

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate  
Georgetown University  
Washington, D.C.



**Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement: Impact on Faith Life  
and Vocational Discernment**

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**Introduction**

Vietnamese American Catholics are of special interest because not only are they one of the U.S. Catholic Church's larger ethnic groups, but they are also one of its fastest growing. While the largest wave of Vietnamese immigration occurred in the 1970s, Vietnamese have continued to immigrate over the ensuing decades, with Catholics currently making up approximately 30% of the U.S. immigration population from Vietnam, where less than 7% is Catholic (Park, Henderson, Vaughn, Bruce, & Cherry, 2015). Starting as one of the first small communities in New Orleans after the Vietnam War in 1975, Vietnamese American Catholics have now established nearly 300 Vietnamese Catholic communities and parishes across the United States, a response from many dioceses in the United States to the pastoral needs for these Catholics.

That they have remained faithful to their Catholic faith is evidenced in the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate's studies of new priests, religious sisters, and religious brothers, where Vietnamese American Catholics are consistently over-representative of their numbers in the general U.S. Catholic population (Do, Wiggins, & Gaunt, 2021; Gautier & Do, 2020; Do & Gaunt, 2020). Vietnamese Catholics are traditionally supportive of encouraging vocations and forming future leaders for the Church through family support and involvement in their parish communities (Wiggins and Do, 2019). One major youth group organization that is popular among Vietnamese Catholics is the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement in the U.S.A. (VEYM), which is believed to have produced a relatively high number of religious and priestly vocations. VEYM is a volunteer faith organization that assists young people in learning about their Catholic faith and nurturing them to live exemplary Christian lives. While this organization is connected to an international Church movement for the formation of youth ages five to twenty-five—the Apostleship of Prayer (<https://www.popesprayer.va/what-is-eym/>)—the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement is distinctive because of its attention to the language and culture of Vietnam in its formation of children and young people in the United States. It is also unique in that adults volunteer their time to help in passing on the faith to young people. VEYM now has 136 chapters across many parishes and communities in various archdioceses/dioceses in the United States. It boasts over 25,000 youth members under the direction of about 2,500 youth leaders (<https://veym.net/>).

Research has shown various conflicts between the first generation's interest in passing on Vietnamese culture and the youth's desire to embrace American culture (Wiggins and Do, 2019; Park & Ecklund, 2007; Chan 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Even the most adept parish community would have difficulty navigating the expectations and needs of these various generations all in one congregation, and Vietnamese parishes and ministries also struggle to do so. As such, it is important to explore how the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement succeeds at meeting the pastoral needs of this young population as well as to document its contributions to nurturing the faith and encouraging vocations to the priesthood and religious life in the U.S. Catholic Church.

This study, generously funded by the Project Grant for Researchers at Louisville Institute, aims to explore (a) In what ways does VEYM affect the faith life of participating youth leaders? (b) In what ways does VEYM influence their vocational discernment to ministries within the Church? The primary impact of the study will be identifying successful ways to engage Vietnamese American youth as well as the youth of other immigrant groups in faith formation programs.

### **Methodology**

To investigate in what ways VEYM affects the faith life of participating youth leaders and in what ways VEYM influences their vocational discernment to ministries within the Church, the authors utilized both quantitative and qualitative research tools.

The quantitative research consists of surveys during winter 2022 and spring 2023 of VEYM youth leaders as well as priests and religious members attending VEYM in the United States. Altogether, 385 youth leaders completed the survey and 98 VEYM priests and religious completed the survey in total.

The qualitative research employed a variety of methods:

- Two focus groups were conducted among VEYM youth leaders concerning their satisfaction with VEYM as well as their experiences regarding the influence of VEYM on their faith life and their discernment to their vocations in the Church.
- Two interviews in Vietnamese were conducted with a priest and a religious sister who have been participating in VEYM activities focused on how the VEYM impacted on their vocation discernment to priesthood and religious life.
- Participant observation on VEYM Sunday events, talking with youth leaders and VEYM participants.

As our results from the surveys conducted are the most representative of the components of our study, our study highlights that data and uses the qualitative data from the focus groups and interviews to further elaborate on those survey findings.

## PART I: FINDINGS FROM THE YOUTH LEADERS SURVEY

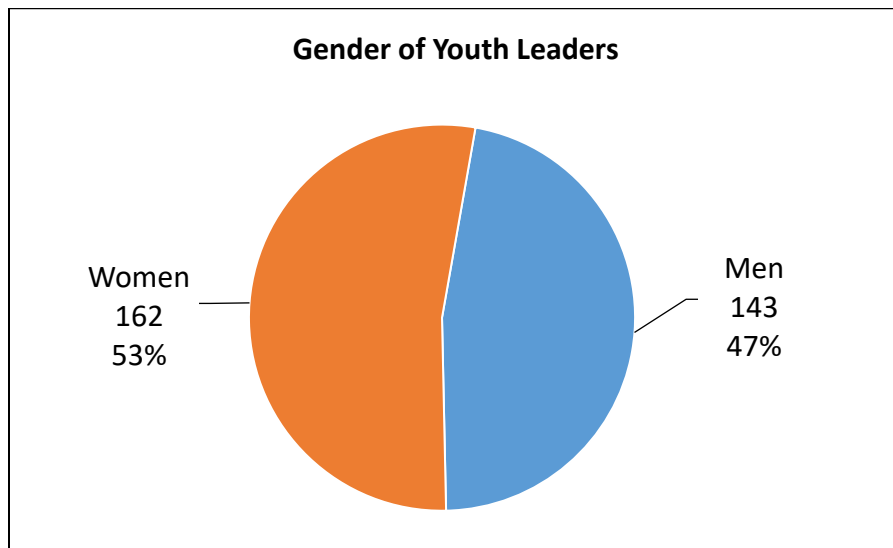
This part of the report presents findings from the survey of youth leaders. Youth leaders are ages 18 and above, who are trained by Youth-Leader Trainers and Chaplains. They lead every activity to accompany youth members during the weekly classes. This part discusses the background and characteristics of respondents, the impacts the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement on their faith life and life vocation discernment, as well as various factors that influence their decision to continue participating in the Movement’s activities.

### Section 1: Background and Characteristics of Responding Youth Leaders

This section presents the demographic characteristics and relevant experiences of the 385 respondents. These characteristics include their gender, age, country of origin, and educational background.

#### Gender

Participants in this study are almost evenly distributed in terms of gender. About half are women (53%), and half are men (47%).



