

# Church Life Profile

for

## The Catholic Church in Australia

A report on the vitality of local churches  
who took part in the  
2016 National Church Life Survey

Denom in 2016 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 36532 forms, 2164 child forms, 191 parishes)

## Dear leader,

Jesus declared, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full". A Church Life Survey focuses on the life and vitality of a church.

This Church Life Profile contains your denomination's unique results from the involvement of your churches in the 2016 National Church Life Survey.

We provide this Profile to you to help you strengthen the vitality of your churches, grow an owned vision and plan for the future.

After receiving these results, we recommend that you examine them closely to see what they reveal and share your insights with your denomination's leaders and resource people. Our hope and prayer is that these resources will help you to serve and equip your churches in their mission and ministry.

## Profile Contents

### [Summary Profile](#) ..... 4-10

A summary of results about the people of the churches in this denomination, what they value and prioritise, their gifts and skills, how they relate to God, each other, and the wider community, as well as vision, innovation and leadership culture.

### [The People of this Church](#) ..... 11-14

Demographics, patterns of attendance, involvement in church life of this denomination's attenders.

### [Church Vitality: Core Qualities of Church Life](#) ..... 15-24

A detailed look at each of the nine core qualities that shape the vitality of the churches in this denomination.

### [Child Survey Results \(as available\)](#) .....

Experiences and thoughts about church life and faith from children aged 8 to 14 years.

### [Denominational Survey Results \(in cases where specific questions were included\)](#) .....

Responses to questions commissioned by your denomination or region.

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## Who Took Part

### Your survey results are based on:

#### Denom in 2016

36,532 adult attenders aged 15 years and over in 191 churches, and 2,164 children aged 8 to 14 years, who completed the 2016 National Church Life Survey.

#### Denom in 2011

47,286 adult attenders aged 15 years and over in 254 churches, who completed the 2011 National Church Life Survey.

#### Denom in 2006

65,395 adult attenders aged 15 years and over in 229 churches, who completed the 2006 National Church Life Survey.

### Consider who completed the survey

Are attenders well represented? This may affect the results shown in this profile.

Regional results are based on surveys received from Catholic sample parishes at the date of printing. Denominational results are based on surveys received from Catholic sample parishes at the date of printing.

Particular care should be taken when extrapolating Child Survey results to your denomination. The Child Survey was optional for churches that participated in the 2016 NCLS - not all participating churches with children may have ordered/returned forms. For a list of the churches that returned Child Survey forms, visit the comprehensive survey results available online. Because of the optional nature of the Child Survey, only 2016 results are included.

### Keeping Up To Date

It is possible that data for extra churches will be added over time. An up-to-date profile can be viewed at [www.2016ncls.org.au](http://www.2016ncls.org.au), using the Profile Number below.

Use your Profile Number **6J7FXF** to access this profile online  
[www.2016ncls.org.au](http://www.2016ncls.org.au)

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# The People of This Church



## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



**62%** of all people are female and **38%** are male

**36%** of all people have a university degree



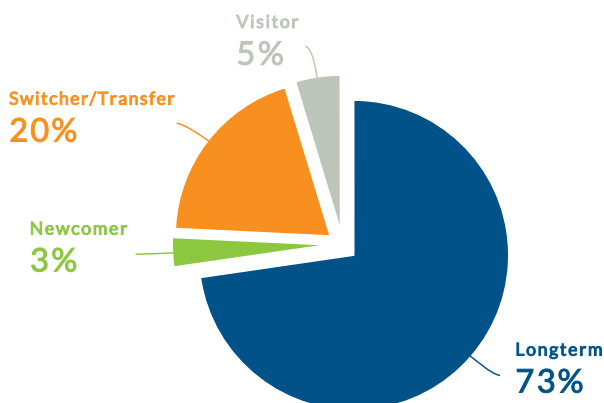
**23%** have a trade certificate, diploma or associate diploma



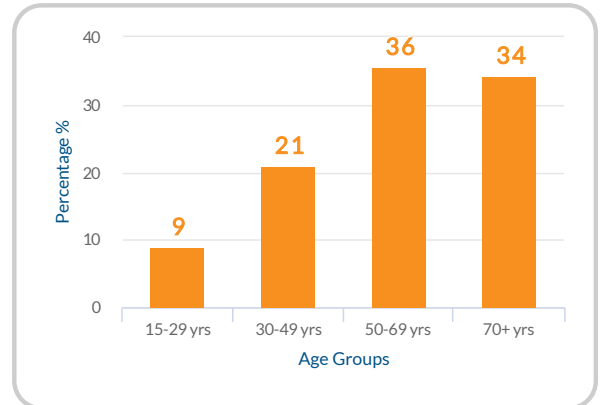
**42%** have primary or secondary school education



## CHURCH BACKGROUND and ATTENDANCE



The AVERAGE AGE of people is **59** years



**57%** of all people were born in AUSTRALIA

**43%** were born overseas



**33%** speak a language other than ENGLISH at home



**24%** of attenders are new arrivals to their parish in the past five years.

**93%** attend Mass at least monthly



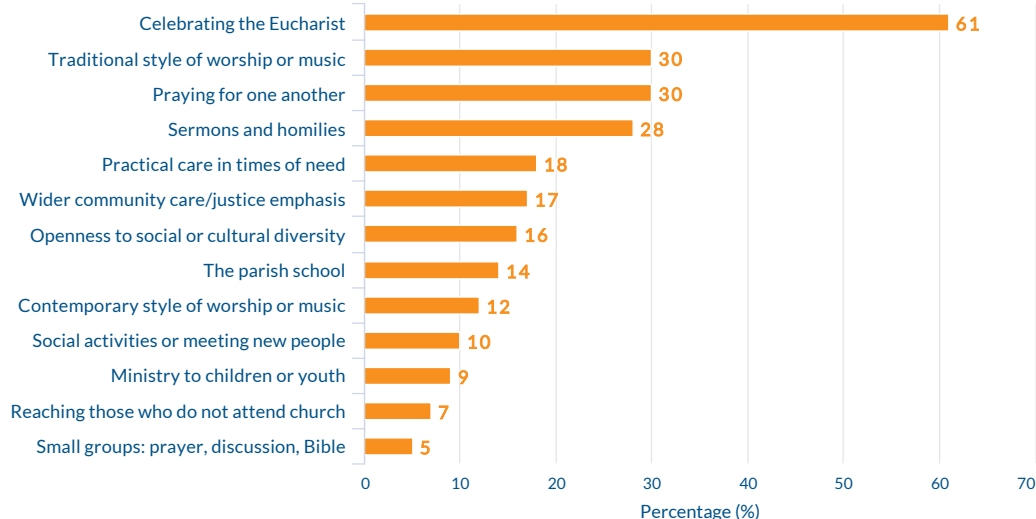


# What People Value and Prioritise



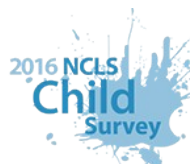
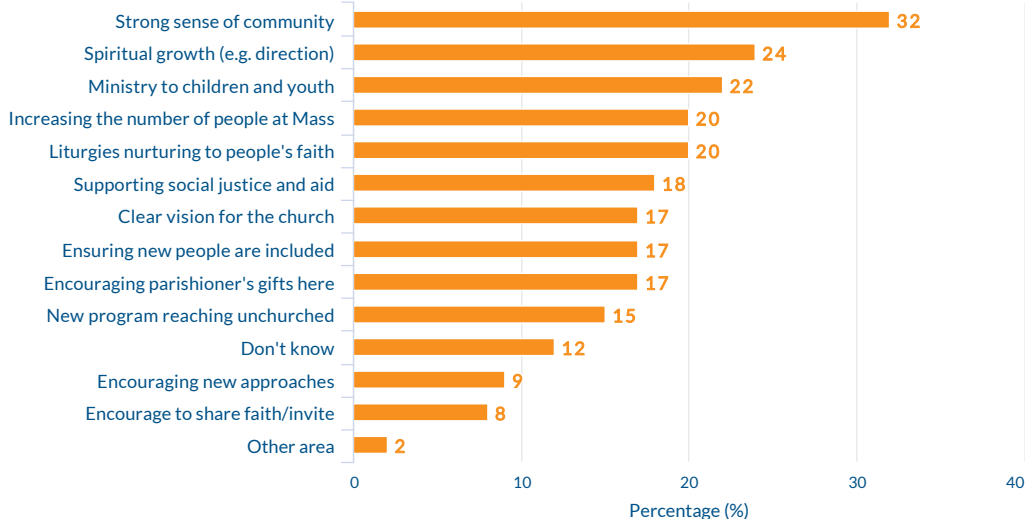
## WHAT PEOPLE VALUE ABOUT THEIR CHURCH

Attendees most value 'Celebrating the Eucharist/receiving Holy Communion' and 'Traditional style of worship or music'



## FUTURE PRIORITIES

Over the next 12 months most attendees would like priority given to: 'Building a strong sense of community' and 'Spiritual growth (e.g. direction)'.



