

Synod 2018

On Young People, The Faith, And Vocational Discernment

Diocese of Lansing, Michigan, U.S.A.
Survey Results.



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Many hands made for light work!

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Thank you Youth Synod Taskforce Team, for your generosity in addition to your ministry to the youth and young adults!

Dear Youth and Young Adult Ministers,

We, the Youth Synod Taskforce, are excited to share with you the results of a survey that the Vatican asked each diocese around the world to conduct for the *2018 Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment*.

Pope Francis has dedicated the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. . . to be focused on the theme of "Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment." It will be held in Rome in October 2018. Pope Francis noted: "The theme, an expression of the pastoral care of the Church for the young, is consistent with the results of the recent Synod assemblies on the family and with the content of the post-Synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. Its aim is to accompany the young on their existential journey to maturity so that, through a process of discernment, they discover their plan for life and realize it with joy, opening up to the encounter with God and with human beings, and actively participating in the edification of the Church and of society." (Vatican Bulletin)

What our taskforce has done for our diocese and for the Vatican, is summarize each question that the 750 youth (ages 16-29), 48 youth leaders, and 9 pastoral/vocational formators answered. You will find a summary of summaries on the following pages, as well as a lengthier version of the summaries of each question. Here are a few examples: "What do young people really ask of the Church in your country today?" "In what manner does the Church listen to the lived situations of young people?"

One notable difficulty in collecting comprehensive data on our youth is that the majority of the 750 youth who took the survey is practicing the faith; therefore, we are lacking the input of those outside of the faith as well as non-practicing Catholics. Despite that fact, the youth still seem to depict the culture in which they live.

So why is this information important to you and us? Now that our youth have taken this survey, they will expect that we *actually do something* in response to their answers regarding issues of life, faith, and vocational discernment.

Here's just a few of the striking highlights we found in the survey responses:

- 1) Many of the youth speak of feeling isolated and lonely in their culture.
- 2) The youth struggle in not feeling equipped to address issues of the culture today and don't know how to stand up for Church teachings, especially when it comes to moral issues (if they even believe in the teachings at all).
- 3) Many of the youth are looking to the Church not only for direction in faith and relationship with God, but for acceptance, belonging, and love from a community of people with similar beliefs.
- 4) In the adult survey, it seems to be a theme that many families and parishes seldom, if at all, teach about vocations and discernment skills on how to hear God's call for one's life, not only in just religious and marriage vocations but in other life decisions as well.
- 5) The pastoral activities mentioned that seem to be most effective in supporting the youth in the journey of faith after the Sacraments of Christian Initiation are: Eucharistic Adoration, fellowship/discipleship groups, retreats/service experiences, and more convenient Confession times.

Please take time to prayerfully read more of what our youth are saying in response to the questions. This will also prepare us for the upcoming *2018 Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment*.

We hope and pray that our ministries to the youth and young adults in our diocese will flourish more and more as we listen and respond to their questions and needs as a Church family, as well as lead and accompany them to a deeper level of faith, discernment, and relationship with God.

God bless you and your ministry!

Dawn Hausmann

Director of Consecrated Vocations & Chair of the Youth Synod Taskforce

Summary of the survey conducted in the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan, U.S.A. 2017: Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment

Section 1: Young People, the Church and Society

Majority of respondents were practicing Catholics. We hoped, and attempted, to reach non-practicing Catholics but, had little success as we are out-of-touch with them. A large majority indicated weekly Mass attendance as well as other formational events.

1. In what manner does the Church listen to the lived situations of young people?
 - a. Many indicated that the Church doesn't listen to them. Many also said that they have been heard by the Church through priests. Most did indicate that they have an active relationship with God but not with the Church.
2. What are the main challenges and most significant opportunities for young people in your country today?
 - a. Young people feel a lack of purpose, isolation and loneliness. They perceive that the Church doesn't provide them an opportunity to belong. They say that the Church didn't form them or equip them to answer the questions of the age.
 - b. Many recognize the value of technology, devices, and social media but also recognize its contribution to the loneliness and isolation they feel. There is still the sense that media can and should be used for good. They also recognize education as an opportunity for growth.
3. What kinds and places of group gatherings and youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success within the Church and why?
 - a. Respondents attend some of the following regular Church events: Mass, youth conferences, leadership training, retreats, Bible studies, small groups, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
4. What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success outside the Church and why?
 - a. Youth recognize that events which are successful include a strong social component.
5. What do young people really ask of the Church in your country today?
 - a. Youth want from the Church a welcoming, accepting and loving community.
6. What possibilities for participation exist in your country for young people to take part in the life of the ecclesial community?
 - a. Respondents attend some of the following regular Church events: Mass, youth conferences, leadership training, retreats, Bible studies, small groups, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
7. How and in what manner is contact made with young people who do not frequent Church surroundings?
 - a. The top three answers were: the Church doesn't, the Church does through acts of charity and service, and through personal witness. Although very few answers indicated a personal interpretation of the question and lacked personal experience in giving witness.

Section 2: Pastoral Vocational Programs for Young People

8. How are families and communities involved in the vocational discernment of young people?
 - a. Evidence shows that very few families are helping the youth to discern vocations. For the most part, parishes don't appear to foster this type of formation through catechesis.
9. How do schools and universities and other educational institutions (civil or ecclesial) contribute to young people's formation in vocational discernment?
 - a. Catholic institutions offer retreats, discernment groups, and exposure to those in religious life. Civil institutions offer career guidance.
10. In what manner are you taking into account the cultural changes resulting from the development of the digital world?
 - a. Youth leaders are increasingly using technology in their ministries: social media and video programs.
11. How can World Youth Days or other national or international events become a part of ordinary pastoral practice?
 - a. Youth leaders expressed the difficulties in participating in such events to be: finances, time, and international travel.
12. In what manner is your Diocese planning experiences for the pastoral vocational program for young people?
 - a. The Diocese offers various opportunities, through the Office of Vocations, such as retreats, discernment groups, workshops/classes, Vocation's Team visits throughout the diocese, and exposure to religious communities.

Section 3: Pastoral Care Workers with Young People

There were 9 people who took this portion of the survey (3 female and 6 male respondents). All of them are formators or pastoral care workers of some sort. A few are vocation or formation directors (or both), a few are religious formators in seminary or in convents, and others are advisors.

13. How much time and in what manner do clergy and other formators provide for personal spiritual guidance?
 - a. Most of them receive regular spiritual direction or spiritual mentoring and formation of some sort, such as annual retreats, strong faith-communities, and conferences.
14. What initiatives and opportunities for formation are in place for those who provide pastoral vocational guidance?
 - a. The NRVC (National Religious Vocation Conference)
 - b. NCDVD (National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors) national conference that focuses on this type of work and formation.
 - c. The Melchizedek Project
 - d. Institute for Religious Life
 - e. Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI): Good Leaders, Good Shepherds
 - f. Theology of the Body Institute courses for our priests- Priestly identity & TOB courses
 - g. Priest Convocations
 - h. Heart of Christ –Spiritual Direction Training Program
 - i. St Luke's Institute
15. What personal guidance is offered in seminaries?
 - a. Spiritual direction, formation, and advising are required for seminarians at the seminary. Many other types of formation and mentoring are available as well, such as regular conferences and talks plus seminary faculty who are readily available.