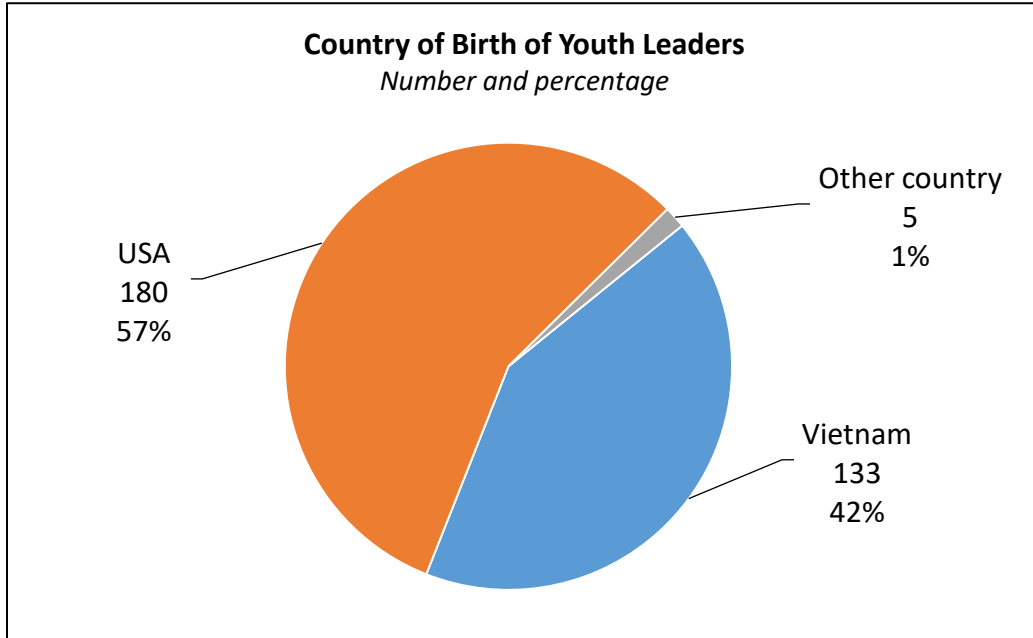
**Age of Responding Youth Leaders**

One does not need to be a youth to be a youth leader, with responding youth leaders born between 1960 and 2008 and thus ranging in age from 15 to 63 in 2023. The average age of the respondents overall is 32 (33 for men and 32 for women). The median age for the entire sample is 31 (31 for men and 30 for women).

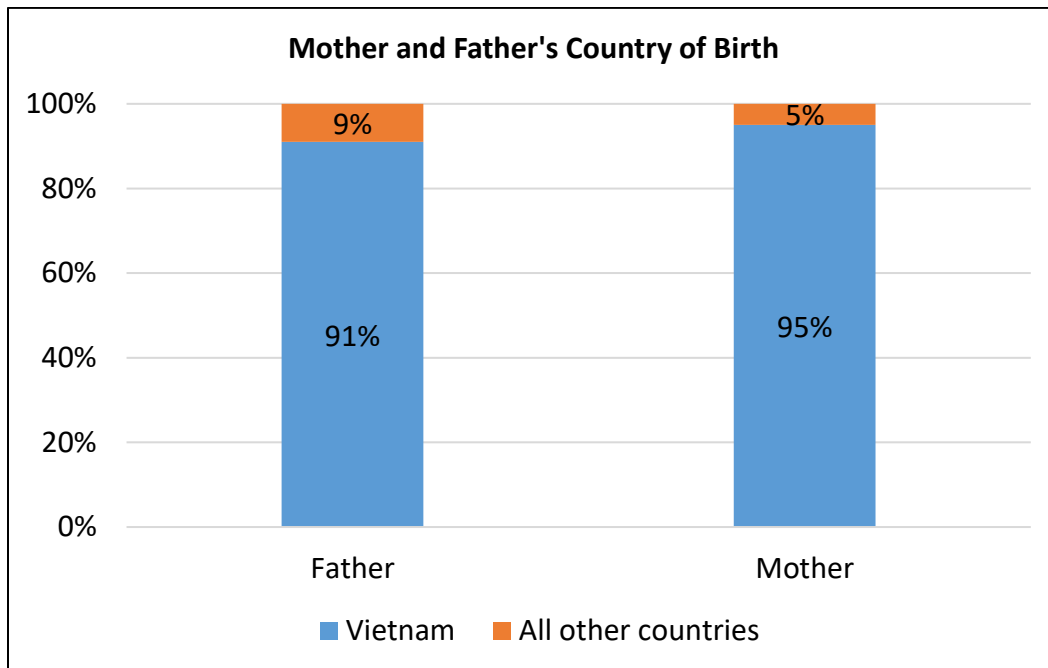
<b>Age Distribution of Youth Leaders</b>			
<i>Percentage in each category</i>			
	<b>All</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
	%	%	%
25 and younger	30	28	31
26-30	21	24	20
31-35	19	23	16
36-40	12	13	11
41 and older	19	20	19
Age range	15-63	19-63	15-61
Average age	32	33	32
Median age	31	31	30

## Country of Birth

The figure below shows the country of birth of responding youth leaders. Six in ten were born in the United States (57%) and four in ten born in Vietnam (42%). One percent reports being born somewhere.

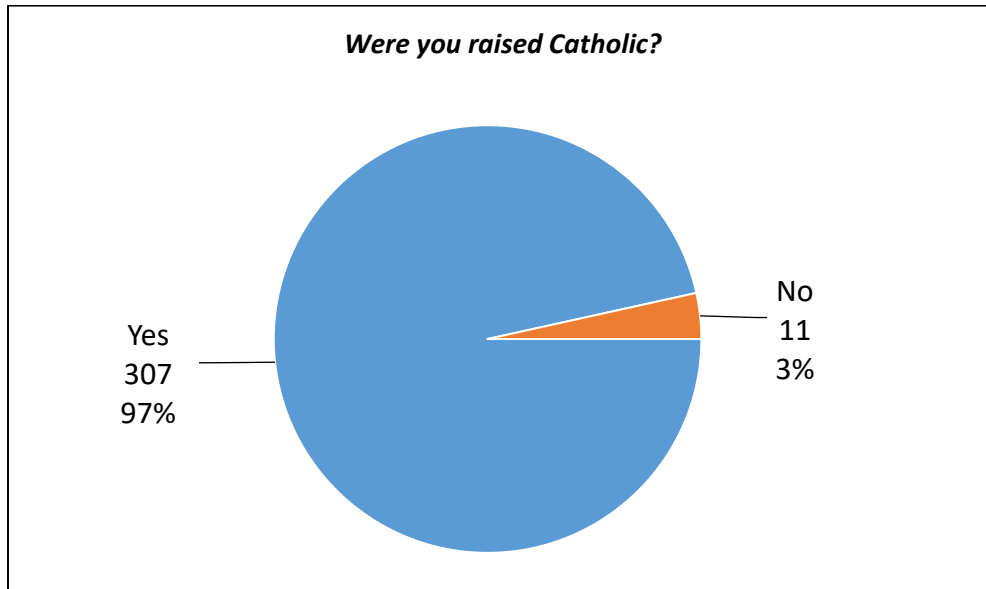


Almost all fathers and mothers of the respondents were born in Vietnam. Just a few of the parents were born somewhere else.



