

# **ChurchStat LLC**

**Sample Report**

# Congregational Survey Results

LARGE SUBURBAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
(FOR SAMPLE PURPOSES ONLY)

## INTRODUCTION

This sample document provides a glimpse of the reporting we can provide your organization. While the outline is based on the type of concerns characteristic of many Christian-based organization, we are familiar working across religious traditions and organizational dynamics. This means we can work with larger suburban/urban or smaller rural and independent organizations and tailor the analysis around your specific needs. We also work with non-Christian and independent churches and are able to design projects in a manner that is respectful and theologically appropriate for the organizations we partner with.

## OVERVIEW OF KEY RESULTS

- When asked if church services address emotional issues, 30% of congregants responded that this is “sometimes” the case, while 10% feel that these issues are addressed “often.”
- When respondents are asked whether church services include messages about life stressors like financial struggles, relationships etc. the largest percent (21%) responded “sometimes” while 18% feel these messages are relayed “often.”
- 63% of congregants feel they are not “very close” to their church leader, but this is most likely related to the large size of the congregation, which makes regular personal interactions difficult.
- A majority of respondents feel they are appreciated (78%), that they can discuss problems and personal issues with fellow church members (83%)
- Furthermore, a high percentage feels that the church fosters a caring environment for its members (71%).
- The data indicate that most parishioners “often” or “fairly often” receive positive messages of caring, concerns, and love from others at St. Matthew. Worth noting, a range of 18-20% responded that they “never” receive such messages and the even higher percentages feel they never talk to fellow congregants about personal issues.
- The majority of St. Matthew members commute from local communities near the Church. A substantial majority drive less than 30 minutes and very few over 45 minutes.
- Congregants reported that they attend weekly (56%) or several times a week (17%), and very few reported either monthly (25%) or yearly (2%) participation in social functions at the church.

- The distribution of volunteer donations made to the church indicates a generous giving spirit among respondents to this survey. The percentages are relatively evenly distributed, with generally equal percentages concentrated in higher contribution brackets (20% for over \$5,000).
- The majority of St. Matthew respondents prays daily (37%) or several times a day (34%), while very few rarely or never pray.
- While 19% of those responding read the Bible weekly, it is important to note the relatively high percentage (28%) who never do.
- 42% of respondents take a more literal view of biblical writings and view these passages as wholly divinely inspired and subject to only a literal interpretation.
- Furthermore, 42% of respondents feel that their faith is “very important” in everyday life, and 48% feel it is “the most important thing.”

### Overview and Sample Description

Our partners collected data in person at all the major church exits at your local church. Data collection occurred on three consecutive weekends at Saturday evening and all Sunday services. A total of 3,200 surveys were distributed and 1,000 completed surveys were returned, resulting in a response rate of almost 32%. Table 1 below provides descriptive statistics for your church.

The average age of respondents is roughly 61 years of age, which is in keeping with participation in church-based activities, including completion of survey questionnaires. Younger families may be less available for volunteer activities, opting to attend regularly scheduled Sunday services and other worship activities. Similarly, we see a high percentage of women (63%) who completed the survey, when compared to men (37%). In keeping with overall demographic patterns in the San Antonio area, the sample is made up primarily of Hispanic and White respondents. Finally, we note the generally high percentage of married, higher income and higher educated respondents that completed the survey. We next turn to several of the main areas that we explored at your church and how your membership is faring these days in terms of health and overall well-being. We will also consider several other facets of religious experiences and feelings of closeness and integration to church leadership and fellow church members.