Section 4: Specific Questions According to Geographic Areas

16. How does your community care for young people who experience extreme violence (guerrilla warfare, gangs, prison, drug addiction, forced marriages) and accompany them in various ways in their life?
 - a. Overall, the respondents seemed to believe that their communities were not deeply impacted by these types of problems and therefore had little to no systems for helping people in these situations. Some just mentioned that they didn't have systems in place.

17. What formation is offered to support the engagement of young people in society and civil life, for the common good?
 - a. Most survey responses indicated formation in the corporal works of mercy. These include service trips, commonly referred to as "mission trips" or "alternative spring breaks." Responses also included service to local peoples. Examples include working at soup kitchens or food pantries.

18. In a world that is greatly secularized, what pastoral activities are most effective for continuing the journey of faith after the Sacraments of Christian Initiation?
 - a. Responses mentioned four main types of activities: various types of small groups (from men's and women's groups to fellowship and bible study groups), adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, retreats, and service opportunities.

Section 1: Young People, the Church, and Society

There were about 760 youth, between the ages of 16-29, who took this portion of the survey (10% more women than men). Although we tried to reach out to non-believers and those not practicing the faith, the majority of the people who responded is practicing the faith at some capacity, even if only because of family or school requirements. Despite not getting quite the diversity of respondents we were looking for, we still received challenging answers from the ones who are practicing some level of faith that reflect the state of their culture at large. We were able to get quite a few high school students from the Catholic schools as well as many young adults in campus ministry and other youth ministries from around the diocese to respond. (See page 29 for more detail on the demographics of the youth).



1: In what manner does the Church listen to the lived situations of young people?

Through priests:

Many of the youth and young adults speak of feeling heard by priests through the Sacrament of Penance or otherwise.

Through youth group/campus ministry/young adult group:

Personal relationships with fellow youth in the various small group settings help them feel that they are heard by their peers and also by those who minister to them in these groups. Many post-college age respondents indicated that they felt heard or that their desires were being met through groups within the Church but, outside the parish structure (e.g. small groups). A few post-college age youth mentioned ways in which they have been heard through events like: Marriage Encounter retreats, young adult ministry activities, etc.

Through personal prayer:

The youth speak of being heard through their personal prayer life. This may be from sharing their intentions in a group setting or just personal prayer on their own.

Through different Popes:

College-age respondents were most likely to indicate feeling heard by the current and previous Popes.

Through this survey:

Several respondents indicated that the opportunity to provide the Church with feedback by way of this survey made them feel heard.

Not heard:

Many of the respondents mentioned that they weren't heard or they weren't sure how they were heard by the Church. However, the youth in high school are most likely to say that they have not been asked or would not know to whom or how to express their desires.

Other noteworthy observations:

Many respondents, especially post-college age, took this question as an opportunity to be heard, rather than giving examples of how they have or have not been heard. A high number of those who used the question to be heard indicated a desire for a more traditional approach to Catholicism (e.g. "Latin Mass," "clearer teaching"). The most common group by whom respondents feel heard are pastors.

The college-age responses also revealed more difficulties than the other age groups (i.e. questioning their faith, generational conflicts, the Church is too modern or not modern enough, and more).

As frequency of Mass attendance decreases, so does the likelihood of a negative response to the question. The 40+ respondents felt heard by the Church through the Sacrament of Penance and no respondents indicated negative experiences through that sacrament.

Respondents who are ordained, consecrated, or in formation, answered that they have felt heard by priests and formators. Uniquely, the majority of respondents in this group felt that their desires were heard by the Church through her sacraments and teachings.

2.1: What are the main challenges for young people in your country today?

Identity: While the various age groups expressed different experiences, issues connected with their identity were common along the entire spectrum. For younger people, questions of identity centered on trying to find purpose, worry about being accepted by others and questions about how much interest God has in their lives. Girls tended to be concerned with their appearance and being accepted, being bullied, and body image, while boys were concerned with life balance, dealing with sexual desire, pornography, and the prevalence of drugs. For college-aged young adults, there was the concern about fitting in with the larger society, being convinced of their worth, and a desire for belonging. Many are searching for their vocation, but have a fear of commitment. Many expressed loneliness and insecurity. Finally young adults in early careers and family life expressed the pressure they feel to be perfect. They expressed wanting to date, but feel like they didn't know how or didn't know how to begin. Many pointed specifically to a lack of the virtue of hope.

Foundational Cracks: Many described a lack of foundation that makes them feel unable to fulfill their desire to love and be loved, their need for healing and their desire to encounter God. Many expressed dissatisfaction with the formation they received from the Church – which they feel ill prepared to be in the world and struggle when challenged on issues such as homosexuality. They feel like there is a lack of a young Catholic community. Many expressed a criticism of the Church that it tries to be 'too relevant'. Some said that Church leaders portray a weak Catholic identity. Instead, they want a firm foundation on which to build their life. They think many young adults are unable to make a personal commitment to the faith - wanting a good reason to believe but are filled with doubts and skepticism. They want to encounter God, but often times get caught up by the rules and laws of the church as an institution. They feel unstable. Conforming to 'worldly norms,' the pressure of a sex-saturated culture, was the most often expressed difficulty young people had in living within the larger community. A large majority pointed to the difficulty of maintaining a Catholic identity while living in a hedonistic, materialistic, apathetic, and self-serving culture. Pornography was referred to often, but fornication and pressure to conform to homosexual ideology to not be labeled a bigot was also mentioned. Many expressed the pressure they feel to maintain faith in the church's teaching while under the immense pressure to conform to the culture's standards of behavior.

Moral Issues and Church Teaching: The topic of homosexuality and gender identity absolutely dominated this area of concern. If young people weren't criticizing the Church's teaching and claiming it needed to change, they were expressing profound confusion and doubt about why the Church teaches what it does. Many said they felt the pressure of holding a minority opinion and felt little equipped to answer the questions as to why they believe what they do. Many want the Church to do a better job at forming them on how to answer such questions and give them tools to have courage, strength, and knowledge to stand up for truth when the world goes against them.

Technology: Every demographic group cited technology as a foundational concern. They are concerned about technology addiction and many blamed it for the loneliness, isolation, and hopelessness that they feel. Many described being constantly flooded with information (often not good stimuli) and distracted from engaging in true interpersonal relationships – some even stated that authentic relationships are almost impossible. Technology has made pornography inescapable and thus technology has resulted in addictions to porn as well.

Social Justice, Politics and Church: Many emphasized the political divisions in the world and in the Church. Many see the divisions that arise when young adults make their political beliefs their God. Some described feeling like the Church teachings are outdated and can discriminate against people and therefore, with the motivation to love, they don't know how to balance their faith with their political beliefs. They don't know how to answer difficult questions surrounding topics such as homosexuality, abortion, sex and transgenderism and are confused about the church teachings. Others described challenges with having the courage, strength and knowledge to stand up for truth when the world often times goes against those teachings. Many stated moral relativism as a huge issue in today's culture.

2.2: What are the most significant opportunities for young people in your country today?

