

June 2022

DeSales Media: Catholic Intentional Discipleship in the US

Overall Report



Agenda

Objectives & Methodology

Faith Life

Evangelization

Spiritual Direction

Community Involvement

Technology Use

Demographic Comparisons



Objectives & Methodology

Objectives

The main objective of this research is to learn more about devout Catholics with a disposition for discipleship, specifically to:

1. Identify unmet discipleship needs
2. Obtain reactions to and interest in the availability and use of apps in discipleship
3. Determine the extent to which these solutions address their unmet needs



Methodology

- Vinea Research and DeSales Media designed a 15-30-minute survey
- Survey links were sent to numerous Catholic organizations for distribution to their constituents
- 3,323 responses in total were gathered (see next slide)



Methodology

- To “clean” the respondents and focus on disciples in the United States, 186 were removed because:
 - *Not currently in the U.S.*
 - *Faith is “not a significant part” or “limited to a familial or cultural part of who I am”*
 - *Never pray outside of Mass*
 - *Faith has zero impact on Family, Social, or Interior Life*
- ...leaving a final sample size of 3,137



Participating Organizations

A special thanks to the following organizations (and others) who contributed to the recruitment of respondents for this survey:

Hallow



Faith Life

 **Vinea** RESEARCH

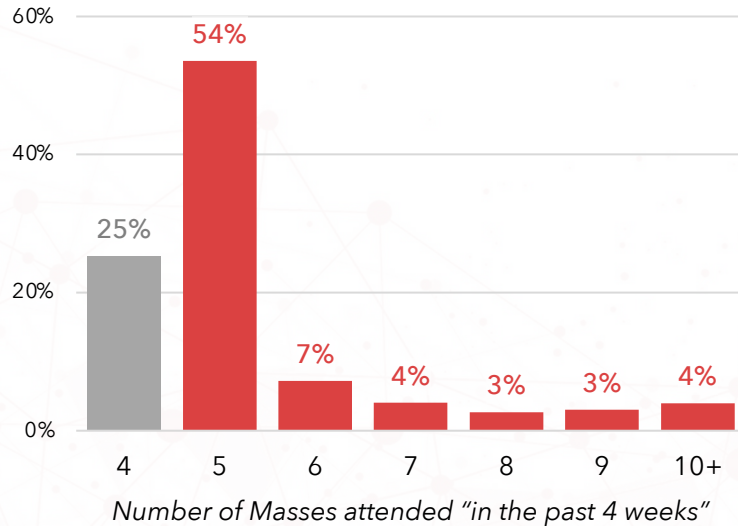
 **DeSales**
Media

Key Findings

- 1 **Prayer and the sacraments are key to the development of the faithful. Also important: print and digital media**
- 2 **Catholics express a desire to grow in a number of key and wide-ranging areas: witnessing to the faith, humility, sacrifice, expressions of faith, and increasing frequency of confession and attending retreats**
- 3 **While physical books remain important, digital tools such as podcasts, websites, and apps play a significant role in helping Catholics live out their faith**

3 in 4 respondents attended Mass more than the month's weekly obligations

Monthly Mass Attendance



97%
attended Mass
physically

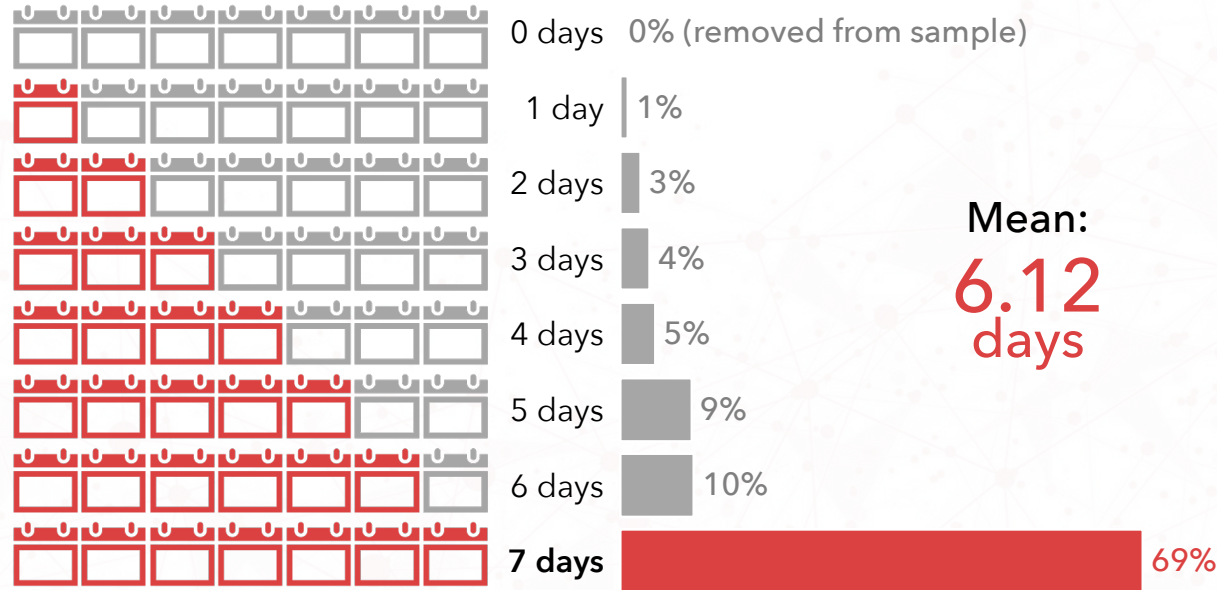


31%
observed Mass
online

n=3137

Respondents in this study are dedicated to daily prayer with nearly 7 in 10 praying every day.

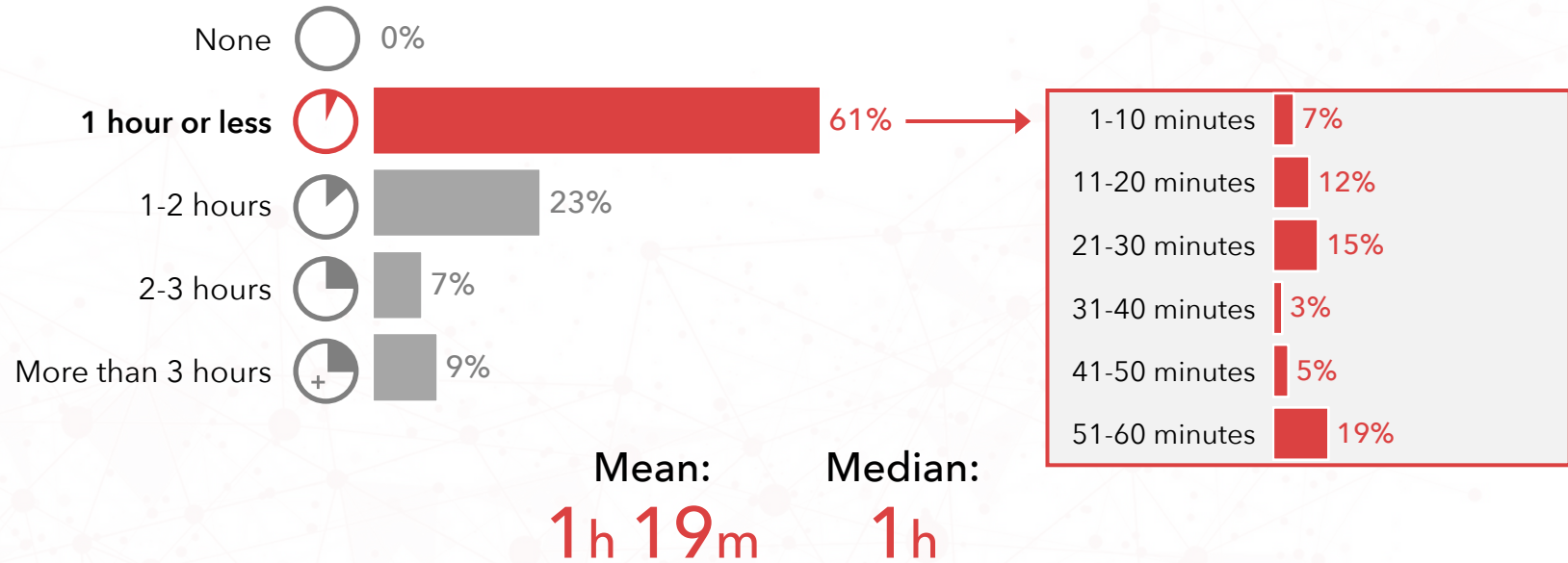
Days Per Week with Dedicated Prayer Time



n=3137

On average, survey participants are faithful prayers, praying very regularly.

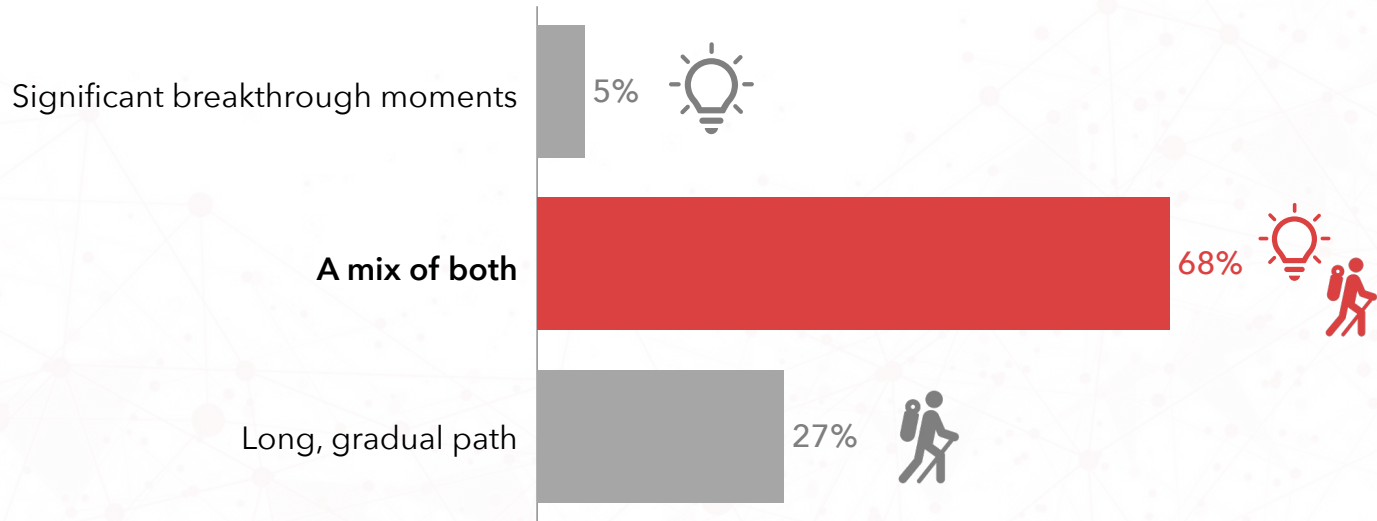
Average Dedicated Prayer Time (Hours and Minutes) Per Day



n=3137

Most describe their faith journey as a mix of breakthrough moments and a long, gradual path.

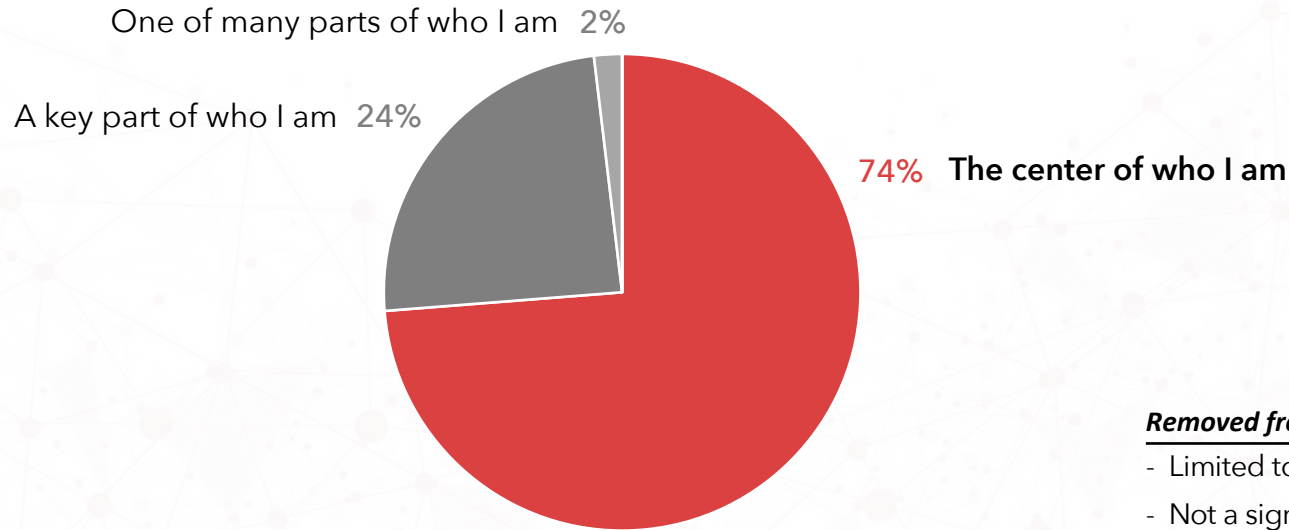
Faith Journey



n=3137

Nearly 3 in 4 respondents said that their Catholic faith is “the center” of their identity

Identity as a Catholic



Removed from sample:

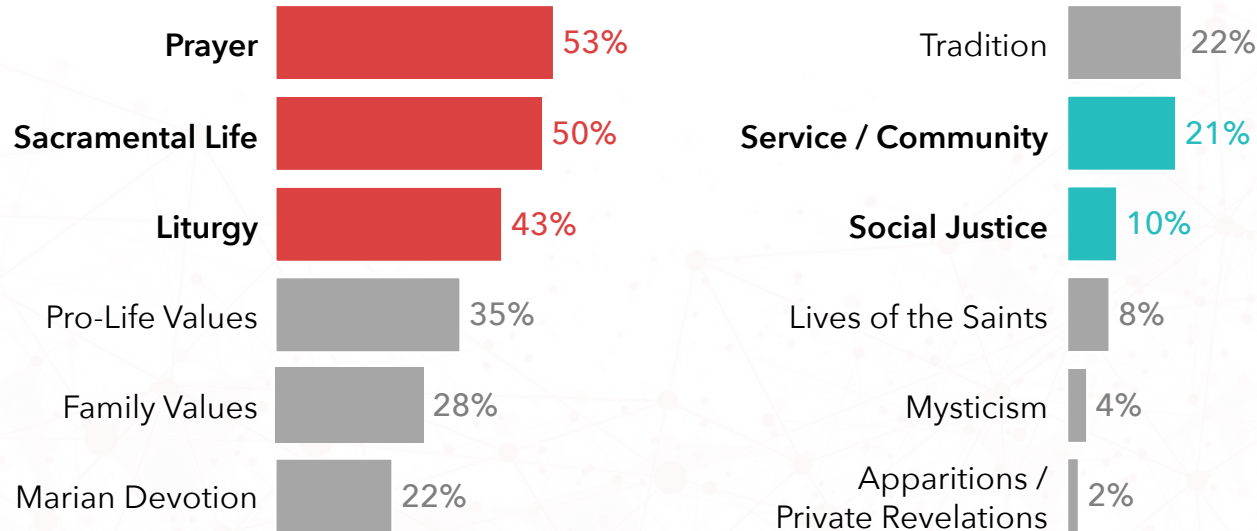
- Limited to a familial / cultural part of who I am
- Not a significant part of who I am

n=3137

Prayer, Sacramental Life, and Liturgy are most frequent as the Top 3 aspects of Catholicism. Service (21%) and Social Justice (10%) seem surprisingly low.

