

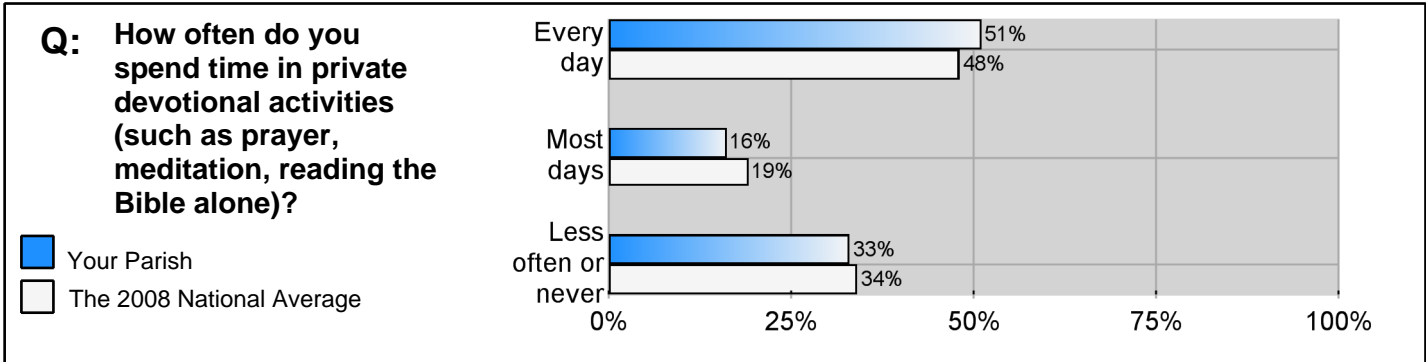


## Building Spiritual Connections

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

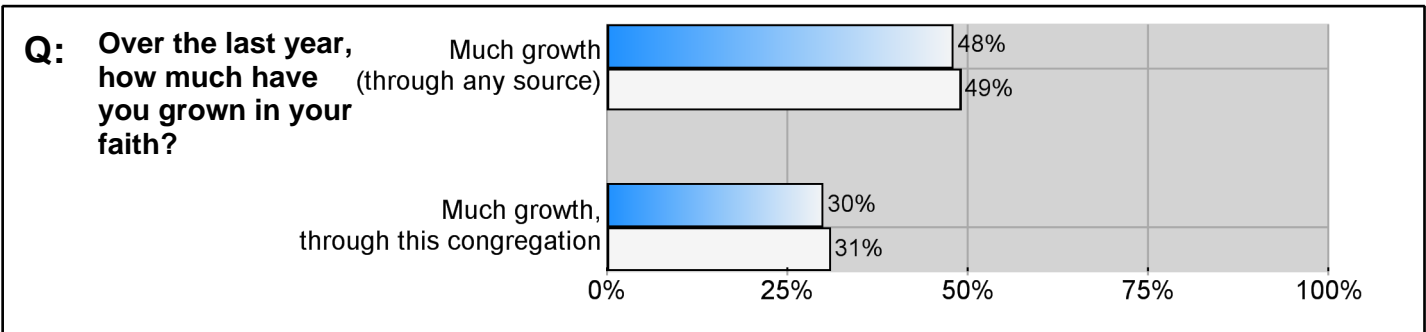
### 1 Private Devotions

About 51% 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 48% who spend time every day in private devotional activities).



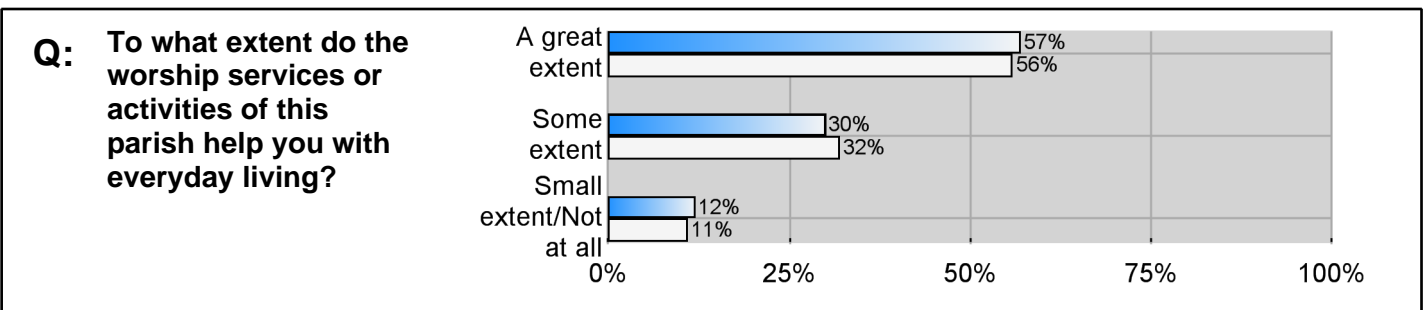
### 2 Growing in Faith

About half of the people in America's congregations (49%) and 48% in your parish report they have experienced much growth in their faith over the last year, through any source. Worshipers in your parish (30%) are about as likely to say their spiritual growth comes from involvement in your parish. Some of your worshipers reported growing in their faith through other groups (7%) or through their own activities (11%).



