

# THE ART OF ACCOMPANIMENT: WALKING WITH FAMILIES & YOUNG PEOPLE ON THEIR FAITH JOURNEY

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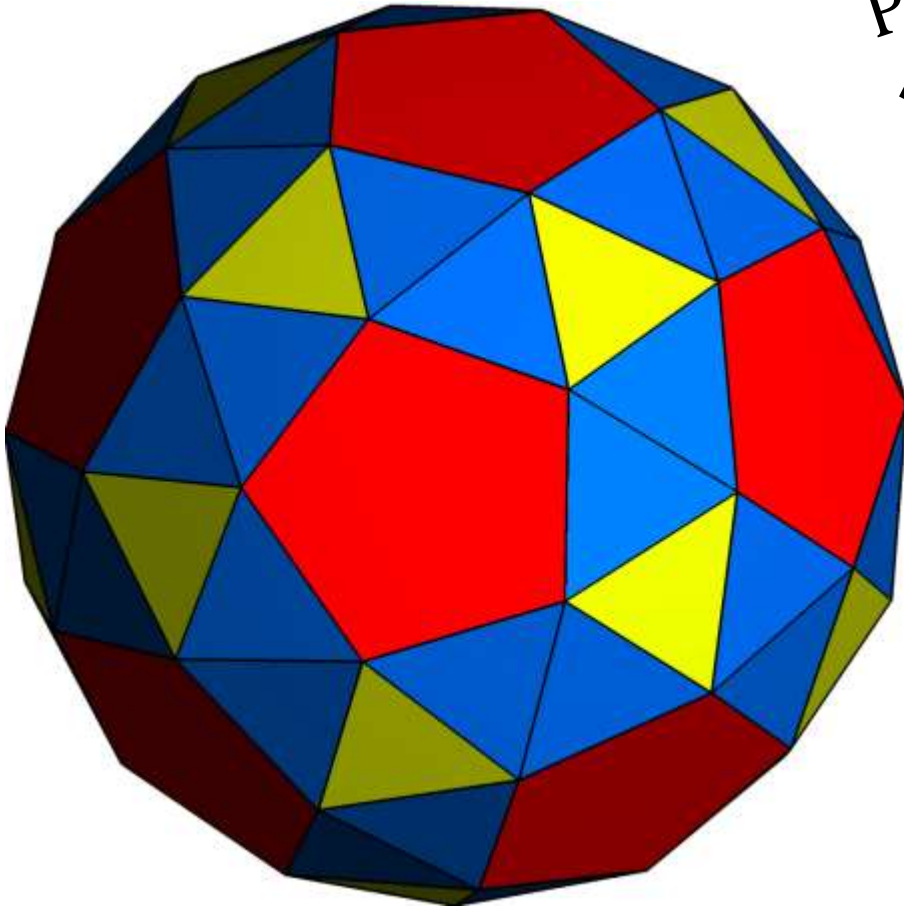
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# Overview

1. What is accompaniment?
2. What does *Evangelii Gaudium* say about how we accompany others?
3. Whom are we accompanying?
4. What does this mean for accompanying families and young people?