Top 3 Aspects of Catholicism Most Closely Identified With

Up to 3 selections allowed

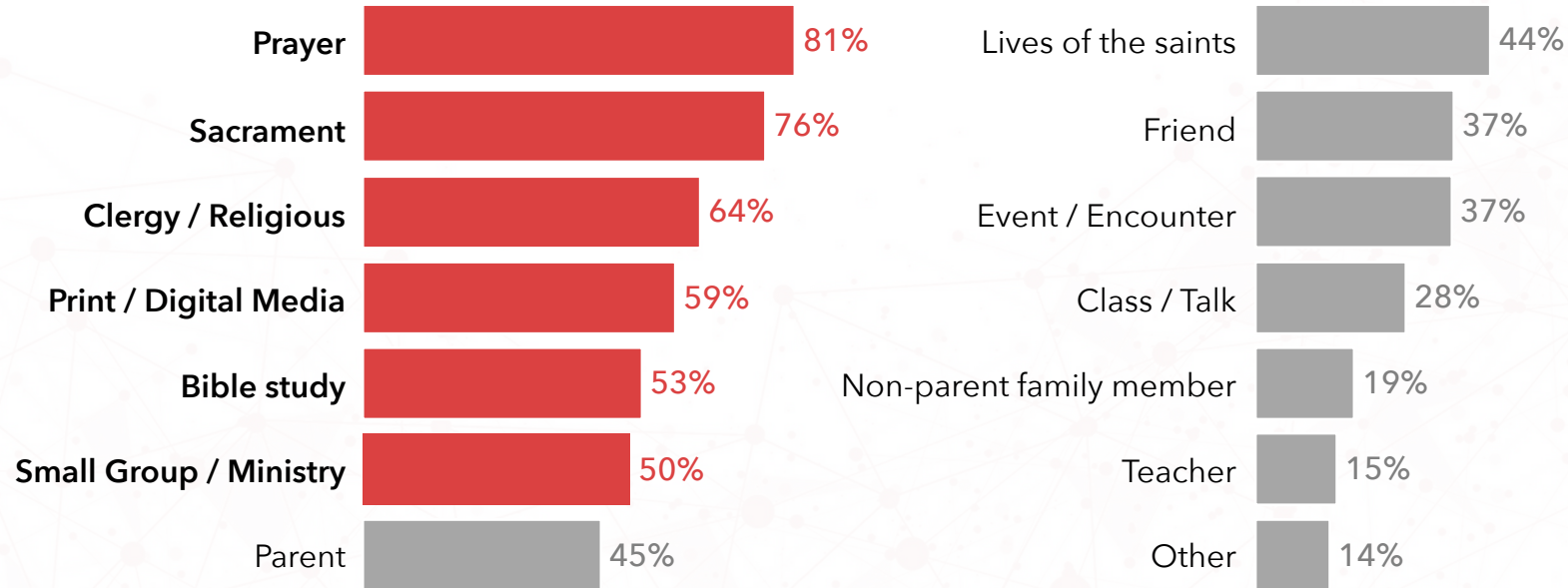


n=3126

F13: Which of the following aspects of Catholicism do you most closely identify with? You may select up to 3; if you closely identify with more than 3, please choose those that you most closely identify with.

Prayer and Sacraments had the most meaningful impact on respondents' faith. More than half mentioned print / digital media.

Meaningful Impacts on Faith Life

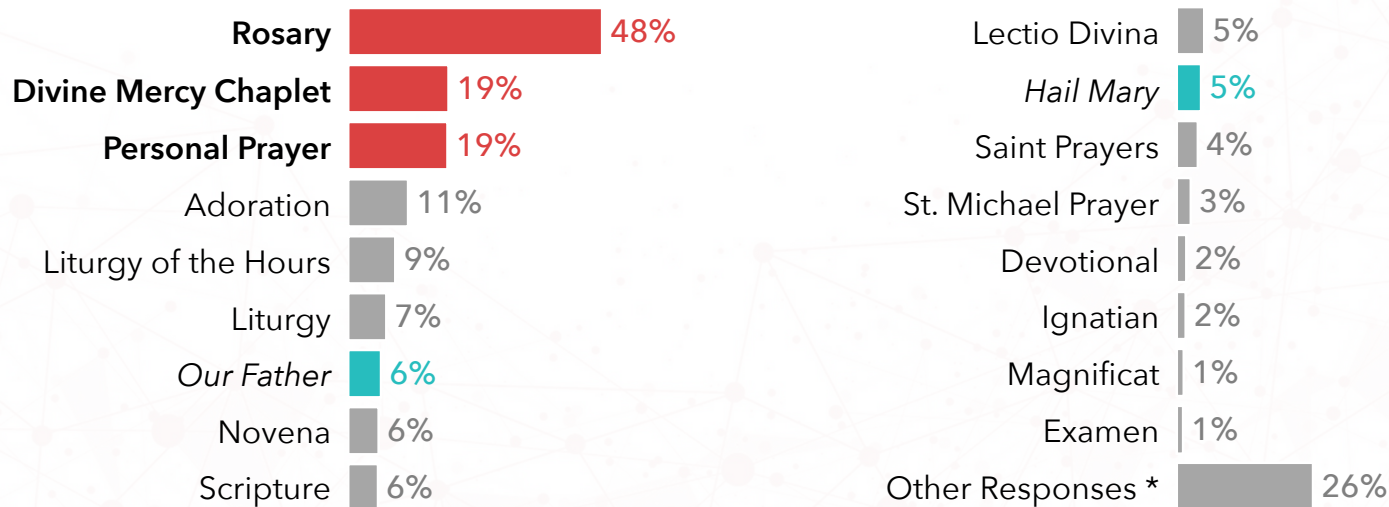


n=3137

Meaningful Impact: Prayer

***“Please name / describe your selection of Prayer”:
Open responses grouped***

Multiple groupings allowed



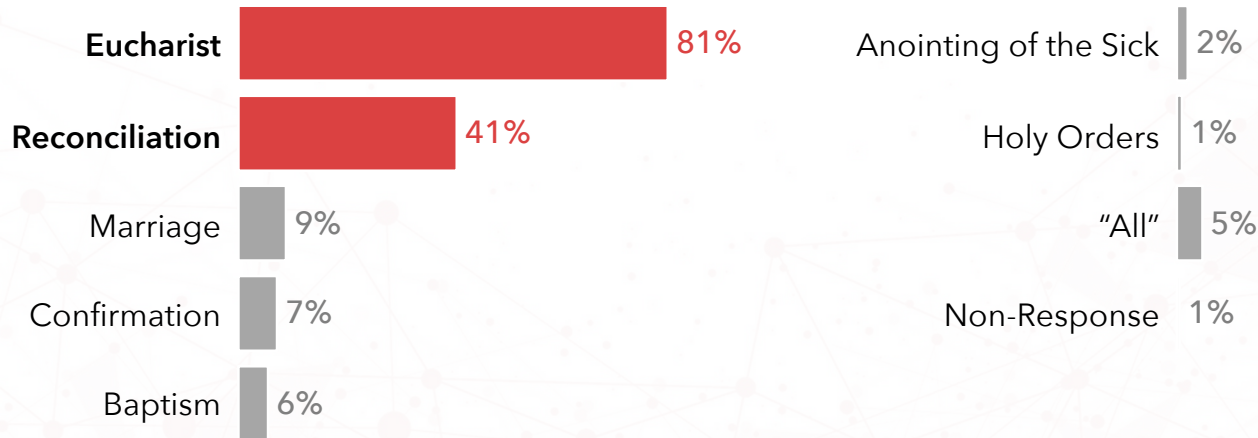
**** Responses are too varied to further group meaningfully***

n=2553

Meaningful Impact: Sacrament

***“Please name / describe your selection of Sacrament”:
Open responses grouped***

Multiple groupings allowed

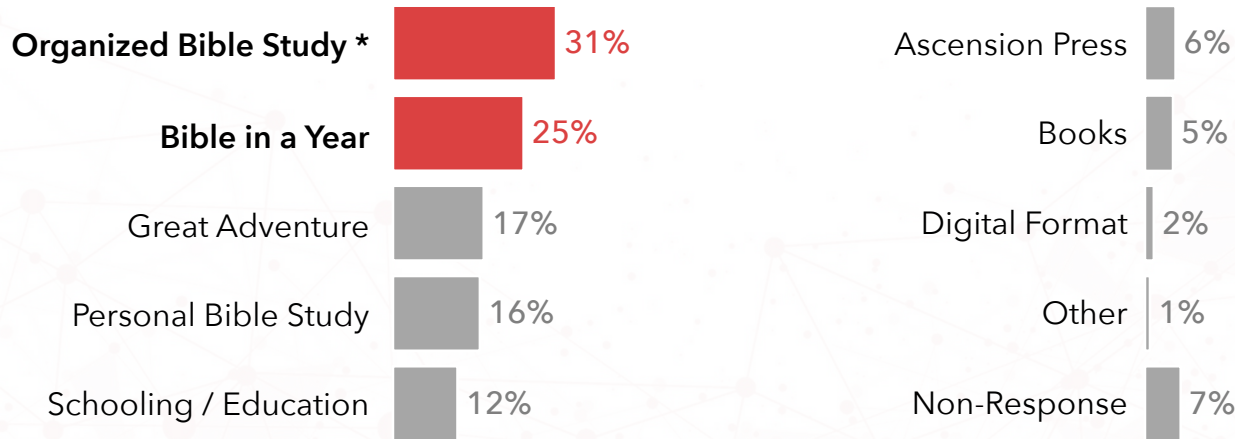


n=2381

Meaningful Impact: Bible Study

***“Please name / describe your selection of Bible Study”:
Open responses grouped***

Multiple groupings allowed



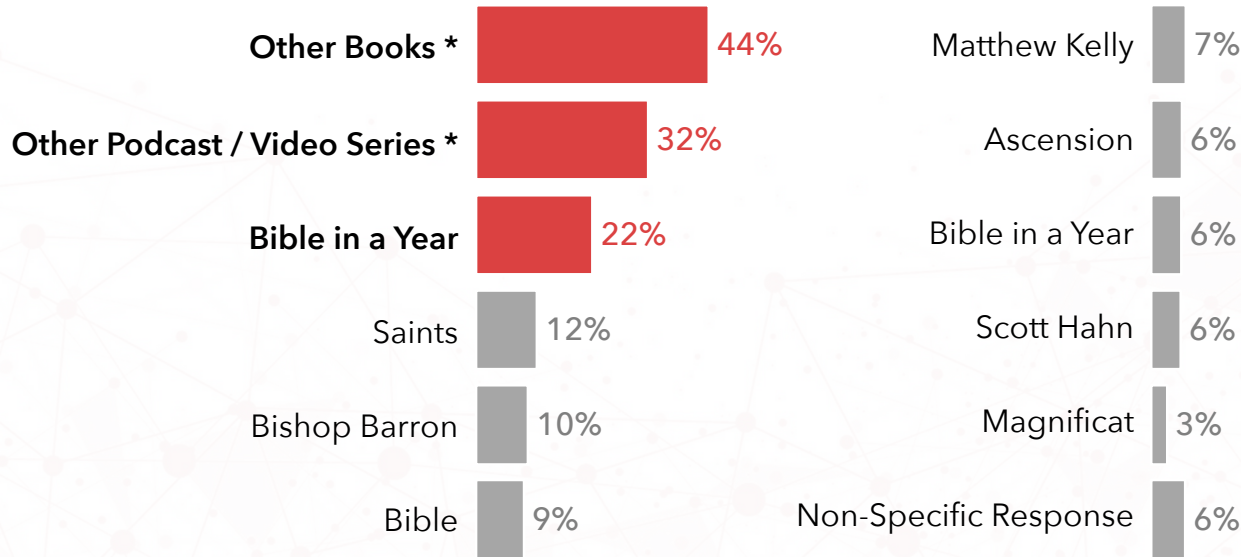
**** Responses are too varied to further group meaningfully***

n=1650

Meaningful Impact: Print / Digital Media

***“Please name / describe your selection of Print / Digital Media”:
Open responses grouped***

Multiple groupings allowed



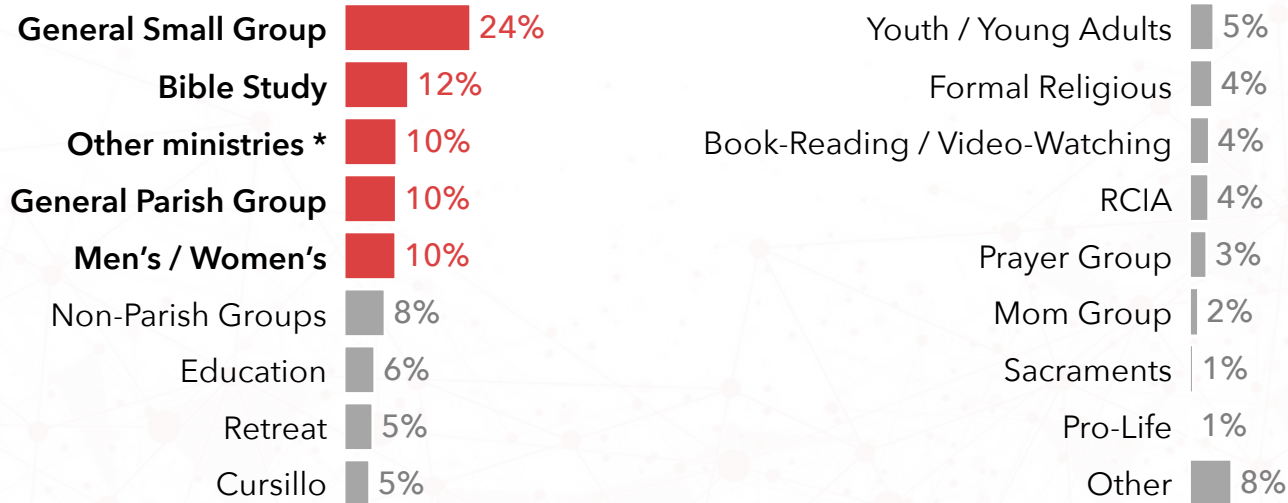
**** Responses are too varied to further group meaningfully***

n=1848

Meaningful Impact: Small Group / Ministry

***“Please name / describe your selection of Small Group / Ministry”:
Open responses grouped***

Multiple groupings allowed



**** Responses are too varied to further group meaningfully***

n=2553

Categories of Strength and Growth

Strength and Growth

These 5 categories of items were presented to respondents, who were asked to rate each item on **level of strength** and **amount of need for growth**:

Discipleship

Interior Fruits

Interior Life

Sacramental Life

Expressive Fruits

Many felt they needed to grow in witnessing and sharing their faith with others. They also noted some shortcomings in putting the concerns of others first.

Strength and Growth: Discipleship

	Level of Strength				Need for Growth			
	None	Little	Medium	High	None	Little	Medium	High
Actively witnessing and sharing my faith with others	17%	35%	31%	16%	10%	34%	34%	22%
Putting the concerns of others first	6%	33%	45%	17%	15%	49%	27%	9%
Being part of a community of believers	5%	22%	38%	35%	29%	42%	21%	9%
Being an intentional follower of Christ	3%	20%	41%	36%	21%	41%	27%	10%

	Level of Strength	Need for Growth
None	"Not an area of strength"	"I do not need growth here"
Little	"I am doing okay in this area"	"I need a little bit of growth"
Medium	"This is an area of strength"	"I need a moderate amount of growth"
High	"This is an area of great strength"	"I need a great deal of growth"

n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?
 A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Among the interior fruits, humility was seen as important area for growth. Many also noted they could do better avoiding the near occasions of sin.

Strength and Growth: Interior Fruits

	Level of Strength				Need for Growth			
	None	Little	Medium	High	None	Little	Medium	High
Humility	16%	55%	24%	5%	5%	37%	37%	21%
Avoiding near occasions of sin	11%	51%	31%	6%	8%	47%	32%	13%
Putting my gifts/charisms to the service of the Lord	11%	34%	37%	18%	14%	42%	32%	13%
Peacemaking	9%	44%	36%	11%	13%	51%	28%	9%
Forgiveness	9%	41%	38%	12%	10%	47%	30%	13%
Practicing gratitude	5%	31%	43%	21%	15%	49%	27%	9%
Stewardship of and respect for God's creation	3%	33%	45%	19%	20%	54%	21%	5%
Work ethic	3%	21%	44%	32%	38%	42%	15%	6%

n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?

A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

The top two areas of need in growing in the interior life were diverse: going on retreats and better taking up their crosses.

Strength and Growth: Interior Life

	Level of Strength				Need for Growth			
	None	Little	Medium	High	None	Little	Medium	High
Going on retreat	56%	24%	14%	7%	16%	28%	26%	30%
Sacrifice: taking up my cross	15%	48%	29%	9%	7%	37%	38%	19%
Reading scripture	11%	33%	35%	22%	14%	43%	30%	13%
Receiving ongoing faith formation	9%	30%	38%	23%	15%	47%	28%	10%
Regularly examining my faith life	7%	35%	42%	16%	12%	48%	31%	9%
Having structure in my faith life	7%	30%	42%	22%	18%	48%	25%	10%
Contemplating God's presence	6%	32%	39%	22%	13%	42%	32%	14%
Prayer life	5%	32%	41%	22%	10%	43%	34%	13%

n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?

A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Catholics also believe they can grow in making confession a more regular part of their lives.