### 3 Help with Everyday Living

To what extent do the worship services or activities of your parish help worshipers with everyday living? 57% of your worshipers reported that they are helped "to a great extent" by worship or parish activities. This compares to the national average of 56% who report finding worship services or activities helpful with everyday living.

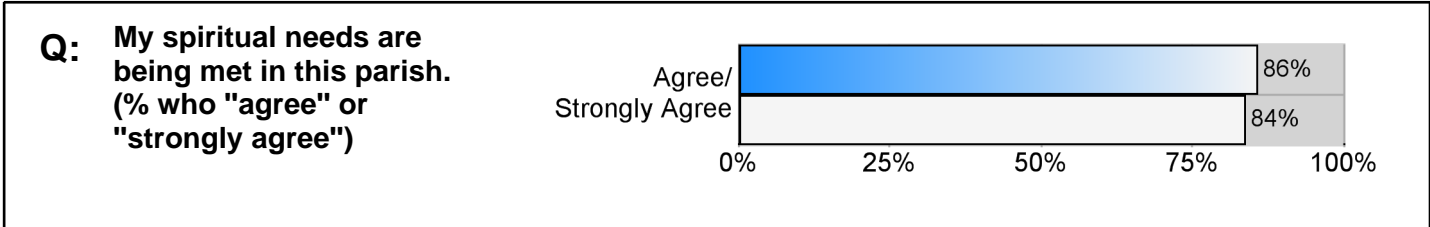




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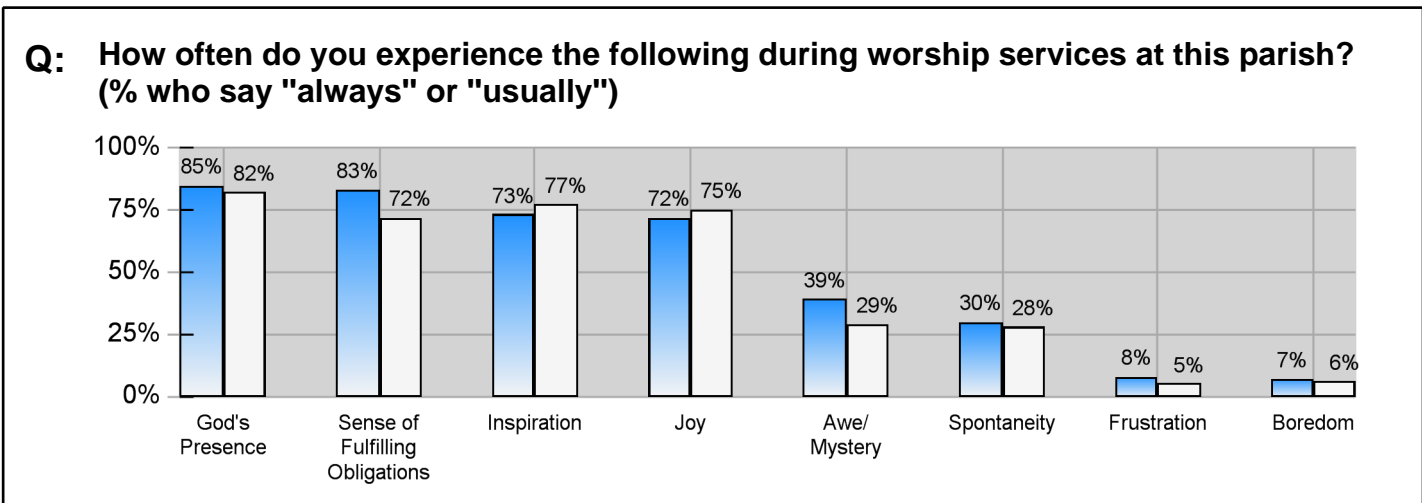
**Meeting Spiritual Needs**

**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., 84% of worshipers feel this way.



**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 boredom.



**Making Music**

**6** Worshipers in your parish prefer the following styles of music in parish worship: traditional hymns (62%), contemporary hymns (25%), and praise music or choruses (25%). Across the country, worshipers reported the following preferences most often: traditional hymns (56%), praise music or choruses (31%), and contemporary hymns (26%).