## CHILDREN'S VIEWS ABOUT GROUPS

When asked about groups for children and youth, the children most like:

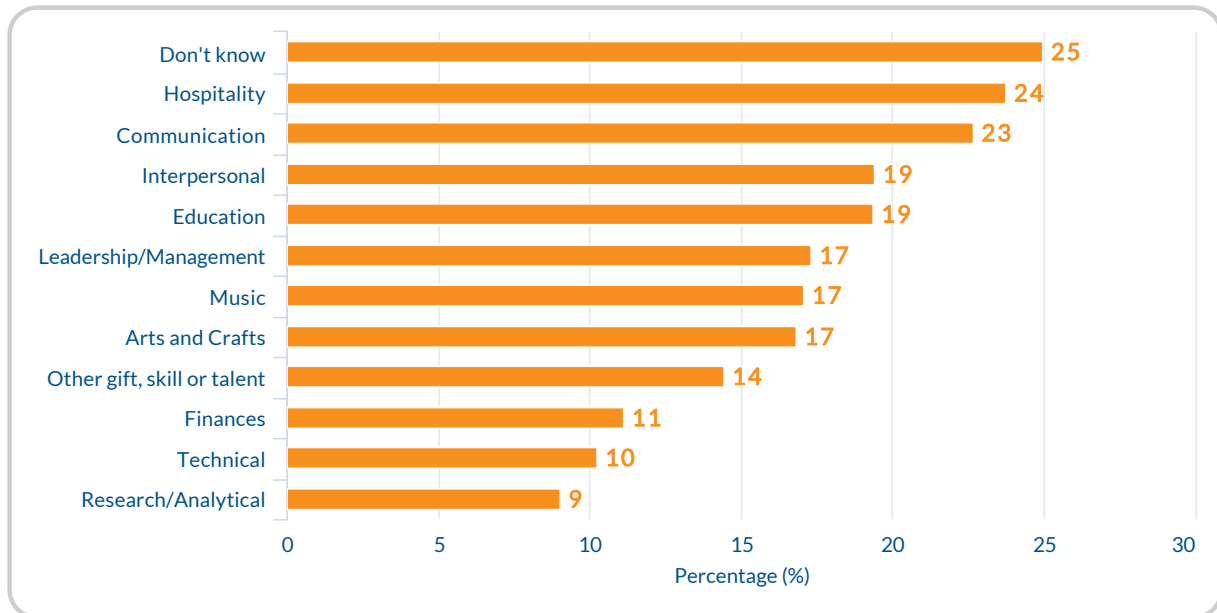
Playing games **81%**  
Being with people my own age **80%**

# People's Gifts and Skills

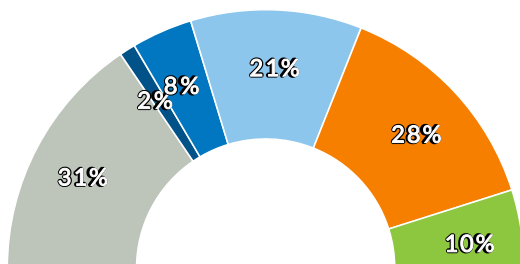


## USE OF GIFTS and SKILLS

Attendees most commonly identified their gifts or skills as "Don't know" and "Hospitality: welcome, host, provide food"

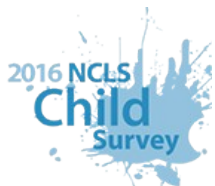
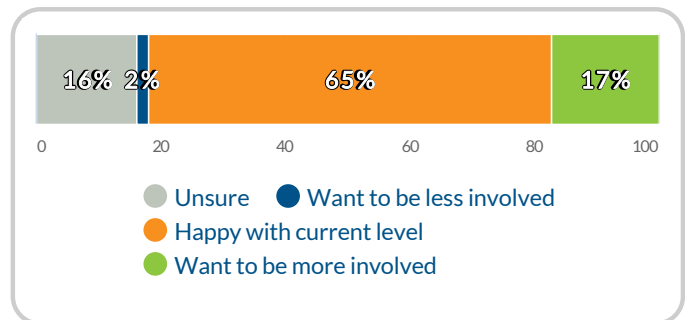


**38%** of attendees agree that their GIFTS, SKILLS AND TALENTS ARE BEING USED WELL in their parish



● Don't Know   ● Strongly Disagree   ● Disagree  
 ● Neutral/Unsure   ● Agree   ● Strongly Agree

**17%** want to be MORE INVOLVED at their parish



## GIFTS & SKILLS OF CHILDREN

Children most commonly identified "Being kind to people who don't have any friends yet" and "Standing up for what is fair and right" as their gifts and skills.

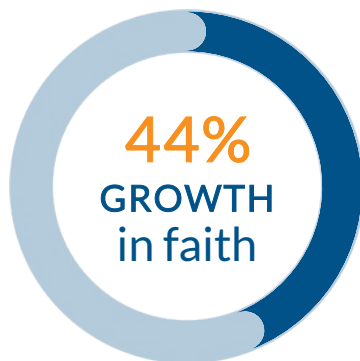
Denom in 2016 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 36532 forms, 2164 child forms, 191 parishes)

# How People Relate to God

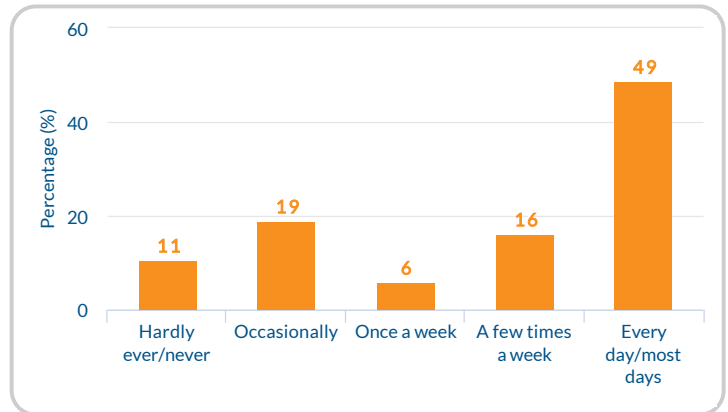


## PERSONAL FAITH

**44%** of attenders said that they had experienced much **GROWTH IN FAITH** in the previous 12 months



**49%** spend time in **PRAYER, BIBLE READING, MEDITATION** everyday or most days



## IMPORTANCE of GOD in people's lives:

"God is more important to me than almost anything else" **33%**

"God is the most important reality in my life" **47%**



## CHURCH SERVICES

During church services at their parish, attenders always or usually experience:

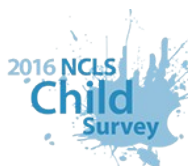
**MUSIC**  
they appreciate



**GROWTH**  
in understanding of God



Being challenged to  
**TAKE ACTION**



## CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF GOD

Children agreed:

God helps me to lead a better life **87%**

I know that Jesus is very close to me **83%**

# How People Relate to Each Other



## BELONGING and INVOLVEMENT

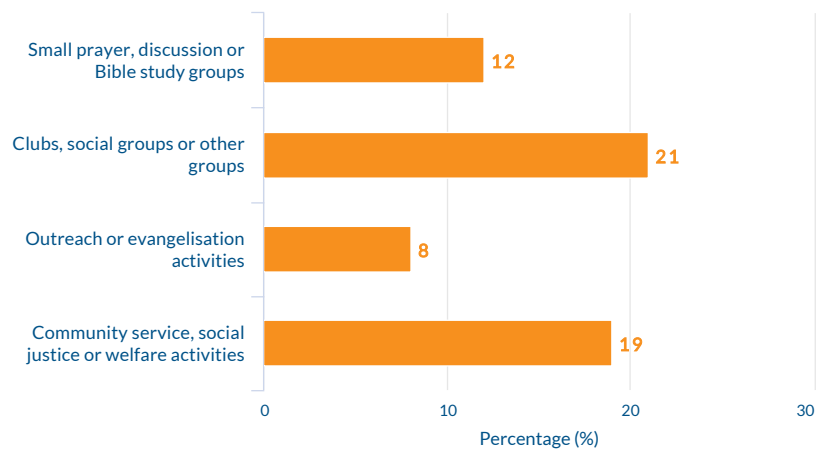


**80%** of people have a strong sense of belonging to their parish

**72%** found it easy to make friends within their parish



People in parish are involved in various parish groups



## SATISFACTION with PARISH ACTIVITIES

People shared how satisfied they are with what is offered by their parish:

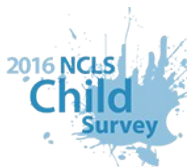
For their own age **72%**

For children aged under 12 years **56%**

For youth aged 12 to 18 years **45%**



**SATISFIED**

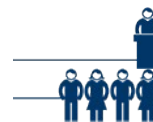


## CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

Children feel close to:

Leaders at their parish **33%**

Other children at their parish **36%**



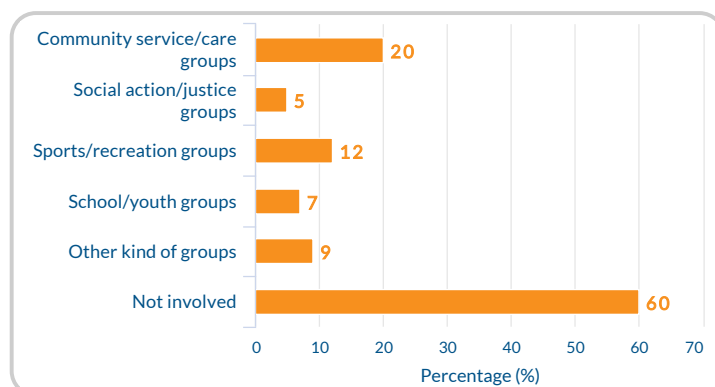
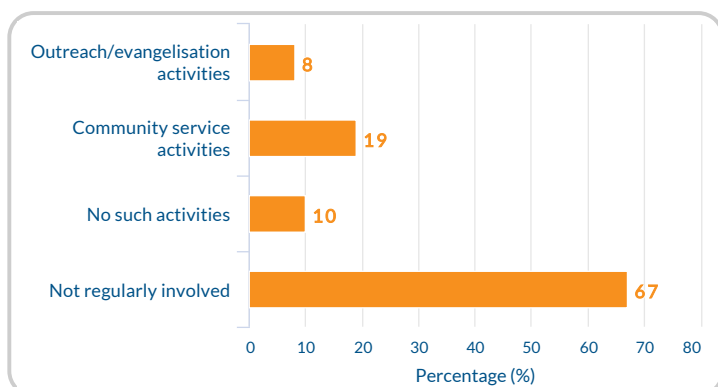
# How People Relate to the Wider Community



## INVOLVEMENT IN GROUPS

**24%** of people reach out to the wider community through activities of their parish

**40%** of people participate in wider community groups



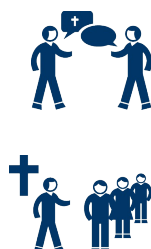
*Note: Attenders could choose more than one option, so percentages will not add to 100%*



## WORDS and ACTIONS

**16%** feel at ease TALKING ABOUT FAITH with others and look for opportunities to do so

**29%** INVITED friends and relatives to Mass or another church service in this last year



Attenders have made OFFERS OF HELP to others in a range of informal ways



Informal action in last 12 months %

Donated money to a charitable organisation 71

Visited someone in hospital 46

Lent or gave money to someone outside your family 45

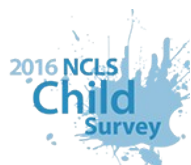
Given some of your possessions to someone in need 36

Helped someone through a personal crisis (not sickness) 35

Cared for someone who was very sick 30

Contacted a parliamentarian/councillor on a public issue 11

Tried to stop someone abusing alcohol or drugs 11



## CHILDREN'S ACTS OF SERVICE & JUSTICE

Children often:

