



The Presence and Voice of Young Catholics in Australia:

**An overview of results from the
2016 Australian Census
2016 National Church Life Survey**

**Australian Catholic Youth Council
Youth & Youth Ministry Research Seminar**

Stephen Reid
Friday 9 March 2018



Outline of session

- Part 1. 2016 National Census (15mins)**

- Part 2. 2016 National Church Life Survey (15mins)**

- Part 3. Questions & discussion (20mins)**



Session 1:

2016 Australian Census



Australian Census

“Snapshot” taken on Tuesday 9 August 2016

Total population 23,401,892 * (2011 = 21,507,719)

Catholic population 5,291,834 (2011 = 5,439,267)

Per cent Catholic 22.6% (2011 = 25.3%)

Change 2011 – 2016 -147,433 or -2.7%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016.

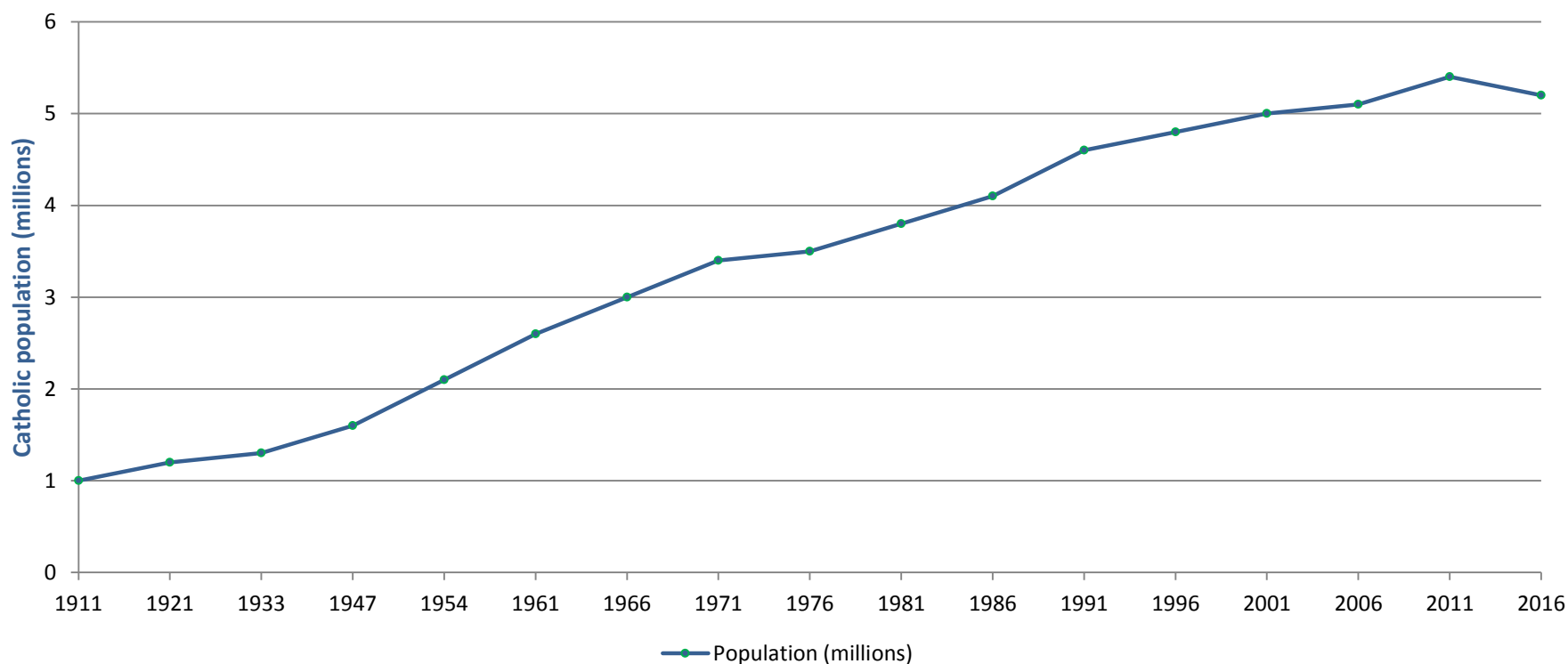
** According to the ABS, Australia’s population reached 24.85 million at 9.30pm Monday 5 March 2018.*



Australian Census

Catholic Population and Percentage of Catholics 1911 – 2016

Population (millions)