Table 1. Description of St. Matthew's Catholic Church's Congregation

<u>Age</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Average age</u>
	22-87	61.1
<u>Gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Female	630	63%
Male	370	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1,000</u></b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>
<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
White	560	56%
African American	20	2%
Hispanic/Latino	370	37%
Asian/Asian American	40	4%
Other	10	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1,000</u></b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>
<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Married	680	68%
Divorced	120	12%
Widowed	90	9%
Cohabiting	10	1%
Single/Never Married	100	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1,000</u></b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>
<u>Income</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Less than 35k	90	9%
35k-50k	120	12%
50k-100k	380	38%
100k+	410	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1,000</u></b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>
<u>Education</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Less than high school	20	2%
High school graduate (GED or diploma)	100	10%
Some college	180	18%
College	380	38%
Postgraduate or professional degree	320	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>1,000</u></b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>

## Religious Experiences in the Church

There are multiple dimensions to religious services that draw congregants towards religious experiences. While rituals and sacraments play a vital role in fostering spiritual outlooks, sermons are the primary source of communicating for both theological and social messages to church members. Our focus on overall health led us to consider the messages emanating from the pulpit that are associated with personal well-being. Figure 1 shows results of questions related specifically to messages from the pulpit. When asked if church services address emotional issues, a plurality of congregants (30%), responded that this is “sometimes” the case, while 10% feel that these issues are addressed “often.” We find a similar result when respondents are asked whether church services include messages about life stressors like financial struggles, relationships etc. The largest percent (21%) also responded “sometimes” while 18% feel these messages are relayed “often.” This data is useful as it allows churches to assess their own messaging and to have a better understanding of perceptions that church members have of sermons and other communications from church leaders.

Figure 1. The Degree to Which Worship Services Address Personal Life Issues



Next, we build on substantial research that has shown the importance of relationships and social networks that individuals acquire as part of their religious experiences in congregational settings. Our survey included questions intended to assess the quality of relationships that congregants share with others at St. Matthew. We specifically asked about the interpersonal relationships that members have with church leadership and with their fellow church members.

As shown by Table 2, the majority of church members at St. Matthew report very close and positive relationships with church leadership. It should be noted that a lower percent (63%) feel they are not “very close” to their church leader, but this is most likely related to the large size of the congregation, which makes regular personal interactions difficult.

Clear majorities responded that they feel accepted and listened to by church leaders while very few report negative feelings.

Table 2. Congregational Attitudes Towards Church Leadership

<b>Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your church leader (e.g. priest, pastor, minister, etc.).</b>	<b>Agree/Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
My church leader would take the time to talk over my problems if I needed to.	91%	9%
My church leader makes me feel like I am a worthwhile person.	85%	15%
When I am around my church leader, I can completely relax and be myself.	75%	25%
My church leader really cares about me.	80%	20%
I feel very close to my church leader.	37%	63%
My church leader expects too much from me.	1%	99%
My church leader treats me like I am an inferior person.	1%	99%
My church leader often criticizes the choices that I make.	0%	100%
<b>Sample size= 1,000</b>		

However, it may also be important to consider relationships with fellow church members as well. We asked additional questions related to church member relationships and offer these results as Table 3 below.

Table 3 shows responses to several questions that are associated with the quality of personal relationships with fellow church members. As with leadership relationships, members of St. Matthew express very positive interpersonal relationships with their peers. Clear majorities feel they are appreciated (78%), that they can discuss problems and personal issues with fellow church members (83%). Furthermore, a high percentage feels that the church fosters a caring environment for its members (71%). On the other hand, very few members of St. Matthew report negative social experiences with others in the church.

Table 3. Congregational Attitudes Towards Fellow Church Members

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about fellow church members.	Agree/Strongly Agree	Disagree
There are members of my church who would take the time to talk over my problems if I needed to.	83%	17%
When I am around other members of my church, I can completely relax and be myself.	80%	20%
Fellow church members make me feel like I am a worthwhile person.	78%	22%
Members of my church really care about each other.	71%	29%
I feel very close to the other members of my church.	60%	40%
Other members of my church expect too much from me.	2%	98%
Fellow church members often criticize the choices that I make.	2%	98%
Members of my church treat me like I am an inferior person.	1%	99%

**Sample size= 1,000**

Having established the very positive experiences reported by St. Matthew parishioners, we thought it would be useful to explore possible mechanisms that might be shaping these favorable outlooks. We asked parishioners a series of questions related to the frequency regular interactions with fellow church members.

