

YOUNG ADULT SURVEY REPORT

2024



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2024 YOUNG ADULT SURVEY

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2024 YOUNG ADULT SURVEY

Introduction and Demographic Overview



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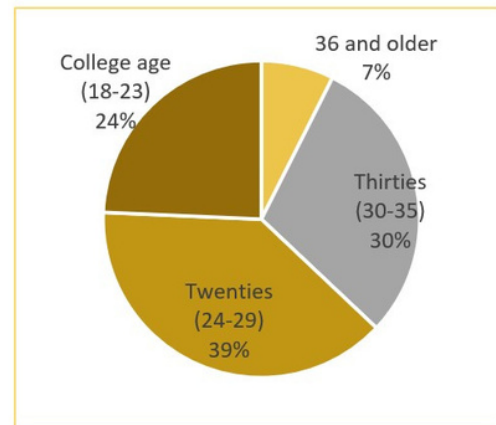
As part of our new pastoral plan priority to nurture and strengthen the faith of young adults, the Diocese of San José conducted an extensive online survey targeting individuals aged 18 to 35 from July 1 to August 30, 2024. The survey aims to better understand the perspectives, experiences, and needs of young adults in our community and to provide valuable insights into how we can better serve and engage this demographic in their spiritual journeys. The survey was promoted through multiple channels, including our parishes, Catholic schools, The Valley Catholic print magazine, diocesan monthly digital newsletters, and targeted advertising campaigns on social media platforms.

With nearly 1,000 responses and more than 4,000 comments and suggestions, the survey offers a rich tapestry of feedback, giving us an overview of young adults' current engagement with the Church, their spiritual practices, and their suggestions for future ministry initiatives. This report will serve as a foundational tool to guide our discussions and discernment on creating more meaningful, inclusive, and engaging spaces for young adults in the Diocese of San José.

Our respondents, a diverse and vibrant group of young adults, truly embody the spirit of our diocese. The age distribution reveals a healthy mix of voices:

Age Distribution

- ✓ 24% are in the college-age group (18-23)
- ✓ 39% fall within their twenties (24-29)
- ✓ A small percentage (7%) were 36 or older

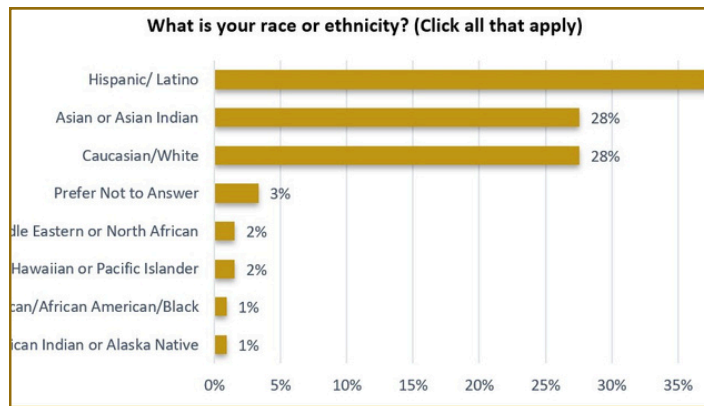


Therefore, what we have represented here is a rich spectrum of potential young adult life stages, from college students to young couples to young professionals to young parents. Despite the male majority for this age group in Santa Clara County, the survey responders were a majority female (54%), with males making up 43% and a small percentage (3%) preferring not to disclose their gender.



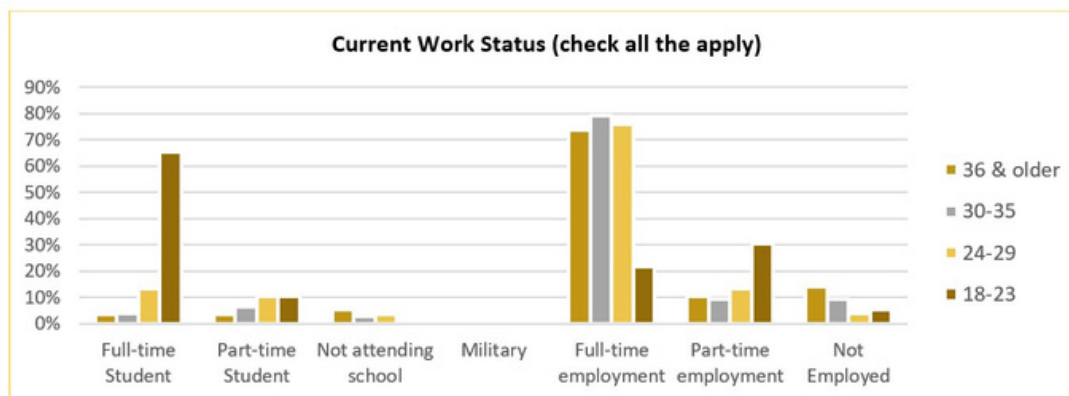
Ethnic Diversity

Ethnic diversity is a hallmark of Santa Clara County; the survey results reflect this. Of the respondents, 38% identify as Hispanic/Latino, 28% as Caucasian/White, and 28% as Asian/Asian Indian. This diversity provides an essential context for analyzing the survey’s findings, as cultural contexts and family backgrounds deeply influence how young adults engage with their faith. Most respondents (76%) were born in the United States, with Caucasian/White respondents reporting the highest percentage born in the U.S. (93%), compared to Hispanic/Latino (65%) and Asian/Asian Indian (76%) respondents.



Work Status

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of respondents are unmarried. While many young adults are in transitional life stages, some respondents reported having children. A higher percentage of Hispanic/Latino respondents (28%) reported having children compared to Asian (12%) and Caucasian (20%) respondents. Female respondents were more likely to have children (23%) than male respondents (11%). This shapes their interactions with the Church and their expectations for parish support.



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Additionally, there are educational and employment trends worth noting: male respondents made up a higher percentage of full-time students (27%) compared to females (18%), while females were more likely to be part-time students (11%) compared to males (5%).

- ✔ Male respondents made up a higher percentage of full-time students (27%) compared to females (18%).
- ✔ Females were more likely to be part-time students (11%) compared to males (5%).

Full-time employment rates were relatively similar, with 66% of males and 62% of females reporting full-time work. Asian respondents constituted the highest percentage of full-time students (32%), while Caucasian respondents reported the highest full-time employment rates (69%).



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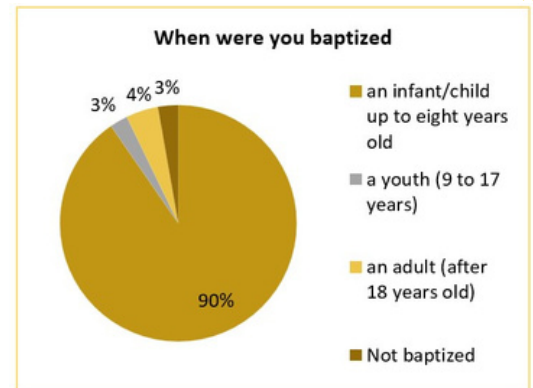
Education and Faith Formation



