

St. John Neumann Parish Survey Report

June 2009

prepared by:

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Introduction and Background

In the Spring of 2009, the St. John Neumann parish council initiated the process of creating a five-year Strategic Plan for the parish. The council wanted to achieve maximum parishioner input and offered two parish vision events, listening sessions for parish groups and a parish survey. This report summarizes the findings of the survey.

The survey was designed by SJN pastoral council, with assistance of Dominic Perri, an independent consultant from the Essential Conversations Group, which is based in Chicago, IL. The survey was distributed at all Masses on the weekend of April 25-26, 2009, and then posted online for the period from April 28-May 12, 2009.

A total of 1,095 surveys were collected; 1,085 at the weekend masses and ten additional responses were received online. The survey results were analyzed by Dominic Perri.

The results presented in this report represent a “snapshot” of the parish one weekend in April 2009. While they provide useful information, they cannot be taken as the definitive profile of parishioners since attitudes change and not all parishioners are present on any given weekend. This said, the large sample size of over 1,000 respondents offers great statistical reliability.

Respondents to the survey constitute a very representative sample of the weekend Mass population at St. John Neumann. Nine in ten say they attend Mass at least once a week. Respondents are split almost evenly between men and women. Three-fourths are married, and approximately half have children under age 18. Their average age is 47. They are also well-distributed across the weekend Mass times.

Executive Summary

The following is a summary of the major findings from the survey:

- When asked which topics St. John Neumann parish should focus on in the next five years, respondents to the survey gave two priorities more support than any others – religious education for youth and outreach to those in need. These are the only two areas that at least 50 percent describe as very important and that over 90 percent say is either important or very important.
- Respondents do also give priority to several other areas for St. John Neumann parish for the next five years:
 - Preaching
 - Youth Ministry
 - Religious education for adults
 - Support for families
- When asked what they would most like to see happen at St. John Neumann parish in the next five years, the most frequent response the successful completion of the new church, which was identified by 23 percent of respondents. Programs for children were named by 12 percent and programs for youth by 11 percent.
- The results of this survey indicate a very strong emphasis on youth. Youth appear in several of top priorities: religious education for youth, youth ministry, and support for families. In addition, children and youth are also the focus of two of the three most frequent responses to the question of what respondents would most like to see happen in the parish in the next five years.
- Over 300 people (30 percent of survey respondents) indicated they would like to be more involved in the parish and provided their contact information.
- One-half of those responding seem to be content with the level of their involvement in SJN and do not appear to seek more.
- Respondents to the survey constitute a very representative sample of the weekend Mass population at St. John Neumann. Nine in ten say they attend Mass at least once a week. Respondents are split almost evenly between men and women. Three-fourths are married, and approximately half have children under age 18. Their average age is 47. They are also well-distributed across the weekend Mass times.