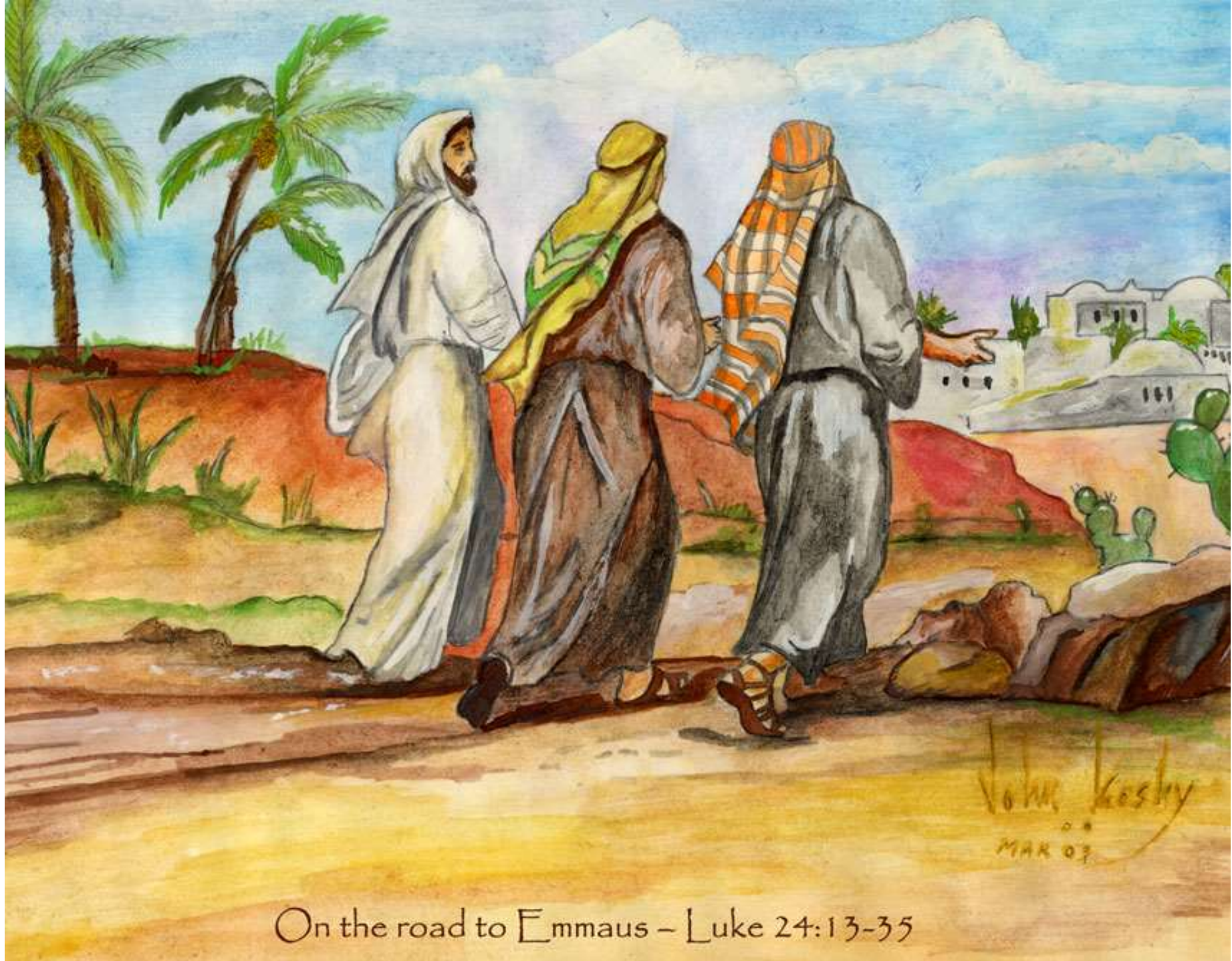


Polyhedron



“reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness. ...It is the convergence of peoples who, **within the universal order, maintain their own individuality**; it is the sum total of persons within a society which pursues the common good, **which truly has a place for everyone.**”

(EG § 236)



On the road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-35

# Personal Faith Journey & Companions

1. Who were your companions on the road?
2. Who were the people that made the biggest/lasting impression on you?
3. What stage of your journey were you at when you encountered them?
4. How did they help you?
5. Why were they so influential?
6. How did they make the Christian faith seem attractive?
7. What was it about them that appealed to you and made you value what they shared with you?

# What does *Evangelii Gaudium* say about Accompaniment?

- It's about Evangelisation (**EG §170**)
- All the baptised need to be involved (**EG §120**)
- The power of the Holy Spirit is at work in all the baptised (**EG §119**)
- We are all called to mature in our work as evangelisers – we ought to let others constantly evangelise us (**EG §121**)
- We should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are (**EG §121**)
- The Church will have to initiate everyone into 'the art of accompaniment' (**EG §169**)
- It's about making present the fragrance of Christ's closeness and his personal gaze (**EG §169**)
- It teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (**EG §169**)

# What does *Evangelii Gaudium* say about Accompaniment?

- It consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time (**EG §24**)
- It involves mercy and patience [through] the eventual stages of personal growth as these progressively occur (**EG §44**)
- It's about encouraging people to reach a level of maturity where they can make truly free and responsible decisions. This calls for much time and patience (**EG § 171**);
- It means inviting others to let themselves be healed, to take up their mat, embrace the cross, leave all behind and go forth ever anew to proclaim the Gospel (**EG §172**);
- It involves realising that each person's situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know from without (**EG §172**);
- It means acknowledging that in evangelisation God takes the initiative, we are called to cooperate with the work of the Spirit; God alone "gives the growth" (1 Cor 3:7) (**EG §12**).



# Families & Young People

- ‘Domestic Church’ (*Familiaris Consortio*, §21, 38, 49)
- Vocation:
  - ‘a community of life and love’
    - ✧ Perfect each other & attain holiness
    - ✧ Rear and educate children
  - Show forth love of God for humanity/love of Christ for Church
  - Make Christ present for others – family, Church, society – agents of evangelisation
  - Build up Christian community
  - Contribute to the welfare of society - spread the values of God’s Kingdom