Below we see several related outcomes that resonate with the general positive experiences St Mathews parishioners report above. The data indicate that most parishioners “often” or “fairly often” receive positive messages of caring, concerns, and love from others at St. Matthew. However, it may be just as important to note that range of 18-20 percent who responded that they “never” receive such messages and the even higher percentages who feel they never talk to fellow congregants about personal issues. These may be areas of further discussion and consideration among leadership in terms of increasing opportunities for these smaller percentages who may feel isolated and less supported.

Table 4. Frequency of Religious and Social Interactions With Church members

How often do people in your congregation do the following?	Never	Once in a while	Fairly/ Very Often
Someone in your congregation lets you know they love and care for you.	18%	24%	58%
Someone in your congregation expresses interest and concern in your well-being.	17%	29%	54%
Someone in your congregation helps you to lead a better religious life.	20%	33%	47%
Someone in your congregation shares their own religious experience with you.	25%	51%	24%
Someone in your congregation talks with you about your private problems and concerns.	41%	39%	20%
Someone in your congregation helps you find solutions to your problems in the Bible.	47%	37%	16%
<b>Sample size= 1,000</b>			

## RELIGIOUS PROFILE OF THE ST. MATTHEW CONGREGATION

We close this report by presenting general information on important church-related characteristics. Such analysis of organizational features are helpful when considering future objectives and strategies for growth.

We begin with several organizational measures and move to general indicators of overall religiousness. In terms of length of membership, Figure 2 indicates that St. Matthew boasts a high percentage of congregants who have been members for over 20 years. This could be a correlate of the relatively older age of the sample, but also reflects a level of continuity that is to me commended. On the other hand, lower percentages are found among newly attending members; a finding that may present opportunities for recruitment and outreach. Similarly, the majority of St. Matthew members commute from local communities near the Church. A substantial majority drive less than 30 minutes and very few over 45 minutes.

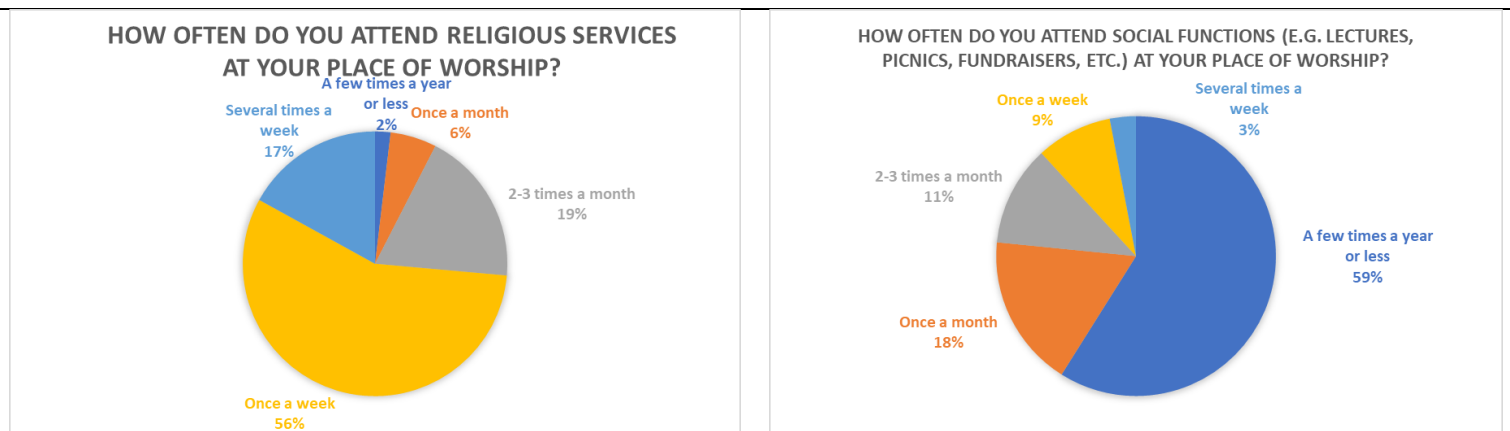


Figure 2. General Congregational Characteristics



While religious attendance is a useful measure to assess overall engagement, it might also be useful to explore participation outside of regularly scheduled religious services. While the majority of St. Matthew members attend weekly (56%) or several times a week (17%), very few reported either monthly (25%) or yearly (2%) participation in social functions at the church. This presents another opportunity for outreach and discussions about the type of non-service programming that may attract larger numbers of participants.