Talk to their school friends about God 12%

Help raise money for poor people 26%

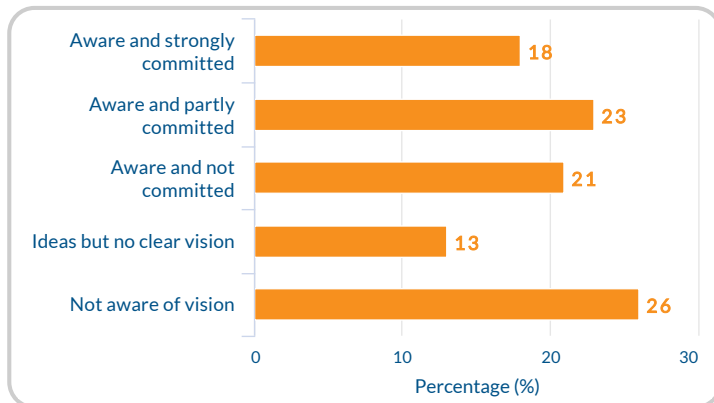
Do things to help the environment 37%

# Vision, Innovation and Leadership Culture

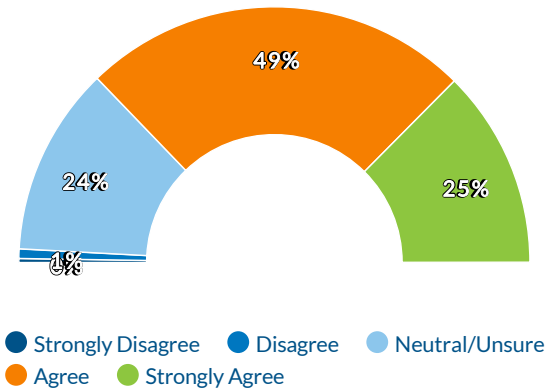


## VISION and INNOVATION

**18%** of people are both aware of and strongly COMMITTED TO THE VISION and goals or directions for their parish



**74%** agree that they would SUPPORT the development of new initiatives in the ministry and mission of their parish

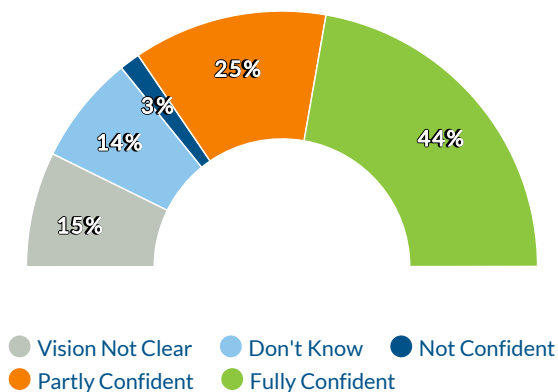


**66%** agree that their parish is always ready to TRY SOMETHING NEW



## LEADERSHIP CULTURE

**44%** are fully confident that their parish CAN ACHIEVE THE VISION, goals or directions set



**33%** of attenders perform a LEADERSHIP OR MINISTRY ROLE

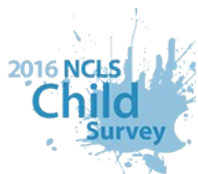
**72%** agree that their parish has good and CLEAR SYSTEMS for how it operates

Attenders agree:

**41%** Leaders encourage me to find and use my gifts and skills to a great or some extent

**64%** Leaders take into account ideas of people at church to a great or some extent

**56%** Leaders at church inspire me to action



## ROLE MODELS FOR CHILDREN

Adults at church (including leaders) are good examples of people who follow Jesus **85%**

Family members are good examples of people who follow Jesus **95%**

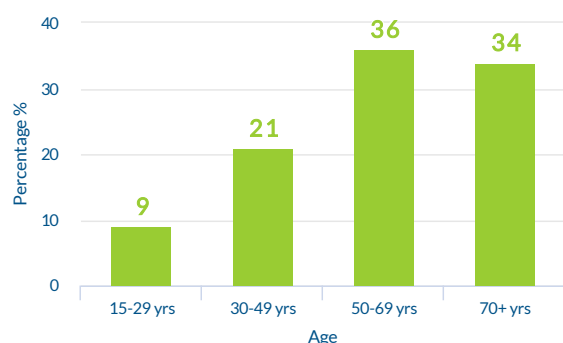


# People of this Church

## A Demographic Profile

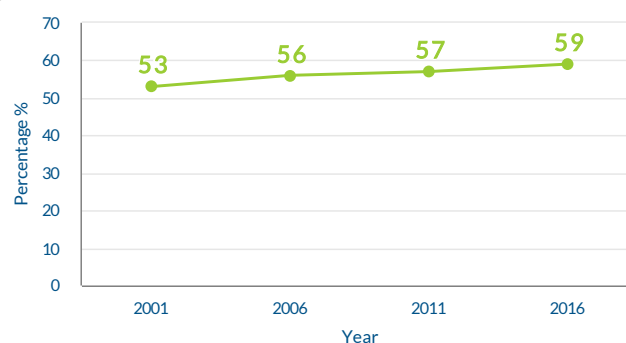
### Age Profile

**59 years** is the average age of church attenders (aged 15+)



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Average age of church attenders aged 15+ years



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

### Demographics

Denom in  
2016 (%)

Denom in  
2011 (%)

Denom in  
2006 (%)

#### Gender

Female

62

61

61

Male

38

39

39

#### Marital Status

Never married

14

15

16

Married

67

67

68

In a defacto relationship

2

2

1

Separated or divorced

5

6

5

Widowed

11

10

10

#### Highest educational qualification

Primary/secondary school

42

45

52

Trade certificate, diploma or associate diploma

23

22

21

University degree

36

32

27

#### Employment status

Employed

45

48

46

Full-time home duties/family responsibilities

8

9

11

Retired

41

37

34

#### Country of birth

Of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin

1

1

N/A

Born in Australia (including above) <sup>+</sup>

57

63

67

Born in another country where English is the main language <sup>+</sup>

6

7

8

Born in a Non English-speaking country <sup>+</sup>

37

30

26

At least one parent born in a Non English-speaking country <sup>+</sup>

46

35

N/A

#### Speak a language other than English at home

English plus other language(s)

30

N/A

N/A

Non-English language(s) only

3

N/A

N/A

#### Lives in the parish

72

71

74

<sup>+</sup>Note: "Don't know" was included in 2016 as a response option for country of birth.

Denom in 2016 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 36532 forms, 2164 child forms, 191 parishes)

Denom in 2011 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 47286 forms, 254 parishes)

Denom in 2006 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 65395 forms, 229 parishes)

# People of this Church

## Children and Youth

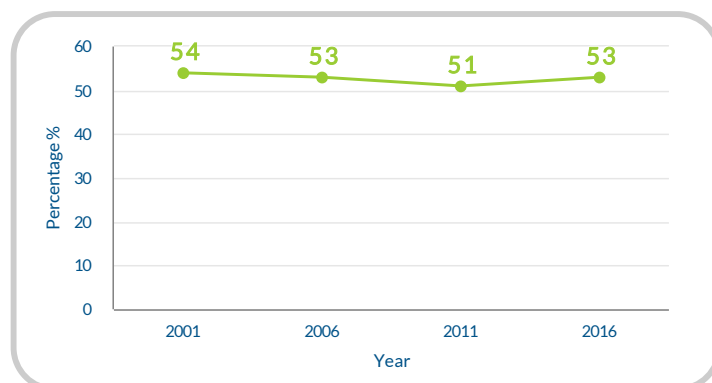
### Children and Church Attendance

**53%** is the proportion of attenders' children (aged 15+ and living at home) who attend a church



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders' children (aged 15+ and living at home) who attend a church



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

| Children and Youth   | Denom in 2016 (%) | Denom in 2011 (%) | Denom in 2006 (%) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Young people (aged 15-19) at your</b>   |                   |                   |                   |
| Young people who completed the survey  | 3                 | 4                 | 4                 |
| Young people who have been attending more than 5 years   | 2                 | 2                 | 3                 |
| Young people who have been attending 5 years or less   | 1                 | 1                 | 1                 |
| <b>Satisfaction with what is offered for particular age groups</b>   |                   |                   |                   |
| Satisfaction with what is offered here "for people your own age":  |                   |                   |                   |
| All attenders very satisfied or satisfied  | 72                | N/A               | N/A               |
| 15-18 year olds very satisfied or satisfied  | 52                | N/A               | N/A               |
| 19-25 year olds very satisfied or satisfied  | 50                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Satisfaction with what is offered here "for children aged under 12 years": ++  |                   |                   |                   |
| All attenders very satisfied or satisfied  | 56                | 46                | 43                |
| Satisfaction with what is offered here "for youth aged 12-18 years": ++  |                   |                   |                   |
| All attenders very satisfied or satisfied  | 45                | 31                | 29                |
| 15-18 year olds very satisfied or satisfied  | 52                | 45                | 42                |
| <b>Church attendance pattern of attenders' children (still living at home)</b>   |                   |                   |                   |
| Attenders' children aged 15 and over still living at home: +   |                   |                   |                   |
| Still attend their parents' church   | 43                | 41                | 42                |
| Attend elsewhere   | 12                | 12                | 12                |
| Do not attend any church   | 43                | 46                | 45                |
| Attenders' children aged 0-14 still living at home: +  |                   |                   |                   |
| Still attend their parents' church   | 80                | 79                | 80                |
| Attend elsewhere   | 11                | 10                | 10                |
| Do not attend any church   | 10                | 12                | 11                |
| + Note: All child attendance options could be selected, so percentages may not add to 100%                             |                   |                   |                   |
| ++ Note: A new instruction was added to this question in 2016: "Please answer even if nothing age-specific is offered" |                   |                   |                   |
| * Results not provided as there were less than 6 responses   |                   |                   |                   |

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# People of this Church

## Church Background

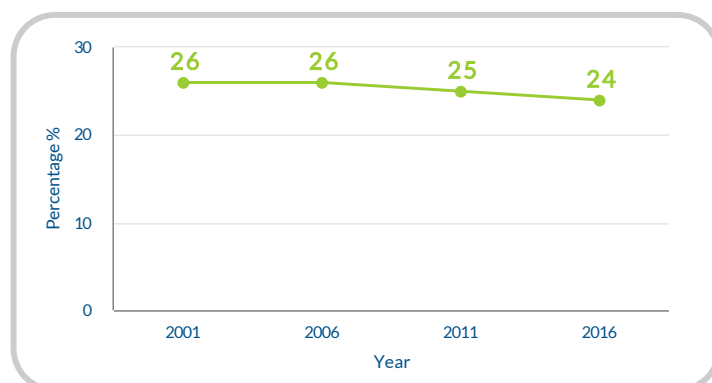
### New Arrivals

**24%** of attenders here are new arrivals in the past five years.



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who were new arrivals in the 5 years prior to the survey