# Whom are we accompanying?

- **Australian Census**

- *“Snapshot” of the Diocese of Broken Bay*

- *taken on Tuesday, 9 August 2011*

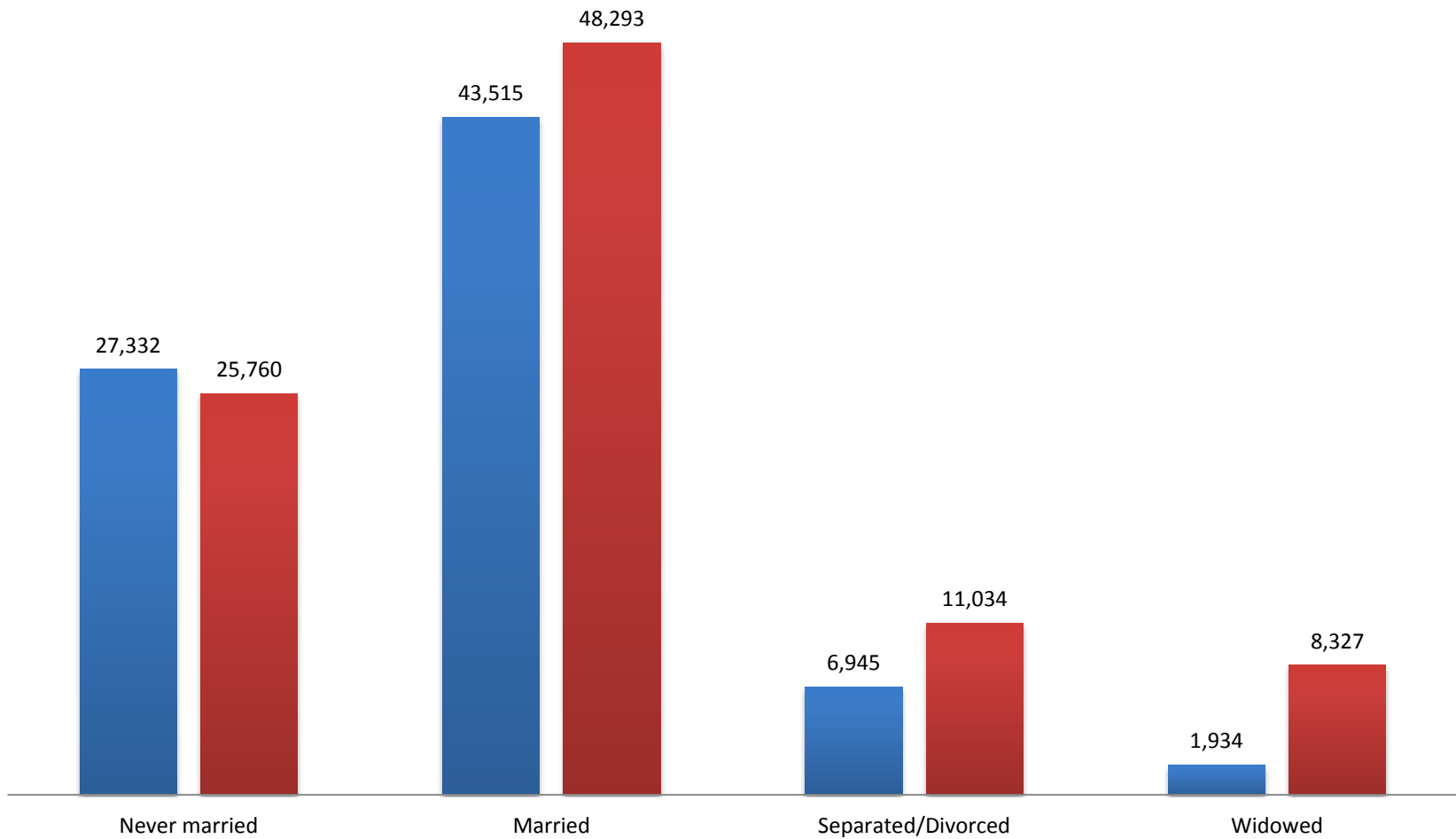
- Diocese population 887,195
- Catholic population 223,240
- % Catholic 25.2

# Marital Status of Catholics by Sex

(Aged 15 and over)