## Religious Background and Practices

Almost all respondents were raised Catholic.



Nearly nine in ten responding youth leaders (85%) attend Mass at least every week. VEYM youth leaders are more likely than other U.S. adult Catholics (21%) to attend Mass at least every week.

**About how frequently do you currently attend Mass?**

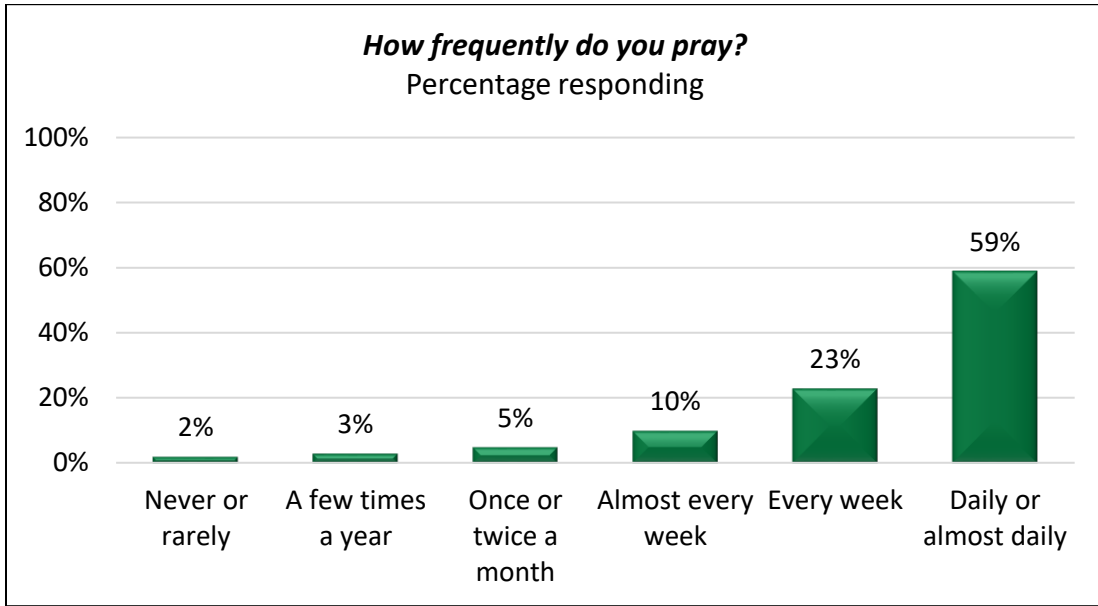
Percentage responding

	<b>VEYM Youth Leaders</b>	<b>Adult Catholics Nationally<sup>1</sup></b>
	%	%
More than once a week	24	3
Every week	61	18
Almost every week	9	10
Once or twice a month	3	13
A few times a year	2	27
Never or rarely	1	26

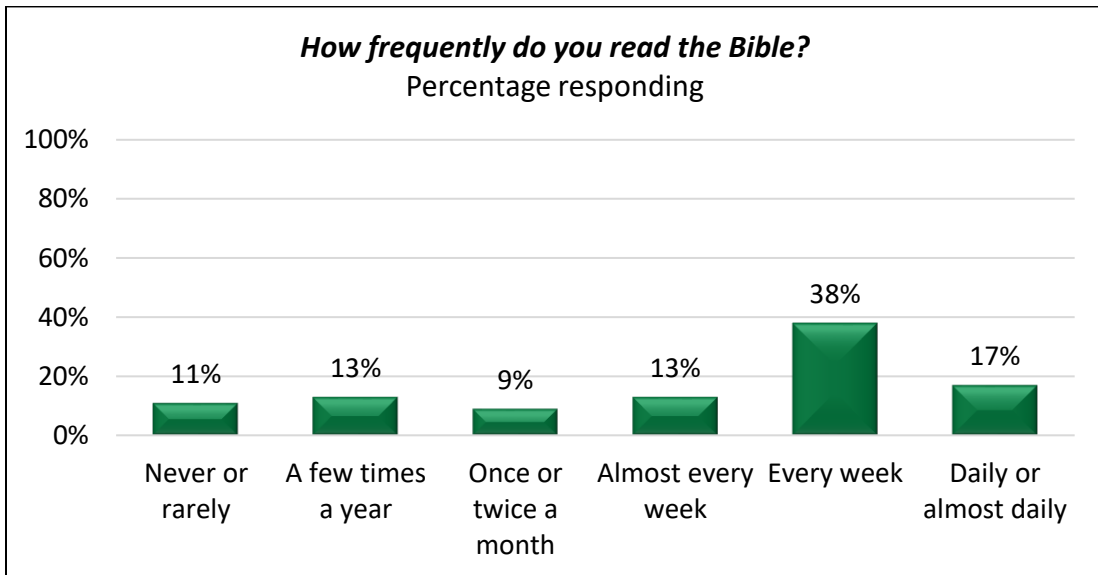
<sup>1</sup> Source: Gray, Mark M. 2023. *Catholic Media Use in the United States*. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Georgetown University: Washington, DC.



More than eight in ten VEYM youth leaders (82%) pray every week or daily. Six in ten say that they pray daily or almost daily (59%).

