-timers (19% in your parish), those who have never regularly attended anywhere; returnees (3%), those who are coming back after not attending anywhere for several years; switchers (5%), those who participated in another congregation with a different faith tradition; and transfers (73%), those who were participating in another Catholic parish immediately prior to attending your parish.



**7 Getting Here**

Do worshipers come from the immediate community or do they travel some time in order to attend? The largest percentage of people in your parish take 10 minutes or less to get to the services. Most of the people in your parish (77%) travel 20 minutes or less to attend services. Across all American congregations, -2% take over 20 minutes to arrive.



**Making the Connections**

Review the seven connections with the people and the community outside your parish and consider these discovery questions for group discussion:

- \*What are your parish's strengths in the areas of social care, evangelism, and advocacy?
- \*Is your focus what you expected it to be?
- \*Are there gaps in your community connections? What walls do you need to break down or open up?



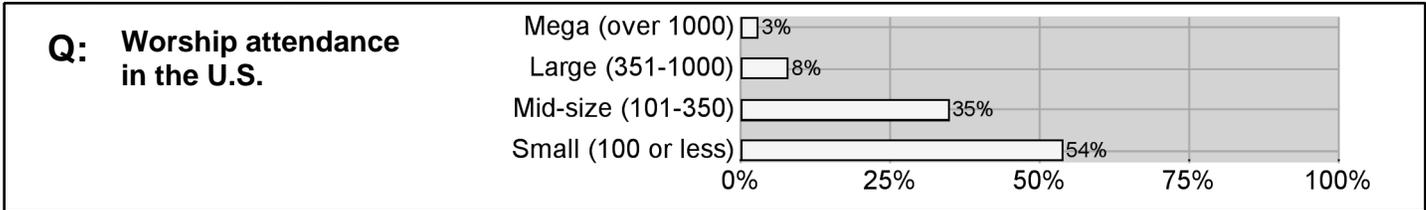
■ Your Parish  
 National Average: Catholics

## Building Identity Connections

Worshippers have an individual identity based on their age, education, and other factors. Worshippers also have a congregational identity that includes what they value and their dreams for the congregation's future.

### 1 Your Size

Small congregations dot the landscape, but most worshippers find themselves in large congregations. Your parish is mega with an average of 3000 attendees. The chart below shows where your parish fits in the size picture of all congregations.

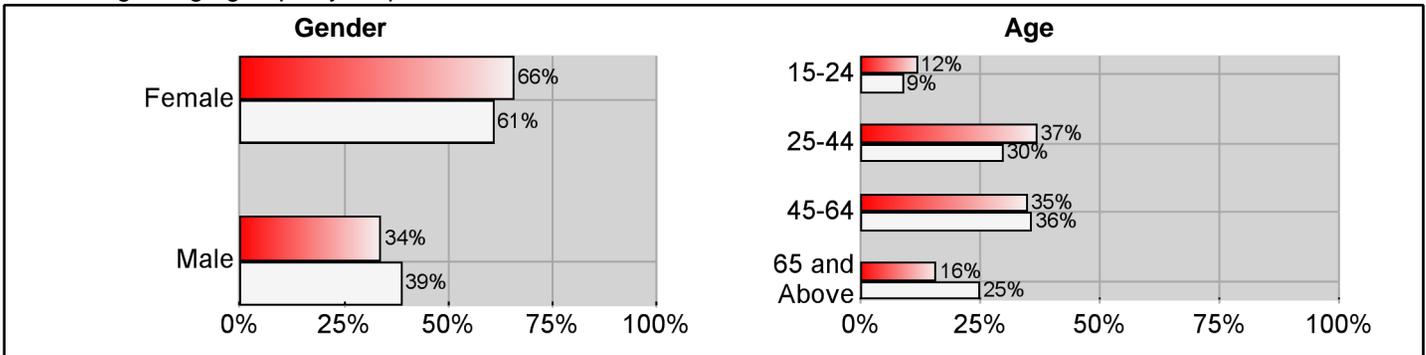


### 2 Your Gender Profile

Who makes up your parish? There are fewer men (39%) than women (61%) in most congregations. Women outnumber men in your parish (66% are women).

### 3 Your Age Profile

In most congregations, those aged 45-64 make up the largest group (36%). The average age of worshippers in your parish is 45. This is younger than the national average of 51. People in the age range of 25-44 comprise the largest age group in your parish.