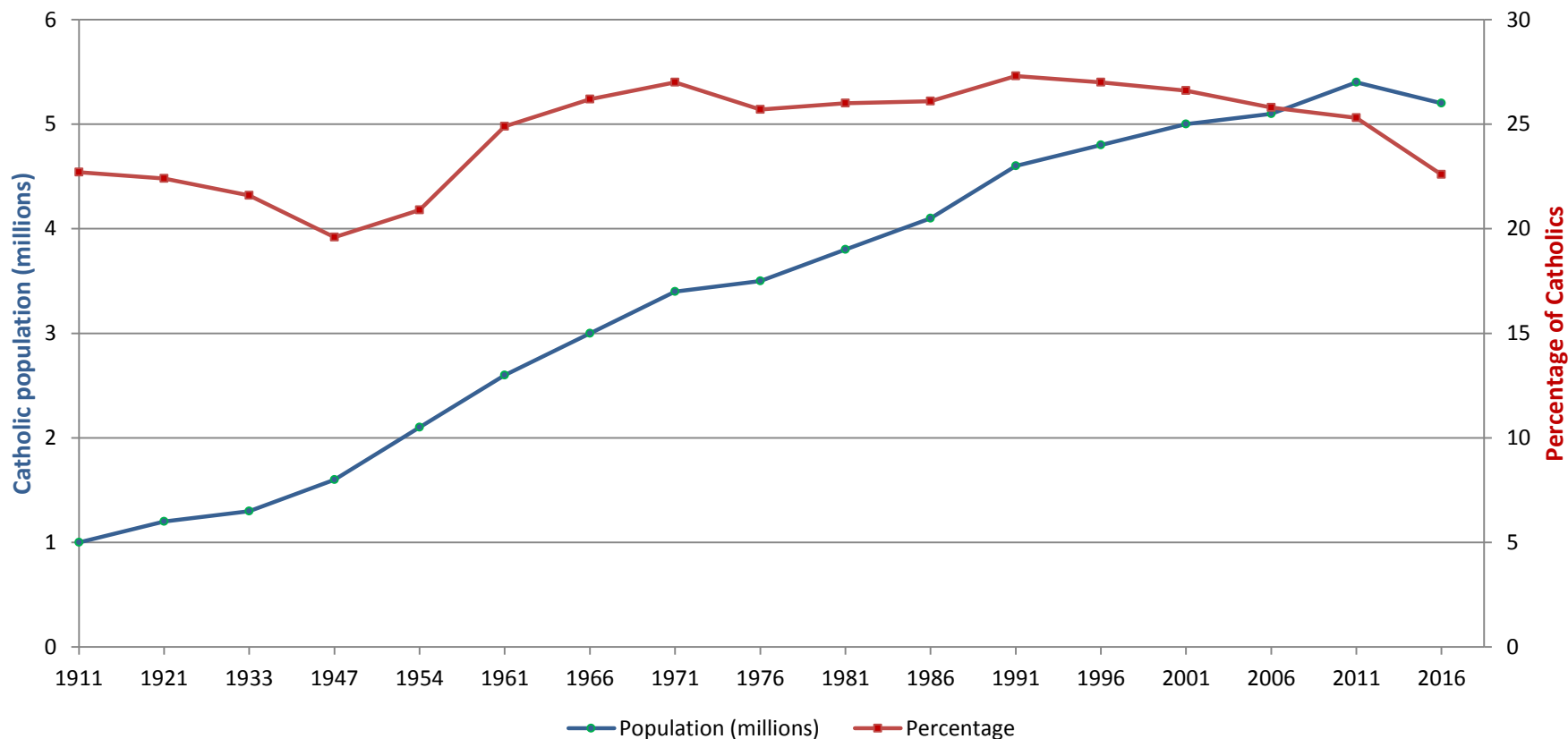


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census of Population and Housing 1911-2016



