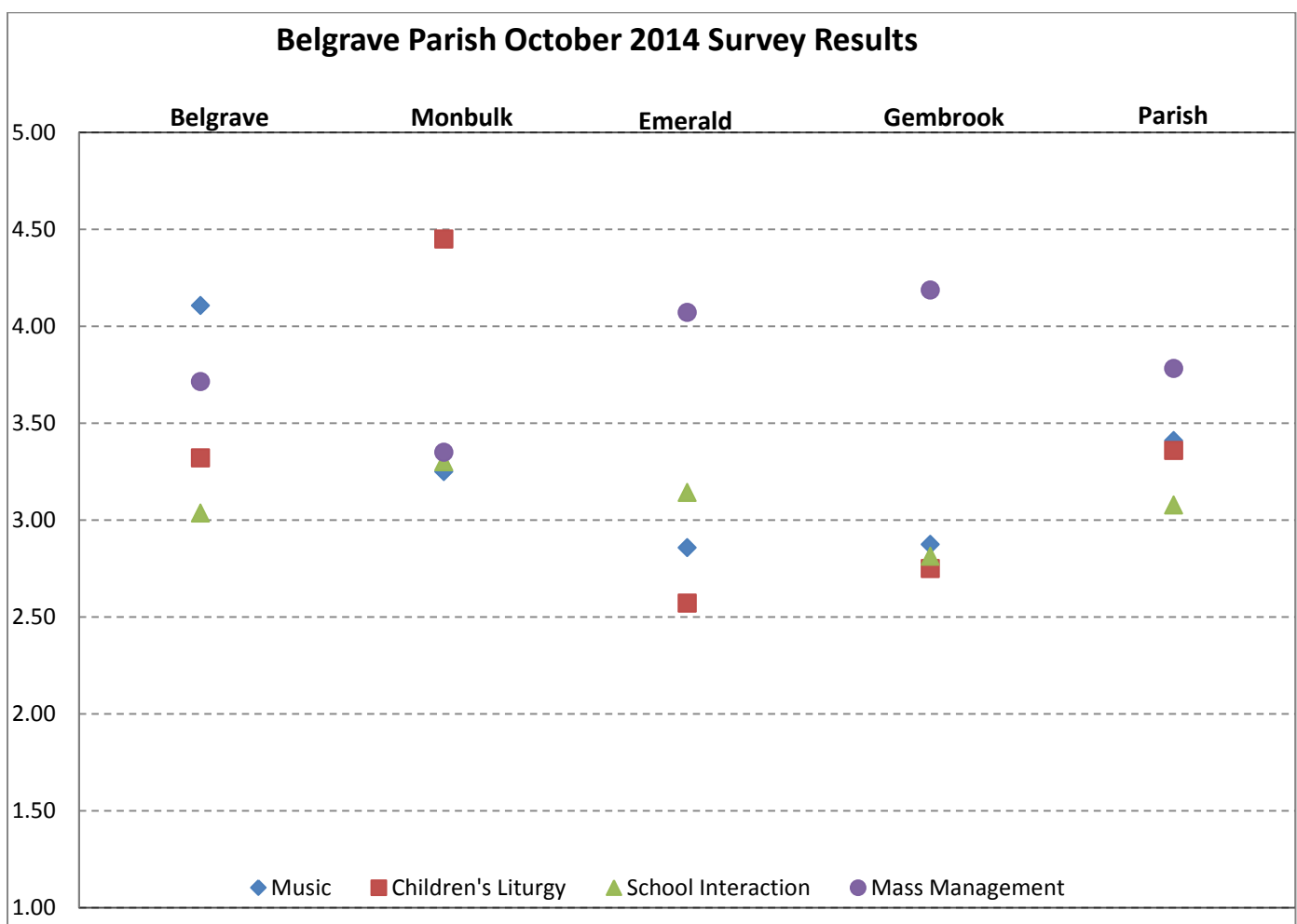


St Thomas More Belgrave – Survey October 2014

In October a survey went out to the broader parish via Mass attendees at the various centres. The survey was also available at the Parish Office and on line. The object of the survey was to gather feedback to help tailor faith services to parishioners. The survey was designed to be short, low cost, and measurable and have plenty of space for comments. The idea was it would be easy to fill in and therefore increase participation. The survey response rate ended up being 24%. This was a fantastic result. Statistically for a 99% level of confidence this gives us a 12.76% margin of error. In short, the data collected was statistically significant. I have attempted to analyse the data and paint an open and honest picture of the findings for all to see.