Narrative Report

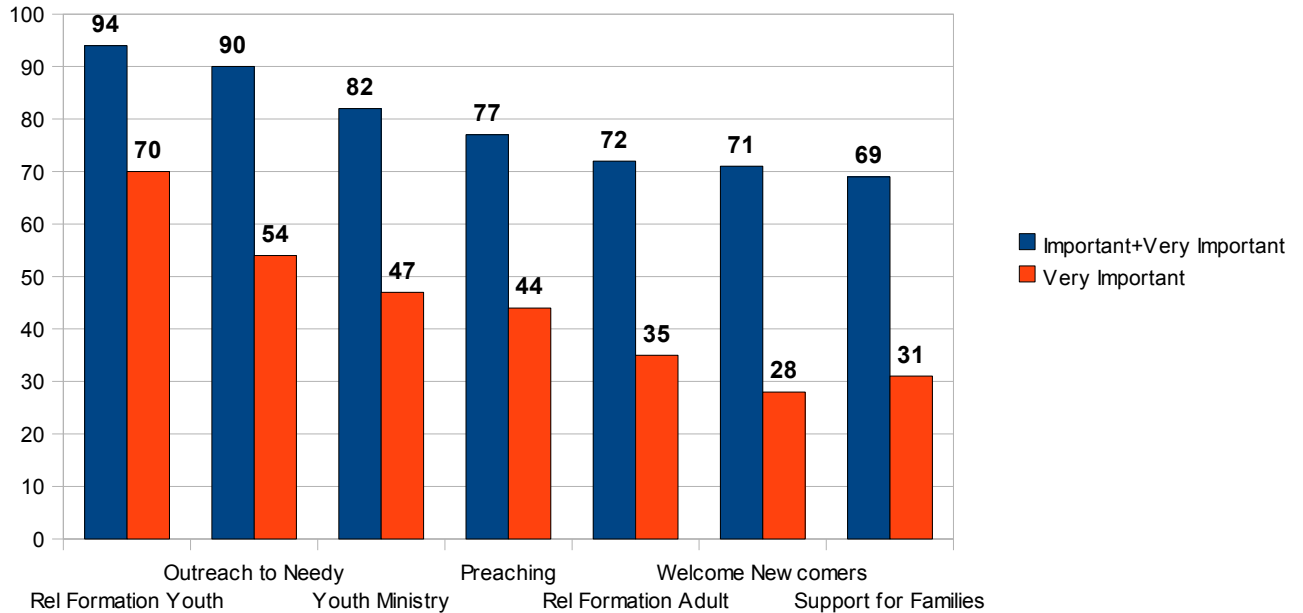
Top Priorities

How important is it to you to have St. John Neumann parish focus on each of the following in the coming five years?

	<i>Important or Very Important</i>	<i>Very Important</i>
Religious Education for Youth	94%	70%
Outreach to those in need	90%	54%
Youth ministry (grades 7-12)	82%	47%
Preaching	77%	44%
Religious Education for Adults	72%	35%
Welcome newcomers to our parish	71%	28%
Support/programs for families	69%	31%
Young adult ministry (ages 18-35)	66%	24%
Stewardship	63%	22%
Music ministry	62%	26%
Prepare leaders in our parish	59%	20%
Finances	58%	19%
Communication about parish events	55%	14%
Outreach to non-practicing Catholics	48%	16%
Connection to the neighborhood	46%	17%
Parish office support	39%	9%
Other	11%	8%

In order to identify top priorities, respondents were asked to label no more than five areas as “very important.” The bar chart on the following page shows the highest rated areas.

Top Priorities for St. John Neumann parish in the next five years



The chart above displays the areas that survey respondents indicated are the most important for St. John Neumann parish to focus on in the next five years. These can be divided into several groups.

There are two priorities that enjoy much more support than any others – religious education for youth and outreach to those in need. These are the only two areas that at least 50 percent describe as very important and that over 90 percent say is either important or very important.

There are two more than between 40-50 percent of respondents say is very important: preaching and youth ministry. And two more areas that between 30-40 percent say are very important: religious formation for adults and support for families.

Taken together, these responses suggest the following priorities.

- Religious education for youth and adults
- Outreach to those in need
- Preaching
- Youth Ministry
- Support for families.

Attitudes/Behaviors

How much do you agree with the following statements?

	<i>Agree or Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I would like to learn more about the teachings of the Church.	59%	24%
I would like to learn more about how to connect my faith to my work and family life.	51%	17%
I would attend social events that allow me to get to know my fellow parishioners.	50%	17%
I would like to be more involved in the parish than I currently am.	46%	11%
I would like to learn more about how to pray.	44%	15%
I would like to have my family's life more centered around St. John Neumann.	40%	12%
I would like the parish to use technology more effectively (website, text, video, etc).	36%	13%
I would like to participate more actively in religious education classes with my children.	22%	6%

There are three statements with which 50-60 percent of respondents either agree or strongly agree.

- I would like to learn more about the teachings of the Church: 59%
- I would like to learn more about how to connect my faith to my work and family life:51%
- I would attend social events that allow me to get to know my fellow parishioners: 50%

When interpreting these results it is also important to remember the large sample size of the survey. For example, when 11% of respondents strongly agree that they would like to be more involved in St. John Neumann than they currently are, this represents 124 respondents, which is a sizable group.

In addition, subgroup analysis also reveals sizable groups interested in greater involvement

- One-third (36%) of respondents with children under age 18 agree or strongly agree that they would like to participate more actively in religious education classes with their children. This represents 172 respondents.

Analysis of Open-Ended Questions

There were three open-ended questions on the survey that offered respondents the opportunity to write their comments rather than respond using a scale. The following is a summary of most frequent responses to each of these questions. A more complete summary is provided in Appendix 1.

Question 17

Questions 1-16 asked respondents to rate the importance of 16 potential priorities for the parish. In Question 17, respondents were given the opportunity to enter a priority not included in the list of questions 1-16 that St. John Neumann parish should focus on in the next five years. However, no consistent theme emerged; no single response was mentioned more than five times.