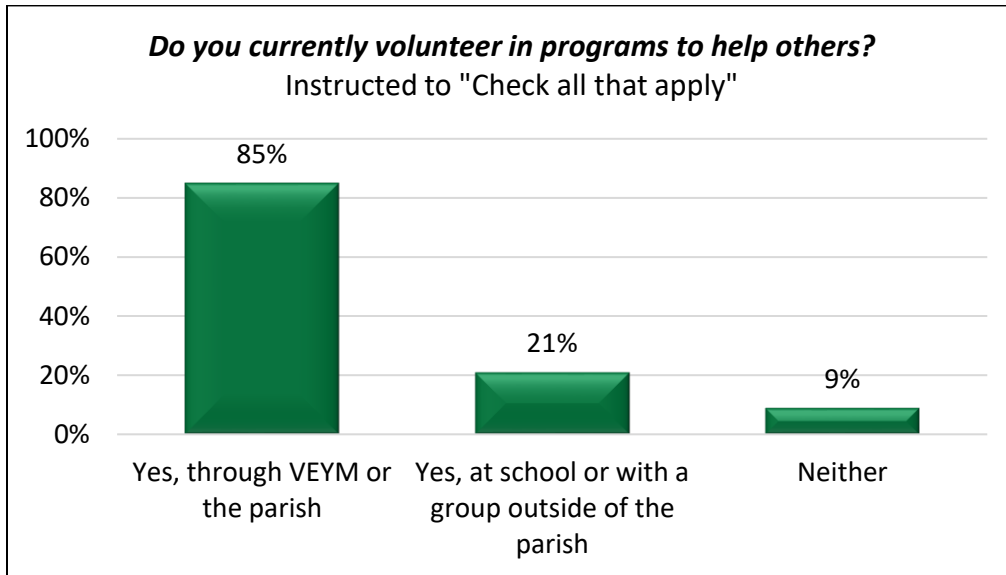


About seven in ten respondents (68%) read the Bible almost every week, with one in six saying they read the Bible daily or almost daily (17%).

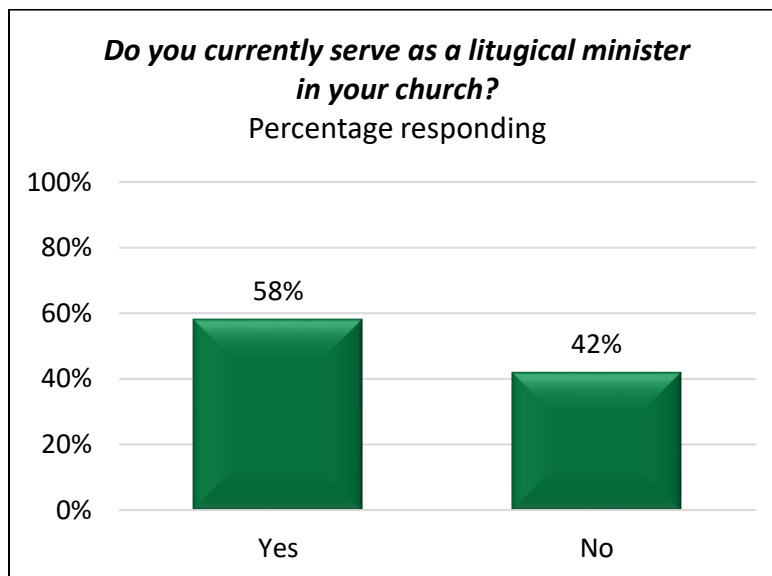


### Participation in Voluntary Work and Ministry

When asked if they currently volunteer in any programs to help others, more than eight in ten responding (85%) report that they do so through VEYM or the parish and two in ten (21%) report currently volunteering in programs to help others at school or with a group outside the parish. Sixteen percent volunteer in programs in both of those categories. Nine percent report they do not volunteer in any programs to help others.



Six in ten report currently serving as a liturgical minister in the church (such as a lector, altar server, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, musician, or choir member).



## Catholic Education

A third (32%) attended a Catholic elementary or middle school. Two in ten attended a Catholic high school (22%) or a Catholic college/university (24%). At all three levels, men are more likely than women to have attended a Catholic school.

<b><i>Did you attend any of the following before you entered? *</i></b>				
Percentage responding "Yes" to each question				
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Nationally</b>
	%	%	%	%
Catholic elementary or middle school	32	38	25	16
Catholic high school	22	27	17	8
Catholic college/university	24	30	17	5

VEYM responding members are more likely than other U.S. Catholics to have attended a Catholic elementary school. In a 2016 national poll conducted by CARA,<sup>2</sup> 16% of U.S. adult Catholics report having attended a Catholic elementary school, compared to 32% among VEYM youth leaders. They are also three times more likely than other U.S. adult Catholics to have attended a Catholic high school (22% of respondents, compared to 8% of U.S. adult Catholics) and are five times more likely to have attended a Catholic college/university (24% of respondents, compared to just 5% of U.S. adult Catholics).

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<sup>2</sup> CARA Catholic Poll, 2016. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.

### Number of Years Participating in VEYM

Nearly half of the respondents (45%) have attended VEYM for 15 or more years. On average, respondents have attended VEYM for three years.

<b>Years you have attended VEYM</b>	
<i>Percentage responding</i>	
	%
0 – 4 years	21
5 – 9 years	16
10 – 14 years	18
15 or more years	45
Number of Years on Average	3

Six in ten respondents (63%) have attended VEYM for ten years or more. Two in ten are relatively new—they have attended for four years or less.

## Section 2: VEYM Impact on Youth Leaders' Faith Life

### Measuring the Impact of VEYM on Youth Leaders' Faith Life

Most respondents report a positive impact of participation in VEYM on their faith life. The table below measures the impact on the participants' faith life on different aspects, with the impact on growing in their relationship with Jesus (87%) and participating more in parish life (86%) having highest impact. Three in four or more (74% to 87%) say all of the measures in the table below were impacted by their participation in VEYM.

<b><i>How much of an impact has your participation in VEYM had on your faith life?</i></b>		
Percentage responding		
	<b>“Some Impact” or “A Great Impact” Combined</b>	<b>“A Great Impact” Only</b>
	%	%
Growing in your relationship with Jesus	87	60
Participating more in parish life	86	61
Participating more in Eucharistic Adoration	84	53
Increasing or strengthening your belief that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist	84	57
Increasing your understanding of the Bible	83	46
Understanding more fully what it means to be Catholic	83	51
Following the teachings of the Catholic Church	83	45
Praying more often	82	47
Living your faith in your daily life	82	48
Better serving the poor and needy	82	45
Understanding the history of the Church in Vietnam (such as the importance of Our Lady of La Vang and the Vietnamese Martyrs)	74	35

With one exception (the final row in the table above), between 45% and 61% of youth leaders say each of the measures above had “a great impact” on their faith lives.