The Findings:

Questions were both quantitative and qualitative in style. Quantitative results have been standardised into percentages with the higher the percentage the better the result. The table below reflects the “relative” results across the Mass centres of the various quantitative questions before conversion into percentages. It is clear from the data that each Mass centre is quite individual with different strengths and weaknesses.



Mass Times: On the subject of Mass Times, 88% of the broader Parish was very happy with Mass times. Gembrook was the happiest with the Mass times at 94%, Emerald and Belgrave the lowest with 86%.

Music: The results for Music were varied across the centres with the broader Parish scoring 60%. There were some good results from Belgrave 78% and some weaker results in Emerald & Gembrook, both 47%. Qualitative comments confirmed the numbers with all Mass centres except Belgrave having a constellation of views on the standard and type of music that should be played. There were both positive and negative comments as well as requests for music in the following areas; “Australian music, Aboriginal hymns, spiritual music, modern music, traditional hymns, CD Music “. Feedback to the Parish Council had indicated this may be an area in need of development and this has certainly been reflected in both the data and comments in the survey.

Children's Liturgy: Like Music, Children's Liturgy was varied throughout the Parish with a result of 59%. Monbulk had the highest result with 86%. It is worth pointing out that this was statistically the singularly highest result throughout the Parish for any number. Special mention should go to Mick Rogers for his work in Monbulk which came through in the comments, "Mick does a wonderful job.....the children are so innocent and honest which always puts a smile on my face". Monbulk also came through from the comments as very "child friendly". The weakest result in the Parish was Emerald with 39% and Gembrook with 44%. This in part may be a reflection of size, regularity of Children's Liturgy and makeup of the congregation. It was also interesting throughout the comments that many Parishioners actively craved the child interaction, "on occasions it would be good if the children would share what they learnt.....more children to do readings". Other interesting comments that could be reflective in this area, "teach order of Mass and lives of the Saints.....more focus on feast days.....more use of symbols".

Activities: The strongest activity that Parishioners wanted to see was Youth Activities with 47%. This was also backed up by additional comments indicating a desire to see younger people within the church. Second was Seniors Activities with 26%, Spiritual Training 19%, Retreats and Church History/ Culture both had 13%, and Theological Training has 9%. Many of the Youth Activities were interlinked with comments around schools and "more regular family Masses...young mums group". There was also a suggestion of a separate "seniors Mass" reflecting the strong result for Seniors Activities.

Schools and Parish: Interaction between the School and Parish was the weakest Parish result with just 52%. The weakest result was Gembrook with 45%, but this would be expected given it has no school, is the most remote Mass centre and most of the closest schools are in an adjoining Parish. The strongest result was Monbulk with 58%. Emerald had 54% and Belgrave 51%. It is worth pointing out that this reflects the interaction with the Parish and all schools both primary, secondary and state and vice versa. Confirmation of the numbers came in the comments such as, "no connection.....with State and Secondary Schools". Comments such as "more involvement of Parish and Parishioners in school" reflected a receptiveness of the Parish to be more involved in the life of the schools. There also seemed to be a strong connection between schools and youth activities with comments such as "Monthly Family Masses.....more youth Masses....outreach programs to draw families into church". One more cautionary comment to be aware of was "Family Masses at normal times otherwise no interaction with broader Parish".

Mass Management: Mass Management was regarded as the strongest result throughout the Parish with 70%. Gembrook 80% and Emerald 77% being the stand out. Many comments backed up the effort and how the Mass Managers "did a good job". One reflection in the comments was to how much of the "heavy lifting was left to a few.....we need more helpers".

Positive/Happiest Measure: Based on an aggregated result of all the data responses, the most positive/happiest Mass centre was Monbulk 70% followed by Belgrave 69%, Emerald & Gembrook with 61%.

Other Interesting Comments: Regarding the structure of the Mass; "One collection not two.....More silence in church.....More reflection time during Mass.....shorter services....improved morning tea.....name tags".

Other good idea: "Mass outside during summer.....inter-centre fellowship.....inter-faith activities...prayer nights.....social trips.....Mass centre picnics".

I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to complete the October 2014 survey. It is through your effort that we have been able to aggregate useful information to better target services and make you faith experience more meaningful. For those who did not get the chance to complete the survey, fear not, we plan to repeat this short form survey again next year!