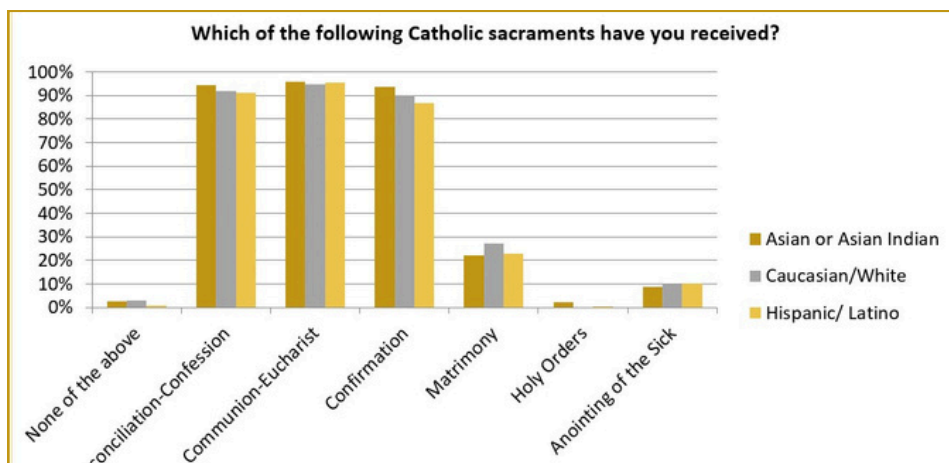
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A significant majority of respondents were baptized Catholic as infants or children (90%). Of those who were not baptized as children, a small fraction converted as adults (4%), while others converted during their youth (3%). Hispanic/Latino respondents show a notably higher rate (94%) of being baptized as infants/children compared to Caucasian (85%) and Asian (88%) respondents. Caucasian and Asian respondents have higher percentages of individuals who became Catholic later in life (a combined 11% for youth and adults) compared to Hispanic respondents (2%).



A significantly higher percentage of female respondents (92%) were baptized as infants or children than male respondents (85%). Of those who converted to Catholicism as adults, males (8%) were more likely to convert than females (4%).



When it comes to other sacraments received, Communion-Eucharist is the most prevalent, with 95% of respondents having received it. This is followed by Reconciliation-Confession (92%) and Confirmation (89%). Less common were Matrimony (22%), Anointing of the Sick (10%), and Holy Orders (1%), reflecting the typical life stage of our respondents. Older respondents (36 and older) report higher rates of receiving Matrimony and Anointing of the Sick. Asian respondents have the highest rates for Reconciliation (95%) and Confirmation (94%), while Hispanic/Latino respondents show slightly lower rates for Confirmation (86%).

Catholic School Education

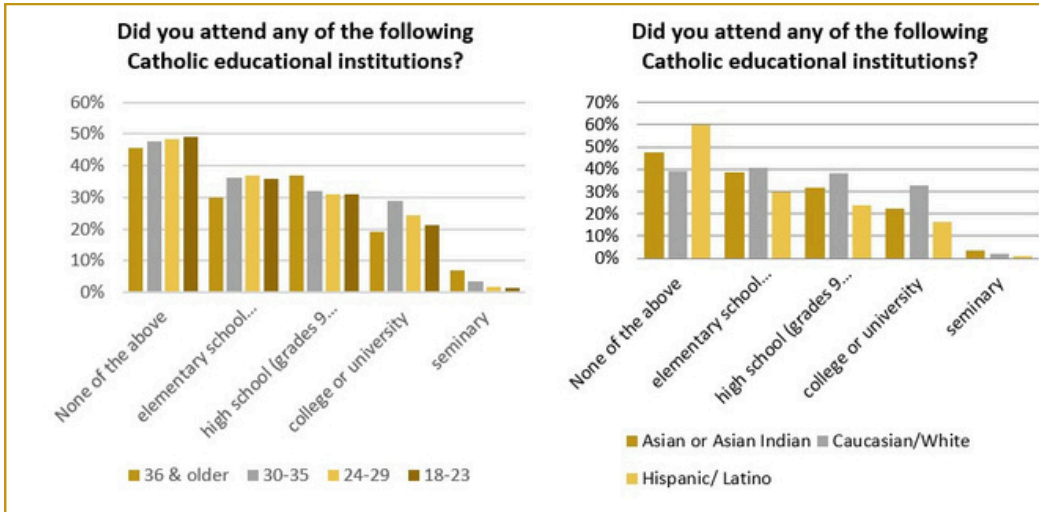
Educationally, nearly half of the respondents (49%) did not attend Catholic schools, while 36% attended Catholic elementary schools, 31% attended Catholic high schools, and 23% attended Catholic universities. Male respondents reported attending Catholic schools slightly more often (51%) than female respondents (46%). Among ethnic groups, Hispanic/Latino respondents reported the highest percentage of non-attendance at Catholic educational institutions (60%), compared to Caucasian/White (39%) and Asian/Asian Indian (48%) respondents.

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Education and Faith Formation

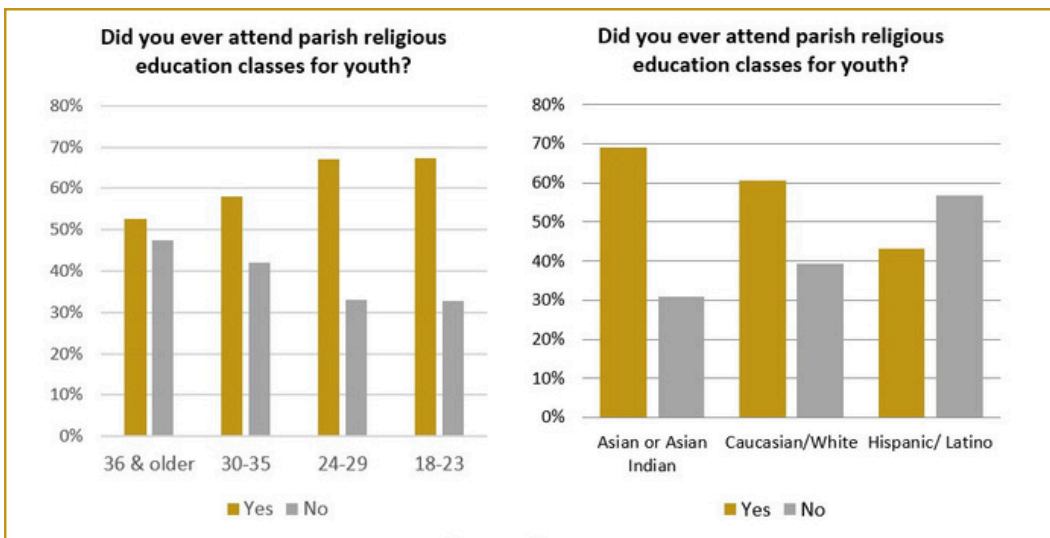


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Parish Religious Education

Both genders show similar levels of participation in parish religious education classes. Asian respondents (69%) have higher attendance in parish religious education classes compared to Caucasian (60%) and Hispanic (43%) respondents. The average participation length was five years for Caucasian and Asian respondents and only three years for Hispanic respondents. The younger age groups (18-23 and 24-29) show higher participation rates in parish religious education and youth groups, with over 66% participating in parish education compared to 52% of those aged 36 and older.