**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:**

Traditional hymns	62%	Music from a variety of cultures	10%
Contemporary hymns	25%	Gospel music	7%
Praise music or choruses	25%	Classical music	7%
Sung responsorial psalms	12%	No music	2%
Other contemporary music or songs	10%	Contemplative chants	1%

**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?

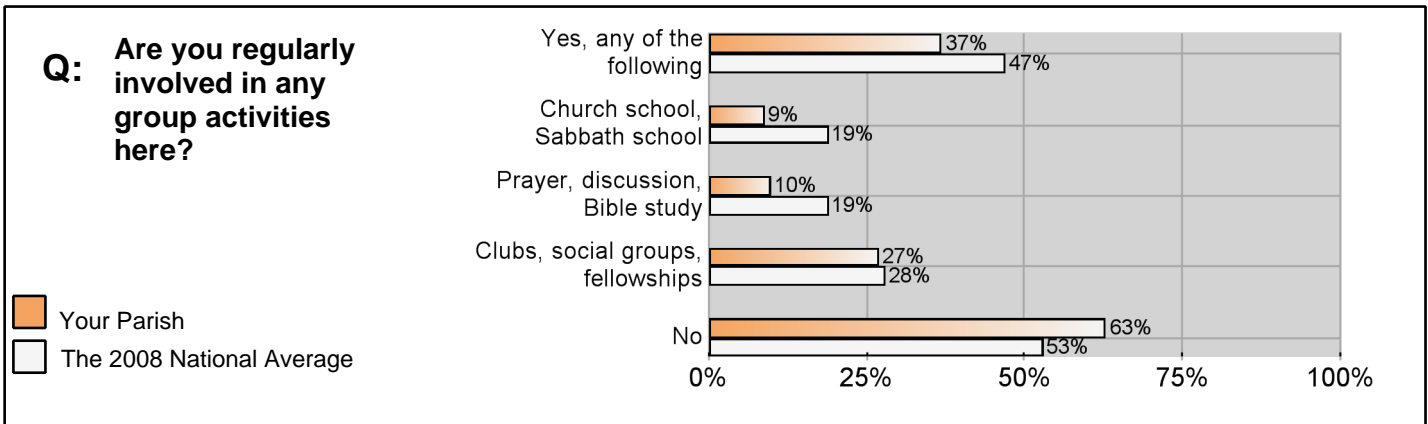


## Building Inside Connections

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.

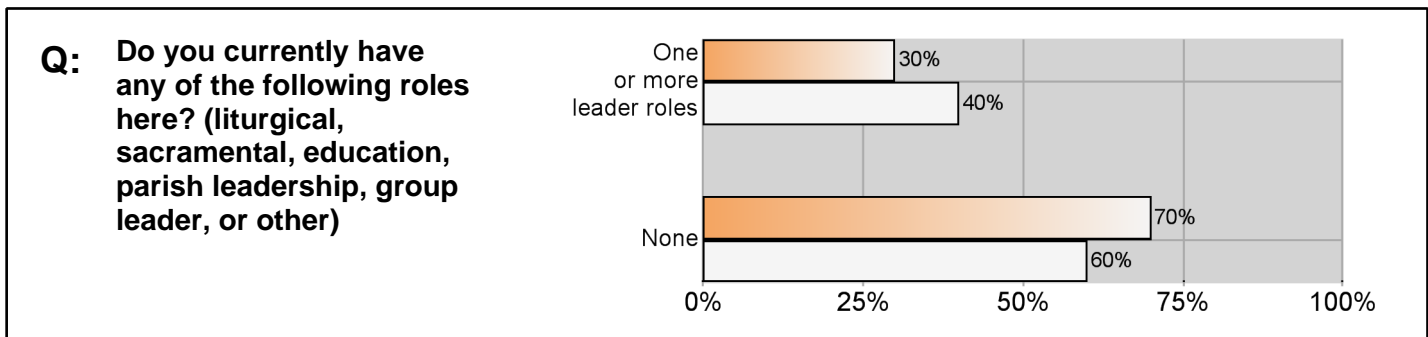
### 1 Involving Worshipers

How are worshippers involved in your parish? Overall, 37% of your worshippers join in small group activities. Some take part in group activities like Sunday school, church school, or Sabbath school (9%); prayer, discussion, or Bible study groups (10%); or fellowships, clubs, or other social groups (27%). Your parish's percentage is lower than the national average where 47% engage in some small group activity.