Australian Census

Catholic Population and Percentage of Catholics 1911 – 2016

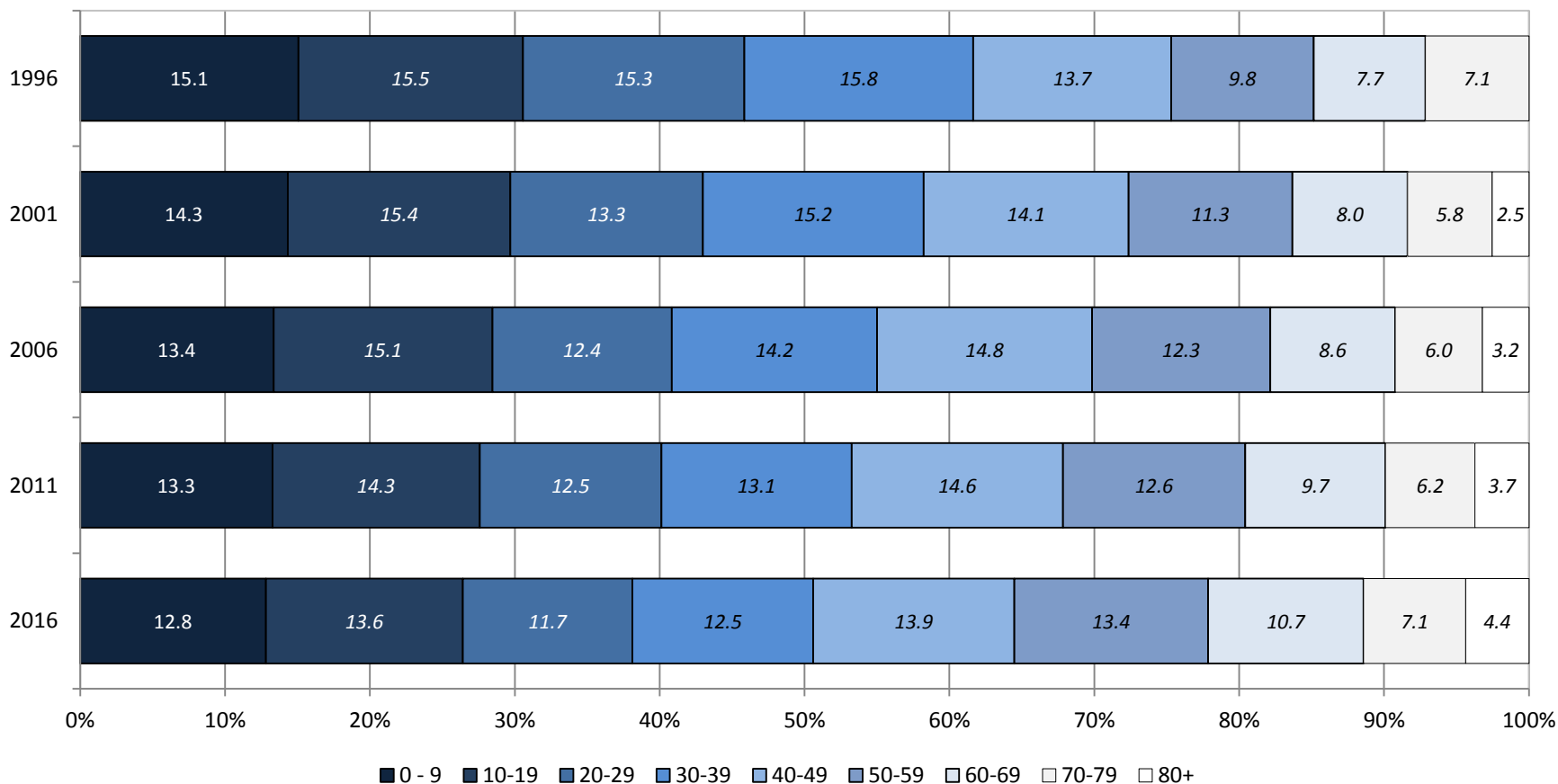


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census of Population and Housing 1911-2016



Australian Census

Catholics by Age group, 1996-2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census of Population and Housing 1996-2016



Religious identification 2006 & 2016

	2006	2016	Change (N)	Change (%)
Population	19,855,287	23,401,891	3,546,604	17.9
<i>Catholic</i>	<i>5,126,862</i>	<i>5,291,834</i>	<i>164,954</i>	<i>3.2</i>
Christianity (inc. Cath)	12,685,835	12,201,624	-484,211	-3.8
Other religions	1,105,125	1,920,831	815,706	73.8
No religion	3,706,553	6,933,711	3,227,158	87.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016.



Religion in Australia

A few comments . . .

- *In 1947, Christians made up 88% of population. In 2016, 52% identified with a Christian denomination.*
- *‘No religion’ response was introduced in 1971, and has increased steadily since.*
- *‘No religion’ is different to not stated.*
- *‘No religion’ does not necessarily mean ‘atheist’.*
- *The religion question on the Census form has always been optional. Between 9% to 12% do not answer (9.6% in 2016).*
- *How much change is due to the change in Census form?*



Religious identification 2006 & 2016

Which groups experienced growth in 15-29 age group?

	2006	2016	Change (N)	Change (%)
Population	3,981,190	4,652,993	671,803	16.9
<i>Catholic</i>	<i>1,012,674</i>	<i>968,696</i>	<i>-43,978</i>	<i>-4.3</i>
Sikhism	9,404	39,759	30,355	322.8
Hinduism	46,956	106,887	59,931	127.6
Christian, nfd *	74,640	126,843	52,203	69.9
No religion	936,552	1,755,750	819,198	87.5

* NB: The only other Christian groups to experience a greater than population increase in this age group were: Oriental Orthodox (+31%), Assyrian Apostolic (+46%) and Other Protestant (+51%).

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016.



Australian Catholic young people (aged 15-29)

(Figures in grey refer to total Catholic population)

Catholics aged 15-29	968,696	(5,291,834)
Born overseas	16.5%	(24.7%)
Born in NESC	12.2%	(19.1%)
Indigenous Aust.	3.5%	(2.5%)
Speak LOTE at home	16.8%	(20.4%)

NESC = Non-English speaking country. LOTE = Language other than English

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - Census of Population and Housing 2016



Australian Catholic young people (aged 15-29)

(Figures in grey refer to total Catholic population)

Males per 100 females	95.9	(90.6)
Degree or higher (15+)	15.9%	(20.6%)
Volunteer (15+)	17.5%	(18.8%)
Need assistance with core activities	20,359	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - Census of Population and Housing 2016