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

| Church Background  | Denom in 2016 (%) | Denom in 2011 (%) | Denom in 2006 (%) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Newcomers to church (who were not attending any church 5 years ago):</b>  |                   |                   |                   |
| Newcomers returning after an absence of several years  | 2                 | 2                 | 2                 |
| Newcomers who never regularly attended   | 1                 | 1                 | 1                 |
| <b>Church attendance history: <sup>+</sup></b>   |                   |                   |                   |
| Total newcomers (new to any church) in the last 5 years  | 3                 | 3                 | 3                 |
| Total who attended a different church in the last 5 years: <sup>++</sup>   | 20                | 19                | 19                |
| Switchers from another denomination in the last 5 years <sup>++</sup>  | 1                 | 1                 | 1                 |
| Transfers from another Catholic parish in the last 5 years <sup>++</sup>   | 19                | 18                | 19                |
| Long-term attenders: attended here for more than 5 years   | 73                | 72                | 71                |
| Visitors from other churches   | 4                 | 5                 | 6                 |
| Visitors who do not regularly go to church   | 1                 | 1                 | 1                 |
| <b>Length of attendance at their church:</b>   |                   |                   |                   |
| Total new arrivals (new to their Mass centre) in the last 5 years:   | 24                | 25                | 26                |
| Less than 1 year   | 6                 | 7                 | 7                 |
| 1-2 years  | 7                 | 7                 | 7                 |
| 3-5 years  | 10                | 11                | 12                |
| 6-10 years   | 13                | 13                | 14                |
| 11-20 years  | 18                | 19                | 19                |
| More than 20 years   | 40                | 37                | 34                |
| <sup>+</sup> Note: Church attendance history is calculated from three survey questions. The figures may not match those for length of attendance due to non-responses. |                   |                   |                   |
| <sup>++</sup> Note: The wording of the response options to the survey question about the denomination of the previous church changed in 2016.                          |                   |                   |                   |

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# People of this Church

## Leadership Roles

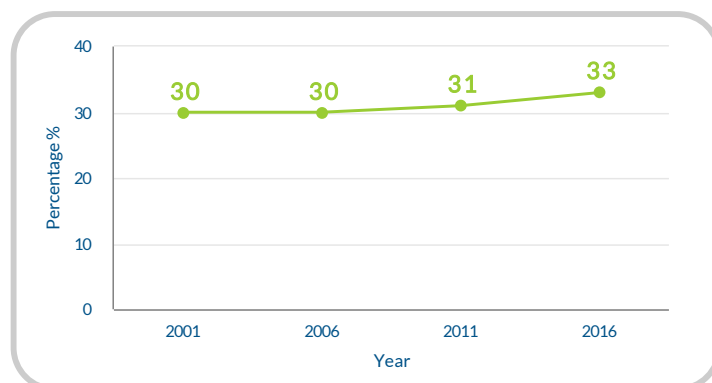
### Leadership Roles

**33%** of attenders perform at least one leadership or ministry role



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who perform at least one leadership or ministry role



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

| Gifts and Skills  | Denom in 2016 (%) | Denom in 2011 (%) | Denom in 2006 (%) |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Attenders' gifts and skills</b>                                |                   |                   |                   |
| Arts and Crafts: building, visual, textile                        | 17                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Communication: write, edit, speak                                 | 23                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Education: teach, coach   | 19                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Finances: accounts, financial management                          | 11                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Hospitality: welcome, host, provide food                          | 24                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Interpersonal: build relationships, care for people               | 19                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Music: play, sing, write music                                    | 17                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Leadership/Management: lead, manage, plan, organise               | 17                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Research/Analytical: collect information, analyse, report         | 9                 | N/A               | N/A               |
| Technical: computers, sound, light                                | 10                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Other gift, skill or talent                                       | 14                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Don't know  | 25                | N/A               | N/A               |
| Strongly agree or agree that their gifts and skills are used well | 38                | N/A               | N/A               |
| <b>Parish volunteer roles of attender</b>                         |                   |                   |                   |
| Liturgical roles (including Children's liturgy)                   | 26                | 25                | 29                |
| Sacrament preparation   | 1                 | 2                 | 1                 |
| Parish council or committee member                                | 7                 | 7                 | 8                 |
| Group leadership  | 3                 | 3                 | 3                 |
| Pastoral care   | 8                 | 8                 | 7                 |
| Attenders performing any of above leadership/ministry roles       | 33                | 31                | 30                |
| Involved in parish school or R.E. in government school            | 6                 | 6                 | 6                 |
| Some other role   | 11                | 11                | 11                |
| <b>Attenders with formal church roles</b>                         |                   |                   |                   |
| Lay person employed as a teacher in a Catholic school             | 4                 | 4                 | 4                 |
| Attender with any other formal church role                        | 6                 | 6                 | 6                 |

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Denom in 2011 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 47286 forms, 254 parishes)

Denom in 2006 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 65395 forms, 229 parishes)



# Church Vitality: Core Qualities of Church Life

Over 20 years NCLS Research has identified 9 Core Qualities shown to be central to the life of a vital church. The blend of these qualities points to the unique character of each church, its areas of strength and its potential for growth.

These Core Qualities are measured and grouped into three areas of church life.

The **Internal Core Qualities** focus on the inner life of the community of faith, and a measure is made of the extent to which the community:

- has an alive and growing **Faith**
- experiences vital and nurturing **Worship**
- feels a strong and growing **Belonging**

The **Inspirational Core Qualities** focus on the vigour of a church and the catalysts that inspire a church to move forward. They give a measure of the extent to which the church has:

- a clear and owned **Vision**
- inspiring and empowering **Leadership**
- openness to imaginative and flexible **Innovation**

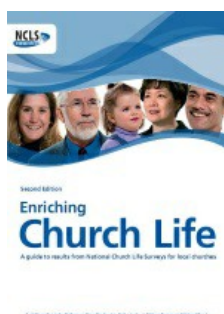
The **Outward Core Qualities** focus on the outward looking life of the church, and a measure is made of the extent to which the church undertakes:

- practical and diverse **Service**
- willing and effective **Faith-sharing**
- intentional and welcoming **Inclusion**



NCLS Research also explores three attendance measures for every church:

- **Young adult retention** - the extent to which the children of the faith community remain regular attenders when they grow into young adulthood.
- **Newcomers** - the extent to which newcomers who have arrived in the previous five years make up the congregation.
- **Attendance change** - the extent to which attendance numbers have changed over the last five years through the inflow and outflow of people.



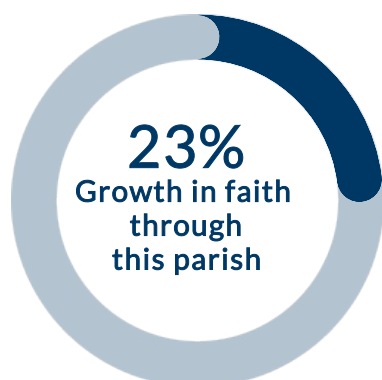
For more detail on the NCLS Research Vitality Framework refer to the book *Enriching Church Life* or go to [www.ncls.org.au](http://www.ncls.org.au)



# Faith Alive and Growing

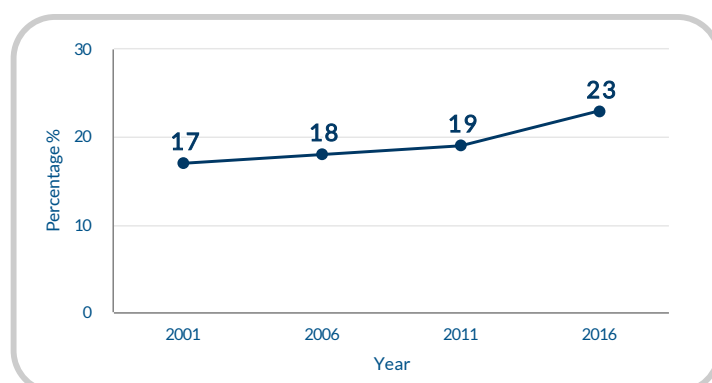
## Growth in Faith through Parishes

**23%** said they had experienced much growth in faith through their parish in the last 12 months



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who experienced much growth in faith through their parish in the last 12 months



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

| Alive and Growing Faith                                    | Denom in 2016 (%) | Denom in 2011 (%) | Denom in 2006 (%) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Growth in faith</b>                                     |                   |                   |                   |
| Attenders' growth in faith in the past year:               |                   |                   |                   |
| Much growth through their parish                           | 23                | 19                | 18                |
| Much growth through other groups or churches               | 7                 | 6                 | 6                 |
| Much growth through private activity                       | 14                | 15                | 15                |
| Some growth  | 39                | 41                | 42                |
| No growth  | 17                | 19                | 19                |
| <b>Private devotional activity</b>                         |                   |                   |                   |
| Time spent in private prayer, Bible reading, meditation:   |                   |                   |                   |
| Every day/most days  | 49                | 47                | 48                |
| A few times a week   | 16                | 17                | 16                |
| Once a week  | 6                 | 6                 | 6                 |
| Occasionally   | 19                | 20                | 19                |
| Hardly ever  | 7                 | 8                 | 8                 |
| Never  | 3                 | 3                 | 3                 |
| <b>Importance of God</b>                                   |                   |                   |                   |
| God is the most important reality in my life               | 47                | 44                | 45                |
| God is more important to me than almost anything else      | 33                | 34                | 34                |
| Fairly important, but many other things are more important | 19                | 21                | 20                |

Denom in 2016 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 36532 forms, 2164 child forms, 191 parishes)

Denom in 2011 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 47286 forms, 254 parishes)

Denom in 2006 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 65395 forms, 229 parishes)



# Worship

## Vital and Nurturing

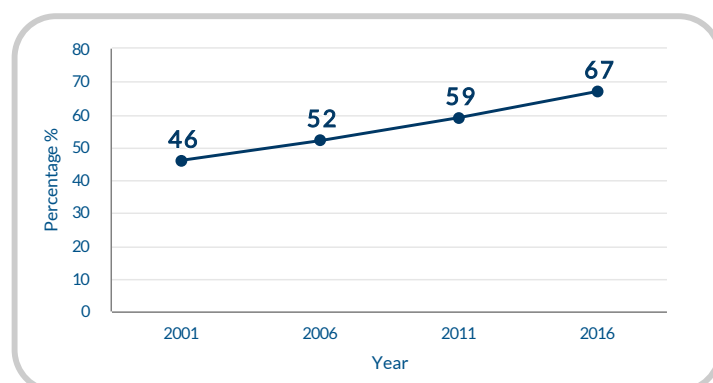
### Inspired during Worship Services

**67%** of attenders said they always/usually experience inspiration during services



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who always/usually experience inspiration during services