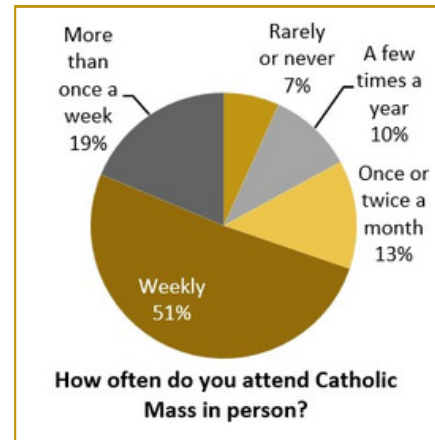


Spiritual Practices

Young adults maintain a dynamic relationship with their faith, though practices vary. Over half (51%) of respondents attend Mass weekly, with:

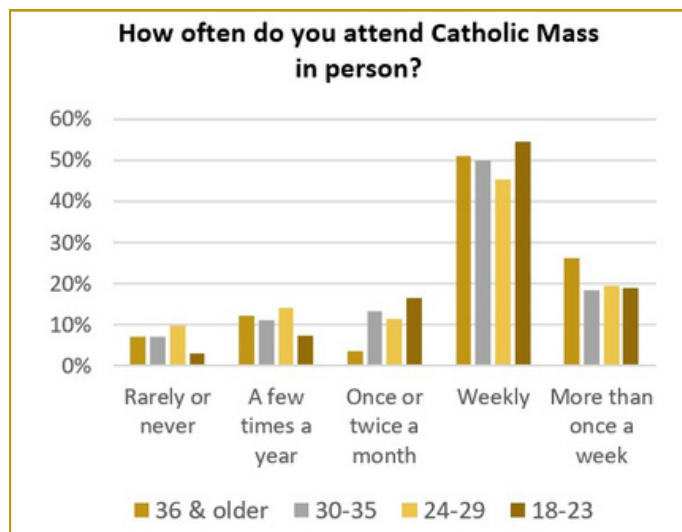
- ✓ 19% attending more than once a week
- ✓ while 7% rarely or never attend Mass

A slightly higher percentage of women reported attending Mass weekly or more frequently than men (51% vs 49%). Asian respondents report a somewhat higher rate (54%) attending Mass weekly compared to Caucasian (50%) and Hispanic (52%) respondents.

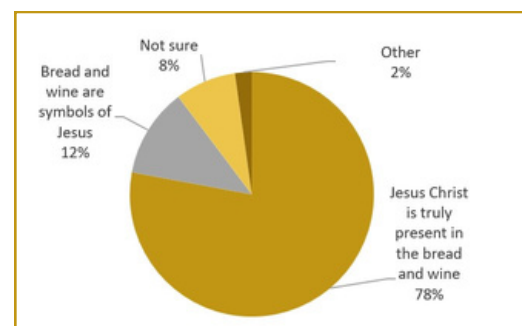


Mass Attendance

Younger respondents (aged 18-23) report the highest rates of weekly or more frequent Mass attendance (55%), while those aged 30-35 report slightly lower rates (50%). This decline in attendance among those in their late twenties may indicate a period of disconnection from regular church participation as young adults navigate careers, relationships, and starting their own families.



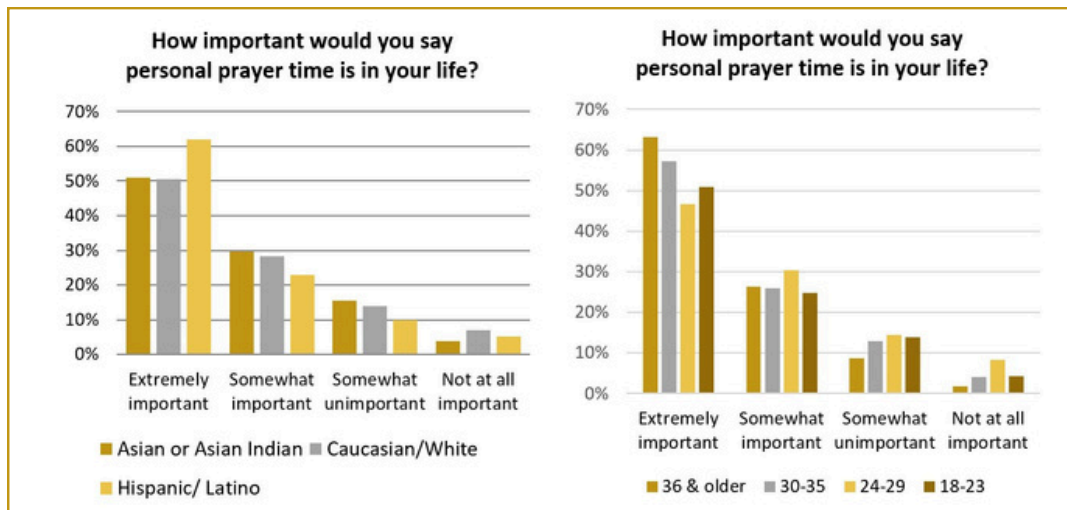
The belief in the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist in all respondents remains strong, with 78% affirming the doctrine, though 12% see the Eucharist as symbolic, and 8% are unsure. Older respondents are more likely to describe their relationship with Jesus Christ as "deep" (28% of those 36 and older), while younger respondents in the 24-29 group are more likely to describe their relationship as "lukewarm" (24%).



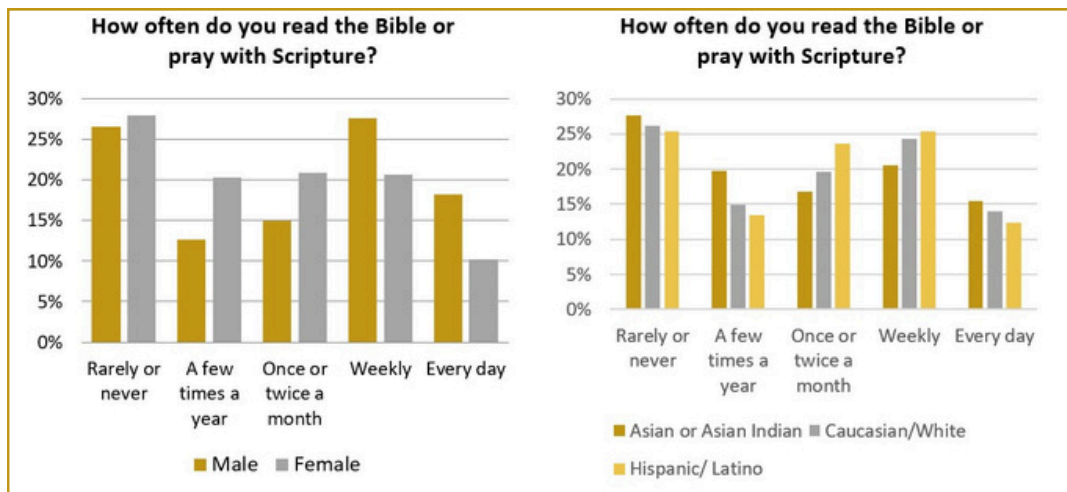


Personal Prayer

Personal prayer also holds a vital place in the lives of young adults. Overall, both genders demonstrate a strong commitment to personal prayer, with 54% of all respondents rating it as "extremely important." The importance of personal prayer increases with age, with 63% of those aged 36 and older rating it as "extremely important," compared to only 46% in the 24-29 group.



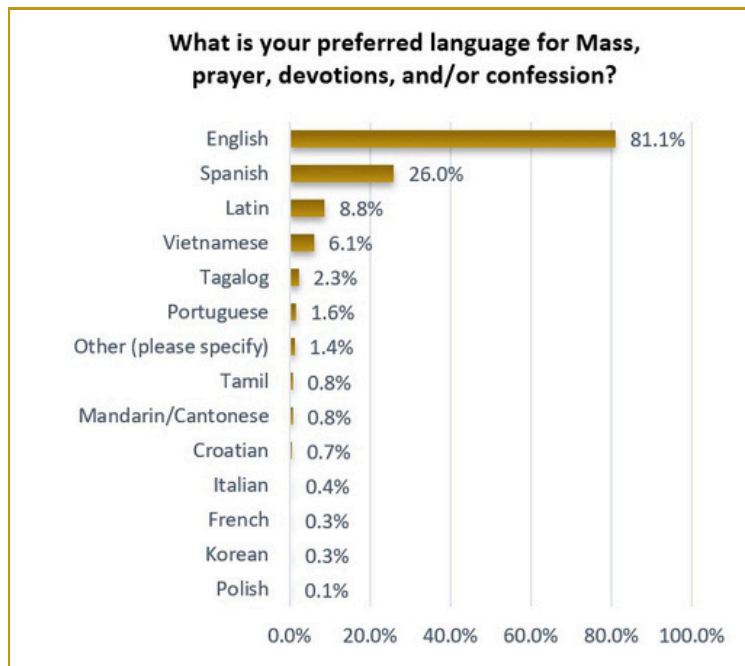
Hispanic respondents (62%) place greater importance on personal prayer compared to Asian (51%) and Caucasian (50%) respondents. Hispanic (40%) and Asian (30%) respondents tend to engage more frequently in reading the Bible or praying with Scripture than Caucasian respondents (30%). Men are also more likely to read the Bible weekly or more (36%) than women (30%). However, 27% of all respondents report rarely or never engaging in personal prayer or prayer groups.