Strength and Growth: Sacramental Life

	Level of Strength				Need for Growth			
	None	Little	Medium	High	None	Little	Medium	High
Regularly going to confession	23%	34%	26%	18%	19%	39%	25%	18%
Receiving the Eucharist at Holy Mass	2%	7%	28%	63%	58%	29%	9%	5%
Worship	1%	15%	42%	42%	30%	45%	20%	6%

n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?
A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Many indicate they can grow in performing spiritual works of mercy and, to a slightly lesser extent, corporal works of mercy.

Strength and Growth: Expressive Fruits

	Level of Strength				Need for Growth			
	None	Little	Medium	High	None	Little	Medium	High
Performing the spiritual works of mercy	25%	41%	26%	8%	7%	37%	37%	19%
Performing the corporal works of mercy	20%	46%	26%	8%	10%	39%	35%	16%
Detachment and generosity	11%	49%	34%	7%	9%	46%	33%	13%
Giving	6%	38%	43%	14%	18%	48%	26%	8%

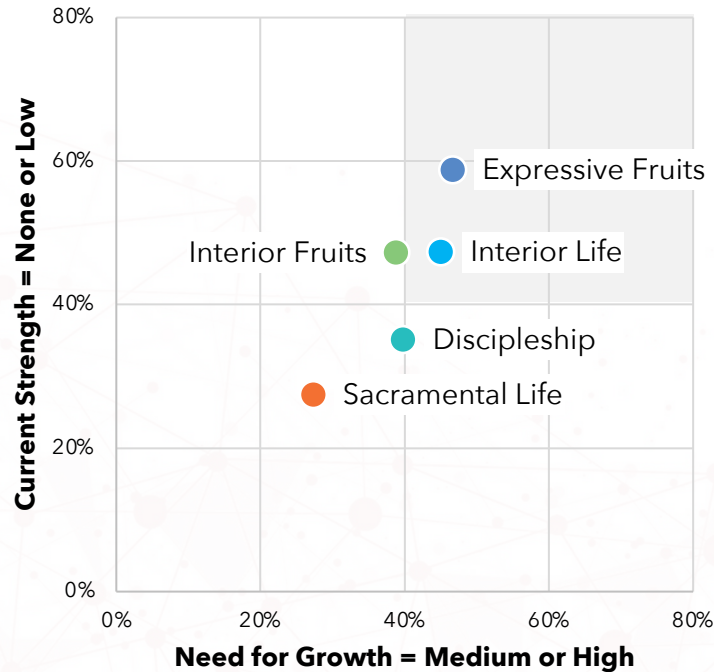
n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?

A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Need for Growth and Low Strength

Strength and Growth: Category Averages

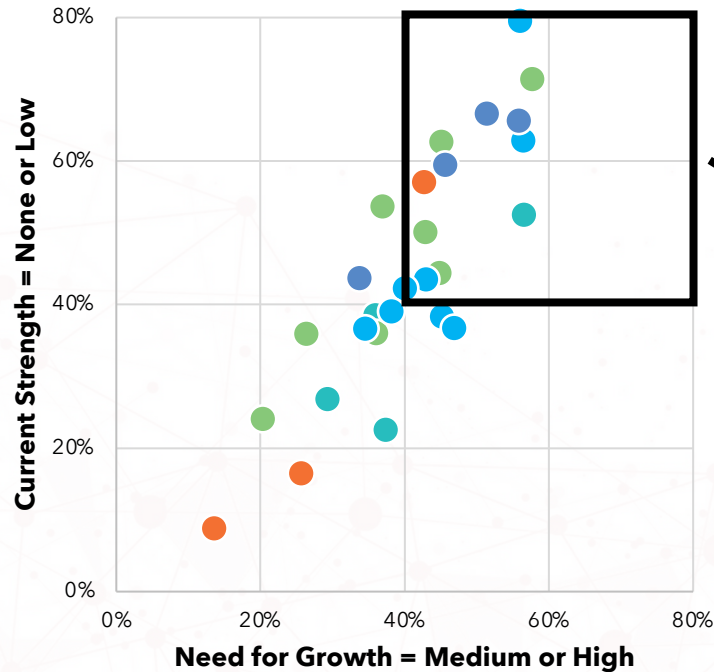


n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?
A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Need for Growth and Low Strength

Strength and Growth: All Items



Highest Need for Growth and Lowest Strength



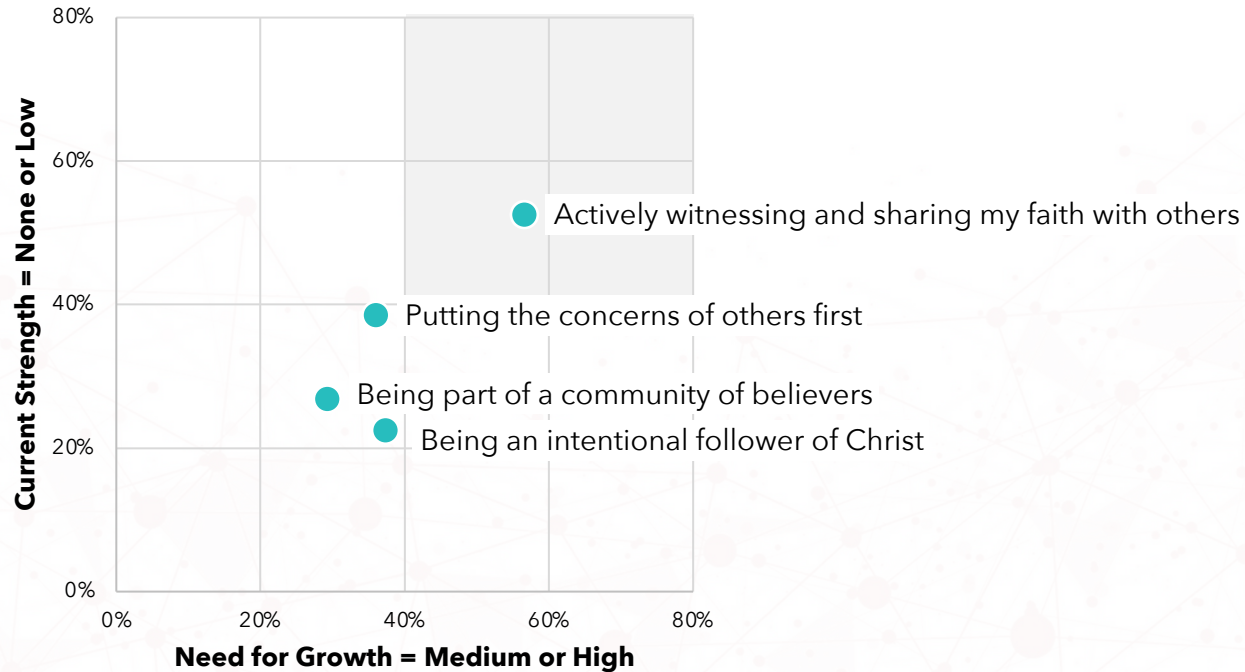
n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?

A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Need for Growth and Low Strength

Strength and Growth: Discipleship

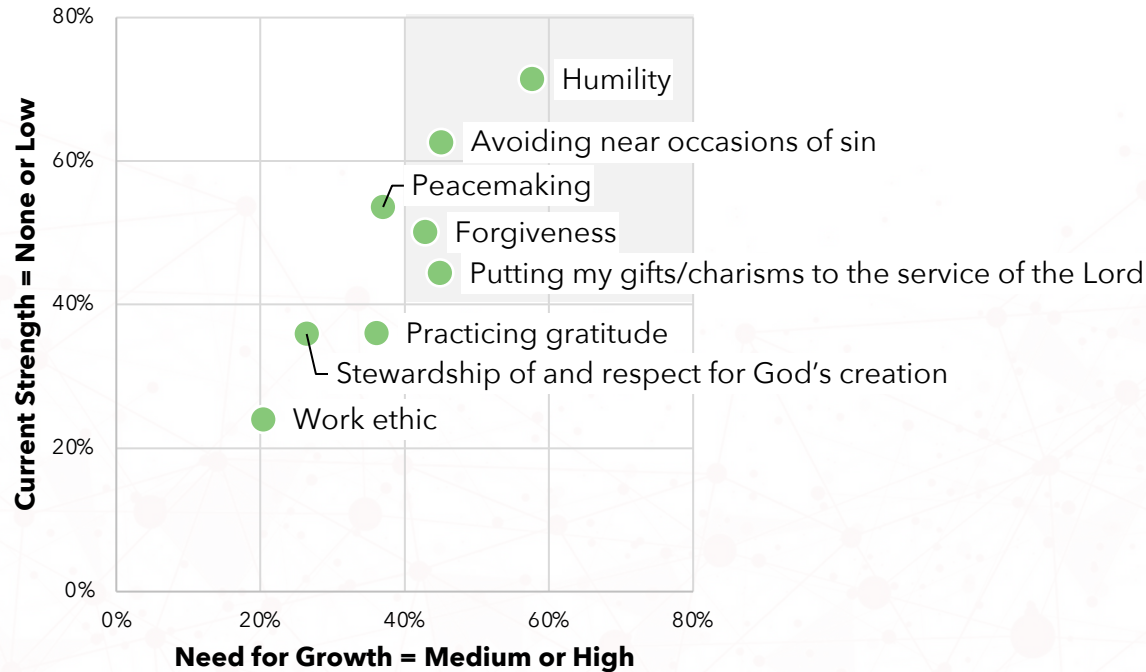


n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?
A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Need for Growth and Low Strength

Strength and Growth: Interior Fruits



n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?
A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Need for Growth and Low Strength

Strength and Growth: Interior Life

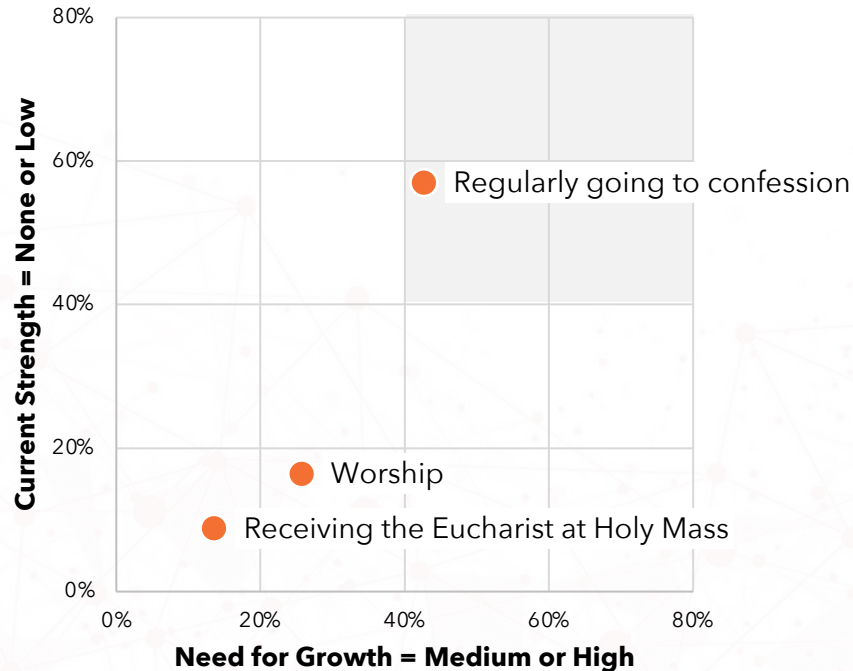


n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?
A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Need for Growth and Low Strength

Strength and Growth: Sacramental Life

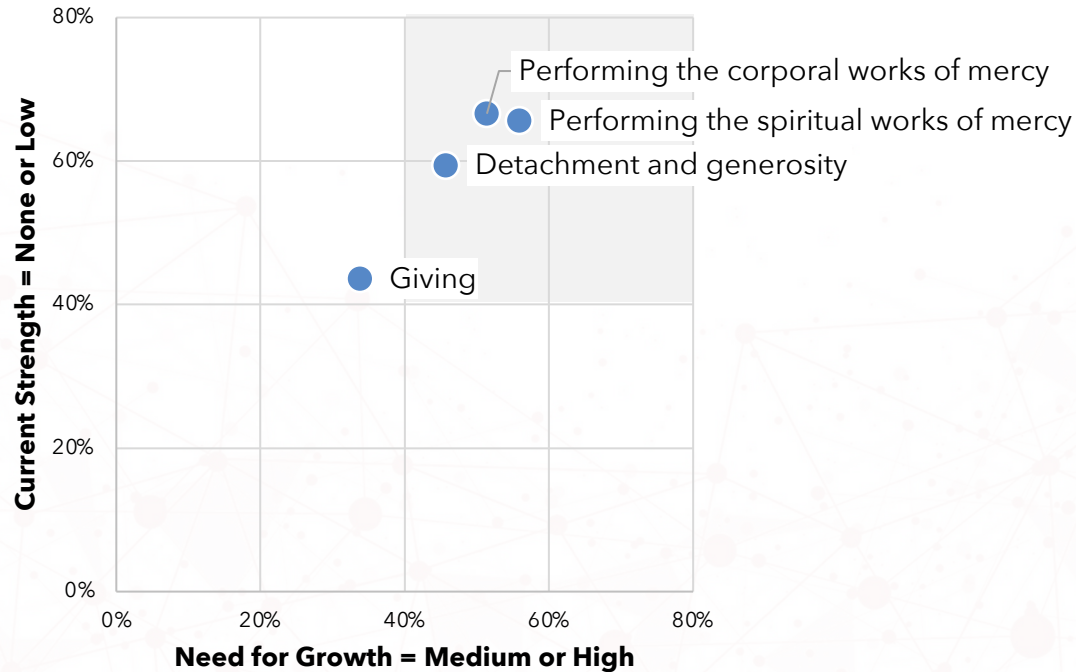


n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?
A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Need for Growth and Low Strength

Strength and Growth: Expressive Fruits



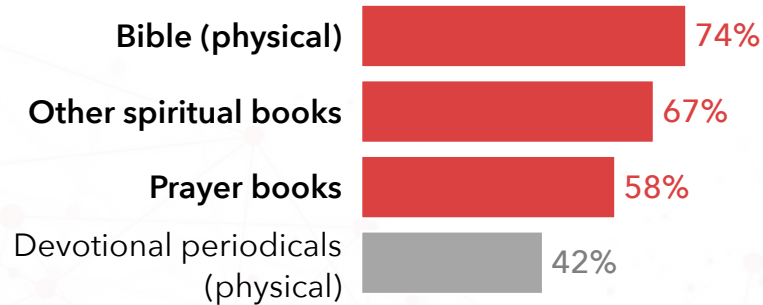
n=3137

A5: Understanding that there is always room for growth, how strong do you feel you are in each of the areas below?
A6: Please indicate how much growth you would like to see for yourself in each of the areas below:

Catholics use a number of aids in living out their faith. While physical aids are key, digital aids are used a great deal.