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

### Vital and Nurturing Worship

Denom in  
2016 (%)

Denom in  
2011 (%)

Denom in  
2006 (%)

#### During church services here, attenders

|  |    |    |    |
|--|----|----|----|
| Always experience inspiration                      | 31 | 24 | 20 |
| Usually experience inspiration                     | 36 | 35 | 32 |
| Always experience a sense of God's presence        | 58 | 47 | 43 |
| Usually experience a sense of God's presence       | 28 | 33 | 33 |
| Always experience growth in understanding of God   | 38 | 31 | 26 |
| Usually experience growth in understanding of God  | 36 | 39 | 38 |
| Always experience being challenged to take action  | 23 | 16 | 11 |
| Usually experience being challenged to take action | 30 | 30 | 25 |

#### During church services, attenders experience preaching very helpful to their life

|                |    |    |    |
|----------------|----|----|----|
| Always         | 33 | 27 | 24 |
| Usually        | 38 | 40 | 40 |
| Sometimes      | 24 | 29 | 31 |
| Rarely / Never | 4  | 5  | 5  |

#### During church services, attenders experience music they appreciate

|                |    |     |     |
|----------------|----|-----|-----|
| Always         | 46 | N/A | N/A |
| Usually        | 33 | N/A | N/A |
| Sometimes      | 17 | N/A | N/A |
| Rarely / Never | 4  | N/A | N/A |

#### The parish priest's style of celebration at Mass is mainly

|  |    |     |     |
|--|----|-----|-----|
| Serious, reverent, unhurried; emphasis on sacredness       | 26 | N/A | N/A |
| Brisk and business-like; aim not to keep people too long   | 3  | N/A | N/A |
| Casual, often humorous; emphasis on putting people at ease | 17 | N/A | N/A |
| Warm and personal; emphasis on involving everyone          | 44 | N/A | N/A |
| Dull and impersonal; uninspiring, out of touch with people | 3  | N/A | N/A |
| None of the above/Don't know                               | 7  | N/A | N/A |

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# Belonging Strong and Growing

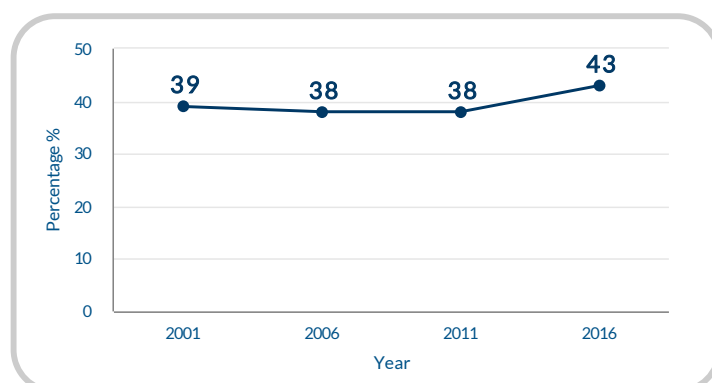
## Sense of Belonging

**43%** of attenders said they have a strong sense of belonging to their parish, which is growing.



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who have a strong and growing sense of belonging to their parish



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

## Strong and Growing Belonging

Denom in  
2016 (%)

Denom in  
2011 (%)

Denom in  
2006 (%)

### Sense of belonging to the parish

|                             |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------|----|----|----|
| Strong and growing          | 43 | 38 | 38 |
| Strong and stable           | 28 | 29 | 28 |
| Strong but weakening        | 8  | 9  | 8  |
| No, but I am new here       | 4  | 5  | 5  |
| No, and I wish I did by now | 2  | 3  | 3  |
| No, but I am happy as I am  | 10 | 12 | 13 |
| Don't know/not applicable   | 3  | 4  | 5  |

### Frequency of Mass attendance here

|   |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|
| First time/ hardly ever/ special occasions only | 4  | 5  | 6  |
| Less than once a month                          | 2  | 3  | 2  |
| Once a month                                    | 3  | 3  | 3  |
| Two or three times a month                      | 9  | 10 | 10 |
| Usually every week                              | 68 | 66 | 65 |
| More than once a week                           | 13 | 13 | 14 |

### Regular participation in this parish's activities

|   |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|
| Small prayer, discussion or Bible study groups          | 12 | 11 | 12 |
| Fellowship, clubs or other social groups                | 21 | 20 | 19 |
| Evangelistic or outreach activities                     | 8  | 7  | 7  |
| Community service, social justice or welfare activities | 19 | 18 | 15 |

### "Being Catholic is an important part of who I am"

|                               |    |     |     |
|-------------------------------|----|-----|-----|
| Strongly agree or agree       | 95 | N/A | N/A |
| Neutral/Unsure                | 3  | N/A | N/A |
| Disagree or strongly disagree | 1  | N/A | N/A |
| Not applicable                | 1  | N/A | N/A |

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Denom in 2011 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 47286 forms, 254 parishes)

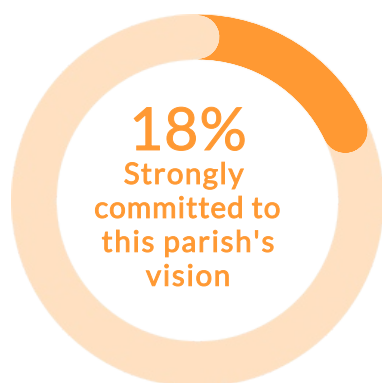
Denom in 2006 - The Catholic Church in Australia (TA000000, 65395 forms, 229 parishes)



## Vision Clear and Owned

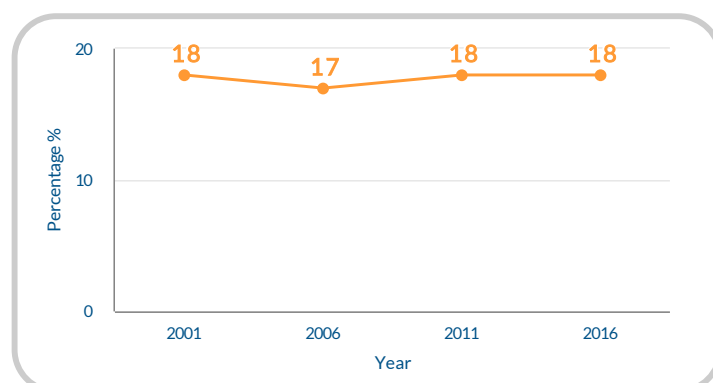
### Committed to this Parish's Vision

**18%** of attenders said they are aware of and strongly committed to their parish's vision, goals or directions



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who are aware of and strongly committed to their parish's vision, goals or directions



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

### Clear and Owned Vision

Denom in  
2016 (%)

Denom in  
2011 (%)

Denom in  
2006 (%)

#### Awareness of vision, goals and directions of the parish

|   |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|
| Attenders are aware and strongly committed                            | 18 | 18 | 17 |
| Attenders are aware and partly committed                              | 23 | 22 | 23 |
| Attenders are aware and not committed                                 | 21 | 19 | 21 |
| Attenders are aware of ideas not of any clear vision/goals/directions | 13 | 14 | 13 |
| Attenders are unaware of any clear vision, goals or directions        | 26 | 28 | 26 |

#### Confidence that the parish can achieve its vision, goals or directions

|   |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|
| Fully confident the vision can be achieved  | 44 | 37 | 40 |
| Partly confident the vision can be achieved | 25 | 25 | 26 |
| Not confident the vision can be achieved    | 3  | 3  | 3  |

#### Attenders' views on priorities for their parish in the next 12 months: <sup>+</sup>

|   |    |    |     |
|---|----|----|-----|
| Spiritual growth (e.g. spiritual direction, prayer groups)    | 24 | 22 | N/A |
| Liturgies that are nurturing to people's faith                | 20 | 22 | 21  |
| Building a strong sense of community in this parish           | 32 | 35 | 35  |
| Creating a clear vision for this parish's future              | 17 | 21 | 20  |
| Encouraging people here to discover/use their gifts           | 17 | 21 | 23  |
| Encouraging new approaches to ministry and mission            | 9  | 11 | 11  |
| Supporting social justice and aid to people in need           | 18 | 20 | 20  |
| Encouraging people here to share their faith or invite others | 8  | 10 | 11  |
| Ensuring new people are included well in church life          | 17 | 19 | 20  |
| Ministry to children and youth                                | 22 | 22 | 23  |
| Increasing the number of people at Mass                       | 20 | 25 | 23  |
| Starting a new program reaching people who don't go to church | 15 | 20 | 19  |

<sup>+</sup> Note: The wording on the introduction to this question changed slightly in 2016.