Language Preference

Language preferences for prayer reflect the diocese's wide diversity. A majority of Hispanic/Latino respondents (68%) prefer to pray in Spanish, while Asian and Caucasian respondents overwhelmingly prefer English. A notable section of respondents wrote in that they prefer Latin for Mass and prayer (8%), with Caucasian/White respondents (54%) more likely to choose Latin than Asian/Asian Indian (25%) and Hispanic/Latino respondents (21%). Amongst the Latin respondents, they were as likely to be men vs. women Latin.



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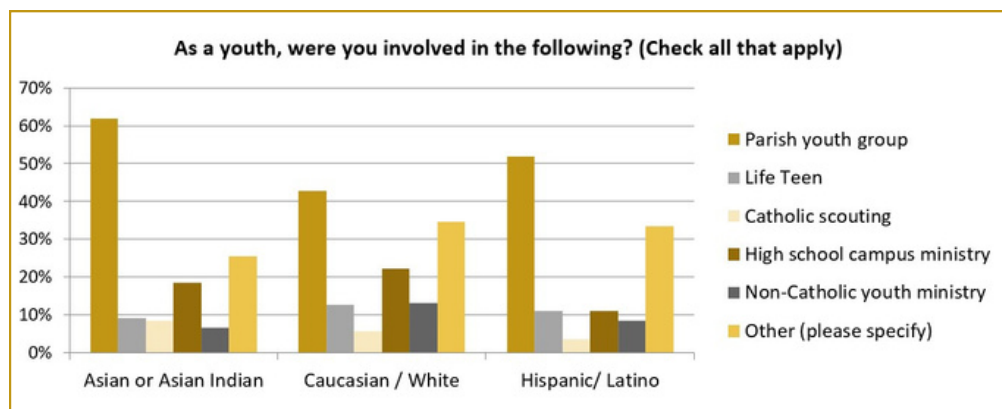
Engagement in the Church



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Respondents' engagement with church activities during their teen years shows differences across ethnicities and genders. Youth group participation was common for 53% of respondents, with females (52%) more likely to have been involved than males (47%). Among ethnic groups, Asian/Asian Indian respondents had the highest participation rate in parish youth groups (62%), followed by Hispanic/Latino (52%) and Caucasian/White respondents (43%). Of those aged 18-23, 56% were involved in youth groups during their youth, compared to just 30% of the 30-35.



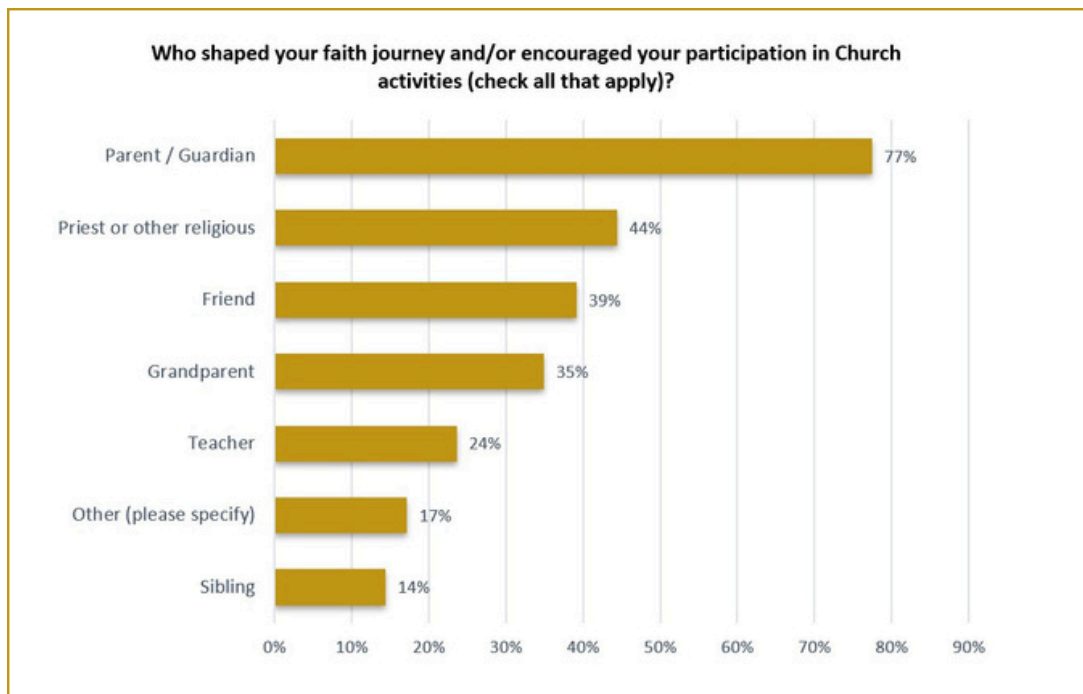
Programs like Life Teen (11% participation overall) saw relatively low engagement, with 13% of Caucasian/White respondents, 11% of Hispanic/Latino respondents, and 9% of Asian/Asian Indian respondents participating. Catholic scouting (6%) and high school campus ministry (17%) had similarly low participation, with 3% of Hispanic/Latino respondents participating in Catholic scouting and only 7% of Caucasian/White respondents involved in campus ministry. In general, females had a higher participation rate across youth activities. Additionally, 13% shared that other youth activities significantly shaped their faith, including altar service, choir participation, summer camps, and involvement in youth groups and ministries. Notably, 19% reported no involvement in any youth activities.





Shaping their Faith

Family and religious leaders play a significant role in shaping respondents' faith journeys. Parents or guardians are the most influential group (77%), followed by priests or other religious figures (44%) and friends (39%). Asian respondents (81%) indicate higher parental influence than Caucasian (76%) and Hispanic (73%) respondents. Of respondents, 17%, predominantly Hispanic, cited other influences that shaped their faith journeys, including family members such as godparents, cousins, and mentors, alongside impactful relationships with peers, youth ministers, and parish staff. This underscores the importance of familial and religious community support in faith development.