Aids Used to Live Out Their Faith

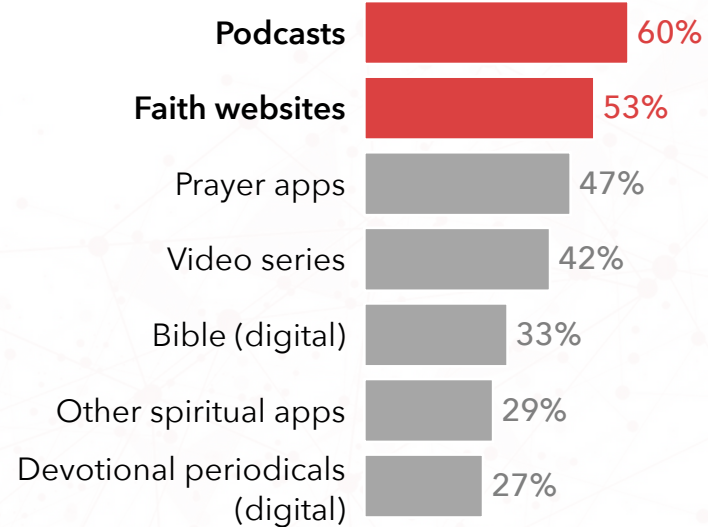
Physical Aids



Physical Aids
ONLY
7%

Digital Aids
ONLY
6%

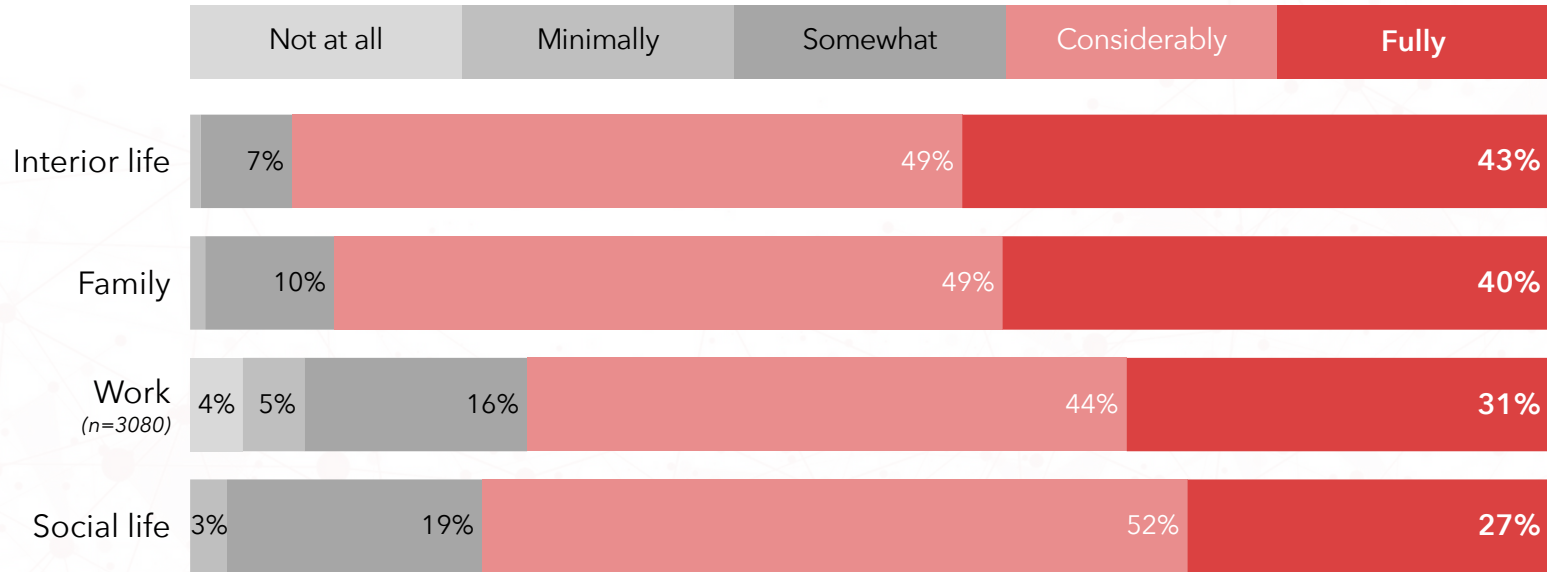
Digital Aids



n=3137

Faith in Christ impacts from the inside out: most of the impact is on their interior life followed by family, work, and social life.

Faith Impact on Decision-Making in Various Settings



n=3137

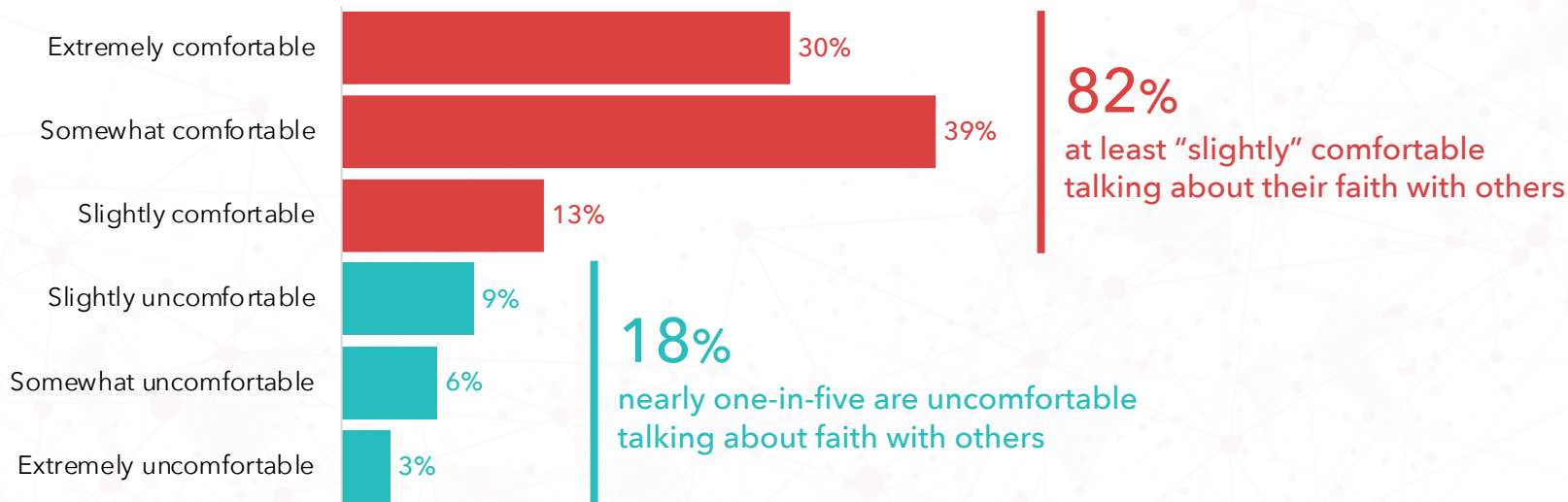
Evangelization

Key Findings

- 1 **While many feel express comfort in sharing their faith, there is a mix of level of proactivity in sharing the faith**
- 2 **There is a great need for education and resources to help with evangelization, particularly in the areas of confidence, knowing how to engage in discussion, and how to do so in today's culture**
- 3 **There is a great deal of interest in further developing evangelization skills**

Catholics in this sample are comfortable sharing their faith, but there is significant room for improvement.

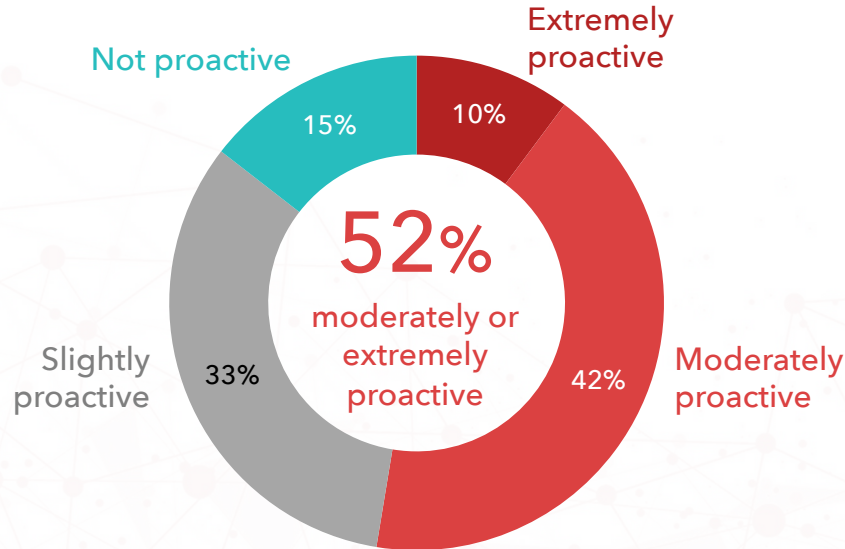
Faith-Sharing Comfort Level



n=3137

Respondents are split between those who do and those who do not consider themselves proactive at bringing up their faith with others.

Faith-Sharing Proactivity



Hispanic respondents are slightly more likely to select "Extremely proactive" or "Moderately proactive" than non-Hispanic respondents (66% vs 51%)

There are no significant differences when looking at age generationally

n=3137

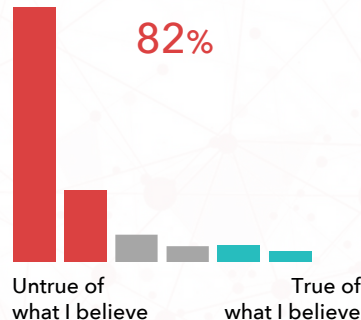
These Catholics know they should share the faith and are largely comfortable doing so. But most feel lacking in some skills.

Faith-Sharing Beliefs

“Religion should be kept private”

Very or Moderately
UNTRUE
of what I believe

82%



“If I live my faith as a good example, it is not necessary to proclaim my faith with words”

Very or Moderately
UNTRUE
of what I believe

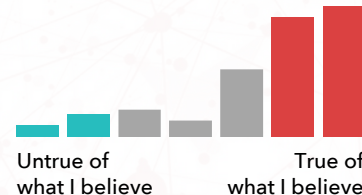
41%



“I am comfortable sharing my faith with others”

Very or Moderately
TRUE
of what I believe

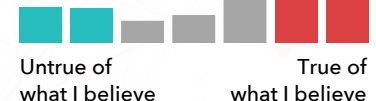
63%



“I feel like I am lacking certain faith-sharing skills and hope to get better at sharing my faith with others”

Very or Moderately
TRUE
of what I believe

47%



n=3137

Situational appropriateness is most often cited as a barrier to evangelization. However, many also lack knowing how to start, confidence, and experience.

Barriers to Evangelization

External Barriers

Lack of experience 33%

Lack of opportunity 24%

Internal Barriers

Lack of confidence 42%

Not wanting to offend 38%

Fear 23%

Don't feel prompting
from the Holy Spirit 17%

Embarrassment 10%

I struggle in my own faith 5%

Cultural Barriers

Situational appropriateness 62%

Worry about
political correctness 19%

Today's culture says
I should not 15%

Church is unwelcoming
or inhospitable 9%

Knowledge Barriers

Lack of knowing how
to start conversations 39%

I need a better
understanding of scriptures 23%

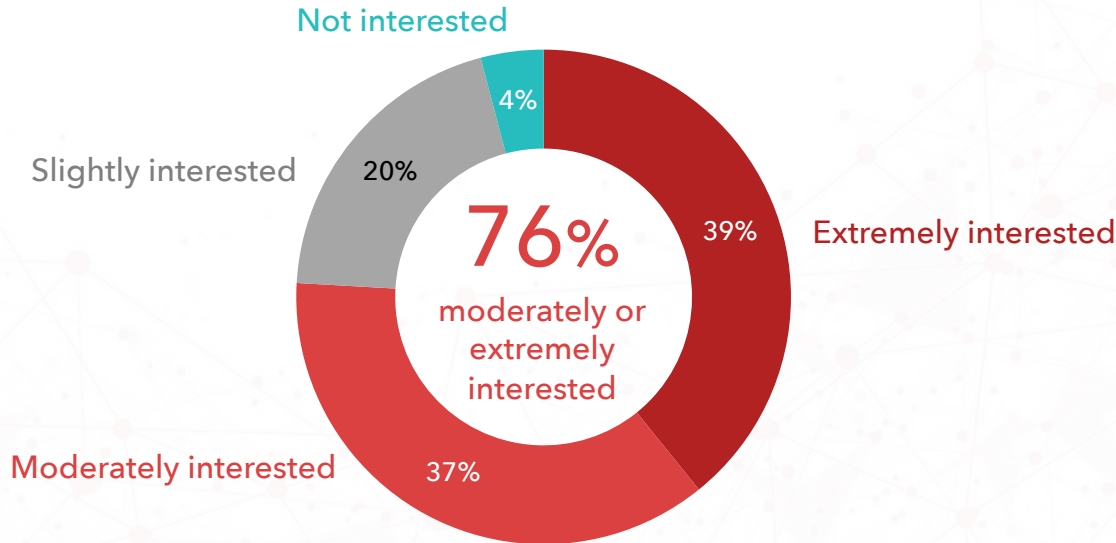
I need a better
understanding of my faith 19%

I never learned how
(to share my faith) 19%

n=3137

There is great interest in developing evangelization skills.

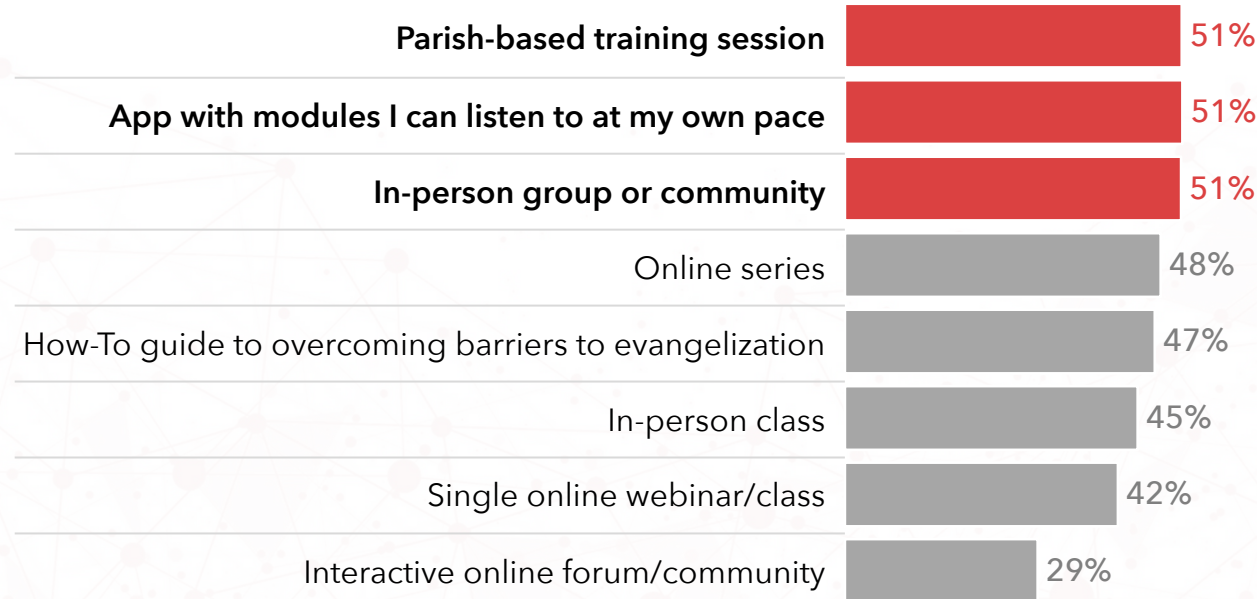
Interest in Developing Evangelization Skills



n=3137

The formation formats evaluated were all equally appealing.

“Very” or “Moderately” Appealing Evangelization Formation Tools



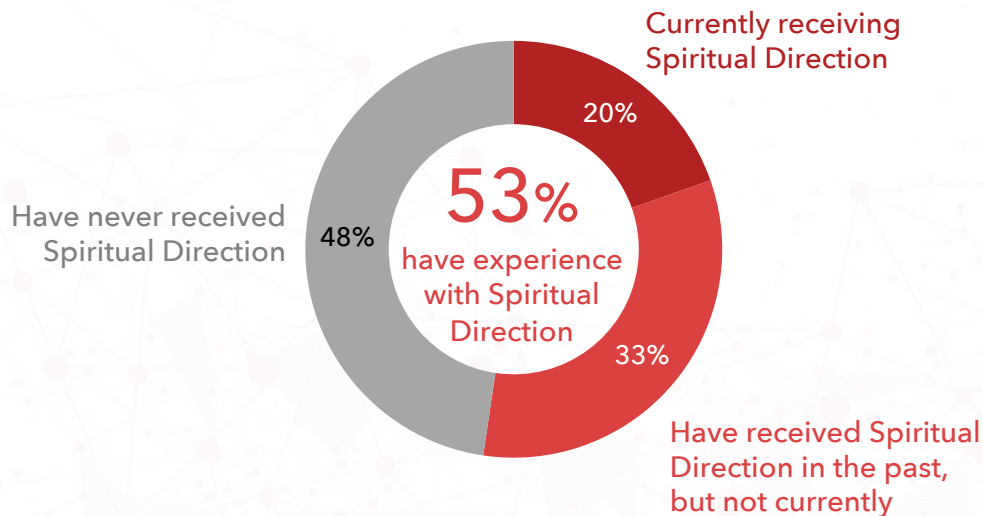
n=3137

Spiritual Direction

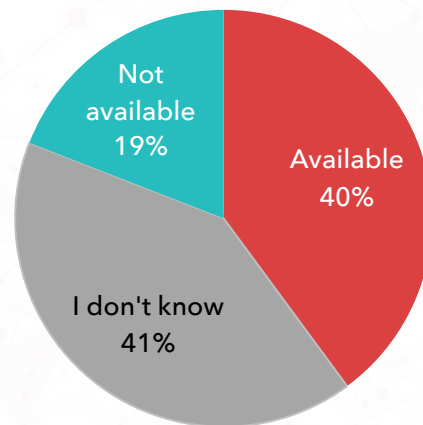
Over half of respondents have experienced Spiritual Direction, but only 1 in 5 are currently engaged in it. Only 4 in 10 know that it is available nearby, indicating a need for heightened visibility and availability.

Spiritual Direction – Current Status and Availability

Are you currently receiving, or have you ever received, Spiritual Direction?