Diocese of Broken Bay

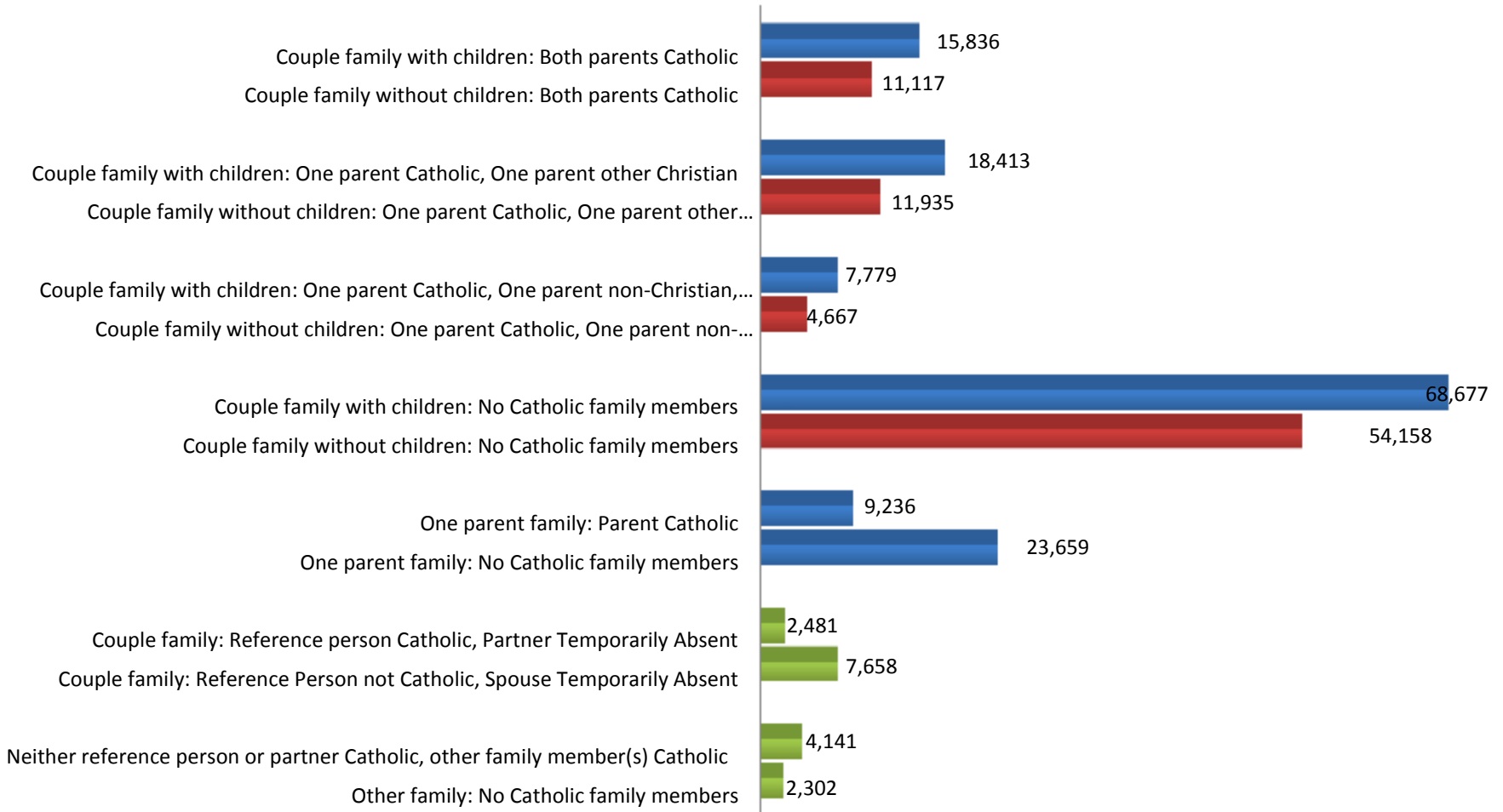
Male Female



# Family Composition by Religious Affiliation

## Diocese of Broken Bay

■ With Children ■ Without Children ■ No. of Families

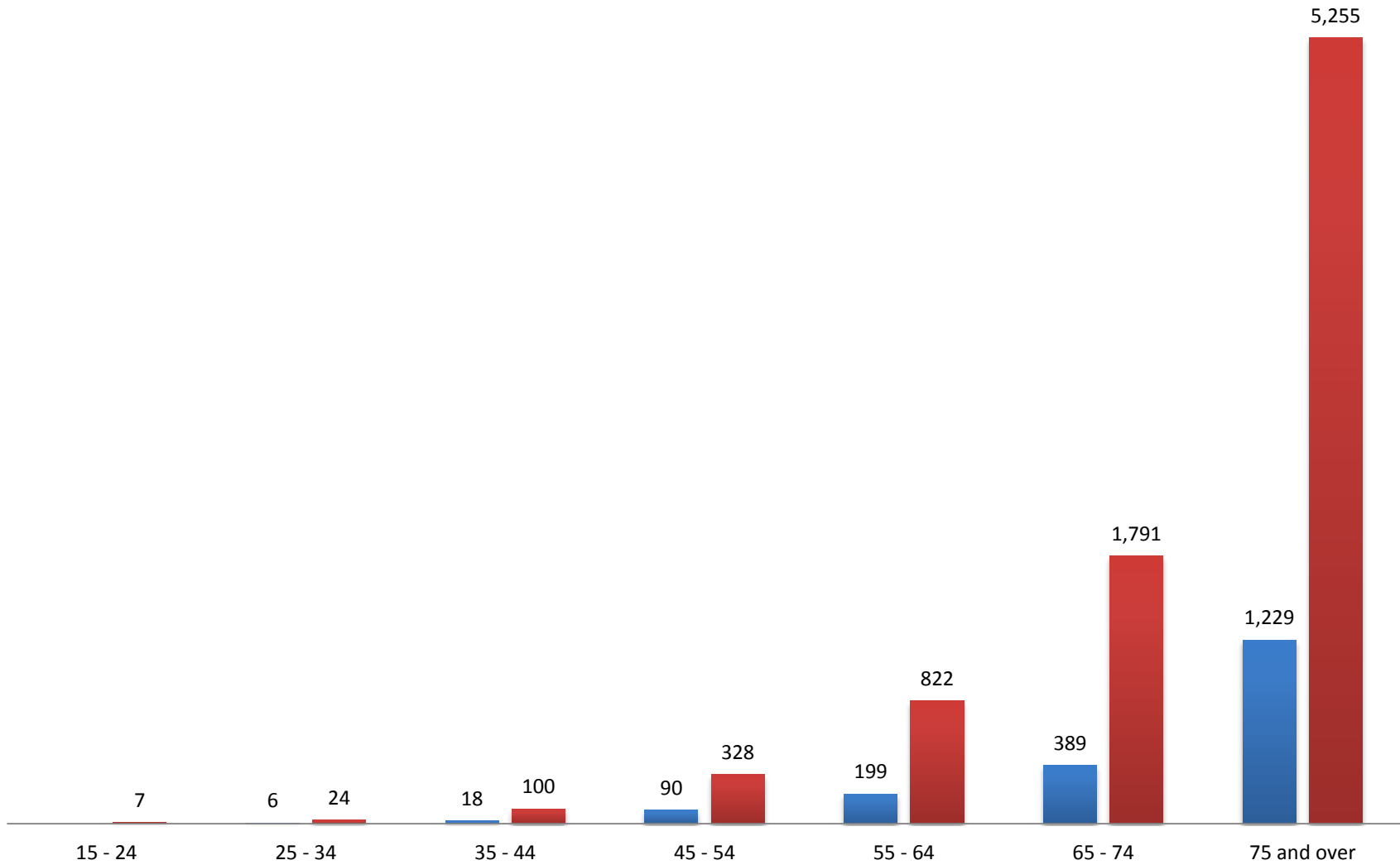


# Widowed Catholics by Age and Sex

Aged 15 and over

Diocese of Broken Bay

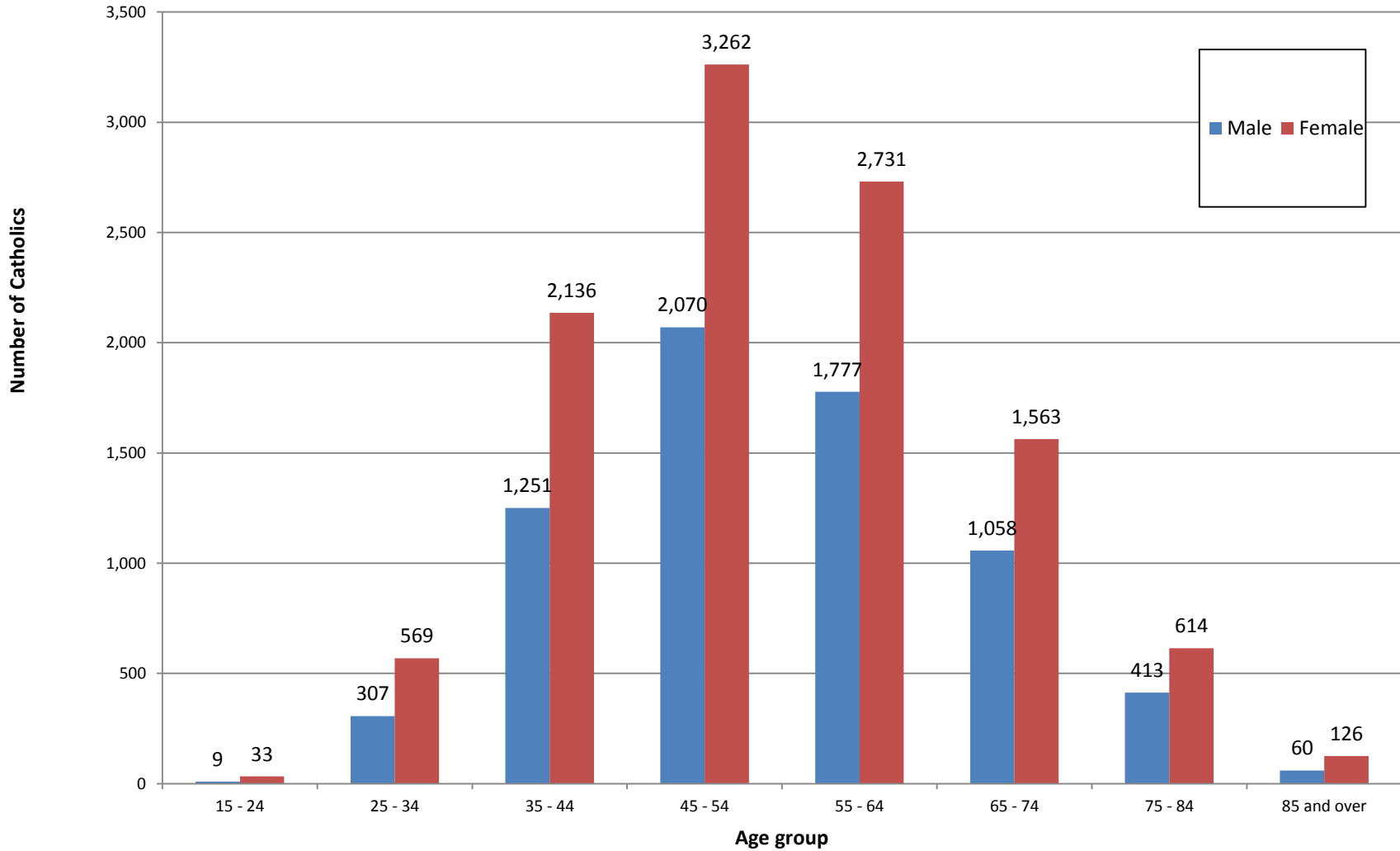
■ Male ■ Female



# Separated or divorced Catholics by Age and Sex

(Aged 15 and over)

Diocese of Broken Bay



# Young People

Philip Hughes, *Putting Life Together: Findings from Australian Youth Spirituality Research* (Melbourne, Fairfield Press, 2007)

1. Young people see themselves as constructing their lives through their choices.... they see themselves as constructing their own personal stories (pp.40-41)
2. Many young people felt it important to take responsibility for actions, beliefs, and their personal journeys. (p. 56)
3. One of the questions asked was who they admired... The most frequent response was mother, followed by father. (pp.78-79)

Figure 12.