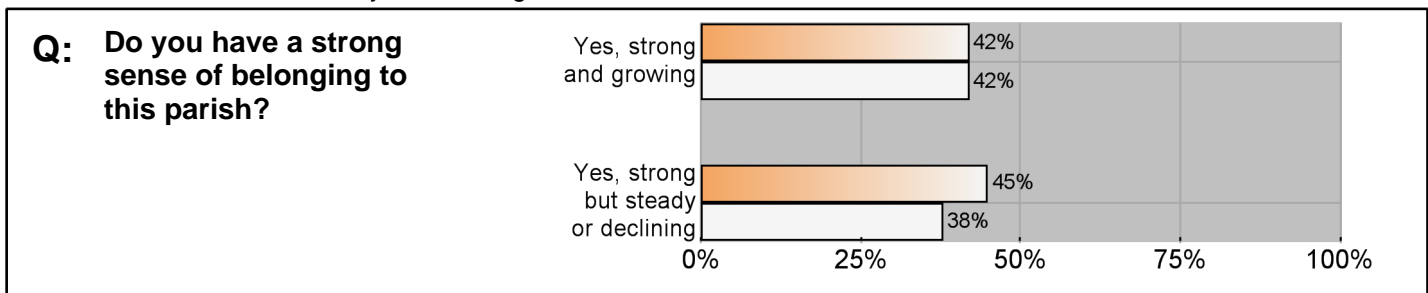
### 2 Involving Leaders

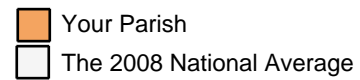
How many worshippers serve in leadership roles in your parish? 30% hold at least one leadership position in your parish (such as liturgical, parish leadership, group leader, etc.). About 40% of worshippers across the U.S. serve as leaders.



### 3 Belonging Here

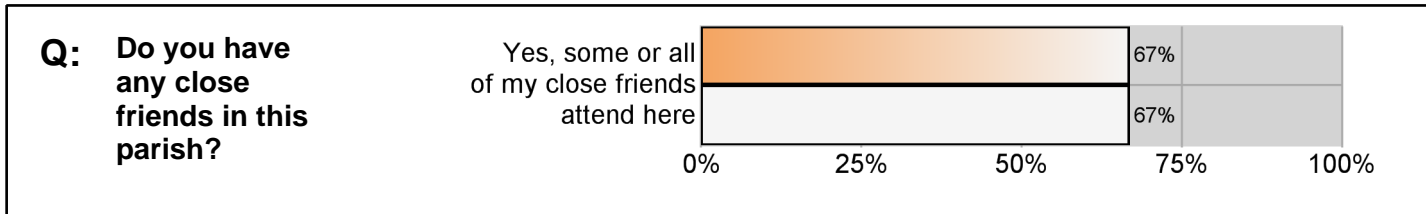
Do worshippers in your parish feel like they belong? 87% report a strong sense of belonging to your parish, which is greater than in the typical congregation. 42% in your parish said this sense of belonging has been growing and 45% said it is steady or declining.