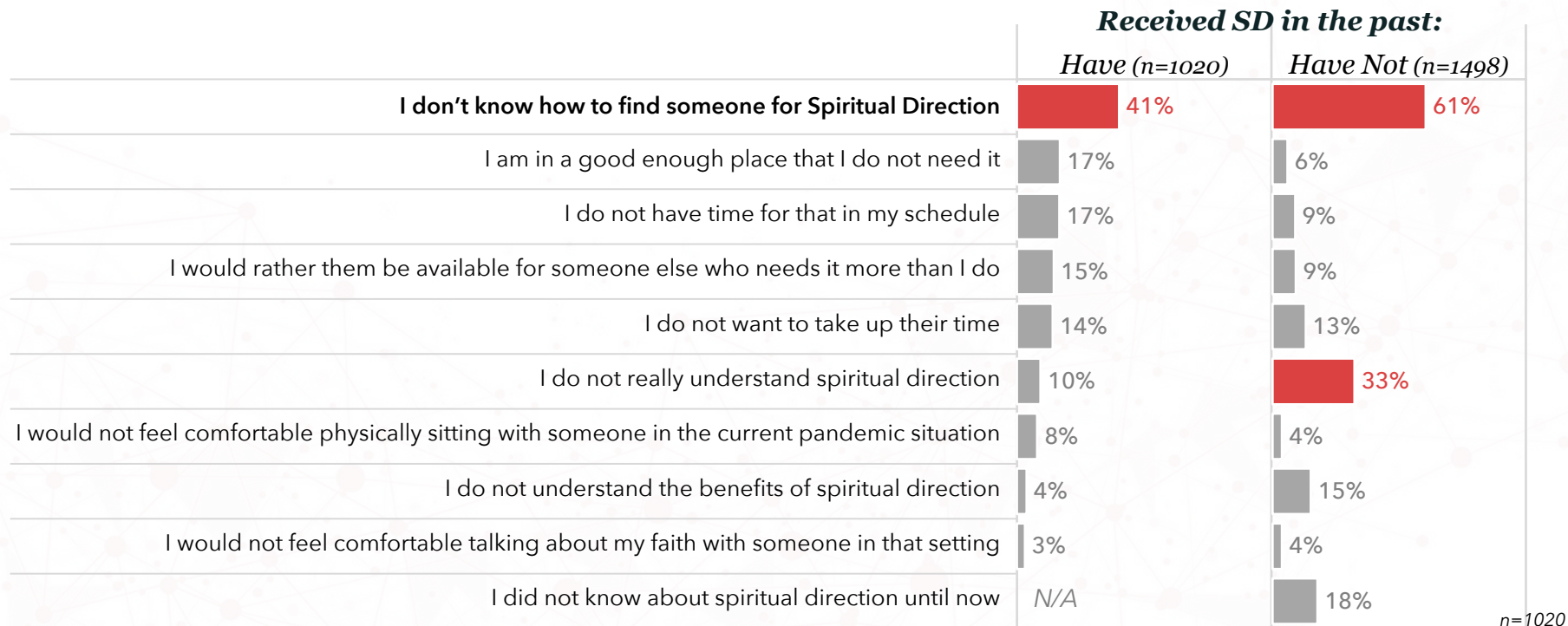
Is Spiritual Direction available in your home parish or any faith community to which you belong?



n=3137

Simply providing a resource to find spiritual directors will meet much of the existing need in this area.

Reasons for not Currently Receiving Spiritual Direction



Regardless of past experience with spiritual direction, many would do online spiritual direction, especially those not having previously received it.

Likelihood of Receiving ONLINE Spiritual Direction

Among those currently receiving Spiritual Direction

n=619

Extremely or
Somewhat
UNLIKELY

39%

Extremely or
Somewhat
LIKELY

41%



Among those who received in the past, but not currently

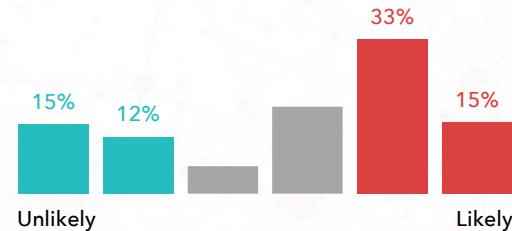
n=1020

Extremely or
Somewhat
UNLIKELY

27%

Extremely or
Somewhat
LIKELY

48%



Among those who have never received Spiritual Direction

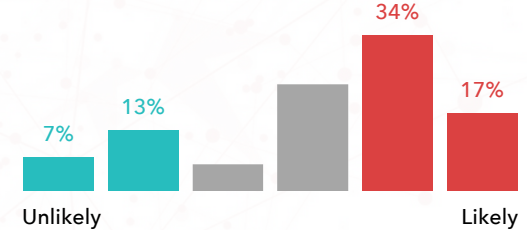
n=1498

Extremely or
Somewhat
UNLIKELY

21%

Extremely or
Somewhat
LIKELY

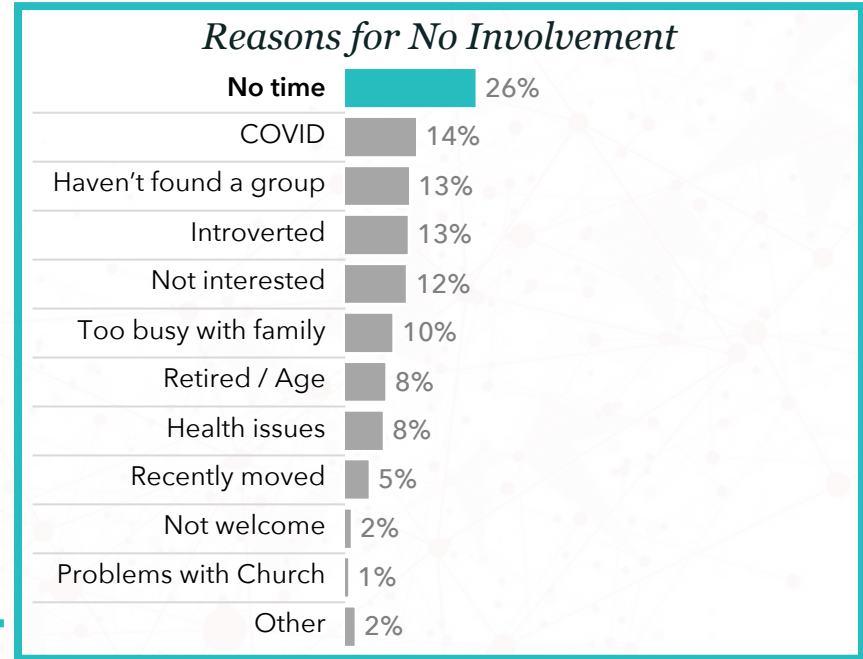
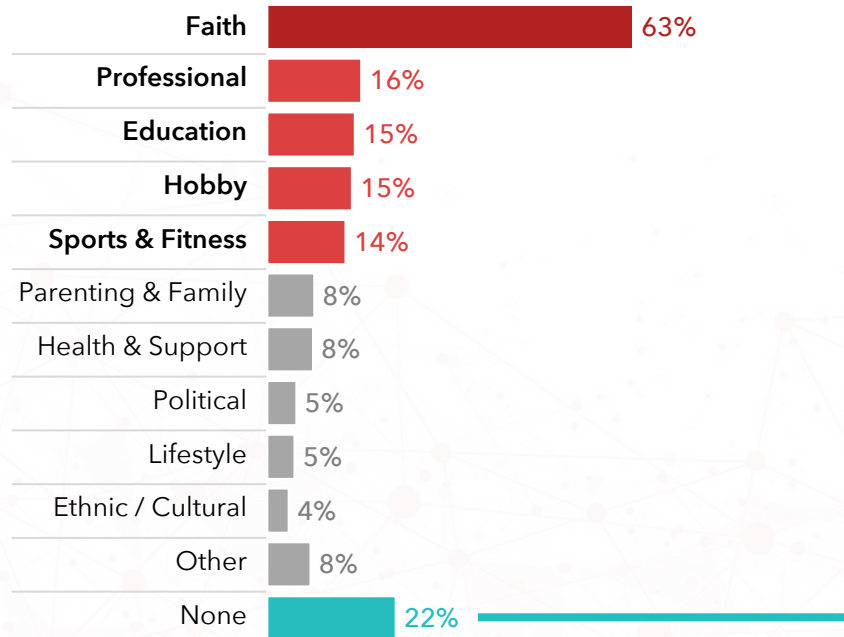
51%



Community Involvement

More than three-quarters are involved in a group, most often faith-related.

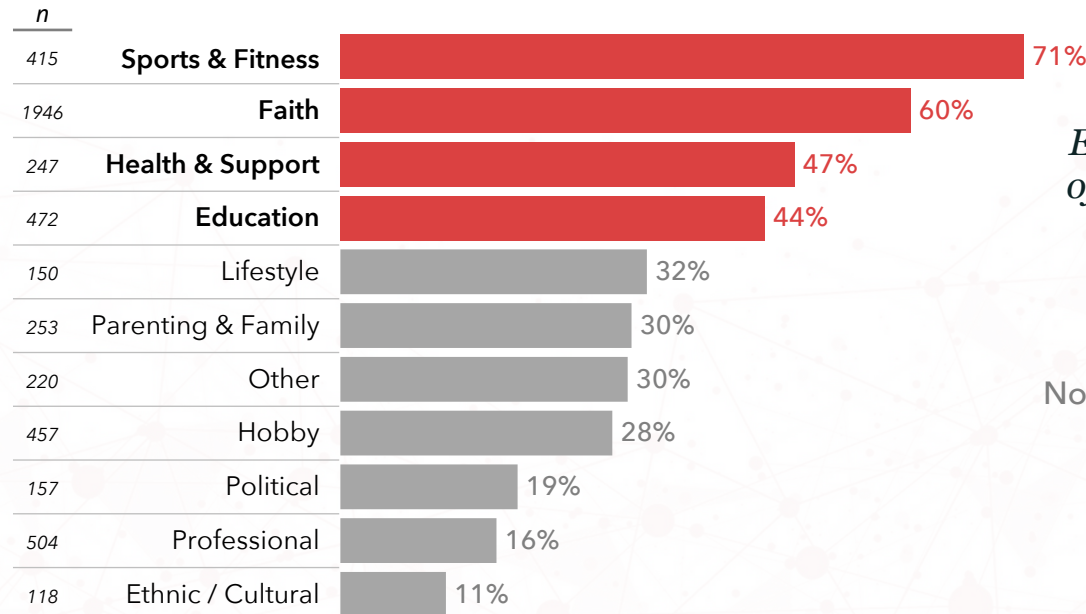
Social / Community Group Involvement



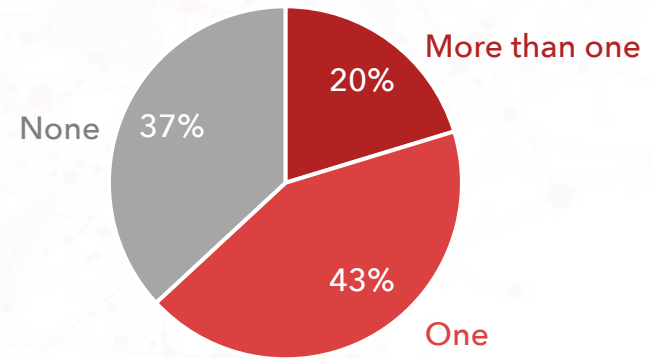
n=3137

Many of these groups, including faith groups, meet weekly.

Social / Community Group Frequency: Weekly

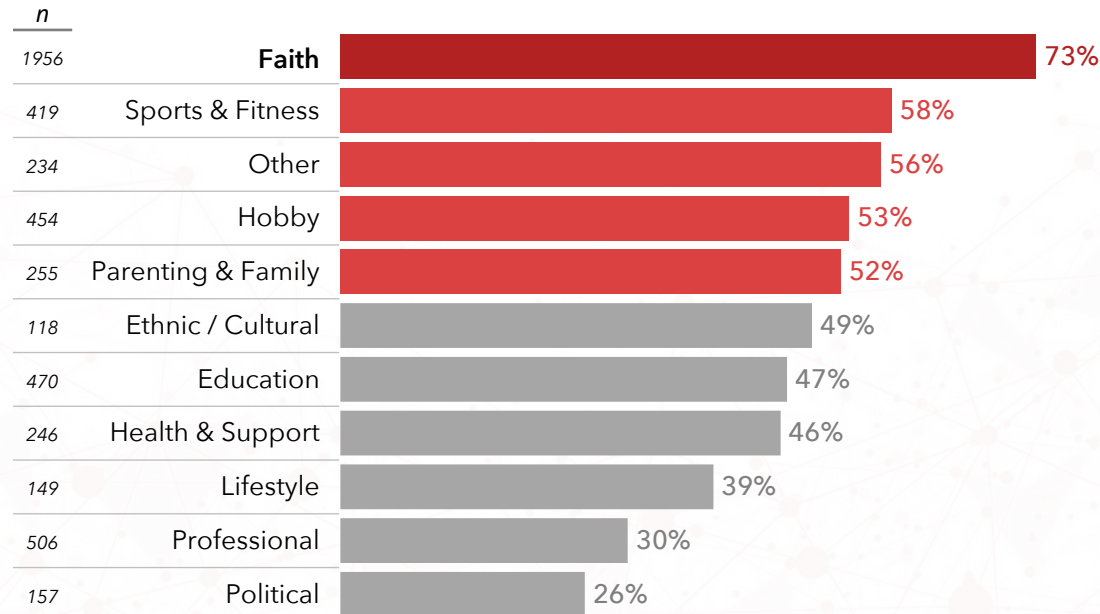


*Each Respondent's Number
of Groups that Meet Weekly*
n=2418



Those who participate in faith groups look forward to participating more than those who participate in other groups.

Social / Community Group: Look Forward to Participating “A Great Deal”



Top responses for "Group Name" in each community category

Social / Community Groups: Group Name

	#1	#2
Faith	Men's / Women's Group 15%	Bible Study 13%
Professional	Medical / Health 9%	Catholic 8%
Education	Religious Education 9%	College / Master's 6%
Hobby	Sewing / Knitting 10%	Book Club 9%
Sports & Fitness	Gym 7%	Watersports 4%
Parenting & Family	Moms' Group 9%	Homeschooling 4%
Health & Support	Health / Medicine 13%	Sports / Fitness 7%
Political	Republican Group 18%	Democratic Group 6%
Lifestyle	Religious Community 7%	Food & Drink 5%
Ethnic / Cultural	Too few to code meaningfully	Too few to code meaningfully
Other	Catholic 7%	Music / Art 6%

Community / Fellowship is a leading feature of groups

Social / Community Groups: Best Features (Coded)



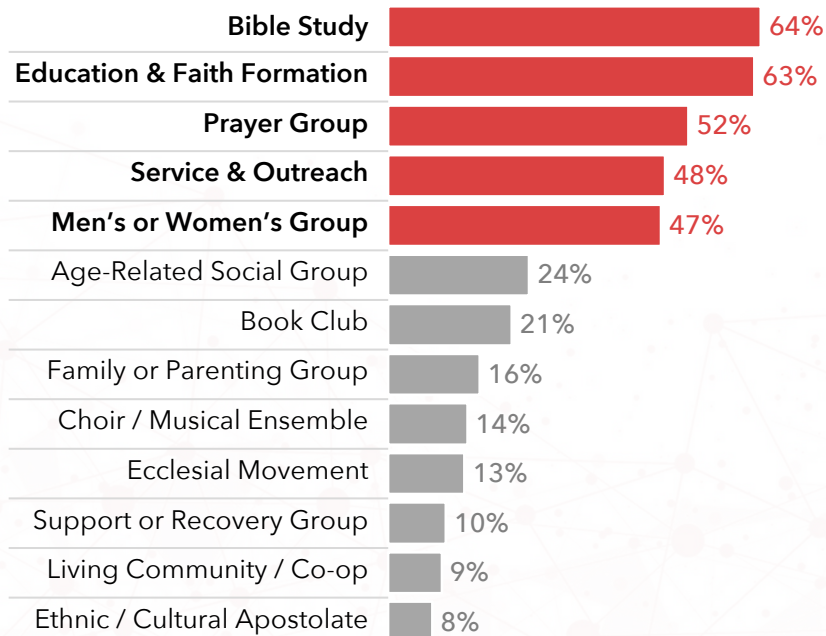
Community / Fellowship is a leading feature of groups

Social / Community Groups: Best Features (Coded)



These Catholics are involved in many diverse groups, most notably formation related, some social groups, and service and outreach.