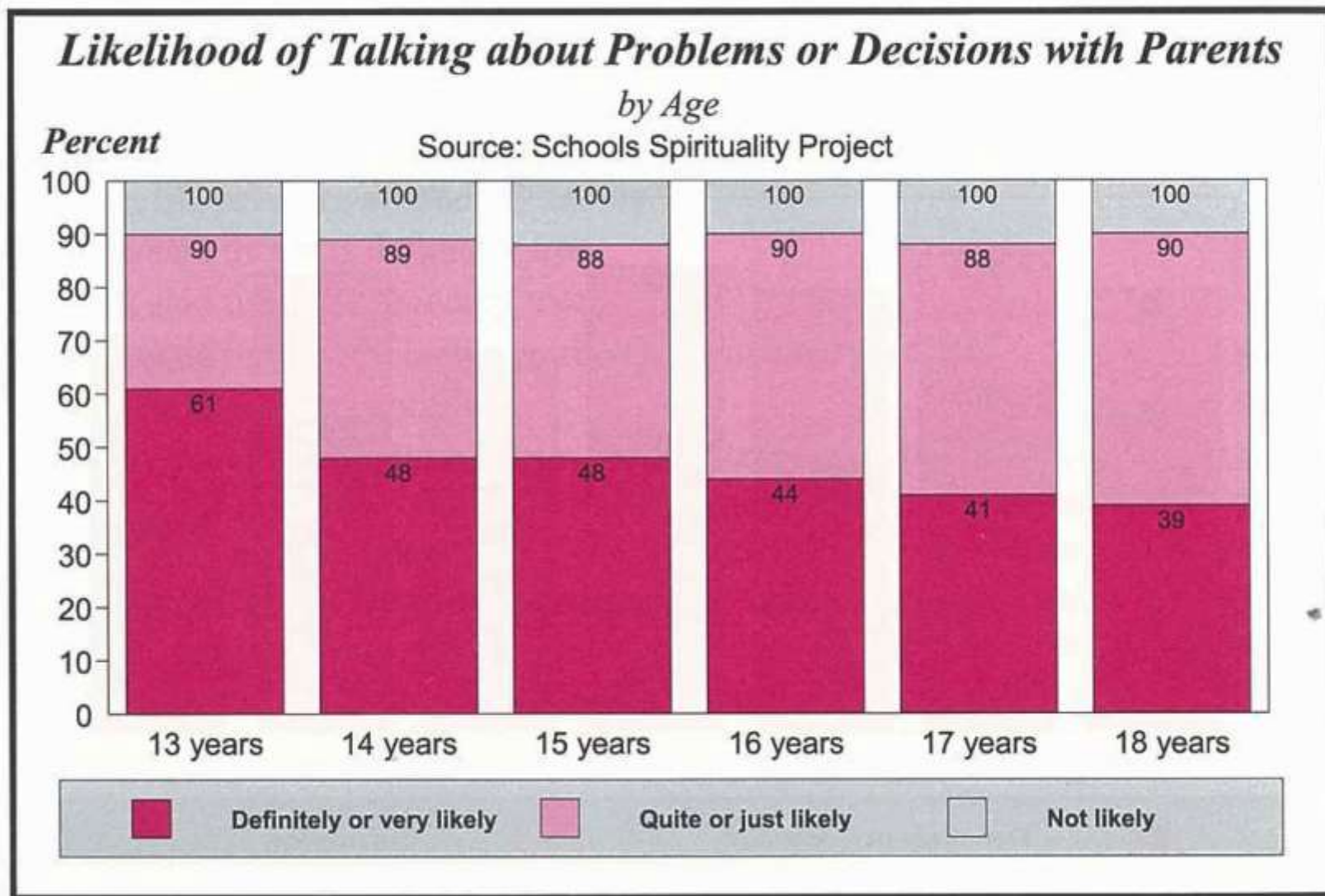




Figure 48.