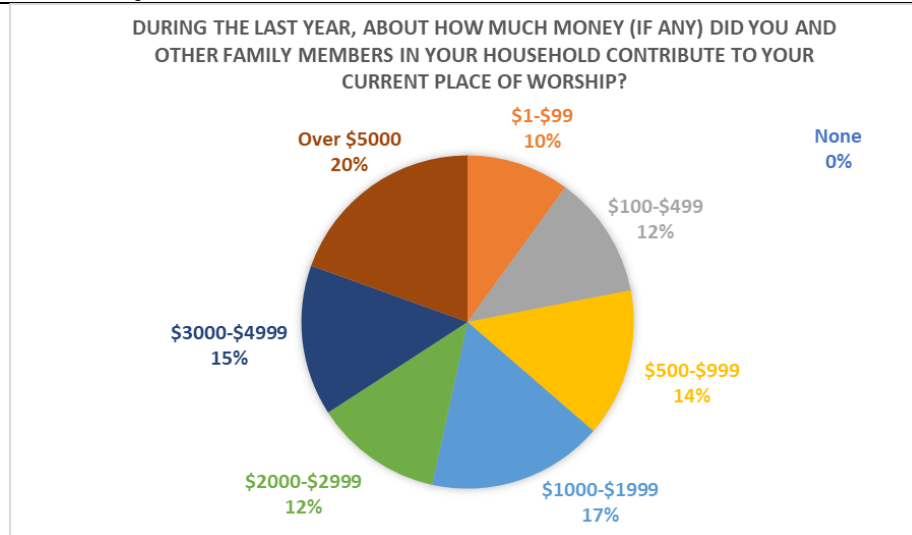
Figure 3. Congregational Attendance at Church Services and Events



Finally, below we show the distribution of volunteer donations made to the church. This data indicates a generous giving spirit among respondents to this survey. The percentages are relatively evenly distributed, with generally equal percentages concentrated in higher contribution brackets. Of course, these results should be interpreted tentatively, since it is likely that there is a self-selection effect impacting these results. In other words, it is likely that more highly engaged respondents are *both*, participants in the survey *and*, more likely to contribute larger amounts to the church. It is also worth noting that these giving

patterns are in keeping with national surveys showing similar patterns. As an example, the annual *Consumer Expenditure Survey* indicates that roughly 4% of Americans contribute 4% percent of their annual income to religious organizations.