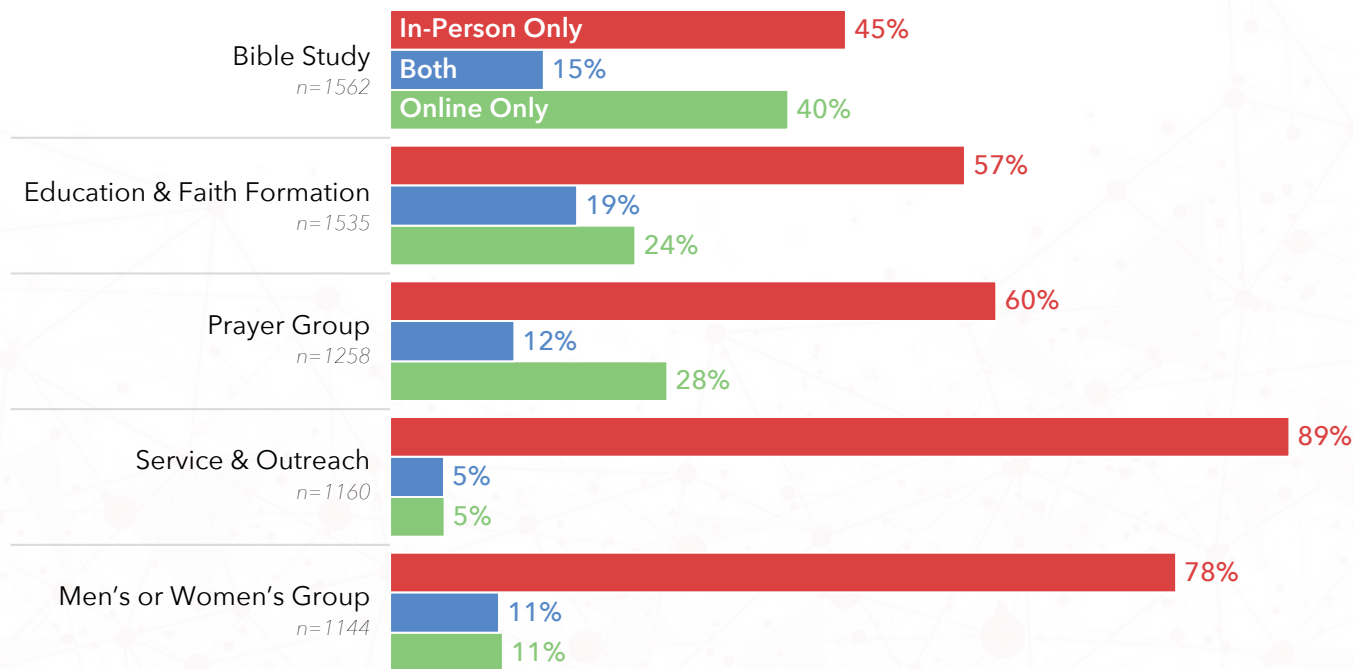
Involvement in Faith Communities



n=2444

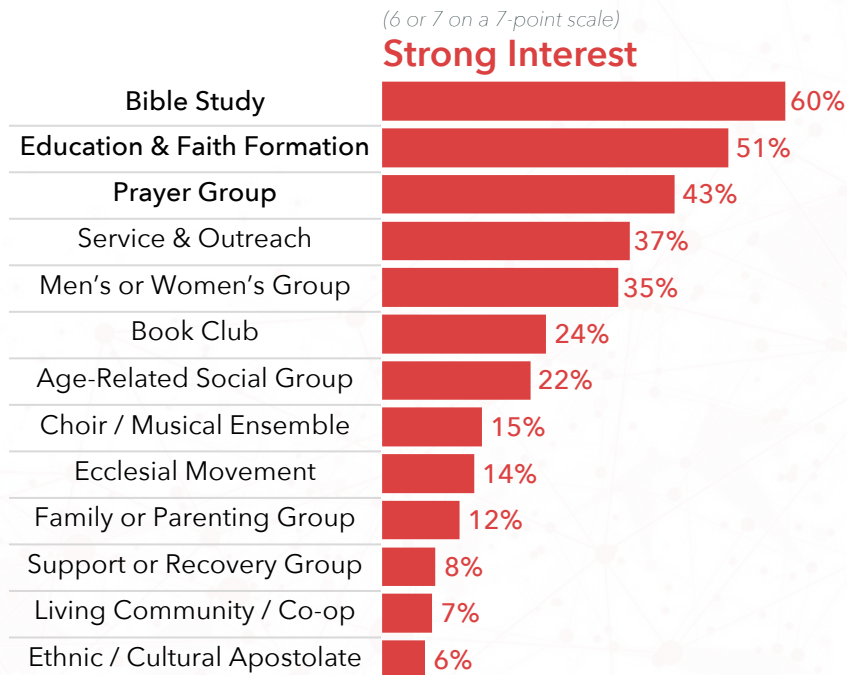
With the exception of bible studies, most common faith communities meet in person. However, online interactions are not unusual.

Top 5 Faith Communities: Format



Many of these respondents are interested in continuing to grow their faith through study/formation, service, and various social groups.

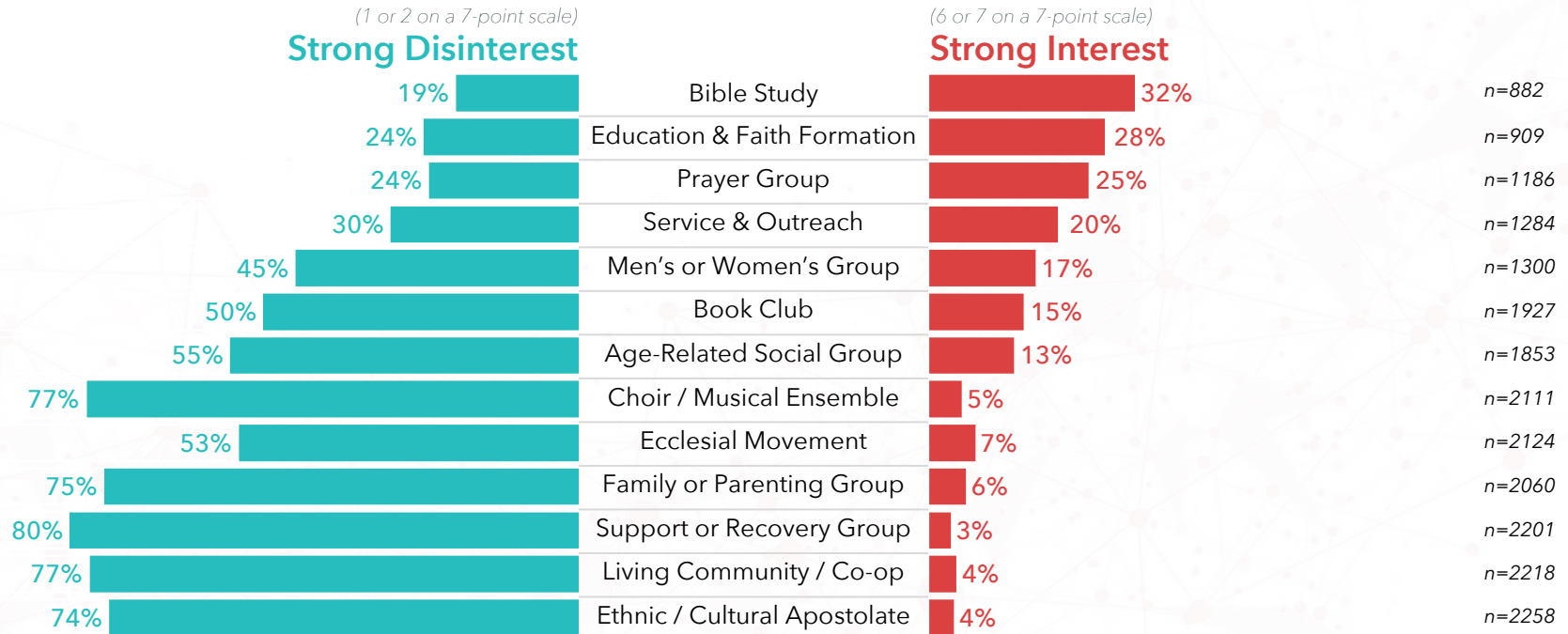
Faith Group Interest



n=2444

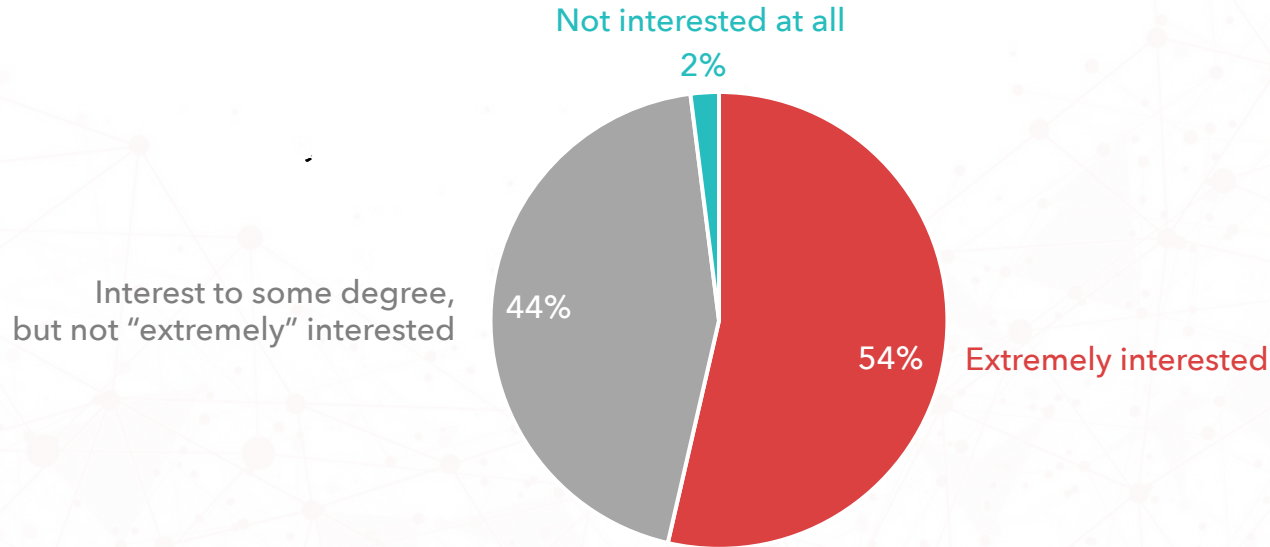
Among those not involved in each type, there is still some interest in joining many faith-based communities.

Faith Group Interest (among those not currently involved in each)



This group of Catholics expresses high interest in connecting with other faithful Catholics (full breakdown on next slide).

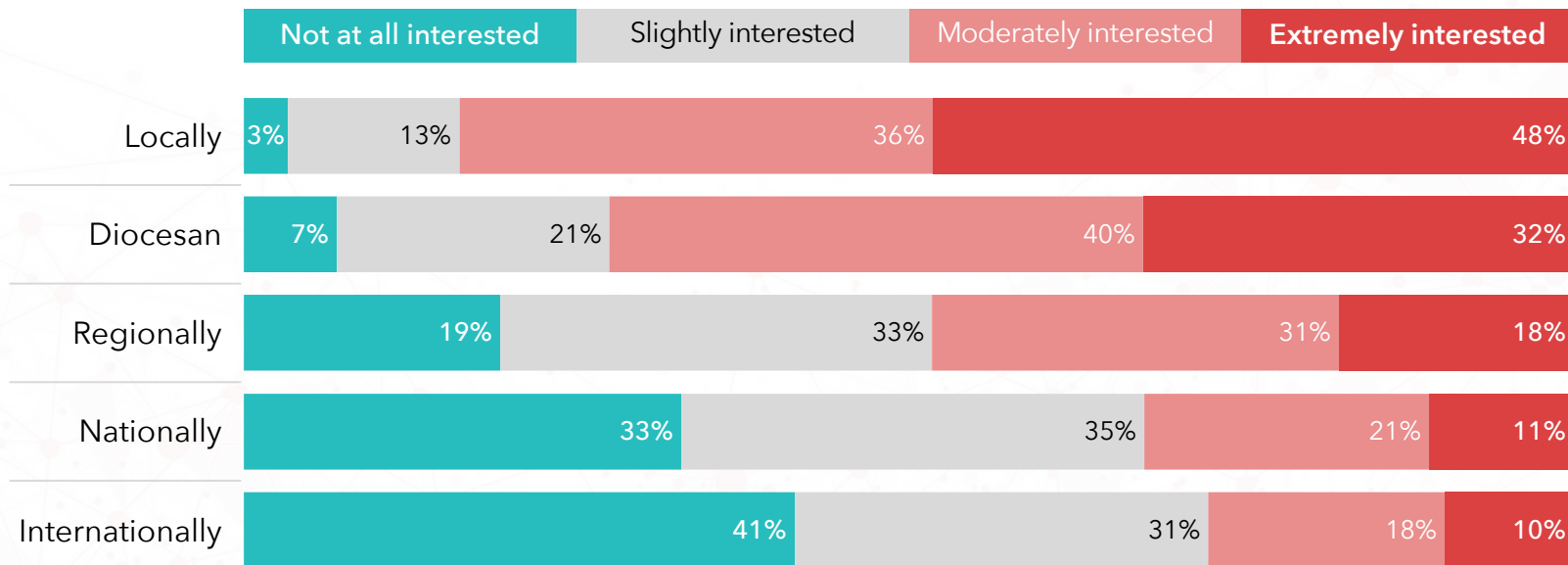
Interest in Making Faith Connections with Others



n=2444

This group of Catholics expresses high interest in connecting with other faithful Catholics at the local and diocesan levels.

Interest in Making Faith Connections with Others

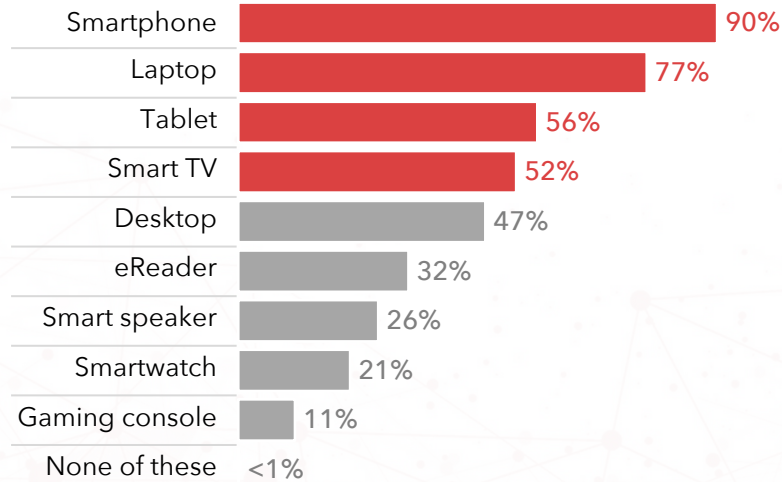


n=2444

Technology Use

Nearly all respondents have a smartphone. Other devices are prevalent throughout.

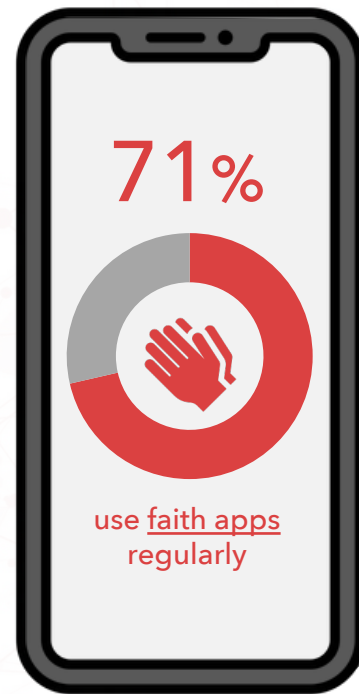
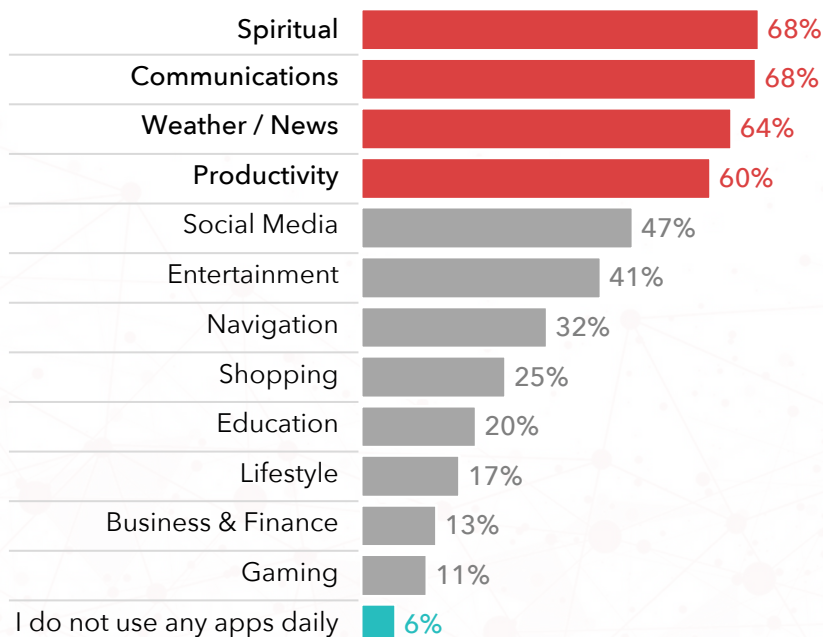
Technology Use



n=3137

Over two-thirds use faith-related apps daily, and 7 in 10 use faith apps regularly (at least 3 days a week).