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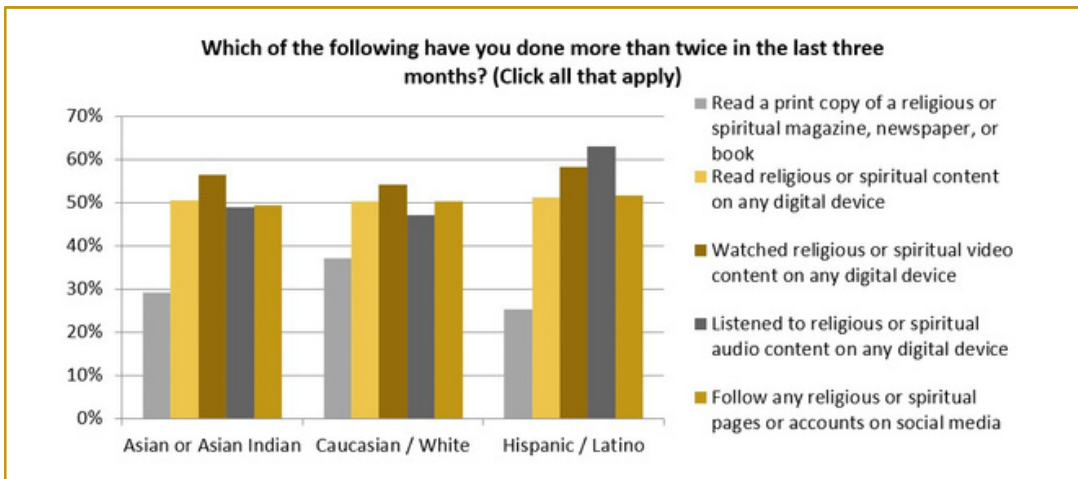
Digital Engagement



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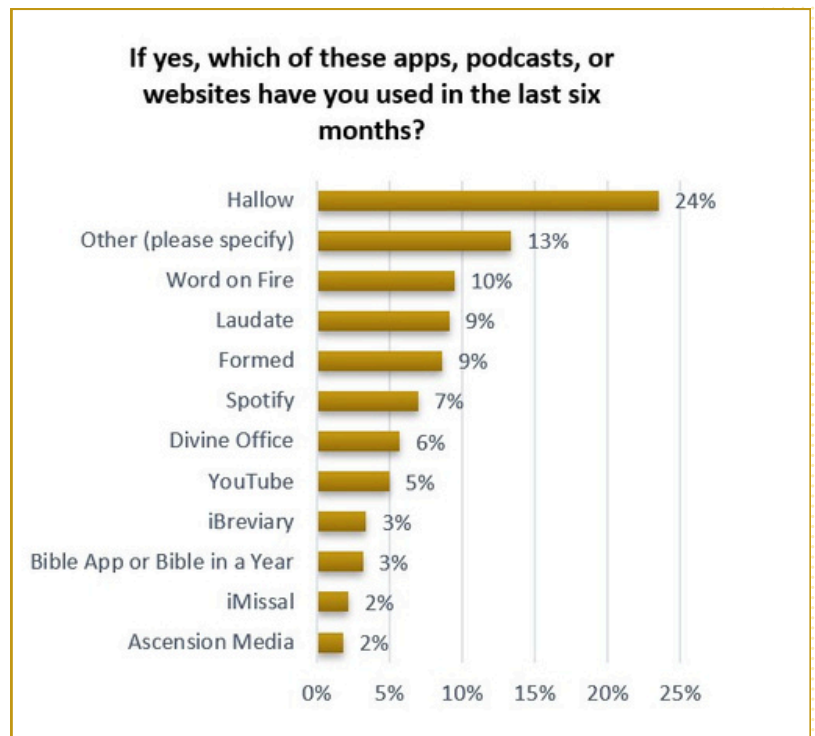
In our digital world, young adults increasingly turn to digital platforms for spiritual growth. Hispanic/Latino respondents report the highest engagement with religious content online, including watching videos (59%). Interestingly, Hispanic respondents (63%) are more likely to listen to religious audio content (podcasts) on digital devices than their Caucasian (48%) or Asian (49%) counterparts.



Religious Apps

Religious apps are growing in popularity, with 51% of all respondents using any religious or spiritual apps or websites to support their faith or spiritual journey in the last three months. Interestingly, younger respondents aged 18-23 report lower use of religious apps and digital resources (38%) than older respondents (63% of those aged 36 and older).

Women tend to engage more frequently with digital tools like apps or websites than men. This digital engagement reflects a shift in how young adults connect with their faith in a digital age, integrating online resources into their daily spiritual practices.



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Commitment to Service

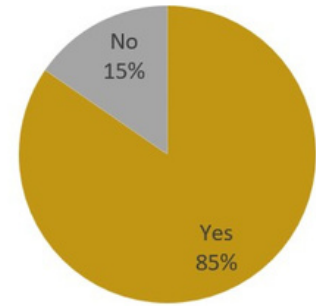


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A strong commitment to community service is evident across the demographics, with 85% reporting participation in community service projects. Across genders, 87% of male and female respondents engaged in community service.

Have you ever volunteered to be part of a community service project that helped people in need?



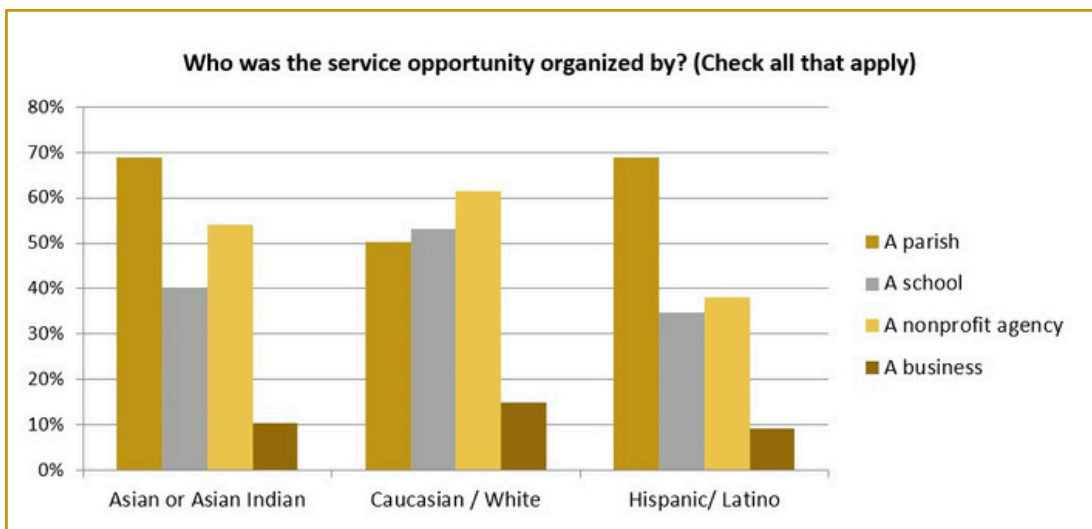
Community Service Among Ethnic Groups

Among ethnic groups:

- 89% Caucasian/White respondents show the highest commitment to service
- 87% followed closely by Asian/Asian Indian respondents
- 78% Hispanic/Latino respondents report slightly lower participation in community service

Younger respondents (18-23) report the highest level of recent involvement in service activities (89%), followed closely by those in the 24-29 group (87%).

Parish-based service projects are a significant outlet for Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Asian Indian respondents, with 69% reporting participation in parish-organized service opportunities. In contrast, 62% of Caucasian/White respondents indicated they are more likely to volunteer through nonprofit agencies or schools. Women reported greater participation in parish-based service, while men leaned toward nonprofit organizations.



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SUMMARY OF OPEN ENDED RESPONSES

Importance of the Catholic Faith

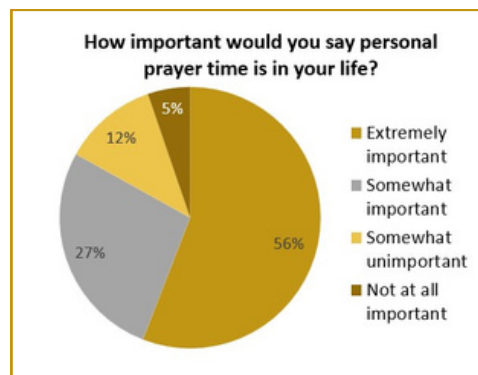


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The open-ended responses to the question "How important is the Catholic faith in your daily life now and why?" reveal a rich array of perspectives among young adults in the Diocese of San José.

These insights underscore the complexity of their relationship with the Catholic Church and highlight the different ways they engage with their faith. Below are key themes drawn from their responses:



Faith as a Foundation:

For many young adults, Catholicism serves as a cornerstone of their identity, providing moral guidance, comfort, and purpose. Their relationship with Christ influences their daily decisions, behaviors, and values, particularly for those across all demographics who regularly engage in prayer and the sacraments. These individuals see their faith as integral to navigating life's challenges, often describing it as essential to maintaining a moral compass and finding meaning.