Australian Census

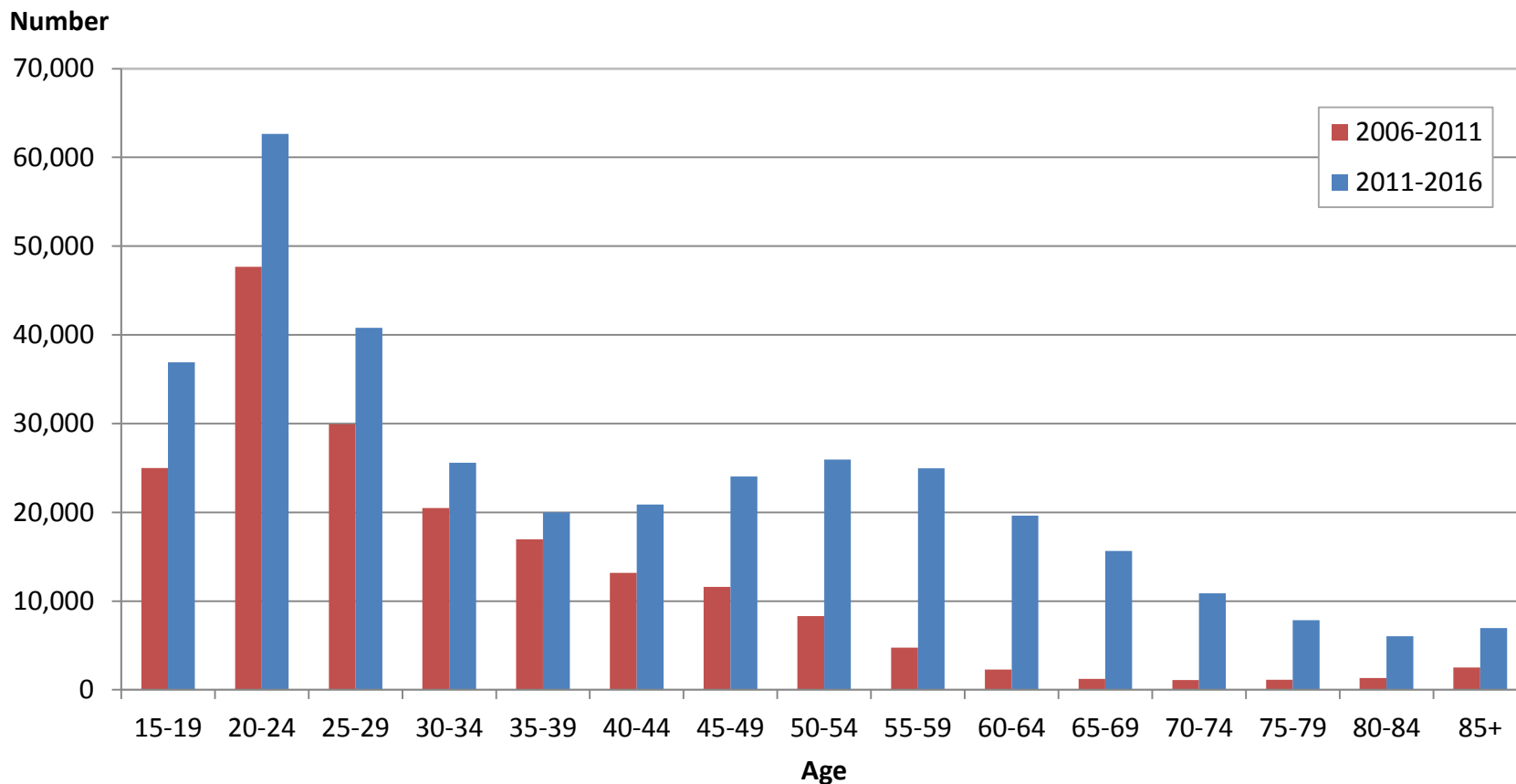
Catholics dis-identifying

- The following graph shows the extent to which Catholics have dis-identified in the last two Censuses
- Catholics who died, emigrated, were overseas at the time of the 2006, 2011 or 2016 Census, or who did not complete the Census, have been omitted from the graph



Australian Census

Catholics dis-identifying 2006-2011 and 2011-2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census of Population and Housing 2006-2016



Australian Census Catholics dis-identifying

- Most Catholics (and other Christians) who dis-identified indicated 'No religion'
- The only cohorts (5 year age groups) to experience a **nett** increase between 2011 and 2016 were:
 - those aged 0-4 in 2011: +26,100 (*16,700 were immigrants*)
 - Those aged 75-79 in 2011: +83,400 (*500 were immigrants*)



Session 2:

2016 National Church Life Survey



2016 National Church Life Survey

- Conducted in October and November 2016
- **191** Catholic parishes participated in the national random sample
- Covered **all dioceses*** (but not Eastern Rites)
- **36,500+** Mass attenders completed survey
- . . . plus almost **2,200** children's forms
- Results are statistically **representative** of all Catholic Church attenders in Australia