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# Leadership Culture Inspiring and Empowering

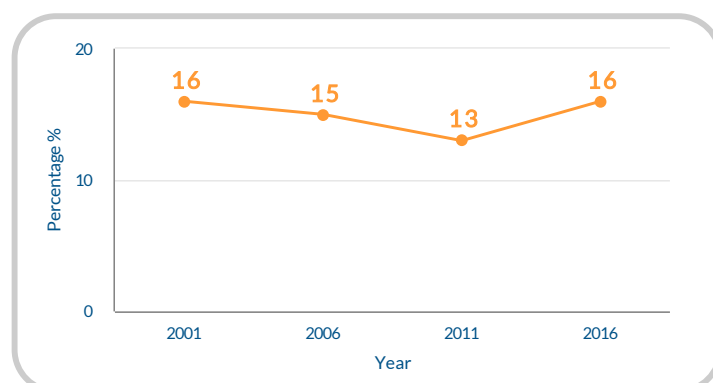
## Encouraging Gifts and Skills

**16%** of attenders said their parish's leaders have encouraged them to find and use their gifts and skills here to a great extent



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who said their parish's leaders have encouraged them to find and use their gifts and skills to a great extent



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

| Inspiring and Empowering Leadership Culture   | Denom in 2016 (%) | Denom in 2011 (%) | Denom in 2006 (%) |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Attenders say their parish's leaders encouraged them to find and use their gifts and skills:</b> |                   |                   |                   |
| To a great extent   | 16                | 13                | 15                |
| To some extent  | 26                | 26                | 27                |
| To a small extent   | 19                | 21                | 20                |
| Not at all  | 21                | 22                | 21                |
| <b>Attenders say that their parish's leaders take into account the ideas of the people:</b>         |                   |                   |                   |
| To a great extent   | 39                | 34                | 38                |
| To some extent  | 25                | 26                | 25                |
| <b>Attenders strongly agree or agree that...</b>  |                   |                   |                   |
| Leaders here inspire me to action   | 56                | 51                | 51                |
| Leaders here keep strong focus on connecting with wider community                                   | 68                | 65                | 65                |
| Leaders here encourage innovation and creative thinking   | 56                | 56                | 56                |
| The parish has good and clear systems for how it operates   | 72                | 70                | 71                |
| <b>Attenders who perform a leadership or ministry role</b>  | 33                | 31                | 30                |
| <b>Attenders' evaluation of their involvement</b>   |                   |                   |                   |
| I would like to be more involved  | 17                | N/A               | N/A               |
| I am happy with my current level of involvement   | 65                | N/A               | N/A               |
| I would like to be less involved  | 2                 | N/A               | N/A               |

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## Innovation Imaginative and Flexible

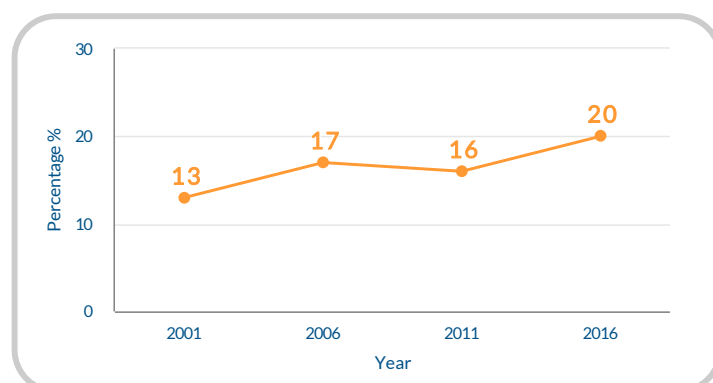
### Ready to Try Something New

**20%** of attenders strongly agree that their parish is always ready to try something new



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who strongly agree that their parish is always ready to try something new



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

### Imaginative and Flexible Innovation

Denom in  
2016 (%)

Denom in  
2011 (%)

Denom in  
2006 (%)

#### Willingness of the parish to try new things

This parish is always ready to try something new:

|                   |    |    |    |
|-------------------|----|----|----|
| Strongly agree    | 20 | 16 | 17 |
| Agree             | 46 | 48 | 46 |
| Neutral / Unsure  | 29 | 31 | 31 |
| Disagree          | 4  | 5  | 5  |
| Strongly disagree | 1  | 1  | 1  |

#### Leaders encourage innovation

Leaders here encourage innovation and creative thinking:

|                   |    |    |    |
|-------------------|----|----|----|
| Strongly agree    | 14 | 12 | 13 |
| Agree             | 43 | 44 | 43 |
| Neutral / Unsure  | 38 | 38 | 37 |
| Disagree          | 5  | 6  | 6  |
| Strongly disagree | 1  | 1  | 1  |

#### Openness to new initiatives

I would support the development of new initiatives in ministry and mission in this parish:

|                   |    |     |     |
|-------------------|----|-----|-----|
| Strongly agree    | 25 | N/A | N/A |
| Agree             | 49 | N/A | N/A |
| Neutral / Unsure  | 24 | N/A | N/A |
| Disagree          | 1  | N/A | N/A |
| Strongly disagree | 0  | N/A | N/A |

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## Service Practical and Diverse

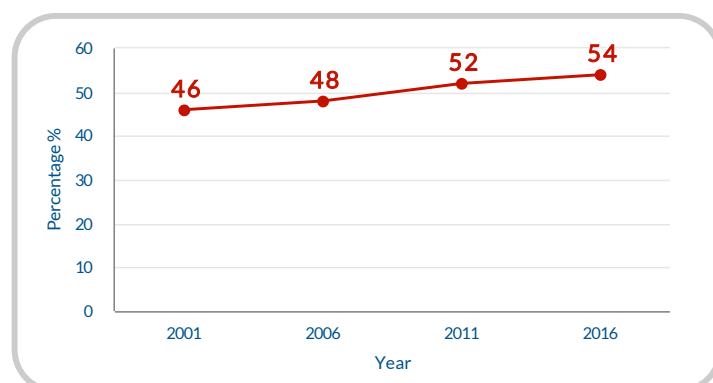
### Informal Acts of Service

**54%** of attenders said they had informally helped others in three or more of a list of ways in the last year



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who informally helped others in three or more ways in the last year



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

### Practical and Diverse Service

Denom in  
2016 (%)

Denom in  
2011 (%)

Denom in  
2006 (%)

#### Informal ways of helping others (in the last year)

Attenders who helped others in three or more of the ways below:

Lent or gave money outside family <sup>+</sup>

Cared for someone who was very sick

Helped someone through a crisis

Visited someone in hospital

Gave possessions to a needy person

Tried to stop someone abusing alcohol or drugs

Donated money to charity

Contacted a parliamentarian or councillor about an issue

#### Regular involvement in parish-based service activities

Community service, social justice or welfare activities

#### Ongoing involvement in community groups not connected to this parish

Community service, care or welfare groups

Social action, justice or lobby groups

Sport, recreation or hobby groups

School or youth groups (e.g. P&F, Scouts)

Another kind of group

Not involved with such groups

#### Beliefs about Christian responsibility to actively care for the environment

Yes, Christians have a responsibility, and I am active

Yes, Christians have a responsibility, but I am currently not active

No, Christians do not have a responsibility

Unsure

<sup>+</sup>Note: Was changed from "Lent money" in 2011 to "Lent or gave money" in 2016.

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# Faith Sharing Willing and Effective

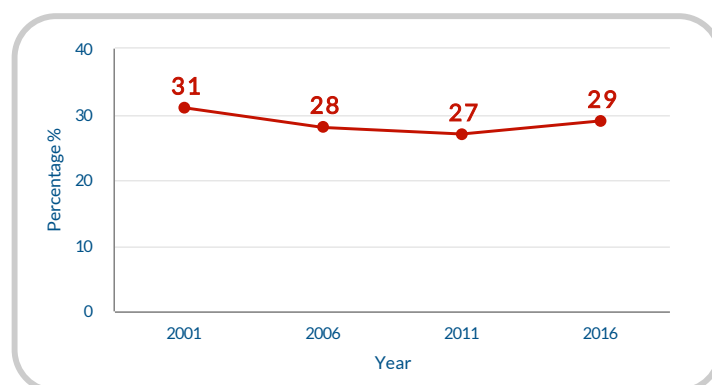
## Inviting Others to Church

**29%** of attenders said they had invited a friend or relative who does not currently attend church to a service in the last year



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who invited a friend or relative who does not currently attend church to a service in the last year



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

## Willing and Effective Faith-sharing

Denom in  
2016 (%)

Denom in  
2011 (%)

Denom in  
2006 (%)

### Inviting others to church here

Willingness to invite to Mass or another church service here any friends/relatives who don't currently attend a church:

|  |    |    |    |
|--|----|----|----|
| Willing and invited someone in the last 12 months        | 29 | 27 | 28 |
| Willing, but didn't invite someone in the last 12 months | 34 | 34 | 33 |
| Probably wouldn't invite someone                         | 17 | 18 | 20 |
| Definitely wouldn't invite someone                       | 2  | 2  | 2  |
| Don't know   | 19 | 20 | 17 |

### Involvement in evangelisation or outreach activities

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attenders involved regularly in outreach or evangelistic activity | 8 | 7 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|

### Readiness to share faith with others

|   |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|
| Feel at ease talking about their faith and look for opportunities       | 16 | 15 | 13 |
| Mostly feel at ease talking about their faith, and do so if it comes up | 54 | 52 | 51 |
| Find it hard to talk about their faith in ordinary language             | 13 | 15 | 16 |
| Do not like to talk about their faith; life and actions are sufficient  | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Do not have faith   | 1  | 1  | 1  |

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# Inclusion Intentional and Welcoming

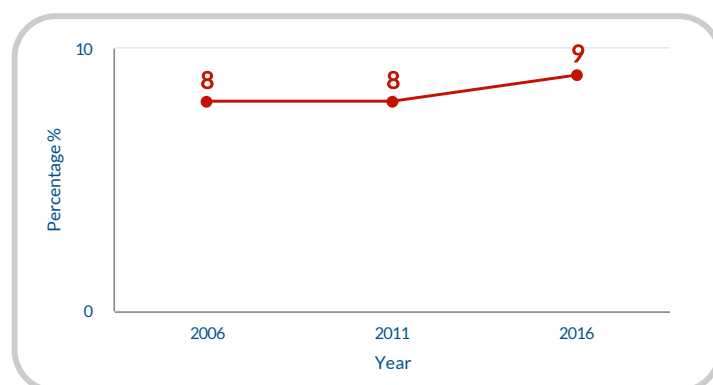
## Follow-up of People Drifting Away

**9%** of attenders said they would certainly follow up someone they knew who was drifting away from church



Source: 2016 NCLS, The Catholic Church in Australia

**Change over time:** Percent of attenders who would certainly follow up someone they knew who was drifting away from church



Source: The Catholic Church in Australia, NCLS 2006, 2011, 2016

| Intentional and Welcoming Inclusion  | Denom in 2016 (%) | Denom in 2011 (%) | Denom in 2006 (%) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Likelihood of attenders to follow up someone drifting away from church</b>          |                   |                   |                   |
| Certain  | 9                 | 8                 | 8                 |
| Very likely  | 12                | 12                | 12                |
| Likely   | 22                | 23                | 23                |
| Hard to say  | 40                | 40                | 40                |
| Unlikely   | 17                | 17                | 17                |
| <b>Attenders personally seek out and welcome people they know who are new arrivals</b> |                   |                   |                   |
| Always   | 21                | 13                | N/A               |
| Mostly   | 18                | 16                | N/A               |
| Sometimes  | 25                | 30                | N/A               |
| Rarely / Never   | 16                | 22                | N/A               |
| <b>Attenders have found it easy to make friends at their local church</b>              |                   |                   |                   |
| Among all attenders:   |                   |                   |                   |
| Agree or strongly agree  | 72                | 67                | 64                |
| Disagree or strongly disagree  | 5                 | 8                 | 9                 |
| Among those who have arrived in the last five years:                                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Agree or strongly agree  | 62                | 56                | 50                |
| Disagree or strongly disagree  | 7                 | 10                | 12                |

\* Results not provided as there were less than 6 responses

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# Research Reports

## Evidence-based insight at your call



NCLS Research holds unparalleled data about Australian churches of most denominations, in many cases as far back as 1991. It includes the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of attenders and leaders, as well as church finances, programs and services.