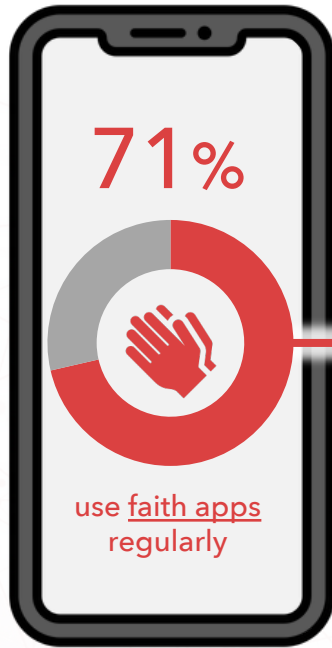
Mobile Apps Used Daily



n=3137

Faith app use is fairly spread out across the most popular apps, but faith podcasts/videos are most prevalent.

Faith Apps Used Regularly



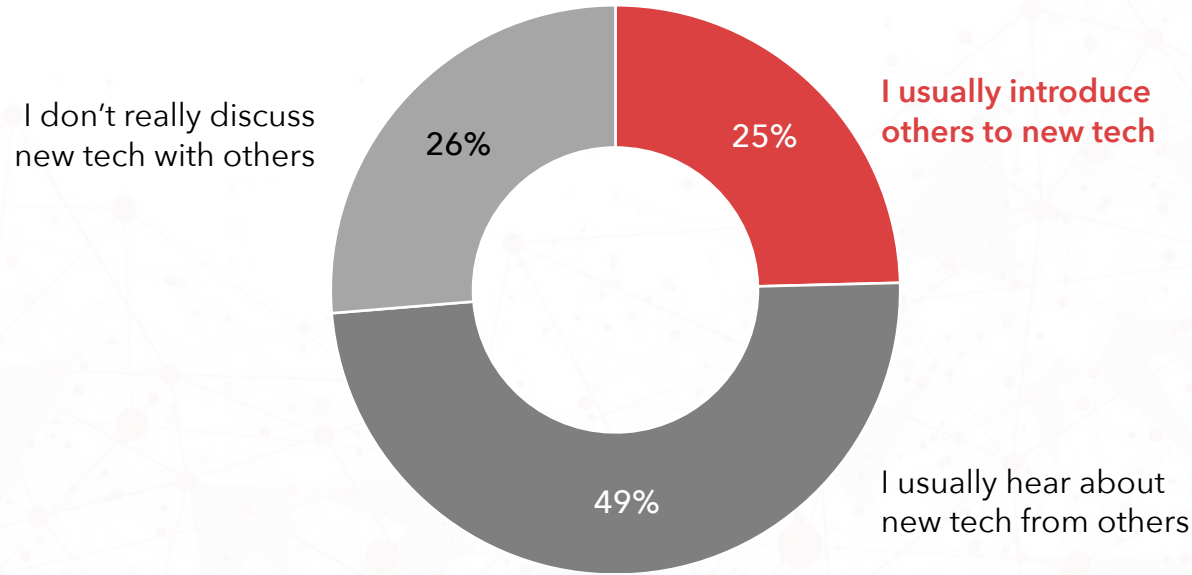
n=3137



Only 1 in 4 respondents introduce new technologies to others, and another 1 in 4 don't discuss technology at all.

Discussing Technology with Others

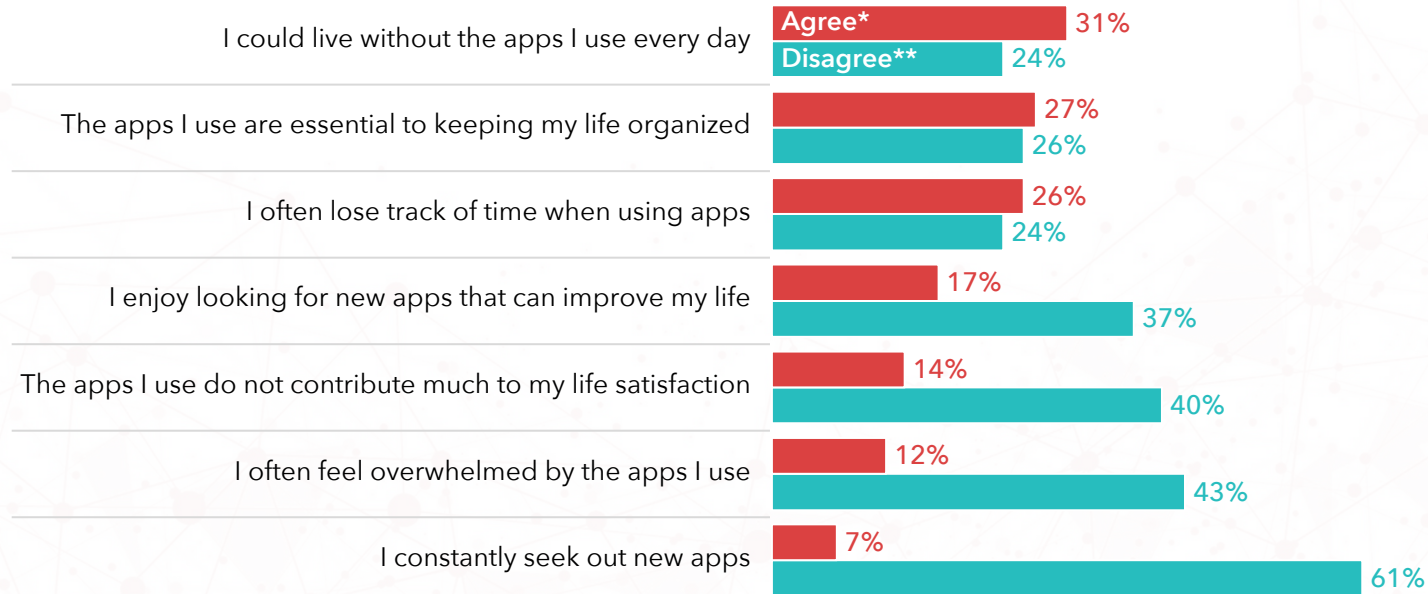
(An indicator of familiarity with new technology)



n=3137

Respondents in this study do not appear to be extremely invested in using new technology.

Technology Statements Agreement

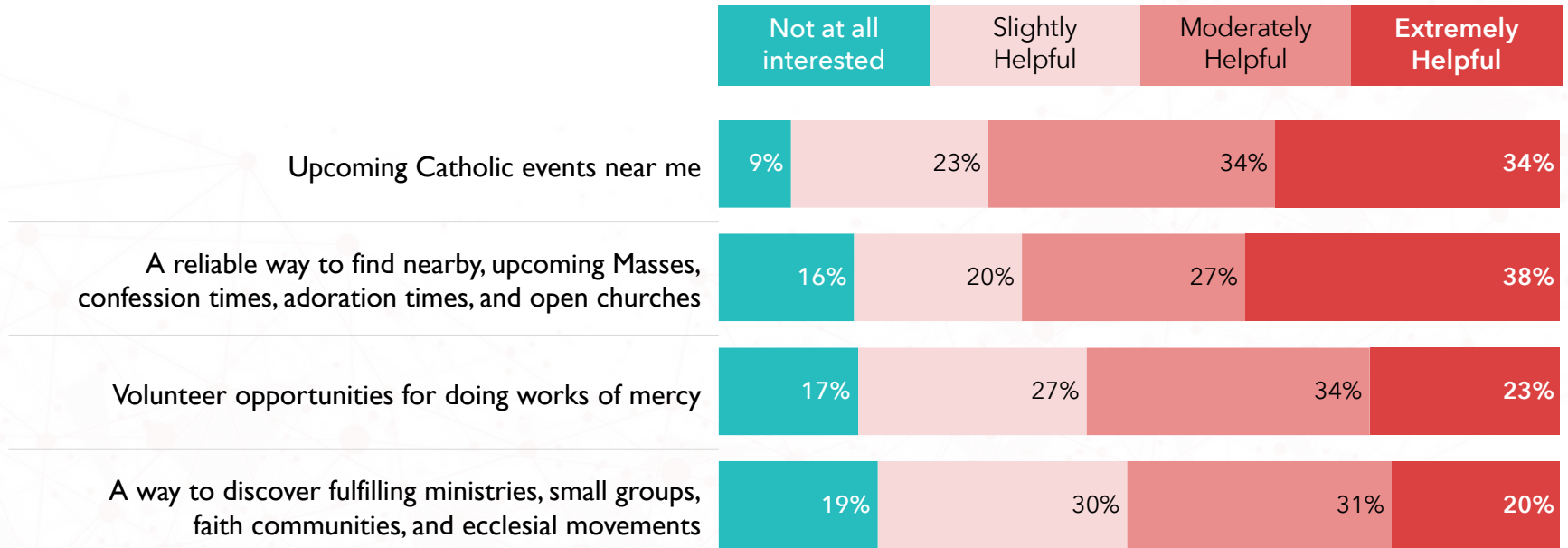


* Top 2 score (6 or 7 on a 7-point scale)

** Bottom 2 score (1 or 2 on a 7-point scale)

A Catholic app that helps discover opportunities to participate in the faith would be most helpful for respondents.

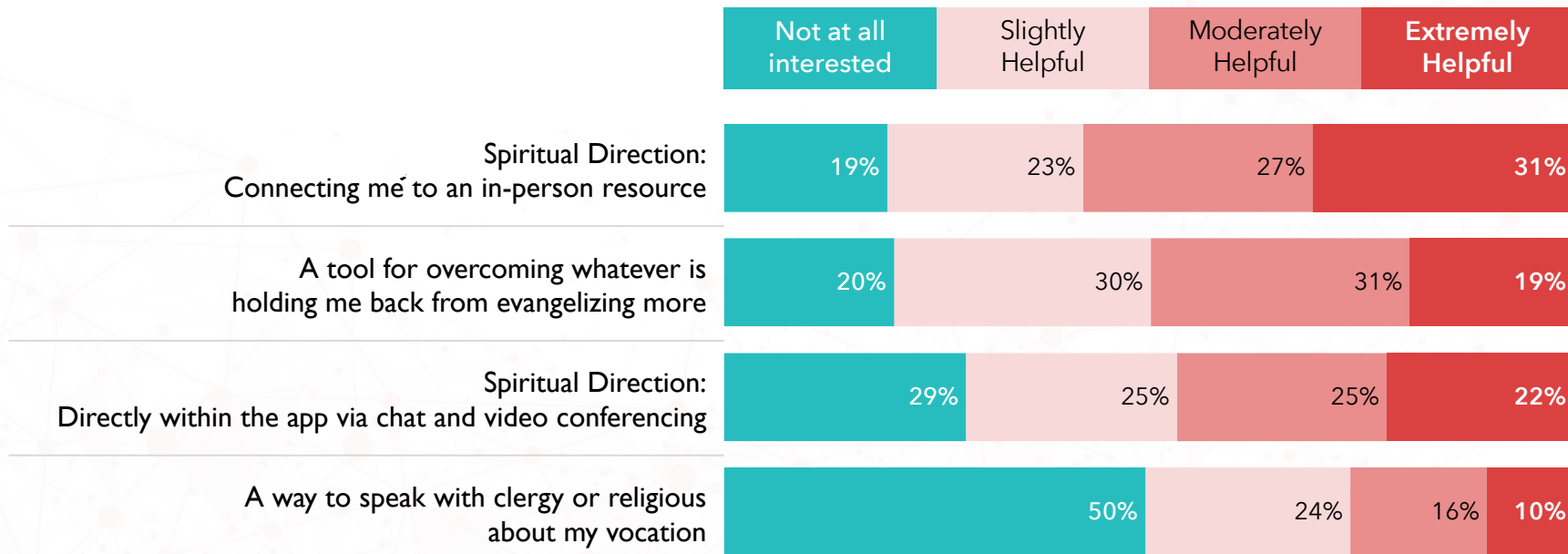
Catholic App Interest: Discovery



n=3137

There is significant interest in an app that allows respondents to participate in Spiritual Direction, even if it is done digitally.

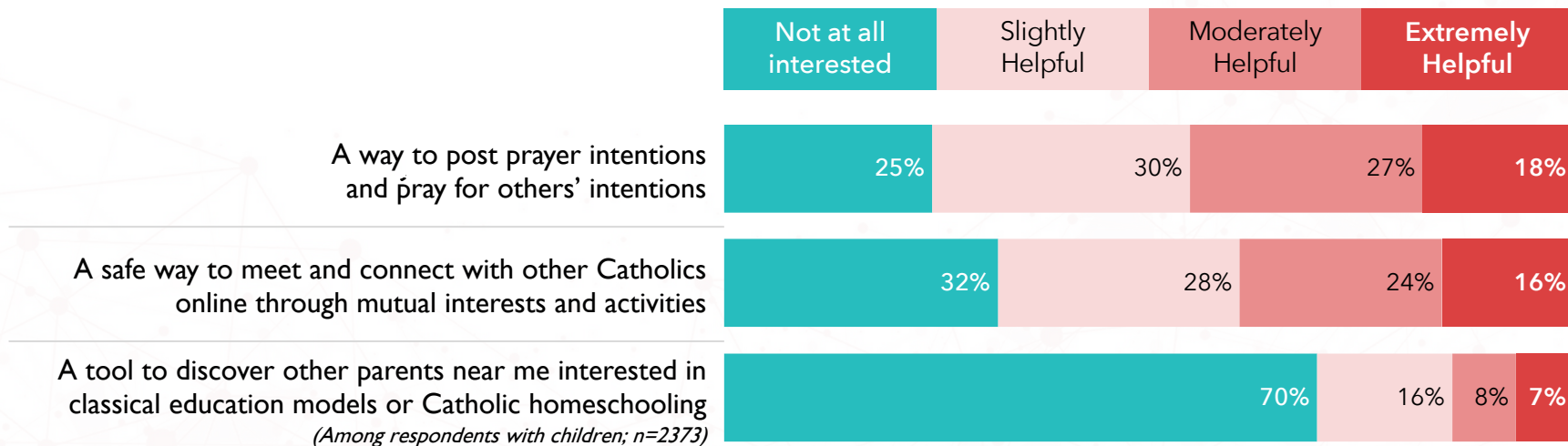
Catholic App Interest: Growth



n=3137

While not as helpful as other features, a Communication aspect would still be seen as helpful (especially as a basic chat function)

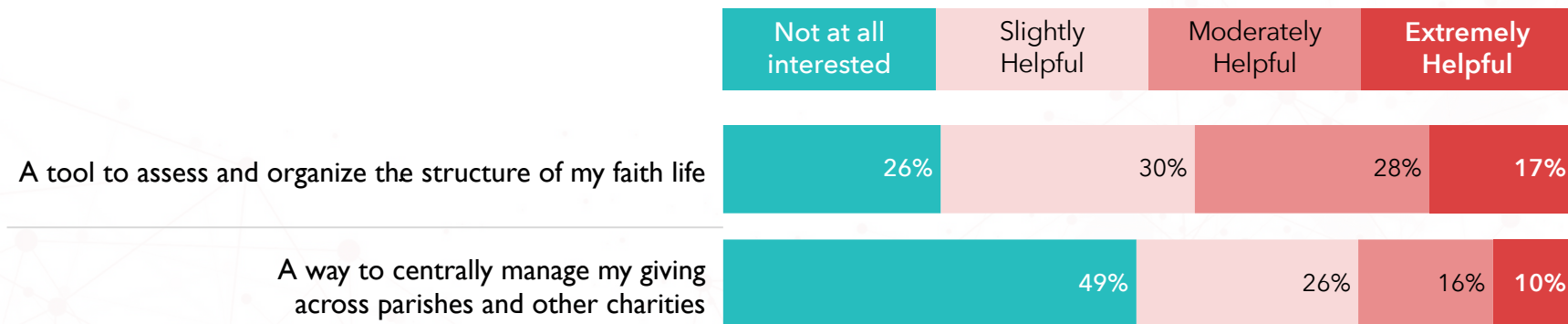
Catholic App Interest: Communication



n=3137

A “faith life organizer” would be generally helpful for respondents, but there is not much interest in a way to track giving.