** Sandhurst diocese only had one parish participate.*



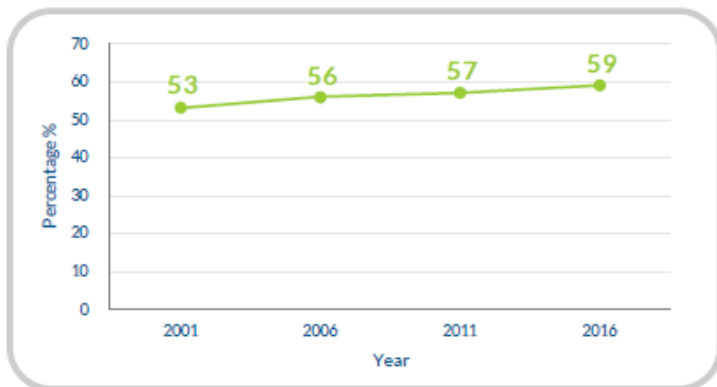
2016 National Church Life Survey

Summary of key national results

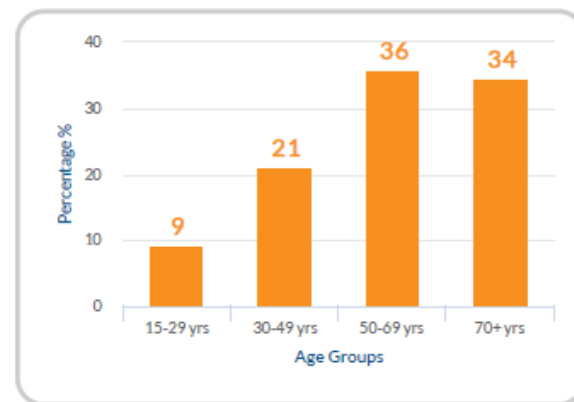


62% of all people are female and 38% are male

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



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



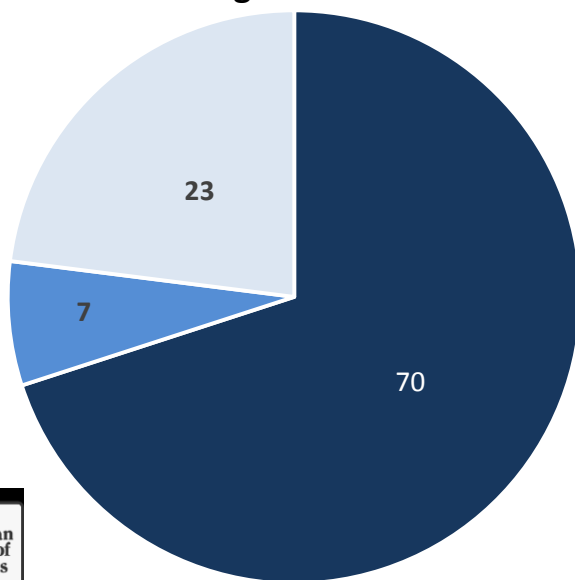
Sources: 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016 National Church Life Surveys



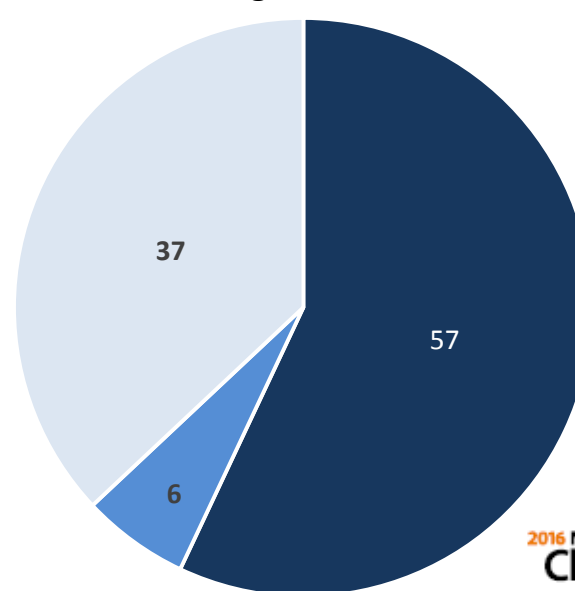
2016 National Church Life Survey

Comparison of Catholics and Mass attenders

Catholics
Aged 15+



Mass attenders
Aged 15+



Born in Australia
Born in another English speaking country
Born in a non-English speaking country

Source: 2016 ABS Census & 2016 National Church Life Survey (Church Life Profile). 'Not stated' and 'Inadequately described' removed.



2016 National Church Life Survey

Office for Youth commissioned three questions in one of the variant questionnaires (called 'X'):

- 'X' was completed by **1,728** Mass attenders
- Note: not only young people answered the questions:
 - 8% aged 15-29 years
 - 21% aged 30-49 years
 - 34% aged 50-69 years
 - 37% aged 70 years and over

Results are still preliminary - please do not use reproduce.



2016 National Church Life Survey

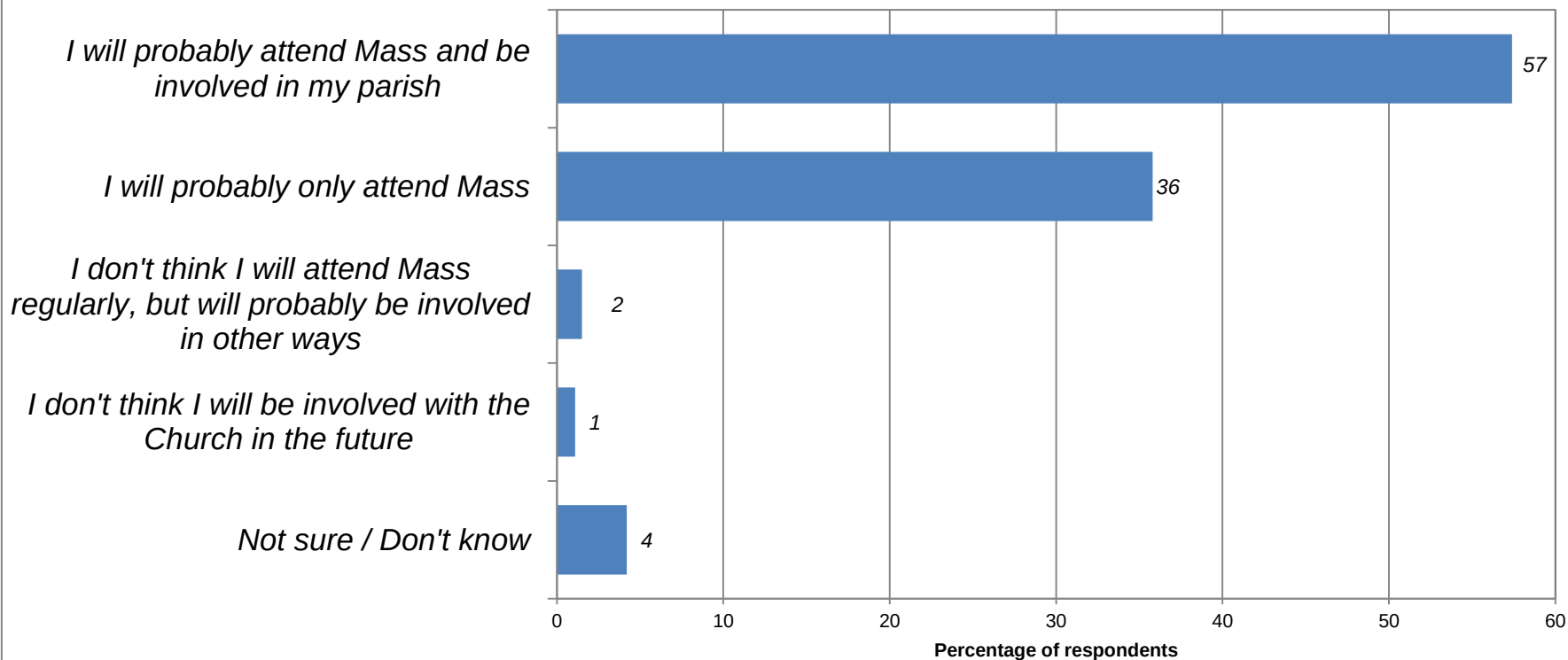
Question: *In what way do you see yourself being involved in the Catholic Church in the future?*