Struggles with Church Teachings:

Some respondents expressed tension between personal beliefs and certain Church doctrines, particularly regarding social issues such as LGBTQ+, reproductive ethics, and gender roles. This tension is consistently expressed across gender and age groups, with many reported feeling conflicted about their place in the Church while still valuing the core aspects of their faith. For some, this struggle creates a nuanced relationship where they continue practicing their faith but struggle to fully embrace Church doctrine on these topics.

Community and Sacraments:

A strong sense of community and the importance of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, are central to many young adults' faith experiences across all demographics. These sacraments are seen as sources of spiritual nourishment. However, some respondents noted feeling disconnected from parish communities due to a lack of welcome and the demands of work, family, or other obligations, which hinders their regular, active participation in Church life. This disconnection often leads to a decline in faith practice, even though a strong desire for connection remains.

Importance of the Catholic Faith



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Challenges of Modern Life:

Balancing the demands of modern life with faith is a consistent theme. Many respondents note that busy schedules, work, education, and family responsibilities make attending Mass regularly or participating in parish activities difficult. This struggle with time management leads to a gradual decline in Church involvement for some, even as they strive to maintain personal prayer or moral values. While older respondents often express more stable faith practices, those in their twenties (especially the 24-29 group) mention a period of disconnect as they navigate careers and relationships.

Criticism and Disillusionment:

Frustration with the Church is another common theme. Some respondents express disillusionment due to the Church's handling of sexual abuse scandals, perceived hypocrisy, or a focus on money. Respondents, across all demographics, expressed frustration with the Church's leadership and direction, with some noting they still believe in God or adhere to Christian values but feel disconnected from the institutional Church.

Faith as a Lifeline:

Faith serves as a lifeline for many young adults, particularly those facing personal crises, mental health struggles, or family challenges. Prayer and a relationship with God are vital sources of hope and resilience, offering peace amid life's difficulties. Women, in particular, emphasized the emotional and therapeutic role of prayer, while men often view prayer as a tool for self-reflection and aligning their lives with God's will. This emotional and spiritual reliance on faith during tough times cuts across ethnic and age lines.

Cultural and Familial Influence:

Cultural background and family traditions play an important role in shaping young adults' faith. For many, especially Hispanic and Asian respondents, Catholicism is deeply intertwined with their cultural and familial identity. Some respondents wish to pass their faith on to their children, even if they are less actively involved in religious practices.

Evolving Faith Journeys:

Many young adults are on an evolving faith journey, seeking deeper understanding and trying to reconcile their faith with the complexities of contemporary life. While male respondents tend to focus on intellectual and doctrinal aspects of faith, women are more likely to highlight emotional and relational dimensions. Across all groups, there is a desire for authenticity, personal connection, and a meaningful relationship with God, though the pathways to achieving this differ, reflecting varied spiritual priorities.



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(See the appendix on page 27 for a chart of the top 16 topics)

Young adults were also asked to reflect on the experiences that have brought them joy, hope, and spiritual growth within the Church. Across all demographics, joy is found in sacramental life, community involvement, reverent worship, personal prayer, and service. However, the emphasis differs by gender, age, and ethnicity. The open-ended responses highlight several key themes that resonate deeply with the young adult community:

1. The Power of the Sacraments:

- **Eucharist and Confession:** Across all demographics, many young adults find profound spiritual growth in the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and Confession. These sacraments provide a tangible connection to God, offering healing and a deep sense of renewal. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is frequently mentioned as a source of spiritual intimacy.
- **Confirmation:** For many, Confirmation is described as a pivotal moment in their faith journey, strengthening their resolve to live out their faith and deepening their connection with Christ. Hispanic and Asian respondents, in particular, emphasize this sacrament as a moment of personal empowerment.
- **Sacramental Celebrations:** Joy is often found in participating in or witnessing sacraments such as marriage and baptism. These celebrations, shared with family and friends, reinforce a sense of belonging, continuity, and shared faith within the Church community.

2. Importance of Community:

- **Youth and Young Adult Groups:** Many respondents express joy in the friendships and sense of belonging found in youth and young adult groups, especially among younger respondents (18-23). These communities offer mutual support and help young adults navigate life's challenges.
- **Retreats:** Retreats are frequently described as transformative experiences. Whether for confirmation, youth ministry, or spiritual renewal, retreats allow young adults to step away from daily distractions and immerse themselves in their faith. This is a common theme across all ethnic groups, with many viewing retreats as moments of spiritual renewal, returning to daily life with a strengthened sense of commitment to their faith.



3. Liturgical Experience:

- **Reverent Worship:** Many young adults are drawn to reverent, intentional liturgical celebrations. Some are particularly moved by traditional elements like incense, Latin prayers, and solemn rituals, which help them feel a tangible sense of the divine. For others, liturgies that celebrate cultural expressions and foster a joyful, welcoming community enhance their spiritual connection.
- **Active Participation:** Many respondents find joy in actively participating in the liturgy as altar servers, lectors, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, or music ministers. Music ministry, in particular, is highlighted as a powerful means of expressing faith, especially among Hispanic and Asian respondents.

4. Personal Spiritual Practices:

- **Prayer and Reflection:** Personal prayer practices, such as Eucharistic adoration, the rosary, the divine mercy chaplet, and the Ignatian Examen, are significant sources of spiritual growth. Respondents value these moments of quiet reflection, helping them deepen their relationship with God.
- **Spiritual Direction:** Guidance from priests, spiritual directors, or mentors is seen by many respondents as crucial for navigating personal faith journeys, more frequently mentioned by women and Hispanics than other groups.

5. Intellectual and Theological Engagement:

- **Faith Formation:** Ongoing intellectual and theological engagement through participation in programs such as RCIA, Bible studies, and theological education is a source of joy and fulfillment for many respondents, particularly mentioned more frequently by Caucasian respondents. Young adults appreciate the opportunity to discuss and debate their understanding of the Church's teachings and traditions, often leading to a stronger commitment to their faith.

6. Service and Outreach:

- **Acts of Service:** Many young adults find joy in living out their faith through acts of service. Volunteering, mission trips, and community outreach are meaningful and essential ways to embody the Church's social justice and compassion teachings. For some, these experiences reinforce their faith by putting it into action in tangible ways that impact the lives of others.

HURTS



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(See the appendix on page 27 for a chart of the top 16 topics)

The survey responses from young adults in the Diocese of San José reveal a range of experiences that have caused hurt or led them to feel distant from the Church. Key areas of hurt include exclusion, disillusionment with Church leadership, and liturgical or doctrinal concerns.

1. Exclusion and Bias

- **LGBTQ+ Treatment:** One out of three young adults expressed hurt by the Church's lack of welcome and perceived in hospitality towards LGBTQ+ individuals. This is a prominent theme among younger respondents (18–23) and across both genders.
- **Gender Inequality:** The exclusion of women from leadership roles and the perception of women as second-class citizens in the Church has been a significant cause of disappointment. Female respondents, in particular, express frustration over feeling undervalued and unrepresented within Church leadership.
- **Racial and Cultural Biases:** Some respondents, particularly from Hispanic and Asian communities, report feeling marginalized due to racial or cultural prejudices within their parishes. These experiences have created barriers to fully participating in the life of the Church for those affected.