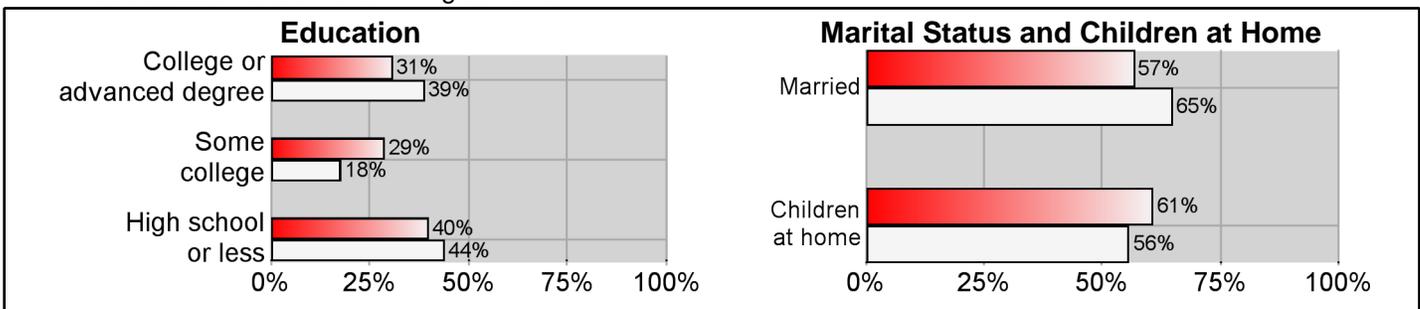


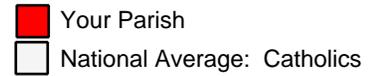
### 4 Your Educational Background

Worshippers in the U.S. tend to be well-educated. The U.S. Census shows that about 23% of people across the country hold at least a college degree. Among worshippers, the figure is 39%. In your parish, 31% report a college or graduate degree.

### 5 Your Household Types

Most worshippers in America are married, and this is true in your parish as well. Overall, 56% of worshippers have children living at home, less than the results for your parish (61%). Again, worshippers differ from typical Americans. The U.S. Census indicates that only 52% of the population in this country are currently married, and about 33% have children living at home.





**What You Value**

**6** What does your parish value? Your worshipers most value wider community care; reaching the unchurched; Holy Communion; sermons, preaching, or homilies; and adult education.

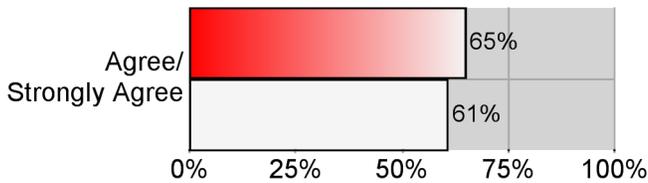
**Q:** Which of the following aspects of this parish do you personally most value? (Mark up to three responses.) Responses for your parish:

Wider community care	33%	Ministry for youth	14%
Reaching the unchurched	31%	Congregation's school/pre-school	14%
Holy Communion	31%	Openness to diversity	9%
Sermons, preaching, or homilies	23%	Traditional worship or music	9%
Adult education	19%	Bible study groups	8%
Contemporary worship or music	15%	Prayer ministry	7%
Social activities	15%	Care for one another	5%

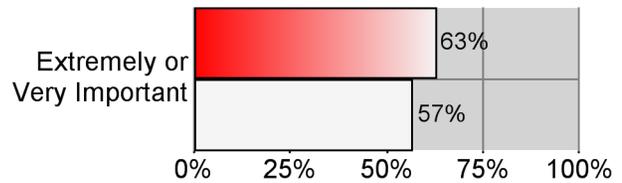
**7 Seeing Possibilities**

How strong is the sense of community in your parish? Many worshipers (65%) in your parish feel the parish has grown in unity and strength in the past year. Another sign of community is the number of people who see the parish as important in their life. Many worshipers in your parish (63%) describe the parish community as extremely or very important in their life.

**In the past year, we have grown in unity and strength as a parish community.**



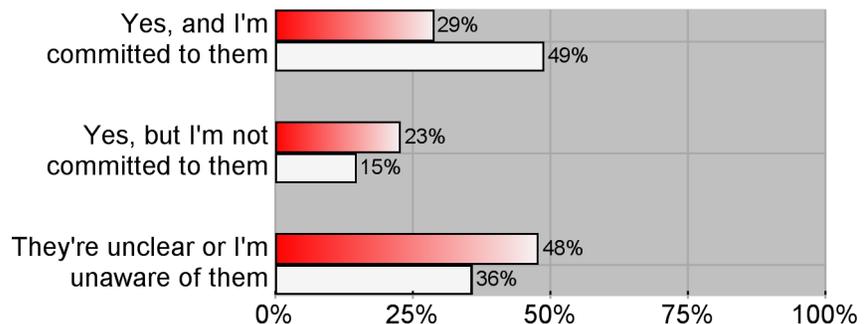
**How important is this parish in your life?**



**8 Committing to the Future**

Does your parish claim a clear vision, goals, or direction for its ministry and mission? About half worshipers in your parish believe there is a clear vision or direction for the future (52% say yes). However, about half are not sure that the vision is clear or that it exists (48%). The national average shows that most worshipers believe their congregation has a clear vision for the future (64%).

**Q:** Does this parish have a clear vision, goals, or direction for its ministry and mission?



**Making the Connections**

Review the eight identity connections in your parish and consider these discovery questions for group discussion:

- \* Who are you as a parish? Who can you become?
- \* How do these pictures compare to how you like to think of your parish?
- \* Are you having an identity crisis?
- \* How can you build on the strengths of your identity?