- ☐ I will probably attend Mass and be involved in my parish
- ☐ I will probably only attend Mass
- ☐ I don't think I will attend Mass regularly, but will probably be involved in other ways
- ☐ I don't think I will be involved with the Church in the future
- ☐ Not sure / Don't know



2016 National Church Life Survey

In what way do you see yourself being involved in the Catholic Church in the future?

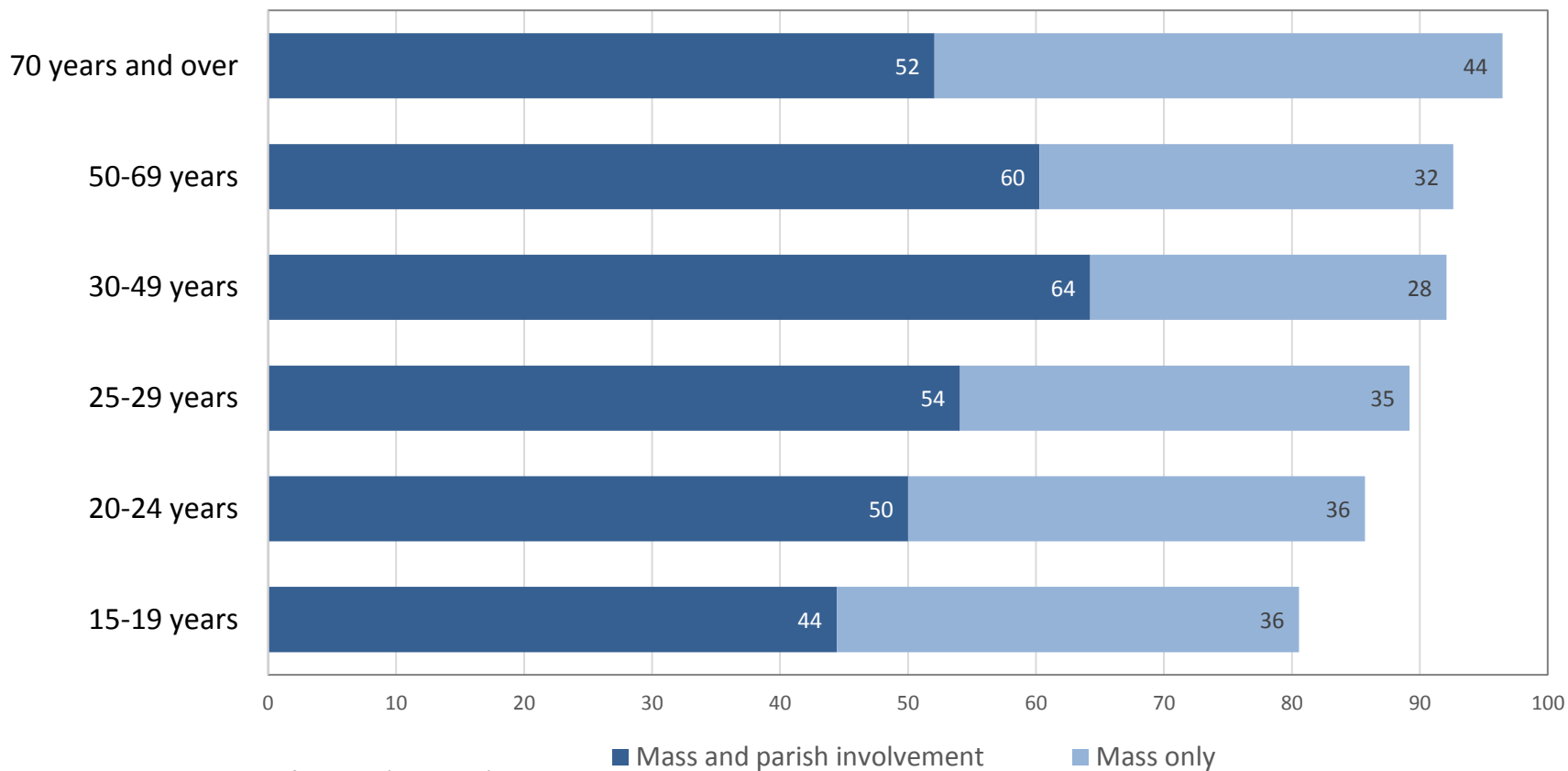


Source: 2016 National Church Life Survey (N = 1,661)