Social Media, Internet, & Technology:

The biggest opportunities for all ages seemed to be social media, the Internet, and technology. Many felt that these media outlets provided a platform for them to make a positive change and help those around them.

Opportunity to Be Heard:

There were many responses explaining that they had opportunities to make a difference and make their voices heard. They felt that they have a platform to create a change in the world today through the opportunities they have.

Education or Career:

High School students felt that education or college was another big opportunity that they had. A big opportunity college age & post college age groups reported was the opportunity for education and success. They related success mostly to careers.

Equality & Acceptance:

Many students also felt like another big opportunity they had were equality and acceptance. Many made various comments ranging from gender equality, sexual equality, to religious freedom. They felt that there is important acceptance today to be who you are made to be than previously in history. They also felt that culture today provided them with more choices than ever.

Travelling:

There were also many responses explaining that traveling was a big opportunity they have in their culture.

Various Comments:

Other various comments about biggest opportunities were Mass, jobs, internships, traveling, and mission trips.

3: What kinds & places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have major success within the Church and why?

The events that youth of all ages attend/have attended:

They attend Mass, Eucharistic adoration, and other Sacraments (marriages, special celebrations, etc.), conferences, retreats of various sorts, mission/service work, Christian music festivals, and alternative spring breaks (that are service trips). Some mention praise and worship as a significant event in their faith experience. Small groups of various sorts: Bible studies, men & women's groups, youth group, etc.

Specific names of events they attend:

A few specific events that high school students mentioned are: Kairos retreats, Jamboree, Diocesan Youth Leadership Camp (DYLC), World Youth Day (WYD), Steubenville conferences, the March for Life, fish fries, FOCUS, and the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC). College-age and beyond seem to attend: i.d. 9:16 (Intentional Disciples), Theology on Tap events, Alpha, Latin Mass, and other young adult events. The young Religious Sisters who took this survey mentioned Steubenville, Eucharistic Conference, and Youth 2000 as events that helped them grow in relationship with Jesus.

Reasons they attend events within the church:

Across the age groups of youth, all seem to attend events in the church to meet people their age who are striving to live the faith, to grow in relationship with God, and to grow in the knowledge of the faith. They all want to be in a place with those who will love, respect, and accept them where they are at in life, as well as be nourished in the Faith. Small groups seem to be good for everyone to establish close friendships instead of just being a number in the pew on Sunday. Some people go to things more for social reasons; others to learn the truths of the faith and grow in relationship with God; and most are there for a combination of both, faith and community. Some high schoolers mention that they go to Mass and church events as an obligation by their parents; some don't mention why they go at all; others mention friends invite them to events; many of them say their reason for going to events is to grow in relationship with God & knowledge of the Faith, to build friendships, and for the fun. They say they go to these events to strengthen their faith and to meet other youth Catholics who have similar morals and values. The major events that are national or international such as WYD, attract the youth of all ages because of the uniqueness of seeing the Church's universality and communion around the world.

Other noteworthy observations:

Many of the Catholic school teenagers are going to the obligatory Mass during the school week, while many of them are not attending regularly on Sundays. This is becoming more common it seems. With post-college youth (young adults) it seems they are seeking opportunities to build community with each other and grow in the faith, while they aren't as involved in volunteering in service programs and other parish activities as with the high school youth. Participation in small groups of some sort seems to be vital to the growth and development of young people's journey of faith, where they can have personal friendships with those of the faith and share in common beliefs. The youth seem to like events that are well-organized and have a good leadership who are experienced, genuine, and accepting. They desire to have an environment where they will be accepted, loved, and not judged. Youth seem to want the church to meet them away from parish grounds too.

4: What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success outside the Church, and why?

Main Themes:

- Social/Communal
- Food/Music
- Informal/Relaxed
- Personal Growth/Learning

The main overarching theme to describe the answers from this question is that gatherings that are social/communal in nature make for successful events.

It is interesting to note that even given the nature of the question, that being “non-Catholic/secular, generally respondents mentioned three of the 4 practices the early disciples adopted after Pentecost as described in Acts 2:42; namely the communal life, the breaking of the bread (secular), and the teachings (secular). (“The prayers” is obviously not part of this answer.) I think it seems to speak to the innate human desire and longing for these practices.

Though there were many gatherings mentioned, the most common responses mentioned events that include music, food, and a relaxed, welcoming environment that is communal in nature.

There was also a theme of informality. Whether the events mentioned were learning, music, discussion/conversational or meals it seemed the air of informality was paramount.

5: What do young people really ask of the Church in your country today?

Most frequent response:

Out of 760 responses, the most frequent theme expressed was that youth and young adults desire a sense of support, acceptance, a welcoming community, love and affirmation, guidance and reassurance as they experience transitions and big decisions or family struggles. The percentage of respondents expressing this desire was about 33% across all age ranges. Although it is tempting to give weight to the more particular desires described below, it should be noted that these themes were overwhelmingly more common.

Other frequent responses:

Access to Mass and the sacraments, particularly the Sacrament of Penance and guidance in prayer, spiritual direction, and relationship with God are the second most important areas. Access to the Sacrament of Penance or Mass at convenient times was a concern. Others expressed desires for good music at Mass. Around 10% of responses fell into this category.

The only particular social issue to emerge was acceptance of LGBT individuals, support for gay marriage, and an end to the rejection of LGBT individuals. This concern was noted in about 5% of all responses, peaking among late teens and college aged individuals.

Noteworthy trends among age groups:

Younger people, high school and college aged respondents (aged 16 to 22), often included a desire for more knowledge of the faith. Around 8% desired clarification of Church teachings, desire for greater dialogue when young people disagree or don't understand rules, and a desire to learn how to defend the teachings and philosophy of the Church.

Their main concern for the Church was to be more open-minded, more compassionate, accepting and less focused on rules (particularly birth control, living together, etc.) was present in ~4% of responses. The sexual issues were noted among older respondents.

Around 6% of college aged responses involved a desire for formation on marriage and discernment topics, decision making, and guidance in discerning the future. A similar number (~6%) talked about wanting to be involved through convenient service times, young adult activities, and to be respected as adult members of their parishes.

College aged and young adult respondents (aged 18-29) often included a desire for the Church to be a "moral stronghold"- clarity of teachings, defense against moral relativism, etc. A small number, about 4% in each of these groups, desired more traditional practices like the Extraordinary Form of the Mass, traditional prayer forms, etc.

Young adults desired particular young adult ministries or activities in parishes, the opportunity to talk to priests, formation for vocation and for the Church to address issues of single life (particularly among those who desire marriage) but struggle to find a spouse.

6: *What possibilities for participation exist in your country (Diocese) for young people to take part in the life of the ecclesial community?*

Events mentioned as opportunities of participation:

Overall, the majority of the answers identified typical church activities in which they could and/or do participate. Here is a list of those mentioned: Mass and other liturgical events, liturgical volunteers, Service/mission trips, charitable work, school/campus ministry, Bible studies, small groups, Youth Group, retreats, Knights of Columbus, and I.D. 9:16.

A minority of answers conveyed ignorance of opportunities:

Some conveyed discomfort at church by the distrust of diverging opinions about doctrinal teachings and social issues. There were also a group of answers which stated that there are lots of opportunities to be involved but that they chose not to participate.