Question 26

In Question 26, respondents were asked “What would you most like to see happen at St. John Neumann parish in the next five years?” The table below shows the most frequent responses:

Response	Total number	Percent of Total Response
Complete new church	149	23%
Children and youth	77	12%
Youth programs	71	11%
Music Ministry	57	9%
Strengthen parish community	33	5%
Adult Faith Formation	19	3%

Question 35

In question 35, respondents could offer any additional ideas or comments they had about the questions on this survey or the Strategic planning process at St. John Neumann. There were 277 total responses. The most common themes were music ministry and children/youth, each of which was named by less than 10 percent of those responding.

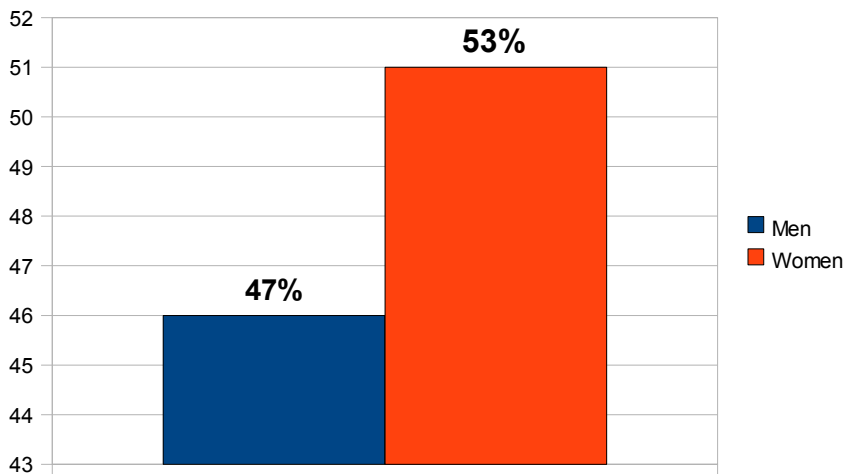
Demographics

Respondents were asked a series of demographic questions to help provide insight into their responses. The following section of this report provides subgroup analysis of the responses using many of the demographics presented below.

Responses are well-distributed across gender, age, and weekend Mass attendance times, suggesting the sample is very representative of St. John Neumann's weekend Mass population.

Gender

Respondents are evenly divided between men and women.



Age Distribution

The distribution of respondents by age group parallels a normal statistical distribution. Over 50 percent of respondents are between the ages of 40-60, with an average age of 47.

Ages 10-17	9%
Ages 18-29	5%
Ages 30-39	8%
Ages 40-49	28%
Ages 50-59	23%
Ages 60-69	15%
Ages 70 and above	9%
Did not respond	3%

Years in this parish

Average Number of Years in the Parish: 10

0-1 years	13%
2-5 years	19%
6-10 years	25%
11-20 years	27%
21 or more years	11%
Did not respond	5%

Marital Status:

Married	74%
Widowed	3%
Separated	0%
Divorced	3%
Single	15%
Did not respond	4%

Number of children under age 18:

0	48%
1	10%
2	19%
3 or more	15%
Did not respond	8%

Most frequently attended Weekend Mass

Responses are well-distributed across the weekend Mass times, which suggests the survey results are representative of the weekend Mass population.

Sat 5:30 p.m.	11%
Sun 7:30 a.m.	11%
Sun 9:00 a.m.	26%
Sun 11:30 a.m.	25%
Sun 5:30 p.m.	18%

How often do you attend Mass?

Daily	5%
Weekly	84%
Several times a month	9%
Several times a year	2%
Once or twice a year	0%

Zip Code

The table below displays the most common respondent zip codes.

78746	46%
78737	14%
78733	13%
78749	4%
78738	3%

Subgroup Analysis

A. Children Under 18

	Respondents with Children Under 18	Respondents with no Children Under 18
Number of respondents	476	528
Average Age:	45	49
Average years in parish	8	12

Respondents with children under 18 are more likely than those without children under age 18 to say they

- want to participate more actively in religious education classes with my children (36 percent say they agree or strongly agree)
- would like to have their family's life more centered around St. John Neumann. (48 say they agree or strongly agree)

B. Mass attendance

	Daily Mass Attenders	Weekly Mass attenders	Attend Mass several times a month
Number of respondents	49	880	92
Average Age:	52	47	45
Average years in parish	12	10	9
Gender	Male: 41% Female: 59%	Male: 47% Female: 52%	Male: 44% Female: 52%
Marital Status	Married: 63% Widowed: 8% Separated: 2% Divorced: 6% Single: 18%	Married: 76% Separated: 3% Divorced: 3% Single: 16%	Married: 84% Divorced: 2% Single: 10%