## **Aspects/Activity of VEYM on Faith Life**

Respondents were asked to respond to this prompt: *Please identify a VEYM activity that has the most impact on your faith life.* There were 314 responses to this question, that can be grouped into the six broad categories discussed below.

### **Camps**

One of the frequently mentioned VEYM activity said to have impacted the respondents' faith lives were the VEYM camp programs they attended, including the VEYM training camps. Some examples are below.

*Attending training camps and camps in general.*

*Youth leader training camps.*

*For me, the opportunity to attend training camps as a youth leader was often a great source of spiritual renewal.*

*Eucharistic adoration at camps.*

### **Eucharistic Adoration**

The second frequently mentioned VEYM activity that impacted respondents' faith lives was their participation in Eucharistic Adoration through their involvement with VEYM.

*Eucharist adoration help me grows closer to God every day.*

*Lift up my Christian life through Eucharistic adoration.*

*Participating in Eucharistic Adoration.*

*Monthly adoration.*

*For me, the monthly adorations at our Chapter level have helped me in so many ways, ways that I will never truly understand until I die.*

### **Being a Leader/Teacher**

The third frequently mentioned VEYM activity was their service as leaders or teachers for the youth in the program.

*Serving as a youth leader in VEYM.*

*Teaching the youth.*

*Being a youth leader and mentoring the youth.*

*Lesson Planning.*

*Planning the academic calendar for members filled with activities and events.*

*Gathering all the kids to do the bang reo also known as a cheer. It shows how much the energy the kids have and their willingness to participate in their faith which makes me realize that I am doing this to help them strengthen their faith.*

### **Retreats**

The fourth VEYM activity that has impacted respondents' faith lives has been the retreats they have helped lead and/or participated in.

*Retreats.*

*Confirmation Retreats.*

*Advent and lent retreat.*

*Annual retreat.*

*Retreat.*

### **Prayer**

The fifth frequently mentioned VEYM activity that had an impact on youth leaders' faith lives was prayer. Some mentioned prayer generally with others mentioning specific prayers.

*Prayer.*

*Prayer (morning, meals, night).*

*Prayers before and after activity.*

*Recite rosary, daily prayers, bible reading.*

*Virtual rosary.*

*Spiritual bouquet activity.*

### **Living the Eucharistic Day**

The sixth frequently mentioned activity that had an impact was the VEYM activities for Living the Eucharistic Day or Eucharistic Life.

*Living the Eucharistic Day.*

*Living the Eucharistic.*

*Living the eucharistic day has the most impact on my faith life.*

*Living the Eucharistic Life.*

*Adoration and living the Eucharist day.*

### **Others**

Some responses did not fit into any of the above six categories. For example, 3% of respondents mentioned praise and worship as the most impactful VEYM activity for their faith life. Below are some examples of these miscellaneous responses.

*Praise & Worship.*

*Participating in Mass.*

*Our Weekly activities.*

*Explanation activities organized by VEYM.*

*Community involvement.*

*Weekly Gospel sharing.*

### **How Aspects or Activities of VEM Impact on Faith Life**

Youth leaders participating in the study were asked on the survey and in the focus groups this question: *How has the aspect of activity of VEYM impacted your faith life?* This section analyzes their responses, combining their written responses with their responses in the focus groups.

#### **Growing Closer to God**

The most mentioned impact the activities had on their faith life was that they brought them closer to God. Specific responses mentioned them thinking of God more in their daily lives, feeling closer to the Eucharist, and having a renewed sense of energy or peace.

*Brings me closer to God and refreshes my love for Him.*

*It helped me connect more with God, allowing me to let Him be with me throughout my day.*

*It reminds me to come back to Jesus and have a deeper relationship with Jesus.*

*Knowing that I am a daughter of God, being in the actual presence of Jesus makes me feel so loved by Him and that everything is in God's hands.*

*That I can actually set aside my daily life activities to come and relax and connect with Jesus as well as deeply reflection.*

*To really spend time with Jesus outside the routine Sunday Mass and to really acknowledge His presence.*

*Finding peace when I am in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Helps me feel comfort and strength in my weaknesses.*

*It allows me time to recollect myself and quietly have time with Jesus. As youth leaders, we are so busy serving others. So, retreats allowed us to serve ourselves.*



*It brought love, peace, happiness and closer to God.*

*It enriches my material life and spiritual life.*

*It made me feel more at peace.*

*It makes me love life more.*

*Walking with God holding my hand and I am not afraid reaching out with love.*

*When I was in Vietnam, my only relation to God was Sunday Mass, and sometimes I just gave it. But when I start going to VEYM, Sunday Mass is the bare minimum for me, and I tried to attend more, go to Church more, and have more relationship [with God]. It just automatically comes to me. Also, the way VEYM is, it makes me closer to God and through talking to the kids and teaching them, I know more about my God, and I know more about why I really need him and want to be with him.*

*I knew VEYM pretty late, when I was probably 23 or 24. I had friends who were in VEYM, but before that I was a gamer, and I was pretty much a loner. I did not consider joining VEYM until we started to have a new chapter at our church. Also, at that time I was a little bit lost, I had finished college and didn't really know what to do. I was still thinking whether I should go further to get my master's. So, it was a good time to explore something new. So VEYM came as something new. For me it was a chance to get to know God closer, instead of before, when God was more like the acting thing. In one ear out the other ear. Sunday, I was Catholic, but I really didn't pay too much attention to it. Until I got closer to VEYM, went on more retreats, more camping and then I got closer to God that way. And, at the same time, as [Name] mentioned, I was going to VEYM at the same time I was developing my faith. From the youth, when the youth pray, you pray. You have to lead them as an example as well. So it's a reciprocal relationship. You grow your faith, and you help others grow their faith as well. God is more in my life now than He ever used to be, and VEYM definitely helped that. And as a parent, my kids are in VEYM, so I want to be a good role model for them and to be closer to them as well. Not to just ship them off to VEYM and let whoever take care of them. I'm just a few steps away, maybe in a different Division, and if they ever need me, they can always come to me.*

### **Increasing their Understanding of their Faith**

Another way VEYM activities have impacted youth leaders' faith lives is in their growth in their understanding of the Catholic faith and of God more generally.