7: How and in what manner is contact made with young people who do not frequent Church surroundings?

The top three answers from the youth were some variation of 1.) they didn't see it 2.) through acts of charity and service 3.) through personal witness.

Other repeated responses included the efforts in Flint Michigan, multi-media efforts, parish outreaches, and public talks.

Noteworthy observations:

Overall, most youth submitted very similar answers. Nearly everyone polled was baptized in the Church and the vast majority attended Mass on a regular basis.

People clearly interpreted the meaning of the question to refer to the institution of the Church since hardly anyone made it personal or reflected on how they personally have shared the good news. It's distressing that one of the top answers was that the Church wasn't reaching out to the youth outside of church surroundings, though it isn't surprising given the common perception of the Church as a stagnant and archaic institution. However, we would have thought people who participated on a regular basis would have more enthusiasm for and experience with evangelization.

The college-age students resonate with people sharing their personal experience with others and engaging in outward expressions of love and solidarity. Multiple respondents cited love and acceptance as part of their answer.

The young adults mirrored the college answers, but with slightly more emphasis on service, charity, and loving your neighbor. Specific ministries were mentioned, as well as street evangelization and parish events.

The vast majority of high school students who responded attend Mass on a regular basis (once or more than once a week) yet their participation didn't translate to an overwhelming understanding of the Church's evangelistic efforts.

Section 2: Pastoral Vocational Programs for Young People

There were 48 youth and young adult leaders who took this portion of the survey. The average age of the leaders who took this survey is 41 years old. Two-thirds of them were women, the other third men. Although the majority of them are involved in both youth ministry and/or Confirmation prep, there are various other ministry representatives who took this survey as well such as young adult ministry, campus ministry, evangelization ministry, etc. (see page 32 for more detail).



8: *In what ways have you seen families and communities involved in helping young people in all forms of discernment?*

Discernment of God's will and Vocational Discernment:

Many respondents display an understanding of discernment and vocation. There is not, at the parish level, however, much evidence of concrete examples of specific endeavors fostering discernment of vocations. Almost all events mentioned by respondents originate from the Diocesan Office of Vocations.

Here are examples of what was mentioned: prayer for vocations during Mass, prayer teams interceding for an increase to vocations (only a few parishes), accompanying the few individuals who do mention an active discernment of vocation. These individuals are connected to pastors and to personnel in the Office of Vocations.

Family involvement in discernment of vocations:

Evidence shows that very few families are helping the young to discern vocations. For the most part parishes don't appear to foster this type of formation through catechesis or any other means. The small minority of families that do teach and foster discernment bear incredible fruit. It appears that having parents promote discernment of God's will is, by far, the most effective way of successfully promoting vocations.

9: How do schools and universities or other educational institutions (civil or ecclesial) contribute to young people's formation in vocational discernment?

Secular high schools, colleges and universities:

Secular educational institutions almost exclusively offer guidance on career choices. Common activities include career fairs or visits from various types of professionals, standardized aptitude and personality tests, college and career counselors at high schools and universities, and visits to colleges and trade schools. Most of these opportunities for secular career guidance are also available at Catholic high schools and colleges.

Catholic high schools, Catholic Colleges, and Catholic Campus Ministries at secular colleges:

Catholic schools and ministry offerings fell into the following categories:

- Retreats
- Talks or visits by the diocesan vocations team, chastity speakers, vocations fair, or panels of priests and consecrated persons
- Discernment Groups
- Christian Households for Vocational Discernment
- Prayer or Eucharistic Adoration services focused on vocations
- Particular nonprofit organizations that contributed to vocational discernment included the following:
- St Paul Outreach (college intentional Christian Community Households)
- FOCUS (missionary program for college evangelization)
- Franciscan University at Steubenville Youth Retreats (primarily for high school students)

10: *In what manner are you taking into account the cultural changes resulting from the development of the digital world?*

Internet & Technology:

Many youth leaders commented on their use of the Internet in their ministry. Many of them commented on how they use the Internet to show videos to the youth during programs, especially during Confirmation class using the program "Chosen". Youth leaders also commented on how the parish has begun to more frequently use the Internet to reach parishioners regarding events and programs such as "My Parish App" and "yDisciple". Many also remarked on their use of the online program "Formed.org" and how that has impacted their programs.

Social Media:

Many of the youth leaders made comments on how they try to stay up to date on popular social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to keep up with the youth. They use social media to inform the youth of events and programs and to keep in contact with them.

Other Noteworthy Observations:

The youth leaders also commented how it is also difficult when it comes to technology because the youth are less engaged in the present world via face-to-face experience. They discuss how many of them limit phone use during programs to encourage the youth to interact without their phones.

Many discuss how reaching out via technology is meeting the youth where they're at and as an easier way to relate to them.

Some comment that they are still wrestling with how to address issues like technology addiction and the epidemic of pornography.

11: How can World Youth Days or other national or international events become a part of ordinary pastoral practice?

The overall themes found in our responses to this question are:

- Financial
- Time
- International Travel

Financial:

Financial issues were the most common responses. Many suggested that if there were scholarships, sponsorships or some sort of Diocesan/Parish subsidy there would be greater likelihood that they would make these events part of their ordinary pastoral practice.

Time:

Many responses indicated that given the demands on the time of youth and young adults these days that the time required to take advantage of all the events surrounding World Youth Days is difficult to get young people to commit to.

International Travel:

There were several responses indicating that in addition to the financial stress of such trips/gatherings, the work and details of taking youth on an extended international trip was not worth the effort. Though some people mentioned live stream or local/regional events coinciding with the international events, the sense was that these did not have the same draw, experience and thus level of interest as the international events. Though most of the responses were referring to World Youth Days, there were several responses indicating a willingness for greater participation at more frequent national events, such as Eucharistic Congresses or conferences.

12: In what manner is your diocese planning experiences for the pastoral vocational program for young people?

Activities and Events promoting vocation:

The 40 responses listed parish activities or diocesan activities. By far the most mentioned detail was the Vocations office and its Director's. There were many elements mentioned which originate with their office and a few from the Office of High School and Middle School Ministry. Here are the things listed:

- Vocations Office, Directors
- Retreats, Discernment days
- Providing speakers for events
- TOB classes/workshops
- General discussion of vocations and help with individual's discernment
- Discernment communities/Emmaus House
- Jamboree
- Diocesan Youth Leadership Camp
- Vocations panels at parish for
- Pamphlets educational materials
- Jeremiah 1:7/The Foundation (men's discernment groups- high school, post-high school)
- Nun-Run, visits to convent's around the geographic region

Parishes which indicate a lack of knowledge or participation in Diocesan vocational events:

Nine responses were negative, most of which indicated ignorance of what the Diocese offers them as parish leaders. Ironically, a few went on to list Diocesan staff or an event or two that pertains to the topic which seems to indicate a lack of personal knowledge or experience of the persons or events. These parish leaders know that resources are available but, haven't utilized them.

One note, also worth mentioning, is that a handful of responses indicated the perception that the Diocesan Office of Vocations only focuses on religious vocations and neglects other pertinent topics like dating, family and married life. While this is not factually true, it is good info to consider for our future work and communication.