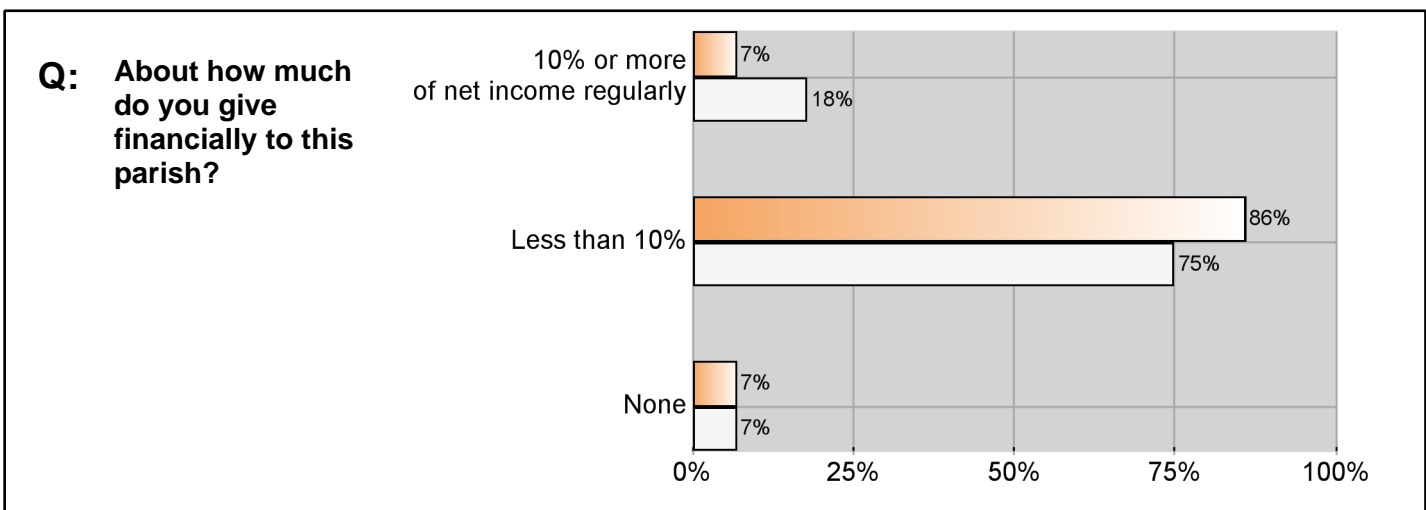
#### 4 Making Friends

Are worshipers developing friendships with others in the parish? About 67% of your worshipers say some or all of their close friends attend there. This is typical of the national picture where 67% of worshipers say they have some close friends in their congregation.



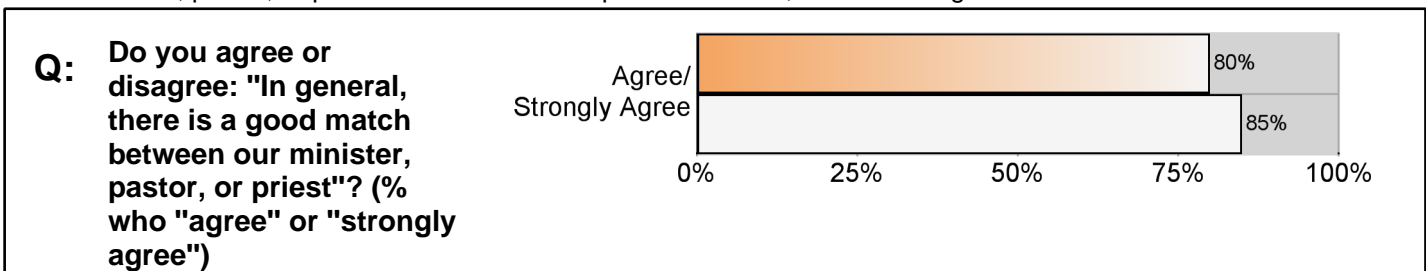
#### 5 Giving

Financial support connects people to the parish and its mission. In your parish, 93% make financial contributions including 7% who regularly give 10% or more of their net income to your parish. Nationally, 93% of worshipers make financial contributions, and 18% give 10% or more of their net income.



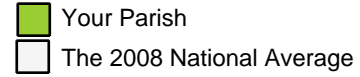
#### 6 Being a Team

Do worshipers feel there is a connection between leaders and worshipers in your parish? Most worshipers in your parish (80%) 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 85% 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?



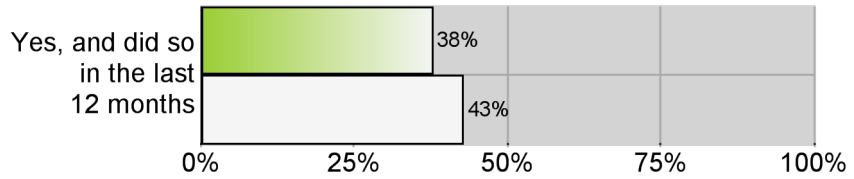
## Building Outside Connections

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

Do your worshipers invite others to attend Mass? In the past 12 months, 38% invited a friend or relative who does not attend a parish to your worship services. This is about the same as the average congregation where 43% asked someone to attend worship services.

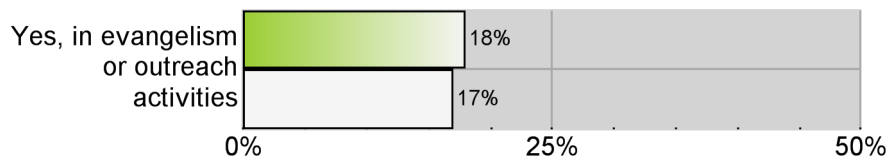
**Q: Would you be prepared to invite to a Mass here any of your friends and relatives who do not now go to church?**



### 2 Reaching Out

How many worshipers contribute to your parish's outreach or evangelism efforts? In your parish, 18% join in these types of activities to reach out to the wider community. This percentage is similar to the national picture where 17% 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?**