*Helped me understand the meaning of the gospel passages and read the bible more. I am learning to pray more and learning more about the saints.*

*It allowed me to have a better understanding in my own faith.*

*Living the Eucharist Day and Weekly Gospel not only help me to be united and closer to God but also impact my thinking and help me to see things through the eyes of God.*

*Provide training, resources, and experience.*

*The deeper discussions on Catholic teachings with colleagues and Trainers during lessons and Q&A sparked my curiosity and inspired me to study apologetics after camp.*

*I was able to get to know the historical events in the bible and having fun with the activities at the same time. Therefore, I became closer to Jesus, God.*

*I've been in VEYM since I was 7 years old all the way up [until now]. For me it was very valuable to have a community that taught me how to live the faith outside of the church walls and outside of a classroom wall.*

### **Strengthening their Faith**

The third frequently mentioned way that VEYM activities helped them was by strengthening their faith. Several of these responses mentioned a stronger faith in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, specifically.

*Deepen my faith. Practicing faith more actively and proud. Love my faith.*

*Puts me in an environment that fosters my faith and increases the understanding of my faith.*

*Reinforce my belief in the true presence of Christ.*

*It helped me to understand my role as a Catholic as well as to reignite my flame and faithfulness to God.*

*This has impacted my faith by having me become more serious about my faith. Having adoration at the event it hit me that Jesus is truly present in the blessed sacrament.*

*Throughout every training camp my spiritual life and my personal life grow better in faith. I know that I will put my truths in God's hand.*

*The other very important thing about the Movement to me is teaching me to love and revere the Eucharist as our center, our source and summit of our lives, especially now that I*

*see how few Catholics believe in the Real Presence. It was a blessing to have been taught that from a very young age.*

*At my parish, we didn't have adoration on a regular basis, but once VEYM started we began having monthly adoration, and with adoration, I grew closer to the Eucharistic Jesus. Some of my fellow youth leaders said that we are beginning to lose that faith, that realization of the real presence of seeing Jesus. I started doing a practice after communion, when priests or deacons put the Eucharist back, I still stayed kneeling as they cleaned the vessels because I see Jesus as still present until the vessels are clean. That is my experience with VEYM.*

*I think it definitely made more of an impact as a youth leader. When we become youth leaders, we become a faith role model. So, our own spirituality and our own faith lives have to be very strong in order to really be good youth leaders for the youth. When I became a youth leader and I started having to put together lessons and activities, doing that research and reading more of the Bible, and having to live virtuously and embody all our faith in the Catholic Church teaching, that's what really helped shape my spirituality.*

### Section 3: VEYM Impacts on Youth Leaders' Life Skills

In addition to VEYM’s impact on their faith life, responding youth leaders report that participating in VEYM has had a positive impact on their life skills. Nine in ten (90%) responding youth leaders report that participating in VEYM has helped them to develop their interpersonal and communication skills. Nearly nine in ten (86%) report that participating in VEYM has impacted the development of their leadership and pastoral skills. Almost eight in ten (78%) report that participating in VEYM has helped them to identify their talents and special gifts.

VEYM Participation Impacts on Youth Leaders' Life Skills		
Percentage responding		
	“Some Impact” or “A Great Impact” Combined	“A Great Impact” Only
	%	%
Developing your interpersonal and communication skills	90	61
Developing your leadership and pastoral skills	86	60
Identifying your talents and special gifts	78	45

Six in ten say participating in VEYM has had “a great impact” on the development of their interpersonal and communication skills (61%) and their leadership and pastoral skills (60%). Less than half say the same about its impact on them identifying their talents and special gifts (45%).

#### How Aspects or Activities of VEM Impact on Life Skills

Youth leaders participating in the study were asked in the survey and the focus group about how participating in VEYM has impacted their life skills. Youth leaders shared various activities of the Movement that have impacted them, which are described in the analysis below.

#### Developing Leadership Skills

Through working with and teaching the youth bible lessons, interacting and working with other youth leaders, VEYM has enabled the youth leaders to develop leadership skills in many ways. Youth leaders mention that participating in the VEYM helps them be flexible, for example.

*For me, versus like communication skill, people always treat you like you are so young, you're like 23. You just act like a kid because I am with kids! But then if a problem happens, you're not a kid, you're an adult. And that's what I learned. I learned to be flexible like. Normally, I will be so cheerful, including everyone, talking to everyone and socializing, being a kid, making everyone feel like I'll take care of them. I'm nice to them and I'm good, I'm friendly and playful. But when things come up, I will need to take initiative, be a leader, solve the problem. Be diplomatic, not be childish. That's the first thing. The second thing is the way I communicate with people and observe the way they react to what I'm saying, observing the way the situation is going so that I can solve the problem right away. I think that's the biggest thing I can share. And then, the way we work in VEYM. We are disciplined. So that's another thing I learned, and then to be able to work as a system, together as a team. How can I make it? How can I organize stuff? In the Movement, I have to do lesson plans, give out work for my assistants. So from all of these things. I know how to organize stuff in a good way and how to look at people in a good way, to give tasks to, to ask for help or to help out.*

*For me, the leadership skills I convey is kind of what [Name] was going at with being 'flexible.' For instance, I teach at a college level, so people always ask me for extensions and whatnot, especially during finals. A lot of it goes back to the skills I learned in the Movement, where you have to be firm but flexible. Imagine being a youth leader and you have a set schedule, where they have to go to this event, they have to go to this lesson— but sometimes the kids get tired, and you realize that if you give them a little break, they might be able to internalize the lesson a little more. I think of that in the way I teach classes at a college level— if I'm too firm and I say you have to submit this homework by this deadline, they might not learn a lot but if I give them one or two days extension, then they will really internalize the material more. Just like if I give the youth a break, a five, ten minute break, they'll follow the lesson a little better. So I think that type of leadership skill carries on at least into the work I do here.*

*I was given responsibility as I grew into my teenage years to take care of the younger members. I think that's pretty unique for our organization, because we feel a sense of being an elder brother or sister to the younger ones, but we still have those older role models. So we're not completely alone in taking care of our responsibility all by ourselves. And something I briefly mentioned before is the most powerful witness of this organization is that it's made up completely of volunteers. Nobody is gaining anything of monetary value for serving— it's truly out of the desire to serve, to imitate Christ, and to love one another. That's what's inspired me this whole time to remain as a youth leader, and simply to pass on everything that I received when I was younger, to try to create the same environment where the younger members can practice these skills, these leadership skills, even though it's difficult at different ages, but to practice these skills. To try leadership and to grow and eventually take on responsibility themselves as young leaders. It's a cycle, where the older generation passes down to the next and to the next, and I'm very heartened that the Movement sort of ensures its own future in that way, by investing into its younger members. Again, completely voluntarily.*