Section 3: Pastoral Care Workers with Young People

There were nine people who took this portion of the survey (3 female and 6 male respondents). All of them are formators or pastoral care workers of some sort. A few are vocation or formation directors (or both), a few are religious formators in seminary or in convents, and others are advisors. Most of them do spiritual direction or spiritual mentoring and formation of some sort. They also seem to have some formation for themselves through spiritual direction and other means of growing in the spiritual life.



13: How much time and in what manner do clergy and other formators provide for personal spiritual guidance?

Those who took this part of the survey didn't mention how much time they dedicate for all these ways in which they grow in their own spiritual life and formation; however, it seems that all of them are faithfully dedicated to a strong life of prayer and a healthy support system outside of themselves. They claim to have these things as their 'regular' journey of their spiritual life. Here are the various ways of spiritual growth that they mention:

Personal Prayer & Sacraments:

Most of the respondents gave various ways in which they foster a strong prayer life, personal and communal. All have some varieties of these prayer forms: personal prayer, meditation, rosary, frequent reception of the Sacraments, and spiritual reading.

Spiritual Direction:

Everyone mentioned having some kind of spiritual direction themselves.

Retreats:

Everyone mentioned taking retreats at least annually. Some do personal or directed ones.

Conferences:

A few people mentioned attending conferences. One mentioned a specific program through St. Luke's Institute.

Friendships & Fraternity:

Many of the people mentioned having some community in which they grow in their spiritual life. They mentioned various means of having community, through the Religious community they are part of, priestly fraternity, or fellow Consecrated men and women with whom they associate and grow in the spiritual life.

14: What initiatives and opportunities for formation are in place for those who provide pastoral vocational guidance?

Some of the formators mentioned that they don't have much 'formal' training or formation that helps them be qualified for this type of ministry. However, they do report having knowledge and experience from the different vocations that they are living such as priesthood, Consecrated Virginity, etc. In addition to vocational experience and knowledge, many of them report having attended various conferences related to their pastoral ministry. Only a few have had specific formal training opportunities in becoming formators.

Some say that there are many opportunities to grow in training to be formators through the seminary but they don't mention exact courses, conferences, or programs; they just say that they exist. A few people also mention retreats and seminary visits that help with ongoing formation.

Other conferences or special programs that are mentioned:

- The NRVC (National Religious Vocation Conference)
- NCDVD (National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors) national conference that focuses on this type of work and formation.
- The Melchizedek Project
- Institute for Religious Life
- Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI): Good Leaders, Good Shepherds
- Theology of the Body Institute courses for our priests- Priestly identity & TOB courses
- Priest Convocations
- Heart of Christ –Spiritual Direction Training Program
- St Luke's Institute

15. *What personal guidance is offered in seminaries?*

Specific to seminary formation, they mention:

The rector gives a regular conference. The formation sessions in which a faculty member addresses students on a given topic are offered monthly. The priests are generally available to the students, which allows for the possibility of mentoring in areas where the student seeks it out. Extra counseling is available to them as well. Spiritual direction, formation, and advising are required for seminarians at the seminary. IPF (Institute for Priestly Formation) is a requirement for seminarians. Holy Land experience along with a 30-Day Ignatian retreat is required as well. Spanish Enculturation Experience is required for Pre-Theologians. Seminarian Outings/gatherings are required as well.

Other formation outside of seminary life (in Religious/Consecrated life and other formation):

- College women in general discernment
- Personal formation, mentoring, and spiritual direction
- Communal formation opportunities be it a topic of formation like Ignatian rules of discernment, and discernment groups for men and women.
- Communal faith sharing & meetings happens in Religious communities
- Input from vocation directors, formators, and Superiors
- Not much formation is found unless they are seminarians
- Formation conferences
- Psychological exams
- Fraternity
- Novice Master, formator has personal interviews
- Nun Runs (visits to convents to experience their life and ask questions)
- Women's Discernment Retreats (Where Religious Sisters and other consecrated women come to share their lives, give talks, and spend time 1-on-1 with women discerning their vocation.)
- Retreats on Ignatian Rules of Discernment

Section 4: Specific Questions According to Geographic Areas

America A: *How does your community care for young people who experience extreme violence (guerrilla warfare, gangs, prison, drug addiction, forced marriages) and accompany them in various ways in their life?*

The most frequent response was some iteration of uncertainty or recognizing that the community had no systems in place to address the question. The second most common response centered around dialogue and personal accompaniment with those who deal with or have experienced extreme violence. Additionally, classes and training sessions were mentioned as methods of addressing the community's response to the evils listed in the question. Some people mentioned pastoral counseling, counseling services through St. Vincent Catholic Charities, pornography addiction groups, abortion counseling referrals, mental & emotional health classes and human trafficking education.

Overall, the respondents seemed to believe that their communities were not deeply impacted by these types of problems and therefore, had little to no systems for helping people in these situations. Some just mentioned that they didn't have systems in place.

America B: *"What formation is offered to support the engagement of young people in society and civil life, for the common good?"*

Responses can be generally grouped into these two generalized categories:

-Christian Service

Most survey responses indicated formation in the corporal works of mercy. These include service trips, commonly referred to as "mission trips" or "alternative spring breaks." Responses also included service to local peoples. Examples include working at soup kitchens or food pantries.

-Political/Civil Service

The second area mentioned by respondents concerned political or civil service. Formation typically takes place within a religious education, confirmation, or youth group setting. A few respondents also mentioned school government classes and information on faithful citizenship.

America C: *In a world that is greatly secularized, what pastoral activities are most effective for continuing the journey of faith after the Sacraments of Christian Initiation?*

The overall themes found in the responses to this question are:

- Eucharistic Adoration
- Fellowship/Discipleship Groups
- Retreats/Service Opportunities

Fellowship/Discipleship Groups:

Many responses mentioned various types of small groups, from men's and women's groups to fellowship and bible study groups. This fits with the responses which indicated that environments where young people felt welcome and that they belonged were important to them.

Eucharistic Adoration:

Although retreats and youth groups were mentioned, quite a few responses indicated that time spent in Eucharistic adoration was effective at helping after the Sacraments of Initiation.

Retreats/Service Opportunities:

Many responses indicated that retreats and service/mission opportunities were effective at helping young people continue their journey of faith after the Sacraments of Initiation. These events seemed to lend themselves to creating an environment of fellowship and belonging, and that young people felt they had something to contribute.