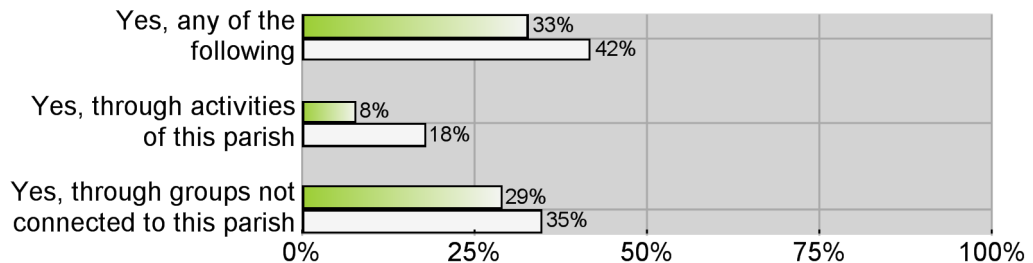
### 3 Your Parish's Inviting Activities

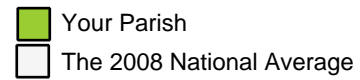
From a list of 15 possible activities, a typical congregation reports using 6 strategies to reach out to non-members in the previous year. The most common strategies are: mailing newsletters, keeping a web site for the congregation, and encouraging members to invite new people. Your parish listed 5 outreach strategies: mailing newsletters, keeping a web site for the congregation, encouraging members to invite new people, holding a public event to gain interest, and having a committee to recruit new members.

### 4 Serving the Community

Are your worshipers involved in any community service, social justice, or advocacy activities? 33% of your worshipers take part in service or advocacy activities. Some join in community service activities organized through your parish (8% in your parish take part in such groups). Several of your worshipers (29%) participate in social service or advocacy groups not connected to your parish. This is less than the national average for all U.S. worshipers where 18% overall get involved in service or advocacy through their congregation, and 35% serve their communities through groups not connected to their congregation.

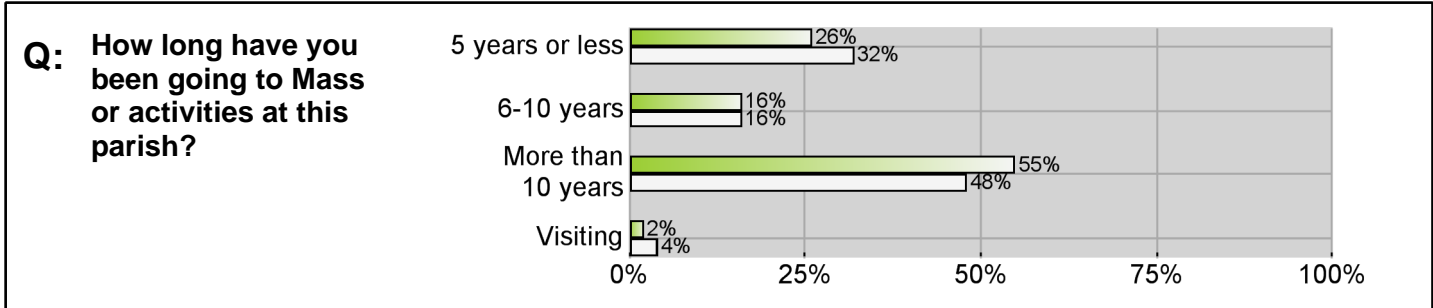
**Q: Are you involved in any community service, social service, or advocacy groups?**





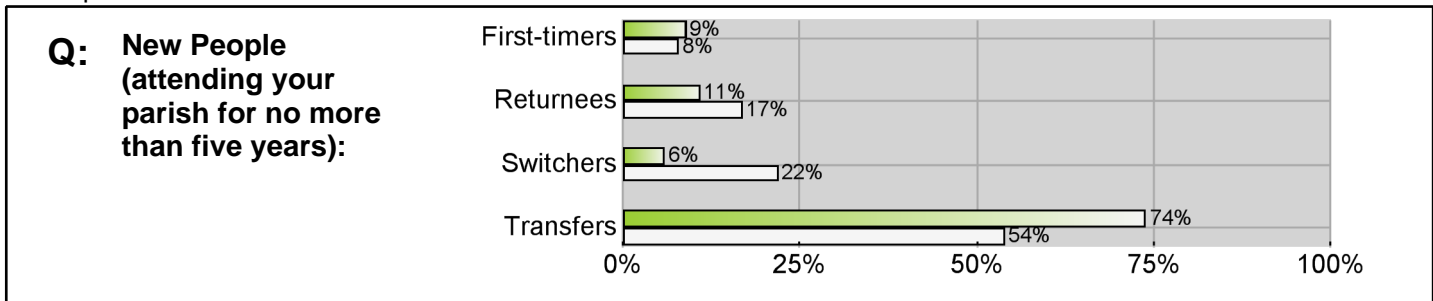
**5 Welcoming New People**

How many new people attend Mass in your parish? About 26% 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 2% of your worshipers. This compares to a national average of 4% of worshipers who are visitors.