*The Movement through its lessons has taught me many things, like teamwork and how to deal with certain situations. I meet other people, or I have a job that deals with youth, and I can use what the Movement has taught me and use that in an environment outside of the movement. So maybe I used to work with an organization that deals with poverty or low-income families, and there were a lot of situations that I saw within this environment and the Movement had resources or lessons that I had learned, and I used that to deal with the situation within this environment that I worked in. Talking about servant leadership, servant leadership within the movement has taught me that sometimes it's not focused mainly on the Movement itself, but you should use that leadership within your daily life. It's not about just me, but it's about making sure that we are witnesses to Christ's love, that other people see that Christ is with them. Like in today's gospel—many people know the verse of John 3:16, but do they really know what it means? That's what servant leadership is—I want to be that witness of Christ to others.*

*Another thing I think The Movement emphasizes is servant leadership. Even when we're in leadership positions, we always look at the people who are working under us and we make sure that we can support them. It's not that the people at the top are giving orders to the people below, but it's that the people at the top are supporting those who are working under them. Through all this working together and interaction, we all learn how to be more empathetic to each other and to look after each other and to make sure that everyone is doing well physically, emotionally, and spiritually.*

In addition, participating in VEYM activities helps youth leaders to develop their skill sets for organizing and managing events:

*I think the biggest impact of the Movement on my life and my faith is providing me an opportunity for me to practice, from a practical perspective, standing in front of people and talking and managing others, the volunteers. [To practice] coordinating, managing, and organizing. From a professional perspective, it's been helpful. Not that I didn't know how to do that before, but this was a lot more practice. But then also, maybe more importantly, from a spiritual perspective, I think teaching the youth, I sometimes am kind of analytical, and so when I have a lesson plan, I try to say, "okay, let's find out more about it," so I can communicate it to the kids. I can't just articulate certain things to them, I need to convince myself first and learn first and so, the act of wanting to be authentic in my teaching helps me to know more about my faith before I can teach it to the kids. And so those are the two things, I think, these are most impactful.*

*VEYM also helps with management and organizing. Organizing events, organizing projects, working with people, collaborating with people, and then managing others. There is a difference, though. As someone who has managed one or two people professionally before and as someone who has been a Division leader, it's different in the sense that managing youth leader, you're dealing with volunteers who have limited time. Especially when I was a Division leader, I was only 24 or 25 and then for youth leader I was only 18 or 19 or 20, so we're a young Division. And in the Northeast we tend to, we are on*

*the young side, we have married youth leaders. So managing youth leaders when I was a Division leader was different, because you have limited time, some of them are more than others, and some of them have more capacity and time than others. So there are some transferable management skills from that experience, but not all. When you're dealing in the professional world, you're dealing with people who are paid to work, and you have to manage them in a certain way. But at least it was an initial practice.*

*In terms of developing life skills and leadership skills through activities, I remember as early as the Knight of the Eucharist, companion, we were given projects to do— like building a gate for a camp, or a retreat or like writing a skit for the Conference. And then through those projects all of us had to learn how to do random things like how to write a script or how to design backdrops, or how to do marketing or to film, or make flyers. So we end up learning on our own what to do in order to get that project done. And then, as a youth leader, for servant leadership, I'm vice president of academic affairs at my division, and I've learned that it's my responsibility to check in on the youth leaders and to see how they're doing like mentally and also see where they are in their faith lives. Because if they're not doing well in their faith life, then that also impacts the youth, and the way that they lead their youth leaders and the way those youth leaders teach.*

### **Developing Teamwork Skills**

One of the most frequently mentioned soft skills that responding youth leaders say has been impacted by participating in VEYM has been learning to work together as a team, bonding with others in the process.

*Being in VEYM, you definitely learn how to work together at every age level. They have this organization, or this structure where the youth are put into team, and there's like team leader and assistant team leader. So, there's this structure, and through that you have to learn to work as a team, and to be humble, and to help each other and lead and just be nicer.*

*Because for everything in life, particularly your work outside your family, even within the family, teamwork is number one. If you get your team to work along with you, your ability, your skill set in collaboration, in working with the team to achieve the goal— if you get that then you get everything successfully. The movement helps the members to learn this, to build up this skill set from very basic foundations, working together. If you have a very young member of the Division, they learn from their youth leader. So when they move up to become the youth leader, they learn how to run the group in the right way. Everyone can run it, but they have to run in the right way, right? So get the team to work together. Teamwork, effort. learn how to lead. And the very important thing is to lead by example. You tell your member that they have to do this, do that. But you need to show yourself in that aspect so that they can follow your steps to be successful.*

*When I joined as a youth leader, I saw that many of my fellow youth leaders said that preparing the lesson and trying to be that role model, learning from your lessons, learning from youth leader trainer, helps you to create that relationship with one another and to create that relationship with God.*

*Those activities like creating the lessons or going to the training camps help me to strengthen those bonds, whether it be with my fellow youth leaders, with youth leader trainers, or with Jesus himself.*

*Showing me that there are a lot of people my age also living a similar life and trying to live a Catholic Vietnamese life, outside of just the people I see at my local parish.*

*Training camps gave me the opportunity to meet quality youth leaders who are serious about their faith life and serve as role models for me to learn from.*

*It brings me out of my shell and allows me to create a safe space within VEYM of my friends and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Fellowship and family make me feel safe and comfortable enough to grow with the support of the people around me.*

*Being able to grow not only in your faith but also to be surrounded by others in the same position as you made it feel so impactful and memorable.*

### **Development of Communication and Social Skills**

Some youth leaders point to how participating in VEYM has helped them to develop better communication and social skills.

