



St. Peter and Paul Survey Results Fall, 2007

Demographics

Age		
Range	Percent	Count
13-17	.5%	2
18-25	1.4%	6
26-49	39.4%	173
50-65	31.4%	138
66+	27.3%	120

Years in Parish		
Years	Percent	Count
0-5	18.7%	81
6-15	26.3%	114
16-25	23.6%	102
26+	31.4%	136

Gender		
Gender	Percent	Count
Male	28.5%	125
Female	71.5%	313

Attend Sunday liturgy at SS Peter & Paul		
Attendance	Percent	Count
Every Sunday	82%	356
Twice monthly	9.9%	43
Several times	6%	26
Seldom attend	2.1%	9

Household		
Members	Percent	Count
Couple with children	45.5%	202
Couple	29%	130
Single	20.7%	92
Single with children	3.3%	15
Other	.009%	4

What Most Attracts Parishioners to the Parish?

The comments from this question yielded key words such as “tradition”, “conservative,” and “beauty”. Of the 452 comments to this question, the overwhelming majority cherished the traditional services as well as the traditional look of the church. Many reflected on how SS Peter and Paul “reminds me of the church of my childhood.”

Responses highlighted appreciation of the “orthodoxy of liturgies,” and availability of Masses, reconciliation and perpetual adoration.

Others described the church’s architecture and found comfort in its edifice. “The church looks like a Catholic Church,” said one. “I feel as if I am experiencing a glimpse of heaven,” said another. The towers, the pipe organ, the stain-glassed windows, the statues were named as part of the joy parishioners find with the church structure.

Of relevant value, many mentioned that they have “lived here all our lives” and “it’s my home,” expressing warmth and value to the history SS Peter and Paul has brought to their lives. Others associated proximity to the church as important to them.

Finally, parishioners described the SS Peter and Paul community as welcoming in a “love, nurturing, caring, spiritual atmosphere.” Several stated appreciation for the “faithfulness of the priests.”

Knowledge of Ministries

The following indicates how familiar respondents of the survey were to the various parish ministries.

Christian Education Ministries

Ministry	Percent	Count
Elementary Religious Education	62.3%	223
Junior High Religious Education	50.8%	182
Quest (high school)	49.7%	178
Adult faith formation/RCIA	46.9%	168
Baptismal Preparation	46.7%	167
Early Childhood Religious Education	45.8%	164
Pre-Cana Marriage Prep	44.1%	158
Vacation Bible School	39.4%	141
Scripture Study	27.9%	100
Small Christian Communities	23.7%	85
Rainbows	15.1%	54
REACH	8.9%	32

Christian Service Ministries

Ministry	Percent	Count
St. Vincent de Paul	61.5%	219
Loaves and Fishes	57.9%	206
Service Day	48.9%	174
PADS	48%	171
Knights of Columbus	44.9%	160
Emergency Meals	35.1%	125
Transitional Housing	41.3%	147
Hesed House	34.6%	123
Elizabeth Ministry	30.9%	110
Employment Ministry	23%	82
Bereavement Ministry	22.2%	79
Senior Services	19.9%	71
People of Life	19.7%	70
Parish Nurse	17.4%	62
Peace and Justice	15.5%	55
Naperville CARES	12.9%	46
Catholic Daughters	11.5%	41
High School Service	11.5%	41
Mission Sewing Group	9%	32
Ministry of Care	9.3%	33
Samaritan Interfaith	6.7%	24
Church Women United	5.9%	21

Christian Worship Ministries

Ministries	Percent	Count
Eucharistic Ministers	79.1%	277
Lectors	64.9%	227
Ushers	64.3%	225
Eucharistic Adoration	63.4%	222
Altar Servers	63.4%	222
Altar Linen Launderers	41.4%	145
Wedding Hostesses	32.9%	115
Sacristans, Housekeeping	24.9%	87
Sacristans, Liturgical	18.3%	64

Parish Life Ministries

Ministries	Percent	Count
Young at Heart	60.9%	131
MOM's	58.6%	126
Welcome Committee	37.7%	81

Social Committee

15.8%

34

Participate More in Parish Activities?

To the question, “If you do not participate in parish activities, what could the parish do to encourage you?” several indicated that their lives were full and it wasn’t what the parish did or didn’t do that would encourage more participation. Several identified themselves as unable due to health and age to get more involved than they presently are.

Of more pointed response, several themes surfaced:

Provide age-specific functions

Although no dominant age-need surfaced, several asked for something for the older singles, for the young singles and for the older married couples. Some individuals requested more family functions and/or more opportunities for babysitting where parents could attend adult functions.