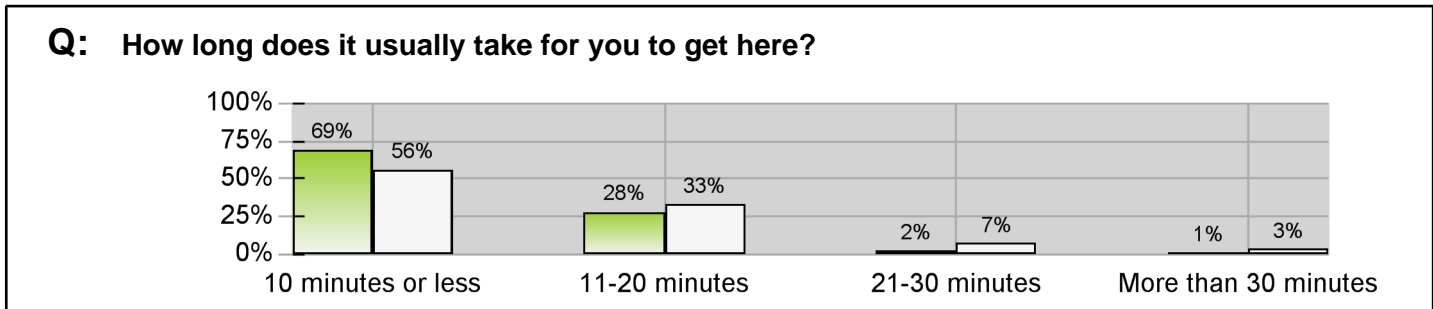
**6 Knowing New People**

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 (9% in your parish), those who have never regularly attended anywhere; returnees (11%), those who are coming back after not attending anywhere for several years; switchers (6%), those who participated in another congregation with a different faith tradition; and transfers (74%), 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. Nearly all of the people in your parish (97%) travel 20 minutes or less to attend services. Across all American congregations, 89% arrive in 20 minutes or less.



**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?



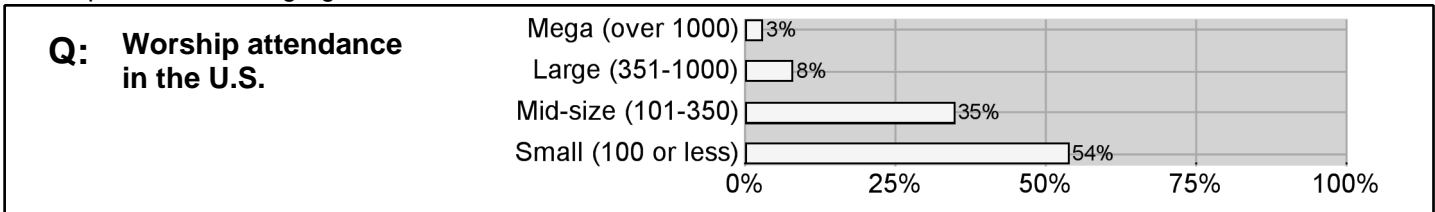
Your Parish  
 The 2008 National Average

## 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

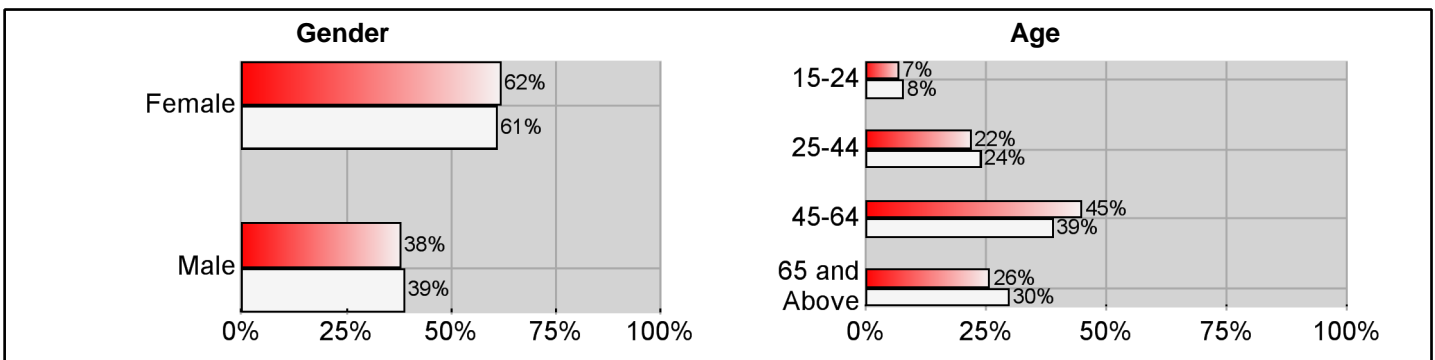
Small congregations dot the landscape, but most worshippers find themselves in large congregations. Your parish is large with an average of 649 attendees. The chart below shows where your parish fits in the size picture of all congregations.