Section 5: Sharing Activities

1: *List the main types of pastoral activity in accompaniment and vocational discernment in your present situation.*

- Priesthood Discernment groups for men: High school discernment group, Jeremiah 1:7, and Post-high school/College discernment groups: The Foundation
- Discernment groups for women: a few college ones, and a Consecrated Virgin one
- A Consecrated Virgin discernment group
- Discernment houses for women – one in Ann Arbor and one in Lansing
- Spiritual Direction for some individual discerners
- Parish-based marriage preparation is offered
- Introduction to Natural Family Planning offered –for college age men and women as well as engaged couples-FOCCUS mentor couples partnering with engaged couples
- Engaged encounter
- College campus ministries
- Youth retreats (ex. Kairos, Steubenville, the Mission, Veritas)
- Young Adult pilgrimage to the Holy Land w/a Diocesan Vocation Director
- Vocation Directors give presentations around the diocese on topics of: discernment, vocations, Theology of the Body
- i.d. 9:16 our young adult intentional discipleship group (monthly gatherings)
- Evangelical Catholic
- Come and See visits to convents in the diocese (called: “Nun Runs”)
- Youth Ministry programs
- Diocesan Youth Assemblies: High School Jamboree
- Diocesan Youth Leadership Camp
- Discernment retreats: some focused on Ignatius Discernment tools, a men’s discernment overnight focused on the priesthood, and a women’s discernment retreat focused on Consecrated life
- Seminary visits/evaluations
- Called and Gifted workshops – to help discern charisms and gifts of each person
- Theology on Tap for young adults

2: Three Activities to Share:

Activity 1: Diocesan Youth Leadership Camp (DYLC) - Diocese of Lansing, Michigan. U.S.A.

Description: DYLC is a weeklong leadership camp in which parishes send their teens with the most potential for leadership development. For 32 years (2017) the Diocese of Lansing has trained over 3,000 teens to be leaders not only in their youth groups or parishes, but in their communities. They are trained to be missionary disciples both in the present and in the future. DYLC, rooted in prayer, has sessions focused on small group development, listening, self-disclosure, affirmation, small group dynamics, small group facilitation, planning group events, trust, the Vision of (Youth) Ministry, and servanthood. Throughout the week there is daily Mass, the Sacrament of Penance and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The sessions, components, and Sacraments keep the camp rooted in Christ in order to then, make leaders who bring Christ to others. Small discipleship groups are a huge component of this week. Every session and most prayers provide a small group experience. DYLC takes place at St. Francis Retreat Center in Dewitt, MI. A team of people work October thru June in preparation for the week, preparing session content, prayer, and team building exercises. The group consists of 14 teens and 18 adults. There are between 80 and 100 participants each year.

Analysis: The Goals of DYLC correspond to those of the USCCB's document "Renewing the Vision". They are to empower disciples, draw teens into the life of the church and community, as well as foster their total personal growth. The DYLC's main goal though is to empower disciples by giving them the tools they need to bring others to Christ.

Evaluation: The goals are stated above. In the majority of cases, not only would those going to DYLC agree that these goals were met, but those facilitating the camp notice a distinguished difference from when they arrive to when they leave. Strengths of DYLC are the emphasis on the 3rd goal of Youth Ministry – The total growth of teens. DYLC focuses on the social, mental and emotional growth of teens as well as their spiritual growth, which is what is considered unique about DYLC. It emphasizes the importance of relationship with others in addition to the importance of relationship with God. Another strength is the peer ministry that occurs. Teen leadership is a staple in our Diocesan Youth Leadership Camp and it wouldn't have thrived without it.

A final thing about DYLC is that it epitomizes the old saying "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." There are a lot of events that give people an opportunity to encounter Jesus. However, DYLC's purpose is forming youth who will go out and bring others to Christ. The purpose is to give these teens the tools to lead others to an encounter with Christ. DYLC is a camp that keeps giving. It creates Fishers of Men.

Activity 2: Discernment Groups & Women's Discernment Houses

Priesthood Discernment Groups

Description: Groups are divided into two types in our diocese: groups for high school aged young men and groups for older college aged men. These groups gather men with one or more priest facilitator (always two priests for the high school groups) and include Mass if possible and open guided discussion using the book *"To Save a Thousand Souls"* or some other appropriate material and usually ending with pizza and a more informal time. These usually take place at local parishes or our retreat center.

Analysis: These groups have engendered openness among men toward discernment of priesthood mainly through the encouragement of peers and the freedom of a "no-pressure" setting. The groups have offered men a chance to safely explore priesthood and more adequately be prepared to enter seminary. For those in the group who discern a call to marriage, they are all the more open to God being in the discernment and to the beauty of the Sacrament. The men who feel called to seminary are given the gift of being much more aware of and open to what will be asked of them in seminary formation as well as in the priesthood. All of this is available to them before they enter in a seminary. These men also have the advantage of already having friends whom they have been journeying with who will continue to walk that journey with them right into the seminary.

Evaluation: All seven of the men who have been accepted for admission into seminary this fall 2017 have been part of these groups. This is the fruit of three years of running these groups now. These groups are not only helpful for those who participate in them, but they encourage other men to begin asking God more seriously what He wants for their lives.

Women's Discernment Houses

Description: We have one diocesan-based discernment house. The house is in East Lansing, Michigan right next to Michigan State University. Four women live in community and in discernment of their vocation there. A housemother also lives with the four women to provide formation and to keep order in the house. The formation provided is not only for the women living there but, any women who are part of campus ministry.

Analysis: They have daily prayer together, a few communal meals each week, formation nights twice a month, Mass on Saturdays, opportunity for spiritual accompaniment, and vocational events such as "Nun Runs" (convent visits) and women's discernment retreats with women living in Consecrated life. The past year they started a discernment group, serving about 12 women. It consisted of a book study and personal sharing bi-weekly, reading *Discernment of Spirits*, by Fr. Timothy Gallagher O.M.V. one semester and *And You Are Christ's*, by Fr. Thomas Dubay S.M. another semester. We have found that it is very good for women to share with each other their journeys of discerning God's will and its joys and challenges.

Evaluation: The goal of the discernment household is to have a place for women who want to seriously grow in tools of discernment of God's will, prayer, and community living. The strengths are that we do have women who are entering religious orders, getting married, discovering God's call for their lives in the little things such as what jobs to take as well as big things regarding their permanent state in life vocation. We are forming women of good character and faith as well as encouraging men to desire and to form similar houses on their own.

Activity #3: i.d. 9:16 Young Adult Ministry

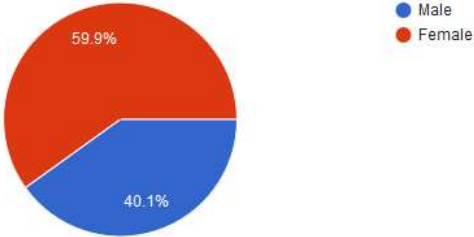
Description: The ministry, i.d.9:16, exists to form young adults into intentional disciples of Jesus Christ. In response to the call for a new evangelization, i.d.9:16 seeks to establish communities of missionary disciples within parishes and to provide opportunities for young adults (20/30's) to encounter Jesus Christ, hear His call, and decide to follow Him. This is accomplished with leadership training and team formation, monthly Disciples' Night meetings, and smaller men's and women's discipleship group. i.d.9:16 is a grassroots outreach of Renewal Ministries. The ongoing work of young adult evangelization and discipleship takes place in and through local partnering parishes. For instance, the i.d.9:16 Chapter in Livingston County represents all eight parishes in the vicariate. The leadership team is comprised of men and women from most of those parishes. The Disciples' Night is held at the same parish each month for continuity's sake but the Discipleship Groups meet in people's homes.