Catholic App Interest: Organization

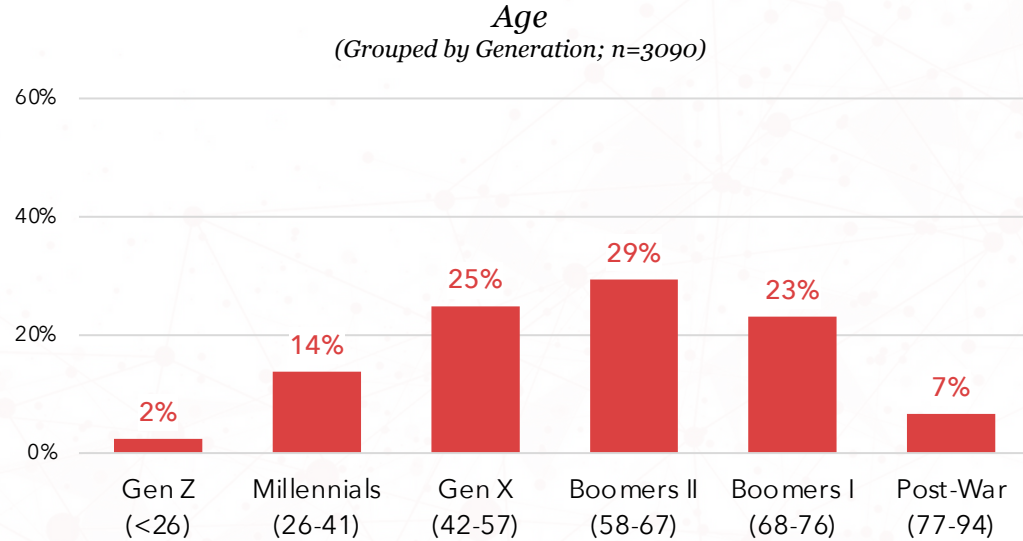
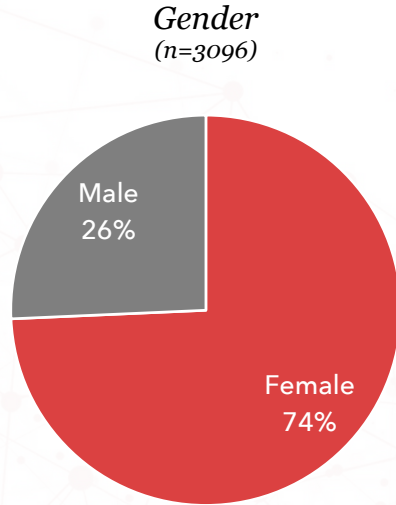


n=3137

Demographics

The responses received were overwhelmingly from women, although age was more varied.

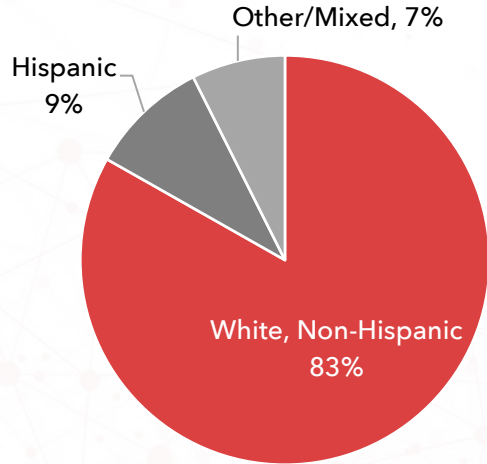
Basic Demographics: Gender and Age



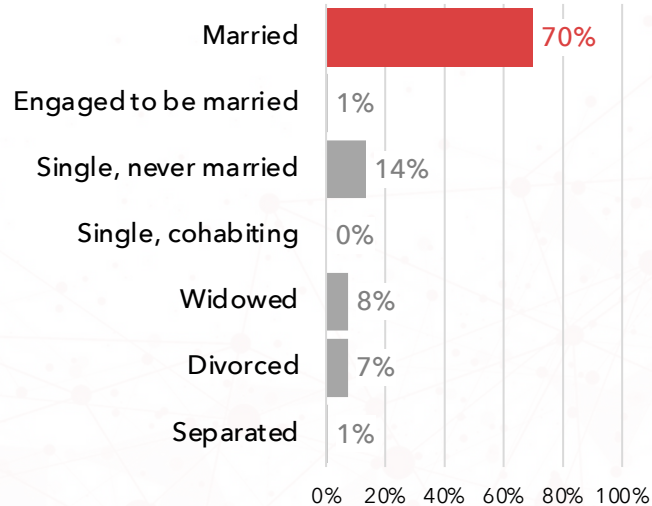
The majority of respondents are White (Non-Hispanic), Married, and have children.

Basic Demographics: Race/Ethnicity, Marital Status, Children

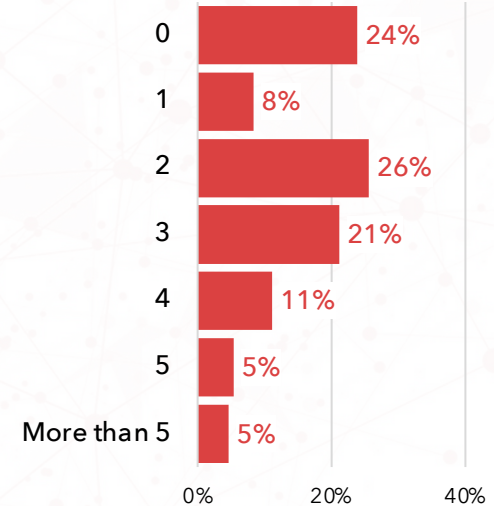
Race / Ethnicity
(n=3092)



Marital Status
(n=3115)



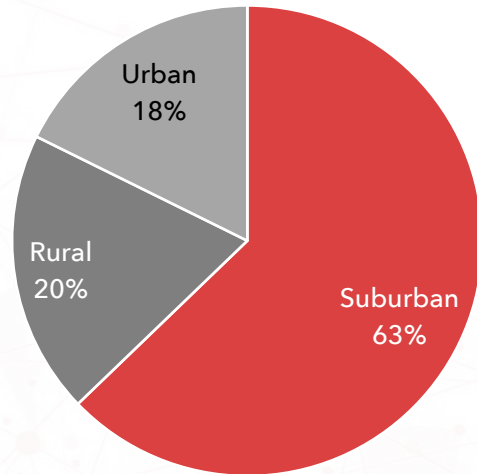
Number of Children
(n=3107)



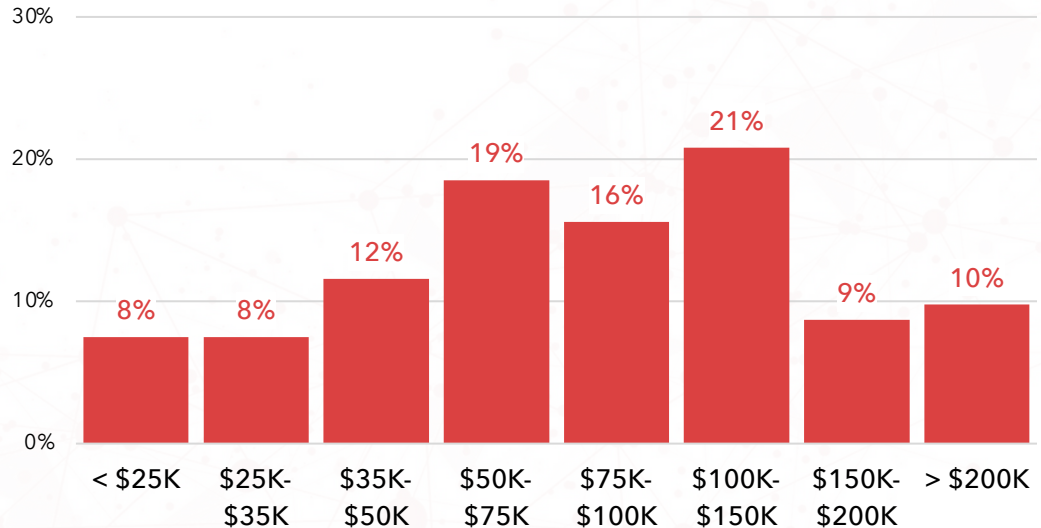
Nearly two-thirds of respondents live in a suburban community.

Basic Demographics: Community Classification and Household Income

Community
(n=3121)

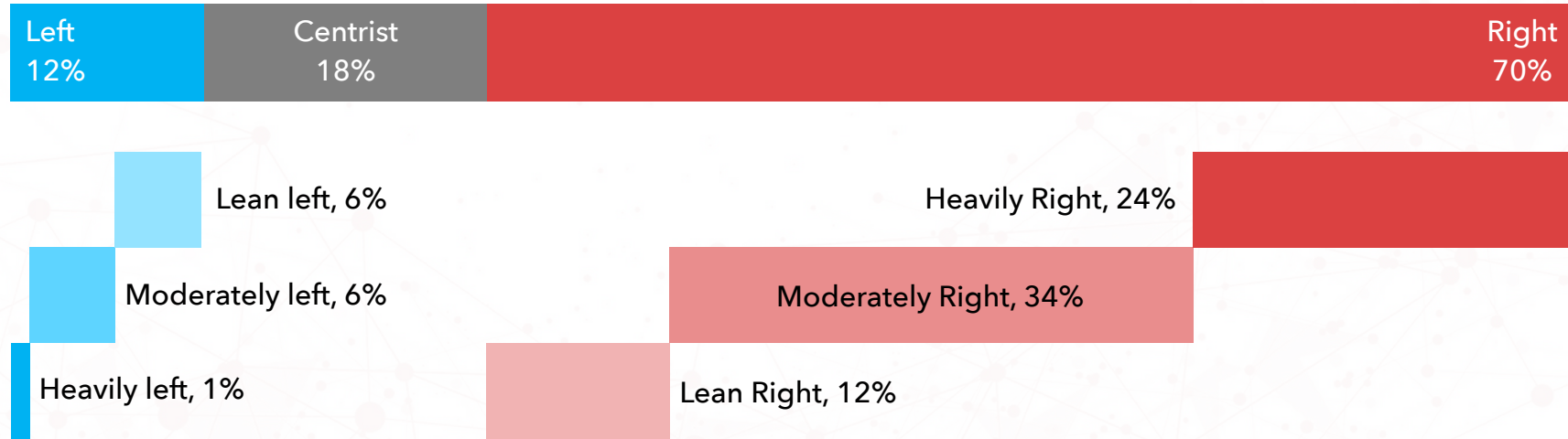


Household Income
(n=2692)



7 in 10 respondents indicated they are politically right-leaning.

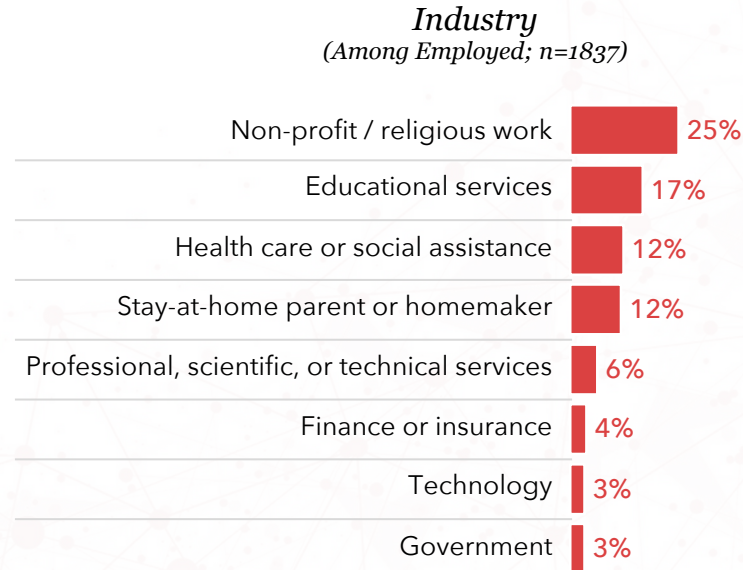
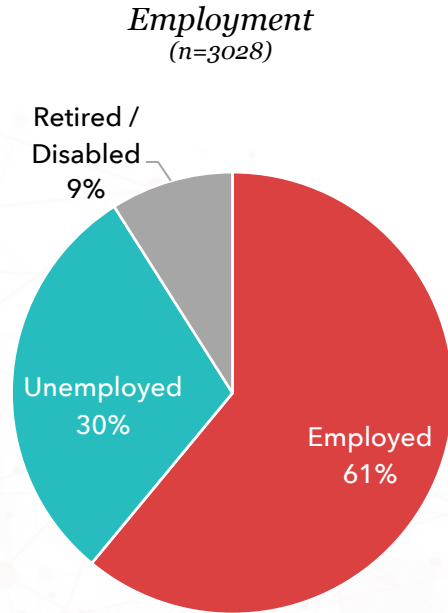
Basic Demographics: Political Ideology



n=3003

1 in 4 employed respondents works in Non-Profit / Religious

Employment Status and Industry



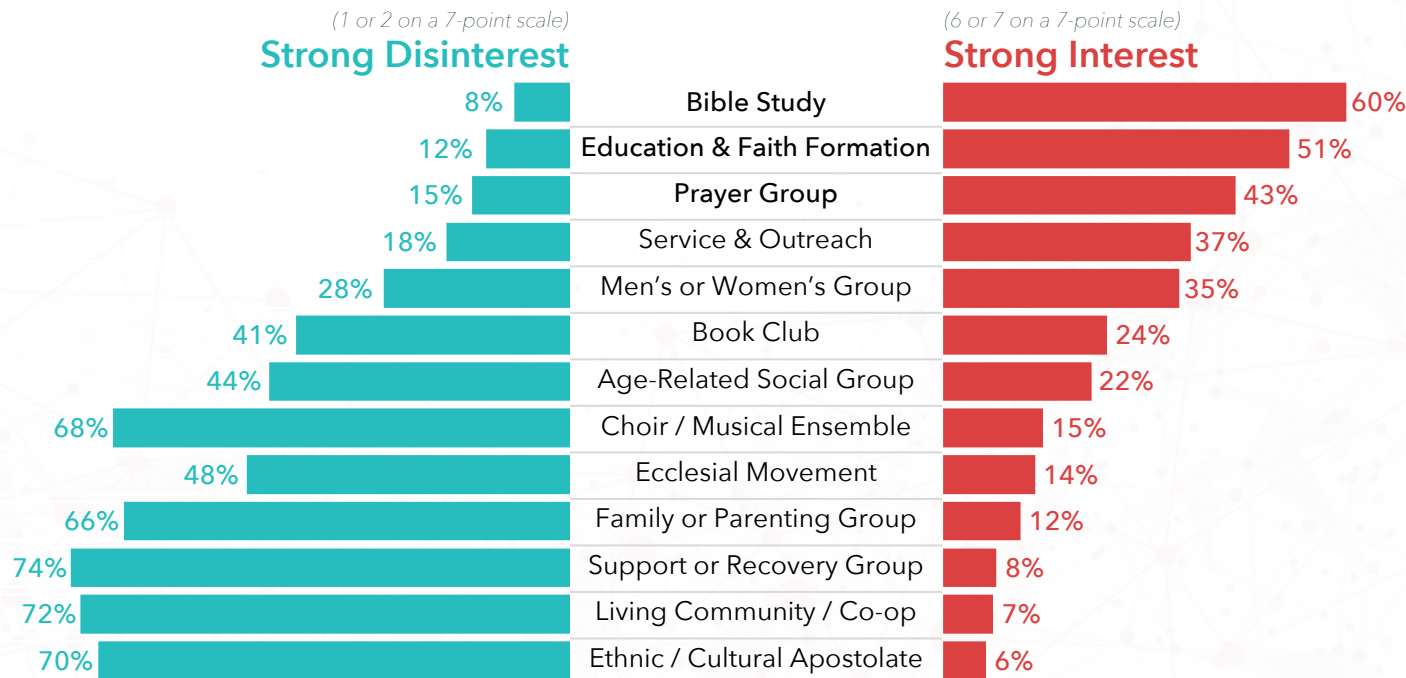
Less than 50 responses:

Arts/Entertainment, Manufacturing, Retail, Admin, Construction, Real Estate, Management, Food Service, Agriculture, Information, Communications, Utilities, Student, Police / Fire, Transportation, Legal, Trade, Mining

Appendix

Many of these respondents are interested in continuing to grow their faith through study/formation, service, and various social groups.

Faith Group Interest



n=2444