### 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 (62% are women).

### 3 Your Age Profile

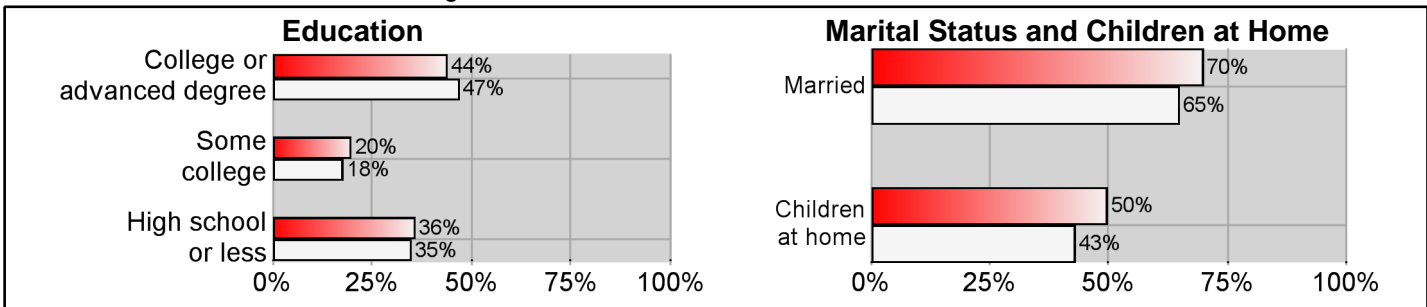


### 4 Your Educational Background

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 47%. In your parish, 44% 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, 43% of worshippers have children living at home, less than the results for your parish (50%). 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.





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**What You Value**

**6** What does your parish value? Your worshipers most value Holy Communion; traditional worship or music; sermons, preaching, or homilies; congregation's school/pre-school; and reaching the unchurched.

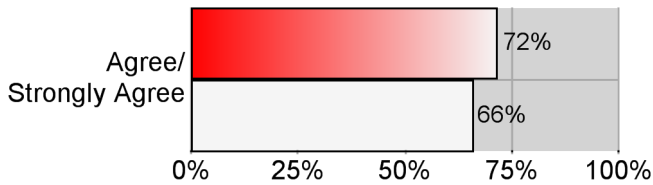
**Q:** Which of the following aspects of this parish do you personally most value? (Mark up to three responses.) Responses for your parish:

Holy Communion	61%	Wider community care	12%
Traditional worship or music	40%	Contemporary worship or music	11%
Sermons, preaching, or homilies	39%	Bible study groups	10%
Congregation's school/pre-school	16%	Care for one another	9%
Reaching the unchurched	14%	Openness to diversity	7%
Social activities	14%	Adult education	6%
Ministry for youth	13%	Prayer ministry	4%

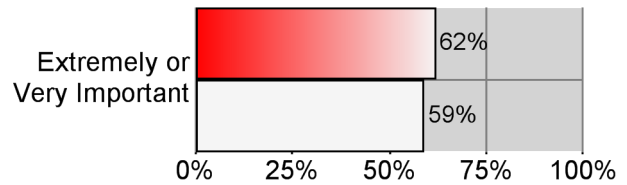
**7 Seeing Possibilities**

How strong is the sense of community in your parish? Most worshipers (72%) 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 (62%) 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.**



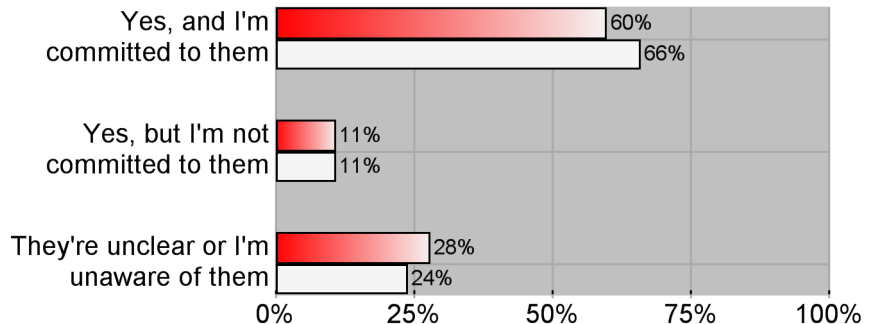
**How important is this parish in your life?**



**8 Committing to the Future**

Does your parish claim a clear vision, goals, or direction for its ministry and mission? Most worshipers in your parish believe there is a clear vision or direction for the future (72% say yes). However, several are not sure that the vision is clear or that it exists (28%). The national average shows that most worshipers believe their congregation has a clear vision for the future (77%).

**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?