Analysis: i.d.9:16 has been successful in helping young adults grow closer to Christ and dive more deeply into a life a discipleship where local leaders have worked hard to make it happen. Each chapter struggles to activate people into a missionary lifestyle capable of reproducing discipleship in someone else. However, we are seeing more and more instances of people coming alive in Christ and desiring the training and community to share Him with others. Leadership and openness to the Holy Spirit are the two most critical success factors for i.d.9:16 chapters.

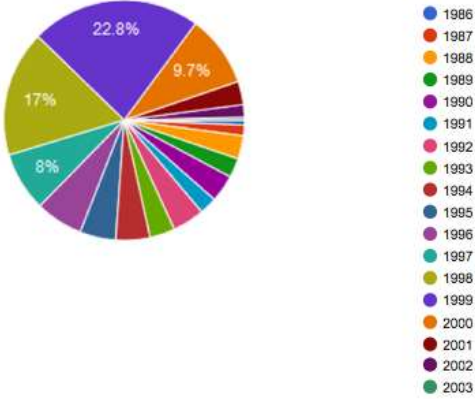
Evaluation: We hope to create 'Trojan horses' of culture change within parishes by equipping and empowering the young adult population. What would our parishes look like if on fire young adults had the freedom and authority to serve within all aspects of the parish? Truly missionary young adults would create atmospheres of encounter, community, and a radically attractive place to worship. This is important not only for the current health of the Church, but these are the people who will be tasked with leading, funding, and populating the Church moving forward. Current parish practices and structures must be evaluated in light of the new missionary paradigm in our country and young adults should have a concrete role in this process. Through the i.d.9:16 leadership training and discipleship process, young adults are drawn into the parish and hopefully given a platform from which to lead and engage across generations.

Appendix 1: Youth Survey Demographics

Gender
766 responses

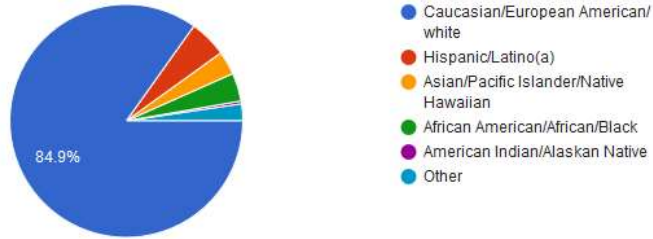


Year of Birth
766 responses



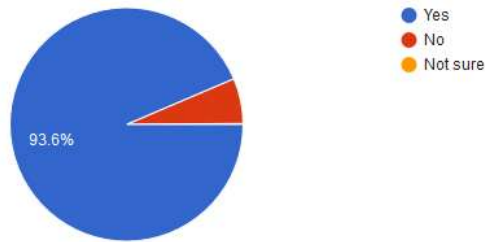
What best describes your racial or ethnic background?

766 responses



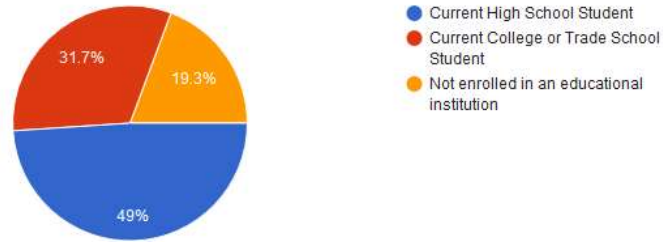
Have you been baptized in the Catholic Church?

766 responses



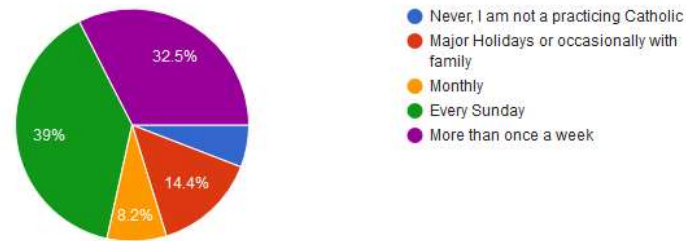
Are you currently enrolled in an educational institution?

766 responses



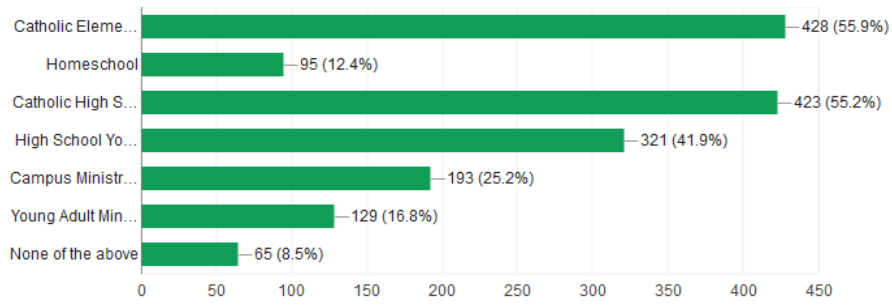
Do you attend Mass?

766 responses



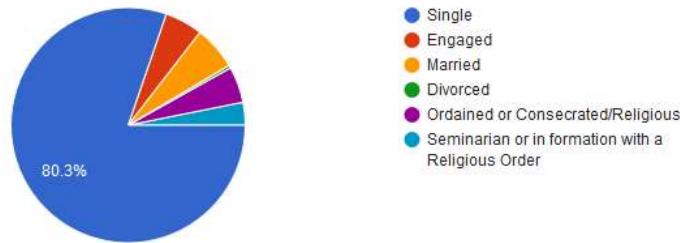
Have you ever been involved in any of the following Catholic ministries?

766 responses



What is your current state in life?