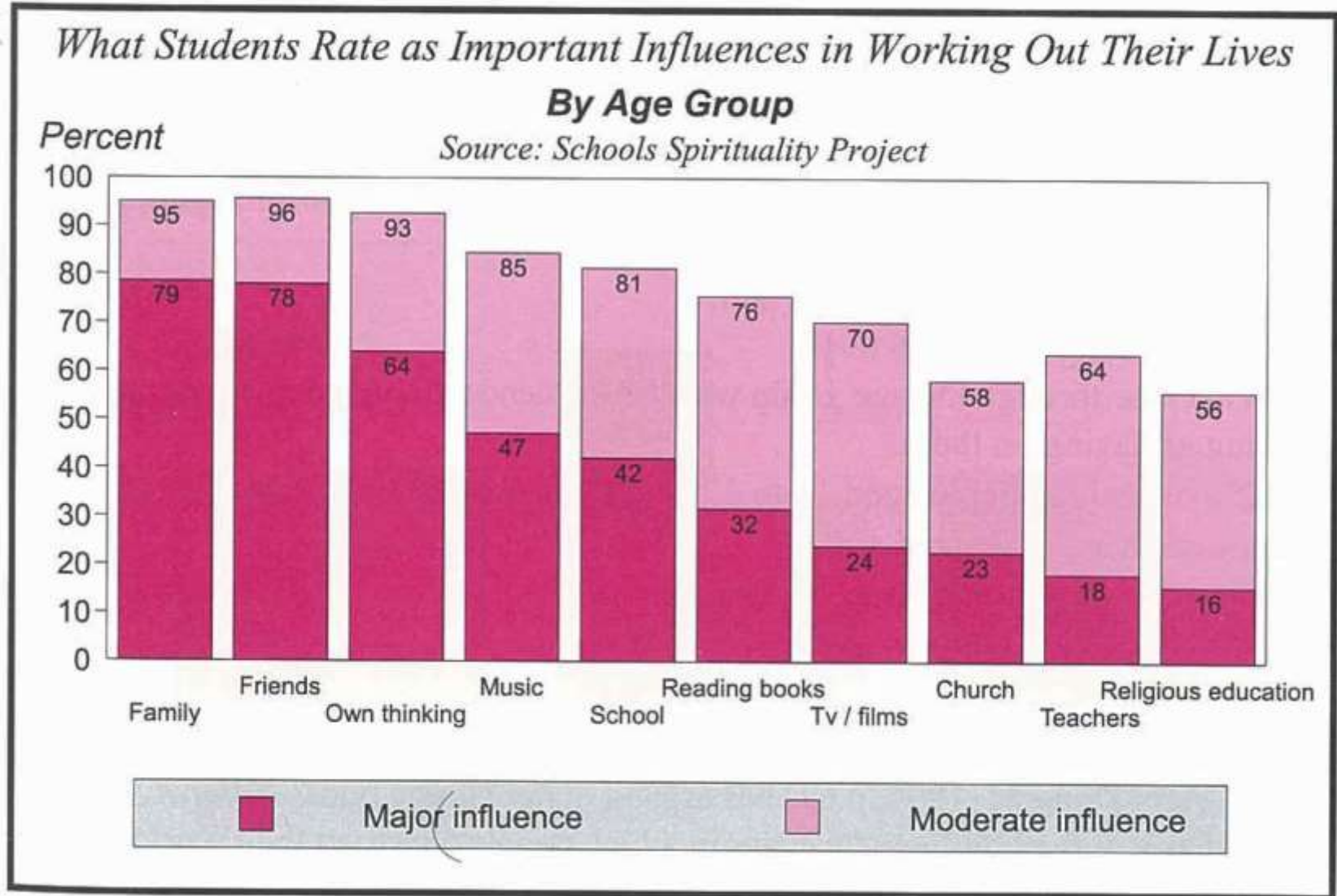


Figure 52.

## Extent to Which School Seen as Influencing Religion In Various Ways

Source: Schools Spirituality Project

Percent

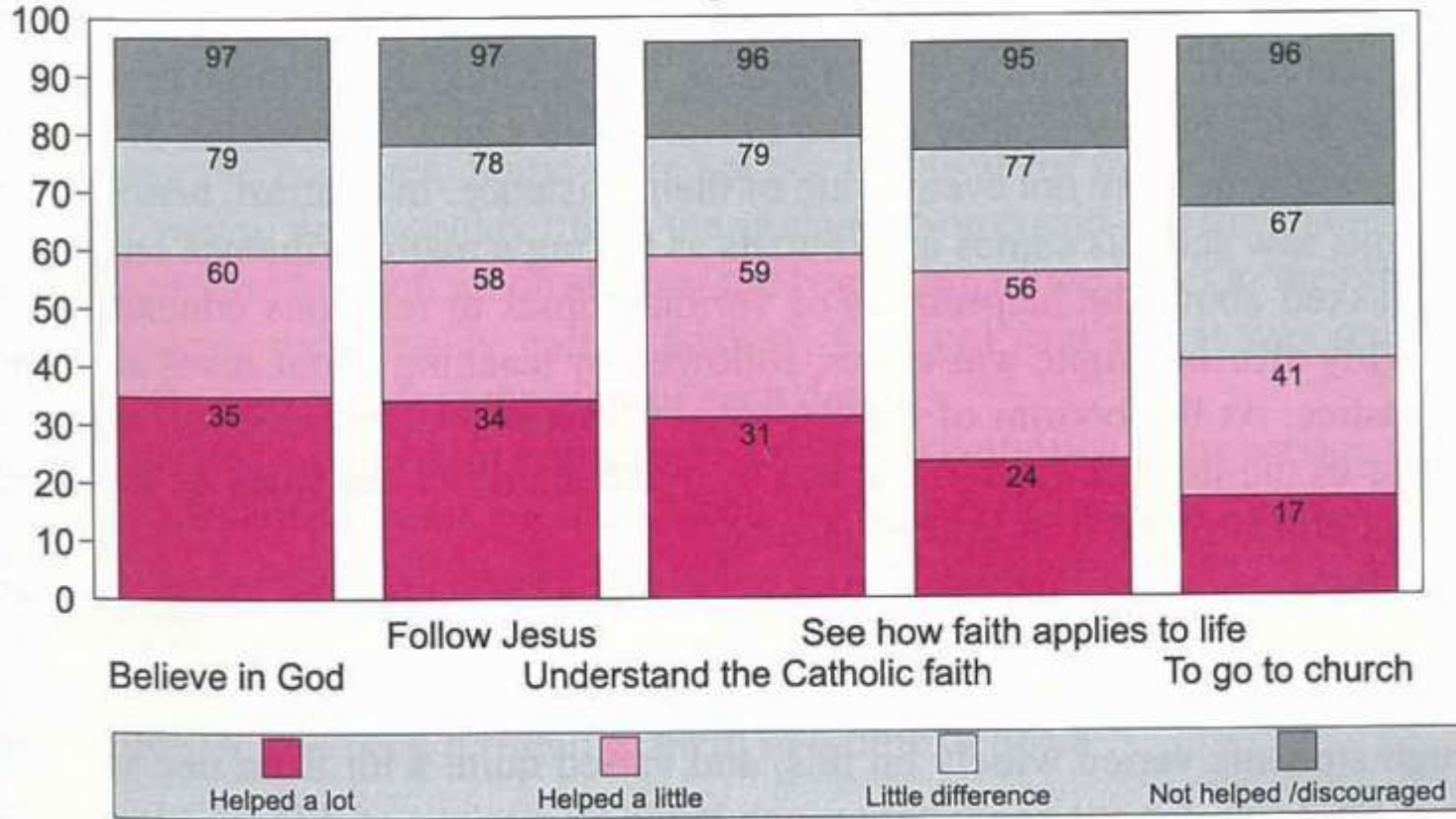
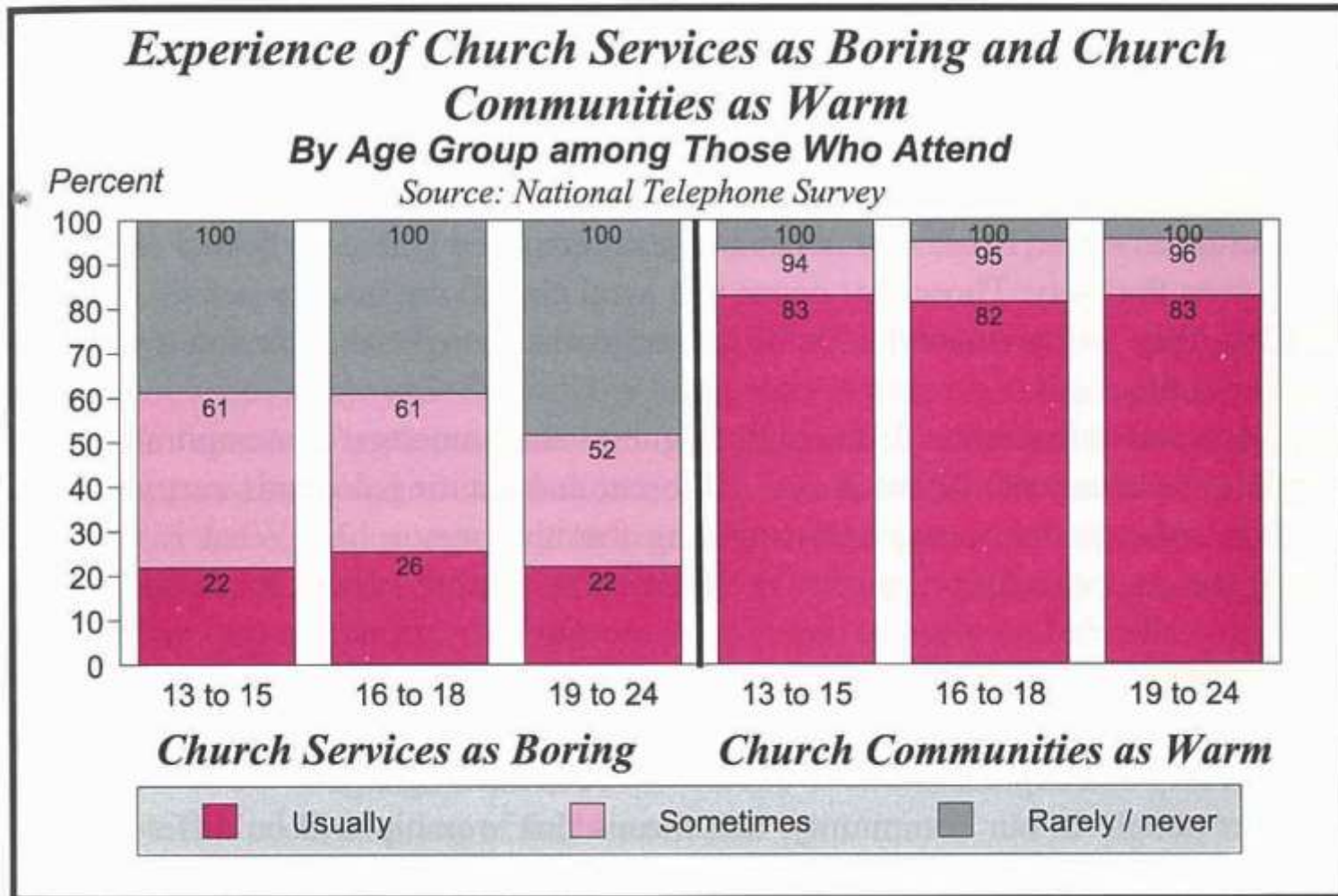