2016 National Church Life Survey

Involvement in Catholic Church in future, by Age group



Source: 2016 National Church Life Survey (N = 1,613)

■ Mass and parish involvement

■ Mass only



2016 National Church Life Survey

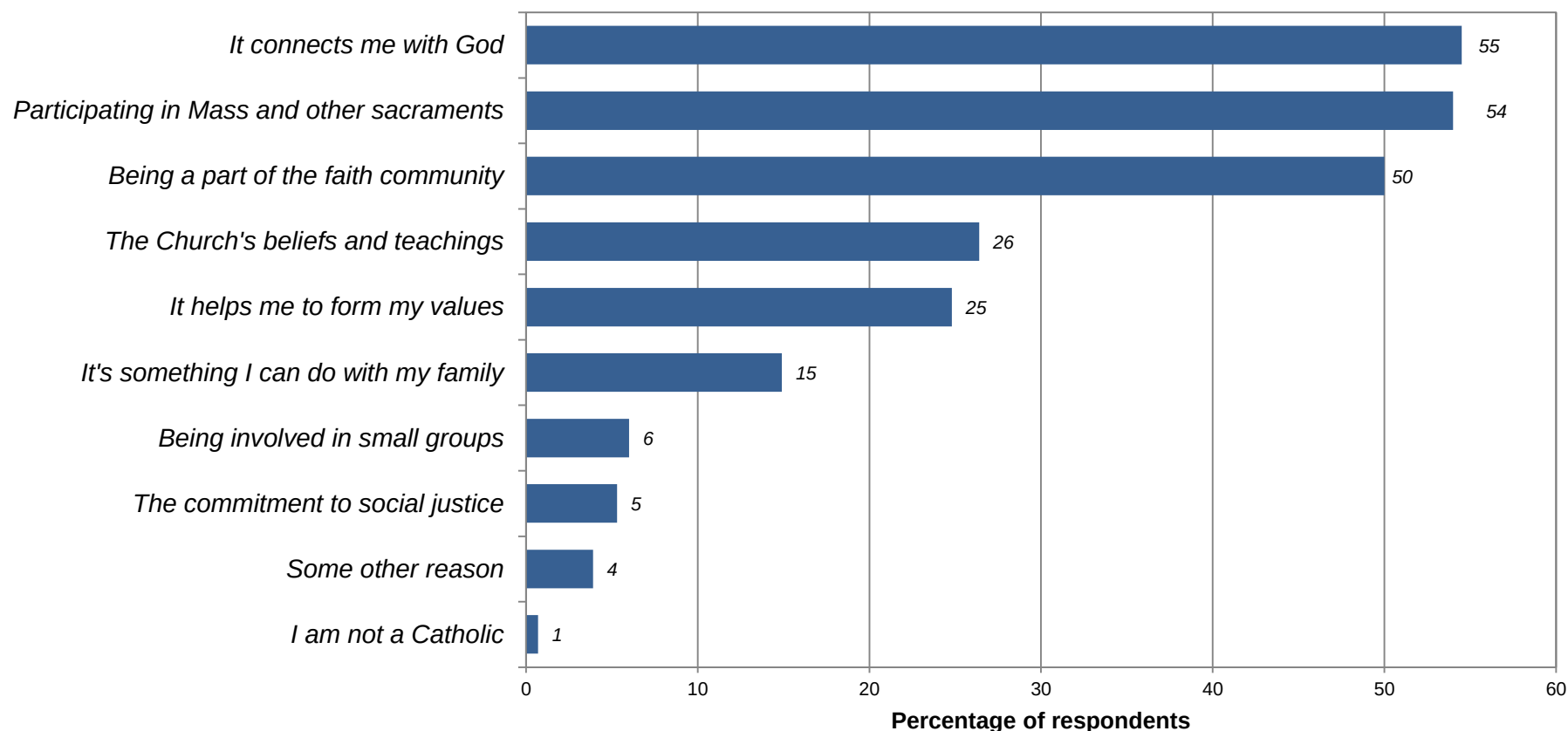
Question: *What do you value most about being a Catholic?*
(Mark up to **THREE** options)

- ☐ Being a part of the faith community
- ☐ Participating in Mass and other sacraments
- ☐ Being involved in small groups (e.g. youth group, prayer group)
- ☐ It's something I can do with my family
- ☐ The commitment to social justice
- ☐ The Church's beliefs and teachings
- ☐ It connects me with God
- ☐ It helps me to form my values
- ☐ Some other reason not listed above
- ☐ I am not a Catholic



2016 National Church Life Survey

What do you value most about being a Catholic?
(sorted by highest response)



Source: 2016 National Church Life Survey (N = 1,667)



2016 National Church Life Survey

What do you value most about being a Catholic?