2. Community and Engagement Issues

- **Lack of Welcome and Judgment:** Many young adults feel unwelcome in their parishes due to parish cliques, judgmental attitudes, and a lack of genuine community in the young adult and parish community. This sense of exclusion has discouraged their participation in parish life, particularly prominent among younger respondents (18–23).
- **Lack of Support for Young Adults:** Respondents across demographics consistently express frustration with the Church's lack of meaningful engagement and support for young adults. Many feel that the Church does not offer enough opportunities for spiritual growth or community-building specifically tailored to their age group, contributing to a sense of isolation.

3. Liturgical and Doctrinal Concerns

- **Irreverence in Liturgy:** Some respondents express dissatisfaction with what they perceive as a lack of reverence during Mass celebrations. Casual or poorly conducted liturgies, along with a perceived disregard for the sacredness of the Eucharist, have left some feeling disconnected from the spiritual experience that connects them with God.
- **Doctrinal Confusion:** Conflicting teachings from different priests, bishops, and even the Pope have caused confusion and uncertainty about the Church's true beliefs. This inconsistency has left young adults feeling uncertain about their faith and who to trust in the Church. Male respondents more often express frustration with the inconsistency.

HURTS



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4. Scandals and Trust Issues

- **Sexual Abuse Scandals:** The Church's handling of sexual abuse cases has deeply hurt many young adults. The betrayal by clergy and perceived lack of accountability have led to significant distrust and a sense of alienation from the Church, causing some to question their ongoing participation in Church life.

5. Leadership and Clericalism

- **Poor Leadership and Clericalism:** Respondents cite frustrations with parish leadership, particularly some priests perceived as detached, unapproachable, or uninterested in connecting with younger generations. This perception of clericalism has led to feelings of disconnection as young adults struggle to find approachable clergy who can guide them in their faith journeys.
- **Lack of Pastoral Sensitivity:** Respondents also note a lack of pastoral care and sensitivity from parish leaders, particularly in dealing with personal issues, struggles, or questions about the faith. This has created emotional and spiritual barriers for young adults seeking guidance or support from their parish communities.

6. Relational and Emotional Challenges

- **Family Dynamics:** For some young adults, particularly Asian/Asian Indian and Hispanic/Latino, family dynamics and strict religious upbringing have caused tension in their relationship with the Church. Respondents note that pressure to conform to specific spiritual practices or beliefs, often politicized, has strained their faith and contributed to their distance from the Church.
- **Trauma and Mental Health:** Several respondents mention that personal trauma or mental health struggles have been exacerbated by negative Church responses. Rather than finding healing and support, some have felt judged, unsupported, or pressured, leading them to further distance themselves from the faith.

7. Political and Social Tensions

- **Political Influence:** Many young adults are uncomfortable with the Church's perceived alignment with specific political agendas. Respondents express frustration with the focus on issues like abortion at the expense of broader social justice concerns such as racial equality, poverty, and environmental stewardship.
- **Social Justice Concerns:** Some respondents express frustration that the Church does not adequately address social justice issues like poverty, racism, and immigration. The perceived failure to connect faith with these pressing societal issues has left some young adults feeling disillusioned and disconnected from the Church.

HOPES



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(See the appendix on page 27 for a chart of the top 16 topics)

The survey invited young adults to reflect on their hopes for the Catholic Church. Responses from different demographics showed shared and unique perspectives, particularly in how gender, age, and ethnic groups view inclusivity, community, tradition, and Church leadership. The key themes that emerged include:

1. Faith Formation and Spiritual Growth:

- A desire for more profound catechesis and faith formation emerged across all age groups, though the specific approaches varied. Men across age groups tend to prefer traditional catechesis, calling for the return of more reverent Masses and practices like the Latin Mass. Women generally emphasize the need for more accessible faith formation, with opportunities for spiritual and intellectual growth that speak to modern issues like mental health, social justice, and family life.
- Both men and women longed for more spiritual depth in the liturgy, including Eucharistic adoration and retreats. Asian/Asian Indian respondents place significant importance on catechesis and returning to reverent liturgical practices, while Hispanic/Latino respondents stress community engagement as a critical component of spiritual growth.

2. Welcoming and Belonging:

- Across all demographics, young adults seek a Church that welcomes everyone, especially marginalized groups like LGBTQ+ individuals and racial minorities.
- This call for inclusivity is most pronounced among younger respondents (18–23) and women, who emphasize gender equality and more roles for women in Church leadership. Men emphasize the need for the Church to uphold its traditional teachings while still fostering a welcoming environment for newcomers and marginalized groups. Hispanic/Latino respondents place a strong emphasis on social justice and inclusivity.
- Respondents across all demographics hope the Church—priests, parish staff, and lay leadership—will be more approachable and welcoming to all. They will lead the way in reaching out to those who feel disconnected, ensuring that everyone, from newcomers to long-time parishioners, experiences a sense of belonging and support.





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3. Community and Connection:

- Building stronger, more connected parish communities is a significant theme among young adults for increasing their engagement. Respondents across genders and ethnicities expressed a need for more social events, retreats, and small groups that allow them to build meaningful relationships rooted in their faith.
- Younger respondents (18-23) emphasize the need for formation groups and spaces where they can discuss faith in relatable ways. While older respondents (30-35) focus more on family activities and inclusive spaces where they can participate with their spouses and children.
- Hispanic/Latino respondents frequently emphasize the importance of community advocacy and family-based ministries, while Caucasian respondents call for building authentic community relationships within parish life. Across all ethnicities, there is a desire for stronger connections between parishes and more collaboration throughout the diocese.

4. Support for Youth and Young Adult Ministries:

- A recurring theme is the need for increased support for youth and young adult ministries, emphasizing the role of these ministries in fostering connections and spiritual growth for young adults.
- Younger respondents emphasize youth-oriented programs like Life Teen, music ministry, and retreats as critical moments for growth. Older respondents want ministries designed for their life stage, including young family activities and professional development programs.
- Both men and women advocate for leadership development within these ministries, focusing on the need for mentoring and discipleship. There is also a shared desire for more opportunities for lay leadership within parish ministries.

5. Engagement with Modern Society:

- Young adults want the Church to engage more meaningfully with contemporary issues. They hope the Church will better address social justice, mental health, and environmental concerns, which resonate deeply with younger generations while staying faithful to its core teachings.
- Younger respondents (18-23) seek a balance between their faith and the realities of modern life, including technology and social media. The older respondents (30-35) seek relevant support from the Church for their family and professional lives.
- Ethnic differences are evident in this area, with Hispanic/Latino respondents prioritizing the Church's involvement in social justice and advocacy. In contrast, Caucasian respondents focus on more precise and consistent communication of Church teachings and how they relate to modern society.

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6. Leadership and Accountability:

- Young adults, especially those in their late twenties and thirties, desire more transparent and accountable Church leadership. This includes addressing past scandals and ensuring that Church leaders are more attuned to the needs of their community, specifically young adults.
- Women tend to emphasize pastoral sensitivity and the need for more lay leadership in decision-making. Men call for a return to strong, authoritative leadership that embodies traditional Catholic values but with greater accountability.
- Ethnic differences are again noticeable, with Hispanic/Latino respondents emphasizing leadership focused on community engagement and outreach. Caucasian respondents call for leaders who can provide clarity and guidance in upholding Catholic orthodoxy.





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(See the appendix on page 27 for a chart of the top 16 topics)

Young adults have many ideas for how our parishes and schools in Santa Clara County can attract Catholic young adults back to the Church and support their continued spiritual growth. While there are shared themes—such as community-building, meaningful worship, and spiritual formation—there are also notable differences between genders and ethnic groups. Women emphasize inclusivity, mental health support, and relational aspects, while men tend to focus on traditional practices and structured communities. The following are critical areas in which young adults see opportunities for growth in their parish communities:

1. Building Authentic Community

- **Creating Welcoming Spaces:** Respondents seek inclusive, non-judgmental communities where they can connect with other young adults. Organizing social events, small groups, and fellowship opportunities is vital to fostering meaningful relationships and providing a sense of belonging.
- **Inclusivity and Acceptance:** Respondents emphasize the need for the Church to welcome marginalized groups, especially LGBTQ+ individuals, and different ethnic groups by demonstrating love and understanding.