Figure 55.



# Needs of Catholic Married Couples

## Lived Experience

1. Church = Priests
2. Faith is separated from Religion/ God is separated from Church

## Pastoral Need

- Create environment where all baptised experience belonging within the Church
- Awaken possibilities of growing closer to God, with Christ, through the communion of the Church;
- Create opportunities for couples to experience sacraments as life-giving

# Needs of Catholic Married Couples

## Lived Experience

3. Nominal sacrament

4. Not a vocation

## Pastoral Need

➤ Formation on marriage as sacrament - enable couples to receive the gift of the sacrament in faith and understanding, and effectively live it throughout the stages of their marriage

➤ Engage couples in the discernment of God's call to them in marriage – so that they can intentionally respond to that call throughout their marriage

# Needs of Catholic Married Couples

## Lived Experience

5. Marriage preparation – practicalities of living life together
  
6. Importance of the witness of other married couples

## Pastoral Need

- Generate an appreciation for the distinctiveness of Catholic marriage as sacrament and vocation, which needs to be adequately discerned and prepared for.
  
- Nurture families who intentionally live out their vocation as 'Domestic Church', to enable them to witness authentically and effectively

# ACCOMPANYING FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Have I heard anything that surprised me?
2. What hope do I see in the data?
3. What challenges does the data hold?
4. What ways are we seeking to get to know these people better in our communities?
5. What supports/accompaniment are we currently offering?
6. How can these be improved?

# ACCOMPANYING FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- From research findings, Art of Accompaniment is meaningful way of approaching ministry to young people.
- Companions need to be authentic representatives of the Christian faith.
- To represent Christ's closeness, we need to build personal relationships with (young) people.
- Parents create patterns of faith-life and rituals that are experienced as meaningful and authentic in child's formative years.
- Parish create environment where baptised experience belonging – family of families
- Parish create patterns of faith-life and rituals that are experienced as meaningful and authentic for parents and young people.
- Professional & Spontaneous ministers seek to minister to family units, supporting parents in their accompaniment, as well as being authentic witnesses themselves.