Using Data in Pastoral Planning

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA)
Pastoral Assistance Surveys and Services (PASS)
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Including:

Overview of CARA

Overview of PASS System

PASS Services and options
To discover, promote, and apply modern techniques and scientific informational resources for practical use in a coordinated and effective approach to the Church's social and religious mission in the modern world, at home and overseas.
Overview of CARA

- CARA is a national, non-profit organization that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church.

- Founded in 1964, affiliated with Georgetown University since 1989.

- The CARA Inspiration:

  "In pastoral care, sufficient use must be made not only of theological principles, but also the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology, so that the faithful may be brought to a more accurate and mature life of faith"

  --- The Second Vatican Council Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes).
Overview of CARA

- Three dimensions to CARA’s mission:
  - To increase the Church’s self understanding
  - To serve the applied research needs of Church decision-makers
  - To advance scholarly research on religion, particularly Catholicism.
You need a parish pastoral plan...
You need a survey of parishioners...
You need PASS

Pastoral Assistance Surveys and Services (PASS) is an innovative tool for pastoral planning. Using a highly developed but flexible survey system, pastoral leaders can deepen their understanding of the people in their pews. Beginning with the formulation of parish-specific questions, and following through to the creation of user-friendly, effective materials, PASS can meet the needs of any pastoral community.

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http://www.cara.georgetown.edu
Overview of PASS

- The Pastoral Assistance Surveys and Services (PASS) System is a dynamic tool for parish leaders engaging in pastoral planning.

- Using a bank of nationally tested questions, in conjunction with a patented survey design method, PASS is rigorous enough to be used diocesan-wide, but flexible enough to be useful to individual parishes.

- Data are aggregated into readable, user-friendly reports and materials designed to aide parish and diocesan leaders in pastoral planning.
PASS Mission Statement

The mission of the Pastoral Assistance Surveys and Services, as part of the work of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, is five-fold:

**To offer user-friendly materials and personalized services so pastoral leaders effectively discern what information they need, how to interpret it, and how to use it**

- Texts are readable, usable, and applicable
- Specialize in applied research – research that is pertinent to Church leaders
- Designed to inform parish leaders, NOT to tell parishes “what to do”
PASS Mission Statement

To give voice to the needs and concerns of people served by Catholic parishes, schools, campus ministries, and other pastoral ministries.

- All parishioners have a chance to offer input on the pastoral plan.
- Subgroup analyses can pinpoint which groups within the parish and Diocese are most concerned with which issues, making the pastoral plan more inclusive for these groups.
PASS Mission Statement

To provide pastoral leaders with the objective information and statistical analysis they need to make good pastoral decisions

- PASS is committed to using rigorous social scientific methods.
- Questions, questionnaire design, data collection methods, and statistical analyses have been nationally tested over more than a decade.
- PASS acts as a neutral third party in pastoral planning, ensuring accurate data are presented, even when the findings are unexpected.
PASS Mission Statement

To teach pastoral leaders how to use social science methods to address the challenges they face

- CARA staff work with pastoral leaders to determine which methods or data collection efforts best serve the parish
- Once the final report has been written, PASS includes a guide for interpreting results and moving forward with the pastoral plan
PASS Mission Statement

To provide a variety of services, at not-for-profit rates, that address the specific leadership needs of Catholic parishes and other pastoral settings

- CARA is sensitive to the unique needs and resources of those in Church ministry
- CARA works with parish and diocesan leaders to determine the services and prices best suited to their needs
Seven Elements of Parish Life

CARA uses the following elements of parish life to inform survey design:

1. **Worship**
   - Homilies
   - Lectors
   - Spiritual growth

2. **Community**
   - Belonging in the parish
   - Involvement in parish life

3. **Leadership**
   - Organizational structure of the parish
   - Leadership of pastor, pastoral staff, and others.

4. **Formation**
   - Explaining, informing, and forming parishioners in Scripture, Church teaching, and tradition.
   - Religious education, schools, and faith formation.

5. **Social Justice**
   - Parish work directed at advancing social justice concerns.
   - Includes charities, advocacy, and action on behalf of justice

6. **Evangelization**
   - Efforts to witness to the Gospel
   - Ecumenism, reaching out to the unchurched, and building relations with the larger community

7. **Stewardship**
   - Sharing time, talent, and treasures with the parish
   - Volunteering, monetary contributions, and other commitments to the parish
PASS Services and Options
PASS Services and Options

• Standard reports, supplemented with optional additional services.
• Additional services include:
  ◦ Comparative data analyses
  ◦ Data collection tailored to youth
  ◦ Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping data
  ◦ Customized PowerPoint presentations
  ◦ In-person presentations by CARA staff.
Standard PASS Diocesan Report

Demographics –
can include parishioner demographics like age, race/ethnicity, education, income, and other variables.

Strengths –
easy to understand overview of the questionnaire items receiving the highest positive ratings.

Opportunities for growth –
overview of questionnaire items receiving the lowest ratings.

All parishes in the Dioceses distribute the same questionnaire. Diocesan-wide results are then presented in three sections:
Parish Life Narrative Report

- Presents data for each parish individually.

- Includes subgroup analyses where appropriate.

- Features a one-page bulletin insert of major findings for the parish, an executive summary, and a datasheet with the frequencies of responses to all questions.
Parish Life Comparative Report

Comparisons to parishes nationally, adult Catholics nationally, and two sub-groups in the parish for additional analyses

AND

Parish-level tailored PowerPoint presentation

Parish Life Narrative Report

Parish Life Comparative Report
Parish Life Youth Report

- Includes development of a questionnaire specially designed for the youth perspective of parishes and the Diocese.

- Questionnaire is distributed at the same time as the adult parish life questionnaire.

- Results from this survey are available for presentation on the parish level, and some comparisons to parishes nationally are included.
Additional PASS Services

Open-ended questions – for an additional processing fee, a maximum of two open-ended questions can be included on the survey.

What is the greatest challenge facing our parish in the next five years, and what should be done about it?

What is the greatest strength of this parish? What is the greatest strength of the Diocese of Bethlehem? What can be done to enhance these strengths?
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping Data – by asking those in pew to include their home zip code, CARA can generate a map by parish or Diocese showing the location of parishioners.

Respondents were asked to list their home zip code. The map above shows the number of respondents within a given zip code area relative to St. Katharine Drexel Parish.
Additional PASS Services

Major findings can be presented in tailored PowerPoint presentations at the Diocesan or parish level.
CARA researchers can make in-person presentations of the major findings at the parish or Diocesan level.
For additional information

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