Religious Education for Adults

	Important	Very important
Daily Mass attenders (49)	22%	57%
Weekly Mass attenders (880)	38%	34%
Several times a month (92)	37%	22%

Outreach to those in need

	Important	Very important
Daily Mass attenders (49)	38%	52%
Weekly Mass attenders (880)	37%	54%
Several times a month (92)	34%	63%

I would like to learn more about how to pray

	Agree	Strongly Agree
Daily Mass attenders (49)	25%	33%
Weekly Mass attenders (880)	31%	15%
Several times a month (92)	20%	11%

I would like to learn more about the teachings of the Church

	Agree	Strongly Agree
Daily Mass attenders (49)	31%	49%
Weekly Mass attenders (880)	38%	23%
Several times a month (92)	25%	16%

I would like to have my family's life more centered around St. John Neumann.

	Agree	Strongly Agree
Daily Mass attenders (49)	31%	24%
Weekly Mass attenders (880)	39%	11%
Several times a month (92)	32%	5%

C. Gender

The differences between male and female respondents are reported in the table below

	Men	Women
Music ministry	Very Important: 20%	Very Important:30%
Communication about parish events	Important+Very Important: 47%	Important+Very Important: 62%
Parish office support	Important+Very Important: 33%	Important+Very Important: 44%
Religious Education for Adults	Important+Very Important: 33%	Important+Very Important: 44%

Appendix 1 – Responses to open-end questions

Question 17 – Other priorities for parish to focus on

- Child-oriented mass/kids’ program – 5
- New church/finish church/build new church – 5
- Help poor/homeless/needy children/care of elderly – 4
- CRHPP – 4
- Better preaching/liturgy- 4
- Sacraments – 3 (more reconciliation – 1)
- Ways to encourage involvement/mass participation/go to church weekly – 3
- Pre-school program – 3
- Daycare/childcare – 3
- Invite/welcome everybody /diversity- 3
- More interfaith activities – 2
- Senior program – 2
- Vocation promotion – 2
- Adoration chapel – 2

Question 26 - What would you most like to see happen at St. John Neumann parish in the next five years?

Total Responses: 660. Most frequent responses are as follows:

1. Complete new church – 149

Get church built on time/complete church – 149

2. Children and youth - 77

Focus on children and families/family activities/intergenerational activities/family week – 65

Focus on children and youth – 3

Kids’ activities during mass – 6

Child church – 3

4. Youth programs - 71

Teens involved in mass – 5

Better youth ministry – 20

Strong youth programs/activities – 36

Youth catholic education – 10

4. Music ministry - 57

Music program/music ministry/vibrant music program – 32

Choir in weekend mass/better, more spiritually inspiring music – 15

9 am choir /solid church choir– 6

Guitar mass – 1
Don't overuse organ - 3

5. Strengthen parish community – 33

Strong sense of community/friendlier church/strong parish/grow closer/friendly/support each other – 23
More social events – 5
Parish more inclusive to all – 2
Increase social functions – 3

6. Adult Faith Formation – 19

Adult ed – 16
Adult formation – 3

Other topics

Perpetual adoration -14
Strengthen community/more community involvement /growth of social service. Ministries – 12
Interact with other parishes in area - 2
CRHP – 11
Parish school - 7
Support for RE in middle-high school – 1
Outreach to non-pracalienated Catholics/newcomers/middle-age adults – 7
Help sick, homeless, dying - 6
More reconciliation opportunities – 6
Athletic teams – 5
Strong homilies/relevant homilies -5
Simpler church - 4
Return to older/traditional hymns /masses– 3
Solidify church finances – 3
web site – 3
couples faith/families faith programs – 3
More practicing Catholics – 3
Office help more knowledgeable/friendly – 3
Host speakers – 2
Spanish mass – 2

Question 35 - Additional ideas or comments you have about the questions on this survey or the Strategic planning process at St. John Neumann

Total Responses: 277. Most frequent responses are as follows:

Music related - 25

Music ministry/better music/more lively music/more guitar and less organ – 16

Don't want to sing all the prayers – 1
Better choir – 1
Better singers - 1
Too much music – 3
Want older hymns - 1
Don't need choir /more liturgy focused - 1
9 am choir - 1