15-19 years	Connects to God (67%)	Community (32%)	Mass & Sacraments (32%)
20-24 years	Connects to God (65%)	Values (53%)	Beliefs (42%)
25-29 years	Connects to God (64%)	Community (45%)	Values (43%)
30-49 years	Connects to God (62%)	Community (47%)	Mass & Sacraments (47%)
50-69 years	Connects to God (57%)	Mass & Sacraments (54%)	Community (52%)
70 years & over	Mass & Sacraments (64%)	Community (54%)	Connects to God (46%)



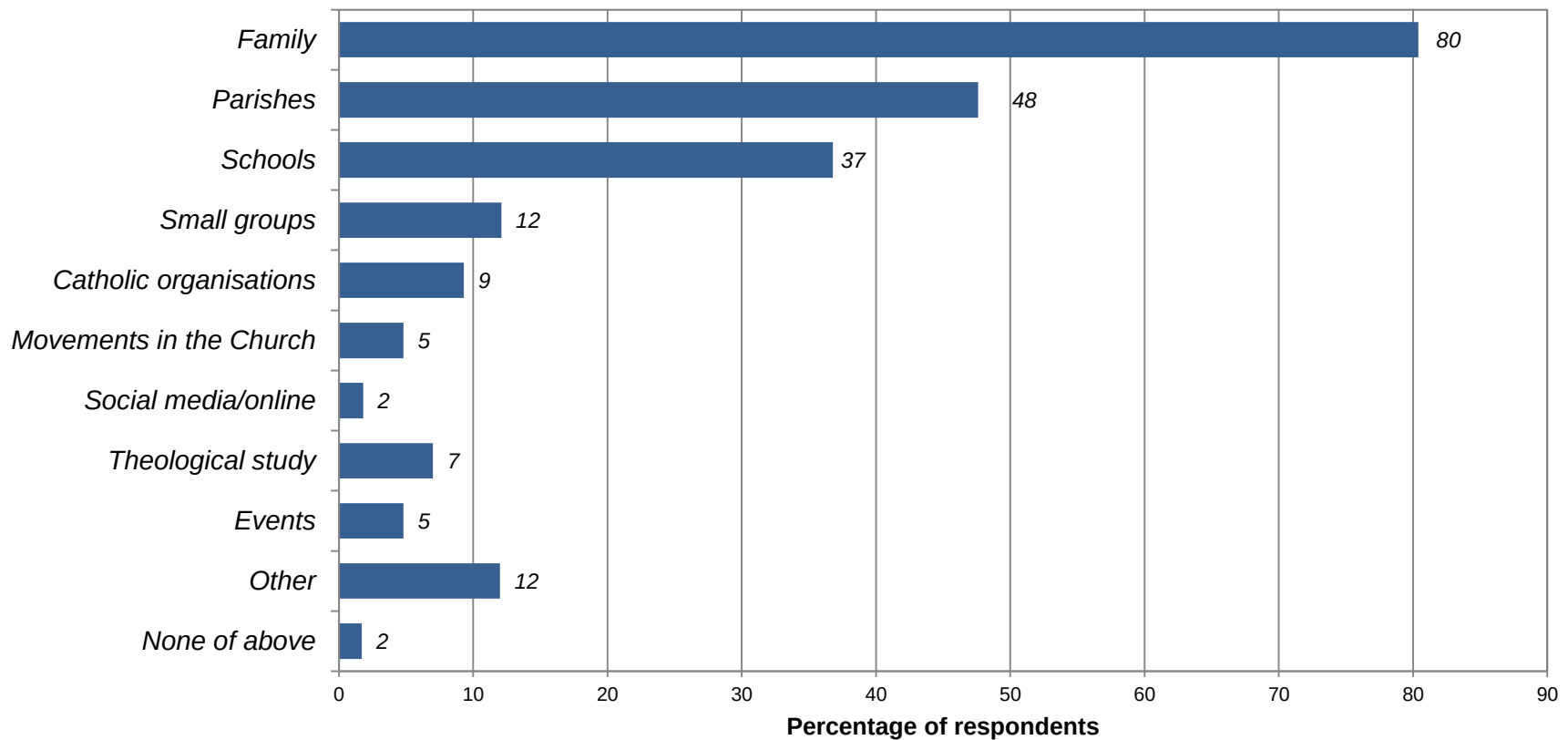
2016 National Church Life Survey

Question: *Throughout your life, which of the following have given you the strongest support in your faith? (Mark up to THREE options)*

- ☐ My family
- ☐ The parishes I have been part of
- ☐ The schools that I attended (or now attend)
- ☐ Small group(s) (e.g. youth group, prayer group)
- ☐ Catholic organisations (e.g. St Vincent de Paul (Vinnies),
Catholic Women's League)
- ☐ Movements in the Church (e.g. Cursillo, Marriage Encounter)
- ☐ Social media and online resources
- ☐ Studying theology or related subjects
- ☐ Events (e.g. conferences, World Youth Day, retreats, festivals)
- ☐ Some other factor not listed above
- ☐ None of the above

2016 National Church Life Survey

Throughout your life, which of the following have given you the strongest support in your faith?



Source: 2016 National Church Life Survey (N = 1,652)



2016 National Church Life Survey

Comments: Strongest faith support in life

- **Family, parishes and schools** were most highly rated in all age groups
- Statistically significant differences between age groups:
 - **Events** – **higher** for younger attenders ***
 - **Social media** – **higher** for younger attenders ***
 - **Catholic organisations** – **higher** for older (70+) attenders ***
 - **Small groups** – **higher** for younger attenders
 - **Family** – **higher** for younger attenders **
 - **Parishes** – **lower** for younger attenders *

*Statistical significance reported as: *** $p < 0.001$ ** $p < 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$*



2016 National Church Life Survey

What do the results tell us about young Mass attenders?

In comparison to older attenders,

- Fewer younger attenders expect to be involved in Mass and their parish in the future
- Mass attendance is not valued as highly for younger attenders
- Younger attenders do not see the parish as supportive of their faith as much as older attenders

... what does that mean for future youth ministry?



Session 3:

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION



For further information . . .

- Websites: www.pro.catholic.org.au
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