Do you have questions you want answered?

Use NCLS Research as your research team. NCLS Research can conduct your research project for you, e.g.:

- analysis of existing data
- a special survey or census of your churches
- a targeted project of yours

Contact NCLS Research to discuss your ideas or request a quote.

Our team of researchers have worked with denominations both in Australia and overseas, as well as universities, to produce the highest quality research with rigorous academic methodology.

We seek to support your ministry with targeted research reports and welcome your enquiries. Contact us on [info@ncls.org.au](mailto:info@ncls.org.au).

## Participating regions and denominations receive two additional reports\* from the 2016 National Church Life Survey

### Overview of Local Church Leaders Report

A report showing an overview of your leaders, ministers, pastors, priests and staff.

This report includes: a breakdown of your leaders (staff roles, age, gender, ethnicity, education); training opportunities; leadership structures; burnout and wellbeing indicators and associated factors; and more.



2016 NCLS  
Local Church  
Leaders Report:  
Demographics and Staffing  
Sample Denomination



### Overview of Local Church Activities Report

A report of your churches showing their activities in wider society. See what social capital your churches contribute to their local communities.

This report synthesises a wide range of measures, particularly focussing on bridging (between group) actions, such as civic engagement e.g. community service, children and youth programs, emergency relief, environmental action, low income support, refugee and immigration assistance, support for people with disabilities etc.



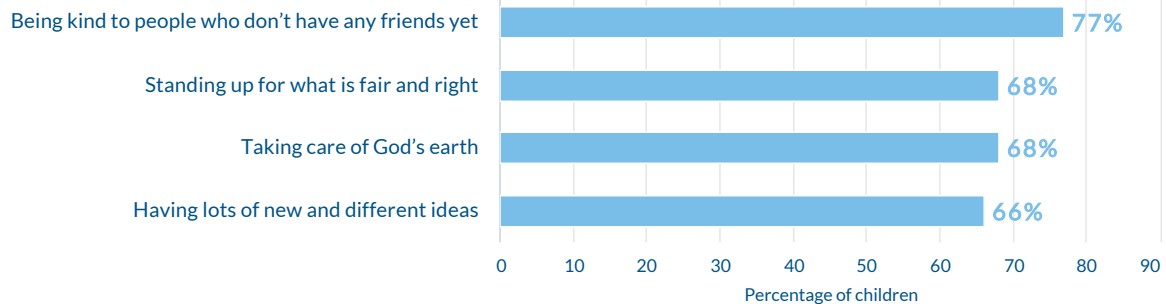
2016 NCLS  
Local Church  
Activities Report:  
Contributions to the Community  
Sample Denomination



\*Provision of reports is subject to regions achieving a sufficient sample size of churches taking part in the 2016 NCLS.

# About the Children of this Church

## Top 4 gifts of the children in this denomination



## Age (adds to 100%)



## Children who...



## School attended (adds to 100%)



## Children's access to technologies



## Things children think they are good at doing

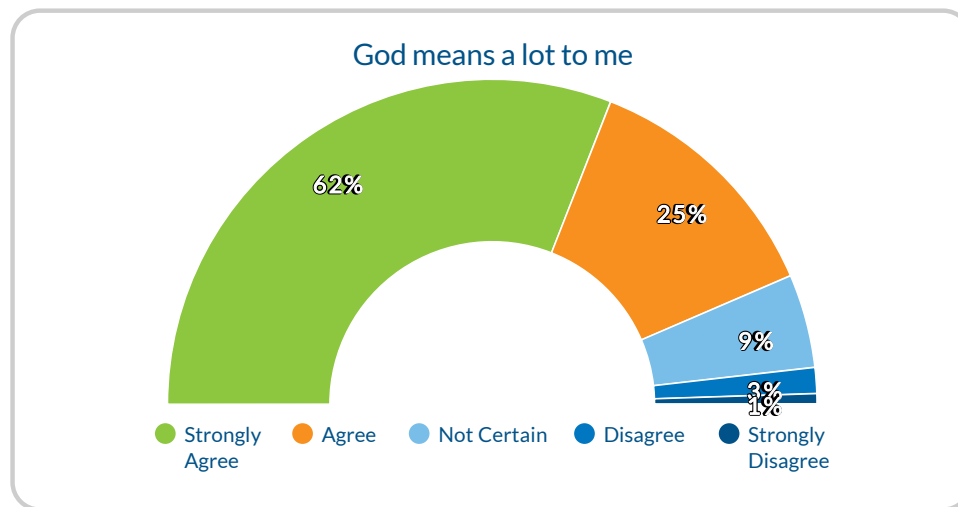


## Children who are happy with...





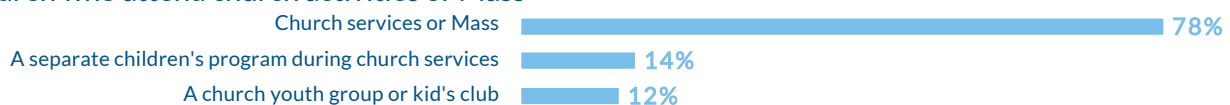
# Children's Spirituality



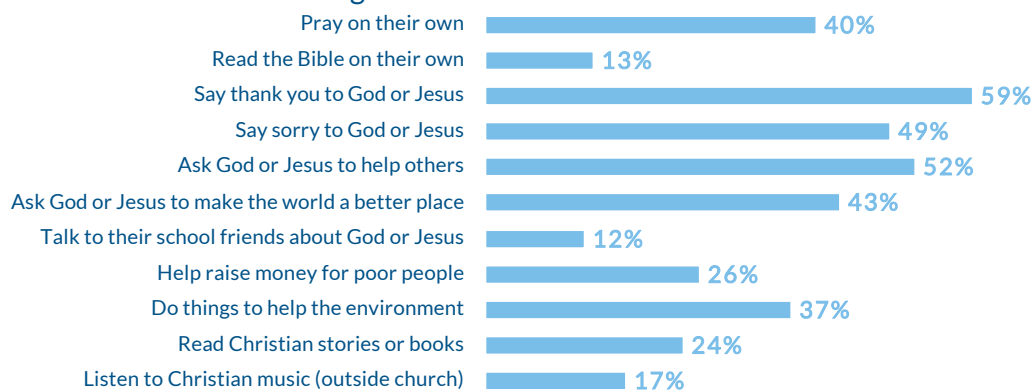
## Beliefs about God (adds to 100%)



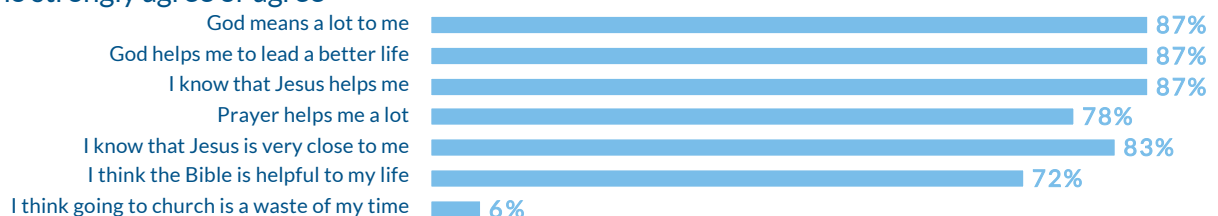
## Children who attend church activities or Mass



## Children who often do the following

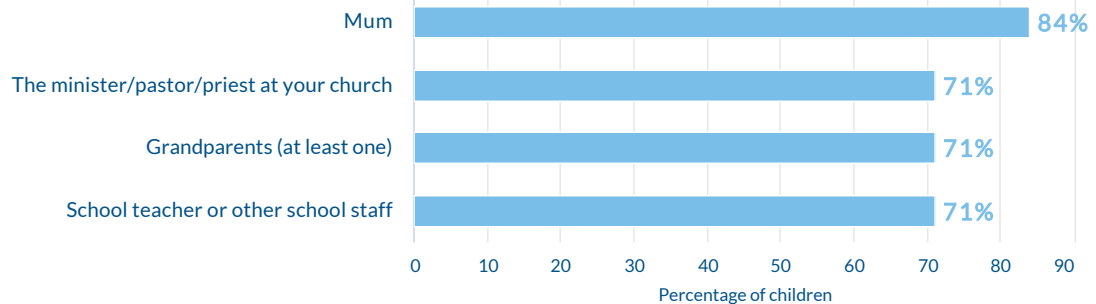


## Children who strongly agree or agree

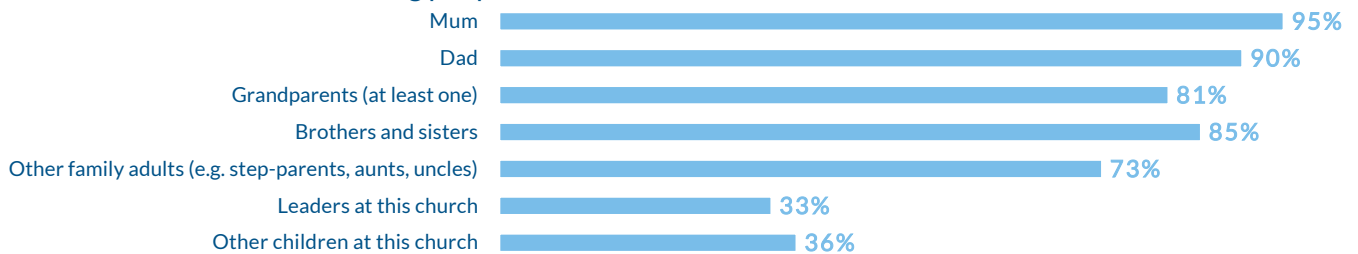


# Role Models in Faith

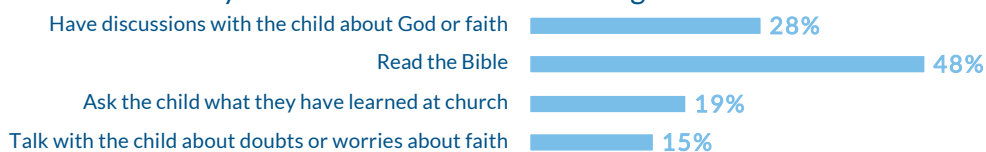
Top 4 role models of following Jesus



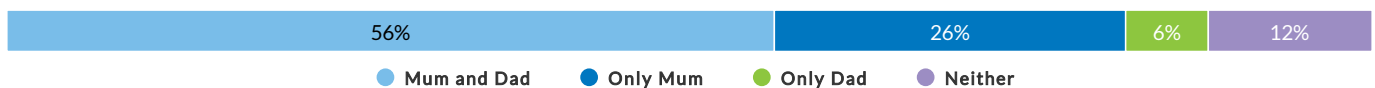
Children who feel close to the following people