2. Engaging Worship

- **Reverent and Traditional Liturgy:** Some young adults, more men than women, are drawn to traditional forms of worship that emphasize the sacredness of the Mass. This includes elements like Latin Mass and more reverent liturgical practices, which respondents perceive as the best way to connect with the sacred.
- **Modern and Relatable Worship:** Others, more women than men, expressed a preference for more contemporary worship experiences that include modern music and engaging homilies that speak directly to their daily lives. Striking a balance between tradition and modernity is key to attracting a broader group of young adults.

3. Intellectual and Spiritual Formation

- **Addressing Contemporary Issues:** Offering discussions and workshops on current social and ethical issues, such as mental health, social justice, and environmental concerns, are seen as essential to engaging young adults in faith. These topics resonate with their lived experiences and values.
- **Deepening Theological Understanding:** Respondents across the board expressed a desire for deeper catechesis through bible studies, theological discussions, and intellectual talks, which they believe will foster a stronger connection to their faith.



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4. Service and Social Justice

- **Meaningful Service Opportunities:** Many young adults, particularly women, are motivated by the opportunity to make a difference in the world. Offering service projects, mission trips, and social justice initiatives that align with their values can attract them to the Church and encourage ongoing participation.
- **Highlighting the Church's Role in Social Justice:** Emphasizing the Church's teachings on social justice, particularly its work in helping the poor and marginalized can resonate with young adults who are passionate about these issues.

5. Personal Outreach and Relationships

- **Direct Invitations:** Personal outreach remains one of the most recommended ways to bring young adults back to the Church. Respondents suggested that personally inviting peers to events and services can help re-engage those who have drifted away.
- **Mentorship and Discipleship:** Establishing mentorship programs where young adults can receive spiritual guidance from experienced members of the Church was another popular suggestion.

6. Leveraging Technology and Social Media

- **Digital Engagement:** Social media and digital platforms are crucial for reaching young adults. Engaging content, such as podcasts, videos, and online discussions, can help bridge the gap between the Church and the digital world.
- **Building Online Communities:** Respondents suggested creating online spaces for young adults to connect, explore their faith, and discuss spiritual topics in a supportive environment.

7. Addressing Past Hurts and Alienation

- **Acknowledging Church Failures:** Many respondents expressed the need for the Church to address past failures, including the sexual abuse crisis and exclusionary practices. Being transparent about these issues is necessary for rebuilding trust with young adults.
- **Healing and Reconciliation:** Providing spaces for healing and dialogue is essential for welcoming back young adults who have been hurt by the Church. Many respondents expressed the need for the Church to address past failures and offer paths for reconciliation



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8. Empowering Young Adult Leadership

- **Young Adult-Led Initiatives:** Empowering young adults to take leadership roles within the Church is a recurring suggestion. This includes planning events, leading ministries, or being involved in liturgy, which can increase their commitment to the Church.
- **Involvement in Decision-Making:** Giving young adults a greater voice in parish decision-making will help them feel more invested in the Church's future.

9. Focusing on Relevant and Relatable Messaging

- **Connecting Faith to Daily Life:** Making Church teachings more relatable by addressing real-life issues that young adults face, such as stress, career challenges, and relationships, is perceived as critical for keeping them engaged in their faith.
- **Providing Safe Spaces for Exploration:** Offering safe spaces where young adults can ask questions, explore their faith, and discuss their doubts without fear of judgment is essential for fostering long-term engagement.

10. Offering Diverse and Engaging Activities

- **Fun Activities and Social Events:** Organizing events such as sports, game nights, and outdoor activities that are not strictly religious can help young adults connect with the Church in a more relaxed and enjoyable way.
- **Retreats and Spiritual Experiences:** Hosting retreats and spiritual events like praise and worship nights tailored to young adults can provide transformative experiences that deepen their faith and commitment to the Church.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE



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Analyzing the survey results (step #2) offers a comprehensive snapshot of the Diocese of San José’s young adult community, revealing a broad range of experiences, challenges, and hopes. While the survey shows the positive impact of sacraments, prayer, and community, it also highlights areas of tension, particularly regarding Church teachings, leadership, and inclusivity. Young adults are seeking a Church that not only maintains its traditions but also addresses contemporary issues, such as mental health, social justice, and inclusivity for marginalized groups. The call for a more welcoming and supportive environment emerges as a recurring theme throughout the responses.

These insights closely align with the diocesan pastoral plan's vision to spiritually renew our diocese. By offering engaging worship experiences, promoting intellectual and spiritual growth, encouraging acts of service, and supporting family life, we can better meet the needs of young adults and all Catholics. A central priority in the pastoral plan (step #1) is strengthening youth and young adult ministries. The Young Adult Assembly (step #3) on September 21, 2024, offers a unique opportunity to listen to young adults and engage in meaningful discernment about how the Church can best support their spiritual needs.

As we prepare for the Young Adult Assembly, the survey findings underscore the importance of a multifaceted approach to ministry that addresses the specific challenges young adults face while offering opportunities for spiritual growth and community involvement. By responding to these insights, the Diocese of San José can foster a deep sense of belonging among young adults, encouraging them to deepen their faith and renew their engagement with the Church.

Guided by the Holy Spirit and aligned with our diocesan vision, the Diocese of San José remains dedicated to creating a vibrant and spiritually enriching environment that empowers young adults and contributes to the ongoing renewal of our faith community. The next steps (steps #4 & 5) will involve using these insights to strategically plan our pastoral ministry with young adults, inform ongoing dialogue, strengthen relationships, and build a stronger foundation for the spiritual journey of young adults in our diocese.

SURVEY ANALYSIS



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The survey analysis team reviewed over 4,000 individual comments received from the qualitative survey questions asking respondents about their joys, hurts, hopes, and ideas regarding our local Church. These comments were further sorted and categorized into topics that emerged from the respondents' feedback. The analysis resulted in 16 primary topics that were most frequently discussed. The "Count" column represents the total number of comments associated with each topic. For example, "Intellectual and Spiritual Formation" had the most comments, with 645 total mentions.

Topics	Count	Joys	Hurts	Hopes	Ideas
Intellectual and Spiritual Formation	645	145	94	117	289
Welcoming and Belonging	492	17	168	131	176
Liturgical Experience	436	141	96	65	134
Young Adult Communities	400	110	28	57	205
Parish Community	302	94	27	85	96
Investing in Young Adults and Families	226	32	15	67	112
Communal Prayer and Devotions	226	120	3	19	84
Evangelization	220	6	5	115	94
Retreats	213	130	3	8	72
Interactions with Priests and Staff	194	20	129	13	32
Structure and Communications	172	2	44	47	79
Service and Social Justice	148	48	5	37	58
Parish Ministries	143	75	9	22	37
Access to Churches and Sacraments	124	70	13	17	24
LGBTQ+	117	6	73	12	26
Leadership	84	4	29	19	32
Totals	4142	1020	741	831	1550

Each topic was further analyzed to see how it broke down in terms of joys, hurts, hopes, and ideas. This helped the team understand not just what was being discussed but also the sentiment behind it. For example, "Intellectual and Spiritual Formation" had 145 comments that were categorized as joys, 94 as hurts, 117 as hopes, and 289 as ideas. This was also done for gender, ethnic, and age groups. Breakdowns such as this one allowed the team to see how respondents felt about each topic from multiple perspectives, giving a more nuanced understanding of the responses.