Reach out more

Respondents showed interest in volunteering and had several suggestions to make the volunteer opportunities more inviting and available:

1. list activities for the week in one section of the bulletin with contact information
2. explain more about what each volunteer opportunity would include
3. promote volunteer activities outside the parish as well as inside the parish
4. follow-up when I volunteer—contact me
5. use the direct request method
6. do more to support and integrate new members
7. have a ministry fair booth
8. eliminate permanent volunteers – engage a more open joining attitude
9. recognize me and make me feel more welcome
10. make school families welcome as parishioners

Attend Mass More Regularly

To the question, “If you do not regularly attend Mass, please explain why?” the following were the responses in the order of repetition with the most repeated theme being mentioned first:

- Overscheduled, busy lives, lack of commitment to go
- Don’t like homilies and priest leadership
- Health, age
- Travel and work
- Young children
- Can’t understand priests’ speech

Communication Choices

To the questions about how best to communicate with parishioners, the following were the responses:

How Receive News & Announcements	Percent
Bulletin	84.3%
Email	24.5%
From the pulpit	12.1%
Parish website	7.8%
Letters sent to my home	7.3%
Notes sent home with children	3.2%
Word of mouth	.9%

Preferred Way to Receive Information	Count*
Bulletin	285
Email	83
Pulpit	40
Website	24
Letter sent to my home	22

*Count is greater than number of respondents since individuals indicated more than one preferred way.

Qualities of Lay People Serving in Ministry

To the question about what qualities were most important in lay leadership, the following were the responses:

Quality	Percent
Compassion	45.7%
Fidelity to church teaching	40%
Knowledge of church teaching	33.5%
Ability to lead people	32%
Knowledge of scripture & theology	25.8%
Ability to manage projects	10.3%

Individuals who offered written comments about lay people in parish leadership ranged from being “resigned to it,” to being excited about the quality of SS Peter and Paul lay leadership.

Respondents cautioned against power positions and appealed for servant leadership. Several expressed concern about a “my way or the highway” mindset. Others highlighted the need of fidelity to church teachings. Some suggested that leadership start in the

parish office where the parish chooses “the best qualified for paid positions and provide them proper guidance.”

Several respondents used this question to express concern about the lack of volunteers and wondered what could be done to open the pool of leadership in the parish. Parishioners showed interest and need for qualified leaders, with several stating that lay people are to be supported through training and ongoing guidance. Training needs identified included interpersonal skills as well as knowledge of church law and scripture.

“Thank God for their dedication,” one concluded.

How to Best Assist the Work of the Priests

To the question about how parishioners could best support priests in their work, the following were the responses:

Assist	Percent
Actively foster vocations	55%
Have deacons attend to more services	20.2%
Have other qualified individuals responsible	18.6%
Do not expect priest attendance	15.1%
Have less Masses and more communion services	1.8%

Those who added additional comments on how SS Peter and Paul could increase vocations or adjust to few priests presented two most frequently repeated themes were married priests and women priests.

Respondents who offered ideas on fostering vocations suggested that the priests act as “role models,” and be around the school children more frequently, tell their vocation story and demonstrate how well they enjoy their vocation. Some suggested getting testimonial talks from seminarians. “Actively leading by example, sharing your faith and doing the Lord’s word is a draw,” one noted.

Other ideas included offering high school scholarships, more mission activities, tours of the church and discernment retreats at seminaries.

Most individuals who considered limiting the amount of Masses at SS Peter and Paul expressed desire to have them remain.

What Best Supports Your Spiritual Life

When reflecting on what means best support respondents spiritual growth and development, the following were their responses:

Best Supports	Percent
Homilies	70.7%
Reconciliation	23%
Personal prayer	22.3%
Liturgical music	17.8%
Faith development classes	14.5%
Retreats and missions	7.7%

Most written comments on the question “how can the parish foster the salvation of souls and also your spiritual growth and development” discussed homilies and how they can continue to inspire and engage spiritual development. These comments included:

- More positive homilies
- Speak the truth even at the expense of offending
- Loving and welcoming manner
- Promote Catholic programming (Catholic Relevant Radio, EWTN, Mother Angelica)
- Discuss and clarify bible readings of the day
- Add more humor
- State church laws and make us aware of the reasons beyond liturgy changes
- Encourage us to free up our schedules for spiritual development
- Tie the readings to current daily challenges—short and to the point messages
- Prepare and deliver homilies enthusiastically

Other areas for development of spiritual growth included requests for more singable music and more adult faith formation opportunities. Individuals named retreats for age-specific and/or life-style groups, bible studies, spiritual direction counseling, Catholic book club as well as social clubs to help connect as a community.

What Supports a Sense of Belonging and Community

To the question on what is important in building a sense of parish belonging and community, the following were the responses:

Activity	Percent
Socials after Masses	40.5%
Service opportunities	37.2%
Age-specific social activities	30.3%
Intergenerational social activities	24%
Neighborhood gatherings	18.7%

Comments that supported this question and mentioned the most were:

- Priests set the tone of friendliness
 - Continue to greet people after Mass
 - Welcome letter from priests when joining
- Warm greetings at Mass
 - Ushers greet
 - After Mass socials
- Unify SSPP school, RE programs and parish
- Service opportunities
 - Provide small service opportunities
 - Intergenerational service opportunities
- Structured opportunities to be together
 - Parish-wide effort of events (e.g. theater group, talent, show...)
 - Parish-wide effort to support chosen charity
 - Parish picnics
 - Fish fries
- Parishioners supporting parishioners
 - Buddy system for new members
 - Volunteer list for those in need
- Ministry engagement
 - Once a month, ministry pitch from pulpit
 - Required volunteer support from RE parents
 - Encourage all to be part of one activity
- Age-specific activities
 - Parish dances and evening socials for different age groups
 - A fair for the children
 - Activities for singles

Most Welcoming

To the question, “What is the most welcoming part of the parish?” the following themes emerged, listed in order of repetition with the most repeated theme mentioned first:

- New priests
- Present and past priests
- The church structure and ambiance
- The people of the parish
- General welcoming spirit

Respondents of the survey appreciate their parish priests and, although many identified new energy and enthusiasm with the new leadership, others expressed gratitude for all SS Peter and Paul priests, past and present. Parishioners repeatedly used descriptors, “warm and friendly,” to describe their priests as well as the congregation. Many appreciated the sense of welcome they feel with the priests greeting them after Mass and the ushers greeting them before Mass.

Specific areas that were named as contributing to a welcoming spirit included monthly welcome coffees, the office staff, the school, MOMs group and the Ministry Center Masses.

Least Welcoming

To the question, “What is the least welcoming part of the parish?” the following themes emerged, listed in order of repetition with the most repeated theme mentioned first:

- Size as connected with sense of community
- Ushers, office/pastoral staff
- Negative, political, irrelevant homilies
- Music

Respondents expressed concern about the inability to get to know people and how easy it is to *get lost* in a parish as large as SS Peter and Paul. They identified limited space to meet and converse outside of church and limited activities for specified age groups.

Several named cliques, both among volunteer ministers and at social events, as a reason why community-building is limited. “So many people already know each other that you feel like an outsider at parish events. You may work all day at a service event together and still end up eating dinner alone,” expressed one. “Sometimes groups get territorial,” said one; “cliques don’t seem to want to include others into the group,” added another.

Although respondents identified the ushers and office/pastoral staff as friendly and welcoming in the “most welcoming” question, others, responding to this question, described them as cold and unhelpful. Descriptive words included “arrogant,” “unwilling to change and/or listen,” “brusque and unfriendly,”

Parishioners expressed desire for the liturgy to have more uplifting homilies and music. “It takes away from my spiritual experience,” said one. “Songs are difficult for most people to sing,” another said. “Some sermons seem to talk down to parishioners,” added one. “Music is too boring for kids,” one concluded.

Ideas for the New Pastor

To the question “please offer one idea to the new pastor that would help improve our parish,” the following responses were made.

Re: Liturgies

- Homilies (Keep up with the fantastic homilies; tell better jokes; make homilies relevant to our lives; no more than 8 minutes)
- Altar more lighted
- Add cry room
- Publish who is saying which Mass

- Build respect for services (silence, modesty of dress, arriving on time)
- No hand shaking (germs)
- Review proper reception of communion with us
- Eliminate musical performance in lieu of community singing
- Add personal comments at weddings and funerals
- Add microphone on the altar to help hard-of-hearing
- Evaluate the music at all Masses
- Have a Latin Mass
- New missals

Re: Finances

- Do professional audit of the books
- Turn down the AC in church; save money
- Consolidate buying habits so purchases are better consolidated

Re: Style

- Keep parish traditional
- Maintain open door policy; be available
- Keep being friendly, cheerful and energetic
- Ask people personally to help out; stronger recruitment for ministries
- Take a stand on important things; don't try to make everyone happy
- Spend time meeting parishioners on a personal basis—neighborhood events
- Take care of yourself
- Be visible to children and young adults
- “Loosen your collar and invite others to do the same.”
- Be pastoral and approachable; encouraging acceptance, listening and being open to new ways
- Continue to take an active interest in the community

Re: School

- Get school more financially independent
- Evaluate how school is soliciting money and spending it
- Work closely with Frank Glowaty to form stronger parish
- Be involved with the school children

Re: Welcoming and social events

- More parish life events (e.g. bingo, pot luck dinners, softball team, spaghetti dinners, picnics)
- More parish greeters
- Welcome letter and outreach to new parishioners
- A directory to announce who to contact for what
- Publish names of new parishioners and invite current parishioners to welcome them
- Hire someone to jumpstart parish life activities
- Bus for senior service

Re: Staff and Volunteer Management

- Help build more accountability for those working in the parish; have staff present during religious education classes

- Monitor style of some church and school leaders to eliminate poor management/leadership behaviors
- Be proud and supportive of our parish school and staff
- New blood in the parish council; parish elections vs. discernment

Re: Communication

- More information on website
- Publish the good we do more frequently; have those doing missionary work share their experiences

Re: Odds 'n Ends

- Survey great start
- More speakers
- Soften looks of ministry center
- Provide playgroup for school/RE kids
- Paid staff for Sunday daycare
- Ramps for community center
- Need coordinator and logistics office to help keep order
- Lighthouse Catholic Media stand