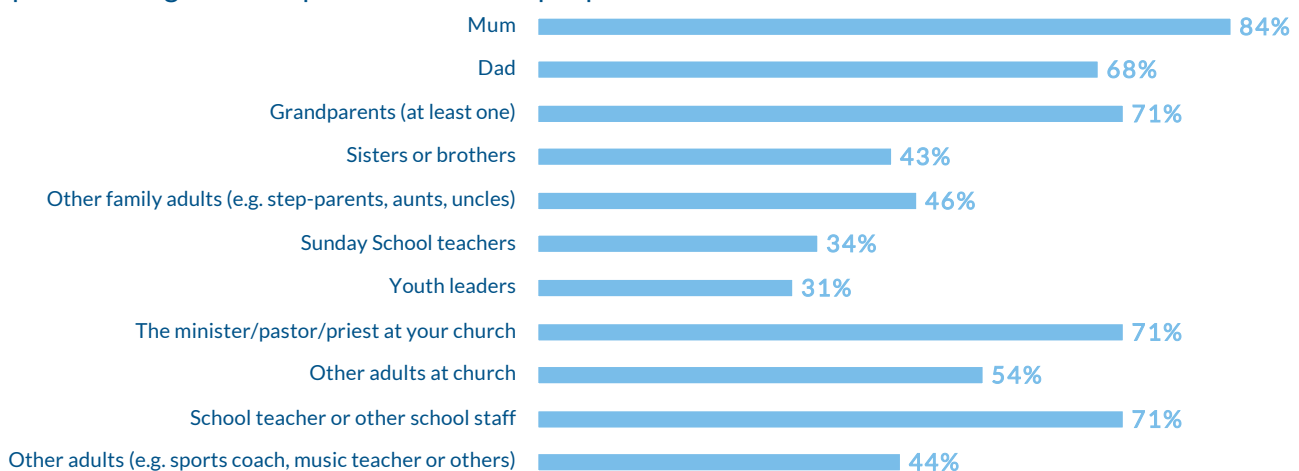
Children whose family members often do the following



Parent's church attendance (adds to 100%)



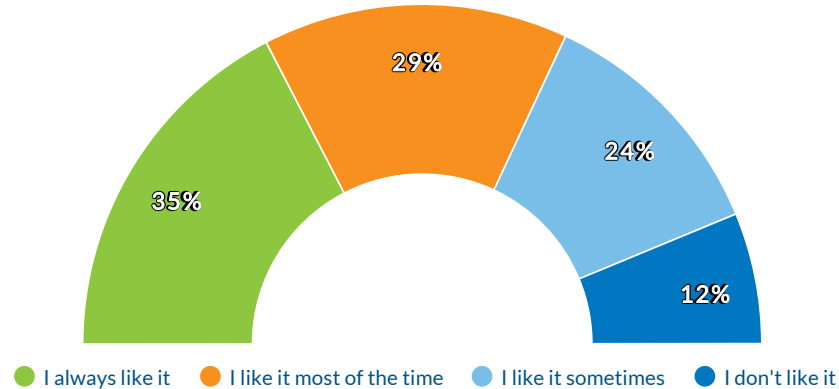
People who are good examples to the child of people who follow Jesus



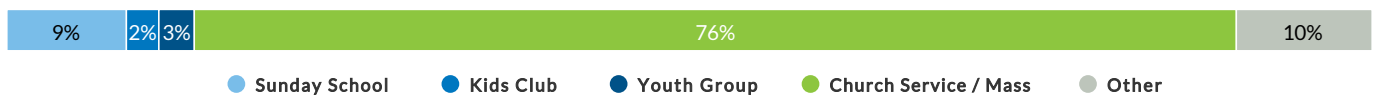


# Children's Evaluation

Children's feelings about their group / activity for children or youth



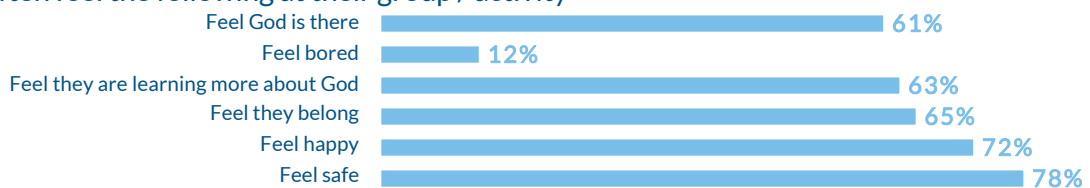
The kind of church group / activity children were at when they answered the survey (adds to 100%)



Children who like the following about their group / activity



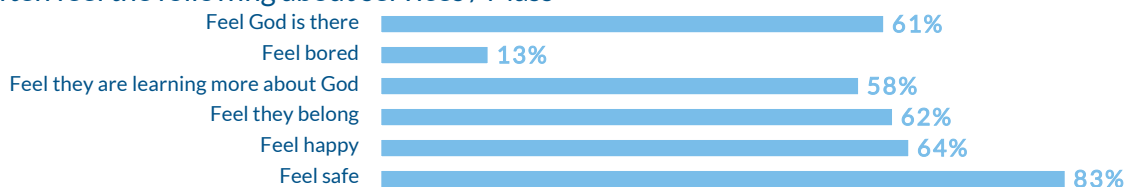
Children who often feel the following at their group / activity



Children's feelings about church services or Mass at their church (adds to 100%)



Children who often feel the following about services / Mass



# Church Life Surveys anytime

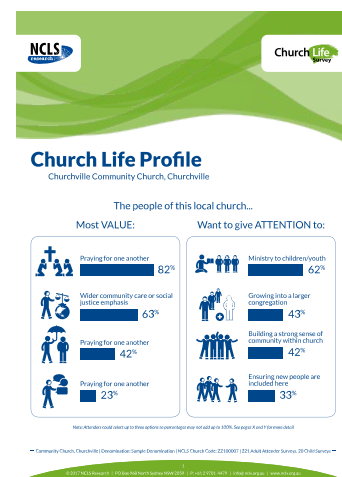


Church Life Surveys can help you regularly review into the future



Any church can complete a *Church Life Survey* at any time, to regularly review their progress and maintain involvement of attenders into the future.

Churches will receive a new *Church Life Profile* showing updated results and changes over time, between their last survey and the future date.



# Online access to Profiles

## Access to 2016 NCLS Church Life Profiles For Local Churches

Do you need access to the Church Life Profiles for local churches?

Contact NCLS Research to find out about protocols for online access.

NCLS Research is committed to providing resources from the 2016 National Church Life Survey (NCLS) not only to local churches, but also to denominational leaders.

Every local church that participates in the survey receives a *Church Life Profile* as part of a *Church Life Pack*. These local Profiles can be made available to denominational leaders to enhance their capacity to assist local churches in their mission and their ministry planning. These Profiles may be viewed online using a Profile Number.

A representative in each denomination has been provided with protocols to follow for the release of Profile Numbers. Please contact NCLS Research to find out who your Denominational Representative is.

Find out more about the resources made available to local churches.

[2016ncls.org.au/church-life-pack](http://2016ncls.org.au/church-life-pack)

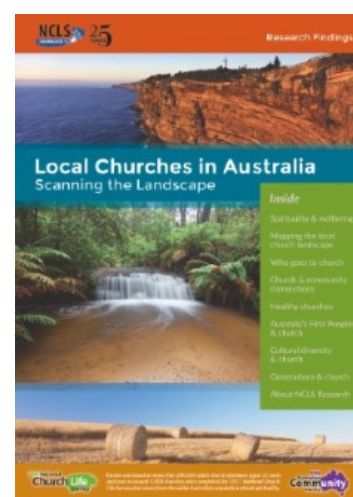
## Research and resources for denominational leaders Make the most of 25 years of data

NCLS Research is able to serve regional and denominational church leaders with a wide range of research reports and research services.

Find out what is already available.

Discuss your own custom research needs.

Contact the NCLS Research office.



## 2016 NCLS Results Dashboard

### The Catholic Church in Australia

#### Who Took Part?

These results are based on 36,532 adult attenders aged 15 years and over and 2,164 children\* aged 8 to 14 who completed the 2016 National Church Life Survey in our denomination.

*\*NB: If fewer than 10 child surveys returned, no results displayed.*

#### Our Gifts and Skills

- Don't know 25%
- Hospitality 24%
- Communication 23%
- Interpersonal 19%



#### How We Relate to God

- Growth in faith over last year 44%
- Private devotions at least weekly 71%
- God is most important reality 47%
- Worship challenges me to act 54%



#### How We Relate to Community

- Volunteer in community activity 24%
- Helped others in 3 or more ways 54%
- Feel at ease sharing faith with others 70%
- Serve in welfare or justice activity 40%



#### Our People

- Average age 59 years
- Female 62% Male 38%
- Tertiary education 36%
- Non-English speaking background 37%



#### What We Value and Prioritise

- Value: Celebrating the Eucharist 61%
- Value: Traditional style of worship or music 30%
- Prioritise: Strong sense of community 32%
- Prioritise: Spiritual growth (e.g. direction) 24%

#### How We Relate to Each Other

- Strong sense of belonging 80%
- Easy to make friends 72%
- Involved in small groups 12%
- Satisfied with children's activities 56%



#### Our Vision and Leadership

- Aware and strongly committed to vision 18%
- Ready to try something new 66%
- Leaders help us use our gifts/skills 41%



#### Weighing up your survey results

It is always important to consider who participated in the survey and in what context. Compare the number of people surveyed (shown at the bottom of each results page) with the total number in the denomination. Consider what else was happening in the life of the church at the time of the survey and whether/how it might have influenced the responses.

Use your Profile Number **6J7FXF** to access this profile online  
[www.2016ncls.org.au](http://www.2016ncls.org.au)