Figure 4. Monetary Donations to Church

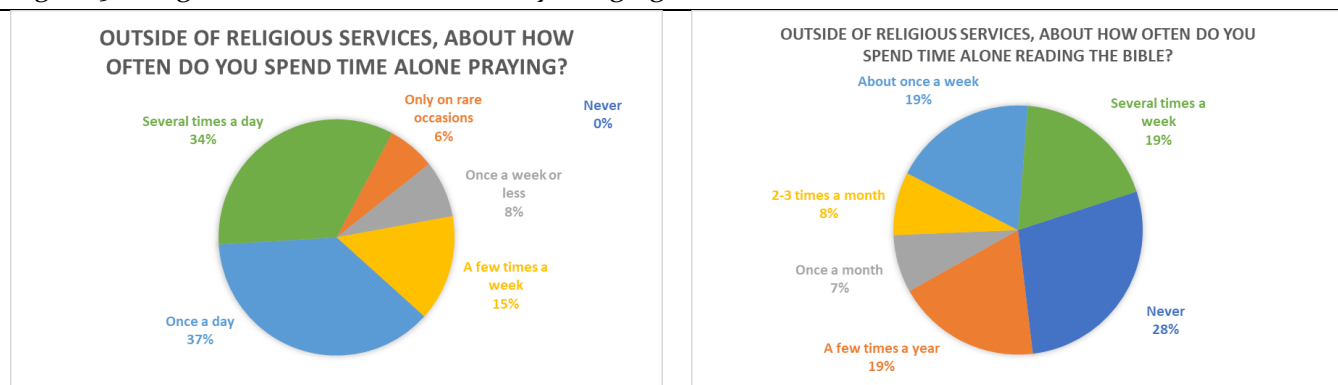


### Congregational Religiosity

We next consider general measures of religiousness among St. Matthew members. Figure 5 displays distributions for frequency of prayer and Bible reading. The left side pie chart shows that the majority of St. Matthew respondents prays daily (37%) or several times a day (34%), while very few rarely or never pray. With prayer being an individual expression of religiousness, it is a positive sign that congregants are highly engaged in this aspect of their own religious life.

However, this high level of personal piety does not translate to reading Biblical scripture, as shown by the right-side pie chart. While 19% of those responding read the Bible weekly, it is important to note the relatively high percentage (28%) who never do. This is a particularly salient result since, as we noted above, we can expect this sample of St. Matthew congregants to be composed of higher engaged and regularly active members.

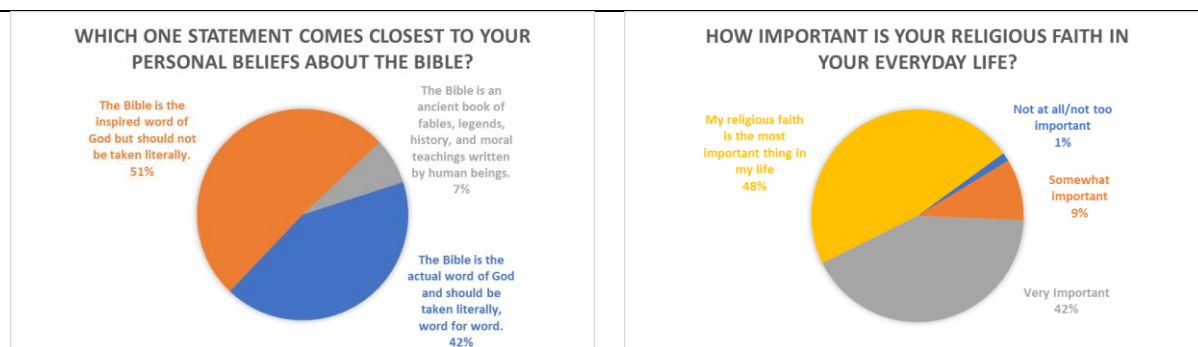
Figure 5. Religious Activities Performed by Congregants



Continuing with the previous themes, Figure 6 shows results to questions related to specific perspectives of the Bible and the place of religious faith in one's life. The pie chart to the left shows that most St. Matthew parishioners take a "balanced" view of scripture, responding that, while the Bible is in fact, divinely inspired, not every pronouncement contained in the Bible is to be taken literally. This resonates with Catholic teaching which has been successful at drawing distinctions between scripturally unconditional verses and more metaphorical writings. Even so, a sizable 42% take a much more literal view of biblical writings and view these passages as wholly divinely inspired and subject to only a literal interpretation.

In terms of the place of faith in one's life, the right-side pie chart shows the very high levels of religious piety among St. Matthew members. While 42 percent feel that their faith is "very important" in everyday life, 48 percent feel it is "the most important thing."

Figure 6. Congregant's Beliefs About the Bible and Overall Faith



## Sample Abbreviated Conclusion

This report has provided an overview of organizational characteristics at your church. In our view, many of the findings shown here, in or view, provide opportunities for further discussion and reflection on the part of church leadership. In all however, it is clear that the life of the congregation is a strong one; characterized by high engagement, high levels of personal faith among church members and as importantly, feeling of connectedness with church leadership and fellow church members.

We are thankful to the leadership and staff at your organization for your support and cooperation during this process. Your commitment to this work reflects your genuine concern for matters of faith and spirituality in our area.