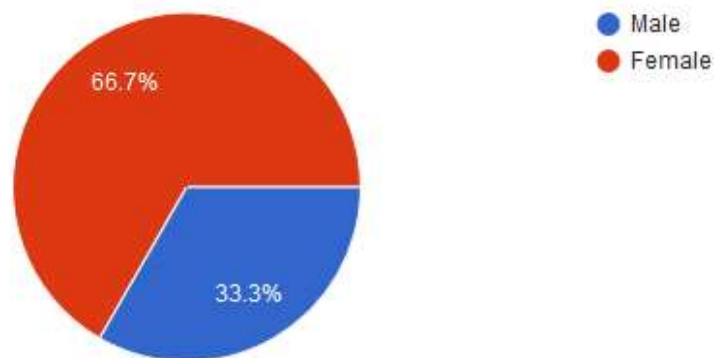
766 responses



Youth & Young Adult Ministry Leaders Survey Demographics

Gender

48 responses

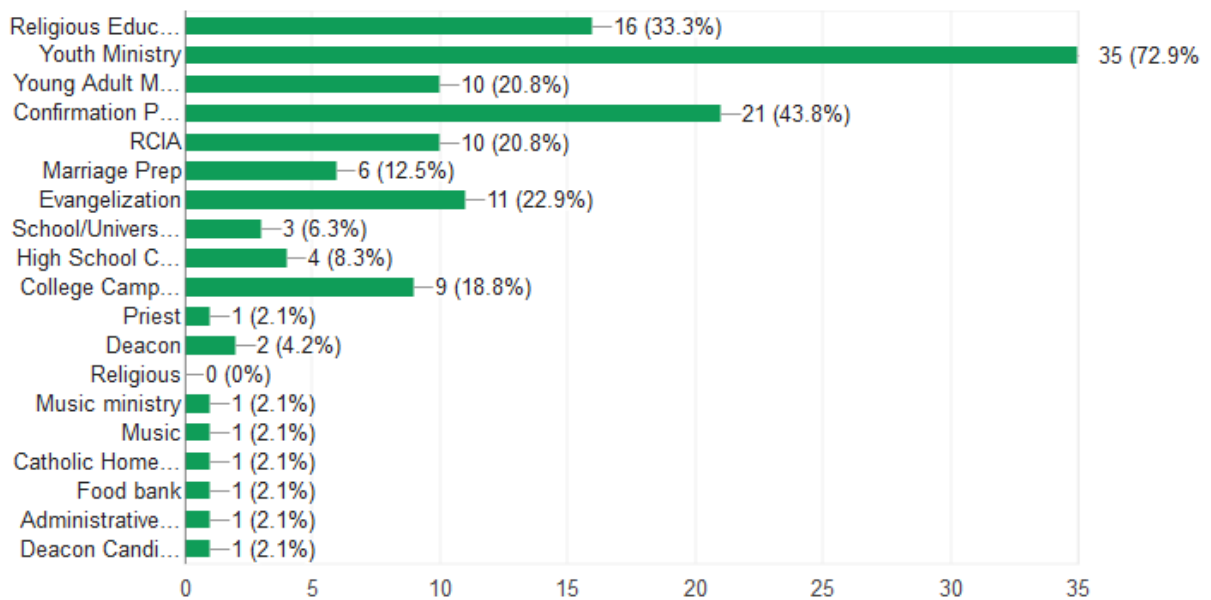


Average Age: 41

(Birth years range evenly from 1943 to 1997, average year of birth is 1976)

In what ministries are you involved?

48 responses



***Appendix 2:
Additional Materials for Questions 5: “What do the young people really ask of the Church today?”***

High School (370 responses)

Theme	Number	Percentage	Notes
Support/Love/Guidance/Reassurance	126	34.05%	Most responses involved a desire for welcoming community, acceptance, sense of being loved, guidance through difficult decisions or family events, etc.
Knowledge	44	11.89%	Desire for knowledge included clarification of teachings, desire for greater dialogue when young people disagree or don't understand, desire to learn apologetics to defend faith and philosophy, understanding of rules
Nothing	39	10.54%	These responses were specifically "Nothing", or "I don't need anything", not blanks
Prayer/Mass/Faith/God	31	8.38%	These responses were usually simple- "Mass", "Help with growing a relationship with God", "Prayers", etc.
Less Judgment	21	5.68%	Along with responses of "less judgment", the words "acceptance" and "More open-mindedness" were common
LGBT	19	5.14%	Acceptance of those who identify LGBT, show of love for LGBT community, acceptance of LGBT marriage. All students responding with LGBT as an issue were 1998, 1999, 2000 birth years- older teens.
Involvement	17	4.59%	Many of these responses noted the desire for better Youth Ministry or involvement of youth in the church
Evangelization	13	3.51%	These included a desire for drawing more young people in, evangelization training, or the desire for the Church to go out to others
Social Justice/Service	10	2.70%	More service trips, more charity, more support of the poor
Modernization	10	2.70%	Get with the times, updated teachings, get online, expectations of total acceptance of church teachings as unrealistic...
Forgiveness/Mercy	9	2.43%	Desire for more frequent the Sacrament of Penance, or simply a desire to feel mercy or forgiveness
Tradition	3	0.81%	Desire for more traditional forms of prayer, music.

College Age (243 responses)

Theme	Number	Percentage	Notes
Support/Love/Guidance/Reassurance	76	31.28%	Support, guidance and wisdom as to how to live at this stage of life, welcoming community, support to grow as men & women, love and affirmation
Prayer/Mass/Faith/God	36	14.81%	Access to Mass, sacraments, relationship with Jesus/God, prayers
Moral Stronghold	29	11.93%	Clarity/steadfastness on moral teachings, truth, direct answers to clear questions, no gray area
Knowledge	19	7.82%	Why we believe what we believe, tangible advice, unity in church message/leadership, defense of the faith, dialogue on difficult questions
Involvement	15	6.17%	Respect as adult member, opportunities to contribute to parish or attend services at convenient time, young adult resources & events
Vocation/Future discernment	15	6.17%	Formation for marriage, more priests to talk to, religious sisters involved in parishes, guidance on vocational discernment
Less Judgment	13	5.35%	Open-mindedness, more compassion, less emphasis on rules
LGBT	11	4.53%	Acceptance for the LGBT community & sexual minorities, end to sense of rejection of LGBT individuals, Support for LGBT marriage,
Modernization	10	4.12%	Change with the times, for the church to be less critical, less structure or rules, more relation to daily life, open up on teachings about contraception/gay marriage
Tradition	10	4.12%	Extraordinary Form of Mass, Latin, traditional doctrine (most from Hillsdale)
Zeal/Energy	10	4.12%	Encouragement, motivation to attend Mass, call to heroic life & holiness, peers on fire for faith
Forgiveness/Mercy	7	2.88%	Sacrament of Penance
Other	7	2.88%	Women's equality, less sexism, women priests, political engagement
Evangelization	5	2.06%	Reaching out... Training

Post college/YA (148 responses):

Theme	Number	Percentage	Notes
Support/Love/Guidance/Reassurance	39	26.35%	Support in faith & faithful living, to be heard, hope, trust, encouragement, community to draw on, acceptance of all,
Prayer/Mass/Faith/God	36	24.32%	Access to sacraments, Jesus, good liturgical music, adoration
Involvement	15	10.14%	Young adult activities, place in the parish
Knowledge	12	8.11%	Defense of Faith, answers to questions
Moral Stronghold	11	7.43%	Proclaiming truth, answers to secular anti-Catholicism, call to conversion
Zeal/Energy	10	6.76%	Encouragement to holiness
Forgiveness/Mercy	9	6.08%	Access to the Sacrament of Penance

Tradition	7	4.73%	Extraordinary Form of Mass, Latin, beauty of traditional services & practices
Other	5	3.38%	Authenticity, support for single parents, pedophilia scandal
Vocation/Future discernment	4	2.70%	Access to priests, opportunities for women & married couples, single life- those who desire marriage but have not found a spouse
Less Judgment	3	2.03%	Less judgment about birth control or living together
Evangelization	3	2.03%	Open & Inviting
LGBT	3	2.03%	More understanding of LGBT individuals, not alienating LGBT community, acceptance of people of diverse sexual preferences

Summary (761 responses):

Overall, the most significant answer to “What do you need from the Church today?” was a sense of support, love, guidance, reassurance, acceptance and community (~32% of responses). Access to Mass, and other Sacraments, (particularly the Sacrament of Penance), guidance in prayer, spiritual direction, and relationship with God were the second most important areas.

High school and college-aged responses often included a desire for more knowledge of the faith and support in discernment of future vocations or decision making.

College aged and young adult responses often included a desire for the Church to be a “moral stronghold”- clarity of teachings, defense against moral relativism, etc.

The only particular social issue to emerge was acceptance of LGBT individuals, peaking among late teens and college aged individuals (~5% of responses).