Youth/children - 22

Stronger youth ministry - 1
Build youth complex – 2
Youth athletics - 1
Catholic youth camp - 1
RE youth program that's engaging -5
Youth groups – 1
Fun youth events/programs – 4
Children's liturgy/mass for and by children – 3
Make church exciting for young ones/more energy at masses - 3
Get involved in HS community – 1

Other Comments

- Like Fr. Bud/great job – 9
- Relevant sermons/homilies/make them more personal-don't read from paper – 8
- More gospel – 1
- Keep CRHP/utilize more effectively/more like it – 7
- Adult study groups/adult education/bible study – 7
- Balance work and family life /Connect church with family life – 4
- Ways for families to get involved in mass and programs - 4
- Build new church – 5
- More volunteers/Get more people involved - 4
- More programs/outreach to help community poor/mentally challenged/ill - 3
- More programs for all ages/seniors - 2
- More connection to community - 1
- Support for church-sponsored groups/use church grounds - 3
- Programs for new members/welcome new members - 3
- Shorter mass/keep mass to 1 hr – 2
- No announcements at mass - 1
- Address issues of people coming late to mass /Proper etiquette, dress - 3

Appendix 2 – Survey Questionnaire

St. John Neumann Parish Survey

Thank you for completing this survey. Your confidentiality will be respected – all survey responses will be analyzed by an outside consultant. If you are not sure how to answer a question, please leave it blank.

Please use the scale below to answer questions about St. John Neumann parish

1 -----2-----3-----4-----5
 Not at A little Somewhat Important Very
 Important Important Important

The goal of Strategic Planning is to identify priorities for the parish to focus on. *How important is it to you to have St. John Neumann parish focus on each of the following in the coming five years?* To help parish leadership understand your top priorities, please do not give a score of 5 (very important) to more than five of the items listed in questions 1-17.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. _____ Welcome newcomers to our parish | 9. _____ Parish office support |
| 2. _____ Outreach to non-practicing Catholics | 10. _____ Religious Education for Youth |
| 3. _____ Connection to the neighborhood | 11. _____ Religious Education for Adults |
| 4. _____ Stewardship | 12. _____ Outreach to those in need |
| 5. _____ Finances | 13. _____ Youth ministry (grades 7-12) |
| 6. _____ Music ministry | 14. _____ Young adult ministry (ages 18-35) |
| 7. _____ Preaching | 15. _____ Prepare leaders in our parish |
| 8. _____ Communication about parish events | 16. _____ Support/programs for families |
| | 17. _____ Other _____ |

Please use the scale below to answer the questions

1 -----2-----3-----4-----5
 Not at A Little Somewhat Agree Strongly
 All Agree Agree Agree

How much do you agree with the following statements?

18. _____ I would like to be more involved in the parish than I currently am.
19. _____ I would like to learn more about how to connect my faith to my work and family life.
20. _____ I would like to learn more about how to pray.
21. _____ I would like to learn more about the teachings of the Church.
22. _____ I would like the parish to use technology more effectively (website, text, video, etc).
23. _____ I would attend social events that allow me to get to know my fellow parishioners.
24. _____ I would like to participate more actively in religious education classes with my children.
25. _____ I would like to have my family's life more centered around St. John Neumann.
26. *What would you most like to see happen at St. John Neumann parish in the next five years?*

The following questions will help us better analyze the responses we receive.

27. Are you: 1. Male 2. Female

28. What is your age? _____

29. How many years have you been in this parish? _____

30. Marital Status: 1. Married 2. Widowed 3. Separated 4. Divorced 5. Single

31. How many children under age 18 do you have? _____

32. Which Weekend Mass do you most often attend?

1. Sat 5:30 p.m. 2. Sun 7:30 a.m. 3. Sun 9:00 a.m. 4. Sun 11:30 a.m. 5. Sun 5:30 p.m.

33. How often do you attend Mass?

1. Daily 2. Weekly 3. Several times a month 4. Several times a year 5. Once or twice a year

34. In which Zip Code do you live? _____

Please use the space below for any additional ideas or comments you have about the questions on this survey or the Strategic planning process at St. John Neumann

If you wish to be more involved in the parish, please provide your contact info below. The consultant analyzing this survey will separate your responses above from your contact info to ensure the confidentiality of your responses.

Name:

Phone Number and

Email: _____

Area(s) of the parish you are interested in:

Fr. Bud and the Pastoral Council thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.