*Taught me to listen. Taught me to believe.*

*By serving as youth leader, I am able to contribute more of my time and talent towards serving the youth, the church, and the poor. By serving, I've grown in faith and communication skills as well as social skills.*

*Built upon my leadership and communication skills!*

*Developing leadership skills, creating deeper bonds with my peers, learning the importance of prayer despite the chaos.*

*Even though I'm older, but my social skill, probably 12 or 13 years old because I'm a lot of the time just like staying home. Just go to school and then go home and do a lot of big game and reading. So those social skills barely exist for me. Joining VEYM, one of the good things with VEYM is that I found some good friends in VEYM, and that's also allowed me to stay with VEYM for a long time. I also met my wife in VEYM. I don't know socially, with that kind of awkwardness that I have, I don't even know how to talk to people, especially when I meet girls, I do not know how to talk with them. So I don't even know if I would have even*



*gotten married if I wasn't in VEYM. That's one of the good things. As far as those skills are in the workplace, I think it definitely helps. I'm able to communicate a little bit better. Also with time management as well. I'm an engineer by trade. So I rely on problem-solving skills a lot. You don't really need to talk a lot, as long as you can solve the problem. It does from time to time, especially now how you divide up tasks, how you communicate what you're working on, that definitely does help coming from VEYM. Every time we have an event that we have to prepare for, we have to divide up the tasks. Not only looking for people who volunteer for the task but see who are really fit to those tasks as well. So that does help, slowly, with my work.*

*In interacting with one another I learned how to treat my friends. I learned how to treat older people, I learned how to treat people of different ages and backgrounds. I feel that it very strongly shaped me into the person I am, especially as I transitioned from being a youth to an adult. Having youth leader as role models, people who gave of their weekends to serve for no payment or anything like that, just for love of God and for love of the Movement. It was very inspirational, especially when I became a youth leader and learned from Youth leader trainer from all around the country— the unity that I could see by attending these training camps, the examples they gave me of living the faith in real life— it was very inspirational to me and continues to inspire me.*

*Because I have to talk with parents of the youth at the same time, so I learn a lot and it changed the way I communicate with people outside of the church, and the way I deal with not just kids, but also adults. Being more patient, more observant, more understanding and diplomatic.*

*The second thing is the way I socialize with other people is very influenced by my role as a youth leader and also my role as a youth in the Movement. In the Movement we teach that when we play, we also pray. Think of many general songs. Everything we do, we make it a prayer to God. So for me the way I socialize, when I talk with someone and I'm enjoying their conversation, I thank God for that conversation, that God has given this person as a gift in my life. I offer it up to God. And the way I socialize with other people is that now I get to see everyone as a gift from God, that's something VEYM taught me. The other thing that's very practical to VEYM, especially as a youth leader, is a way to make everyone included into the conversation. Think of as a youth leader, if you see a kid not having fun, or a kid not being included in a game or a conversation with the other kids, you try to help them make friends. As adults, we do the same thing where if we see someone at a party, and they're not really talking, you go up to them and you talk to them. You try to bring them into the group. That's something you learn as a youth leader very subtly. Just as we do that with kids and help them to feel included into the Movement, so too we do that with other people at a party or in another adult setting.*

## **Growth in Self-Knowledge**

Responding youth leaders mentioned that their VEYM activities provided them with time and opportunities for greater self-discovery.

*Help to have guided quiet time for reflection.*

*It truly opened my eyes to an experience that I have never experienced before. Through these retreats, I truly found myself and they shaped the person who I am today.*

*Through retreat, we found connection to one another. It was a time for spiritual healing and self-discovery.*

*These retreats taught me more about God's love and what I am called to do in life.*

*It allowed me to reflect on my contribution and impact that VEYM had in my life as a person and as a Vietnamese Catholic.*

*Igniting my vocation to the priesthood, diaconate, or consecrated life.*

*And one of the things that I love best about the Movement is that there's always room to learn and grow every year. When you're a child all the way up to youth leader and even though you have the responsibility of teaching, you still develop your own faith and your own level of knowledge. And it just never ends. And I see people of every age, and they're all still learning and striving to become better servant leaders.*

## **Other Soft Skills**

Other soft skills mentioned by respondents include becoming more virtuous and becoming more knowledgeable.

*Every time I prepare the lessons and doing the research for the kids, I also recall it for myself. Every time I teach the kids, I learn to be more patient, humble, and confident.*

*Learn to be grateful and help others.*

*This activity gave me time to reflect on who I am as a Catholic, and what I should do to become a better example for my Doan Sinhs.*

*I heard this from many people who said, because of the relationship between you and the Church, it makes me trust you more. As a person, always, you cannot trust people 100%, but because of the way you always think of the Church and the way you always make people know the relationship between you and the Church, it makes me know that I can trust you because you may not be a good person, but you are definitely scared of your God and you love your God, and you're not going to make your society be disappointed about you. So, it makes you a better person, and it makes you a more reliable person in my eyes. I*

*get more trust from people, and I try my best to always keep that trust, because I know if I do something wrong, or if I make them disappointed, they will think of the Vietnamese Catholic society in Ottawa, and the Catholic Church in general, in a bad way because of me. That's mainly because of VEYM, it makes me not a perfect person, but as good as I can be. So I think that's the most impactful thing I can share.*

## Section 4: VEYM Impacts on Youth Leaders' Social Life

As was apparent in the previous section, youth leaders find the experience of participating in VEYM to be a positive social experience as well as one where they grow spiritually and in their skills. They were asked about the social aspect of their participation on the survey as well as in the focus groups and interviews.

*When I was younger, some of my friends were in VEYM, and it was like a social group. We weren't all hanging out together, there were certainly cliques. But, enough of us were friends in and out of VEYM, so it was like a little social circle. [...] and my interactions with VEYM is more like a brother-sister-type of relationship, because I tend to be older than others who remain in VEYM, so it's more like an older sister and younger brother, younger sister, type of thing. Now, as a parent of a young child, now I'm really older, and most of my friends are again, either non-Catholic or non-practicing Catholics. It's nice. It's a balance, right? If I don't go to VEYM, I'm either with my family or having playdates with my friends who also have kids around the same age. But with VEYM, I'm gradually going back into VEYM so I'm not completely immersed in it yet, but it's been nice to have a balance to feel, younger with members who are younger and trying to help out.*

*Just reflecting like VEYM, because we're all Asian, like Vietnamese American people. And so there's kind of a supportive group. Interpersonal communications are relatively easy because we're similar and have similar experiences, family, expectations from family, etc. So, it's helpful to develop these communication skills and these management skills in a supportive environment because you can have a boost of confidence. Outside, had I not had VEYM to practice this with I think it might be a little harder, because managing someone, working in a group setting where what I do is mostly with Caucasian Americans], it's a different dynamic. There's an element of otherness. If I didn't have the practice within VEYM, it would have been a little harder to practice with other folks, like Caucasian because I feel like they wouldn't have been as supportive of my mistakes, or I would have felt more self-conscious. So just wanted to note that.*

*I'm so thankful that I've been able to travel to other places, other states, and so on, just for the sake of the Movement, for example, this event happening in Florida is on the other side of the country for me. But having opportunities like this where it's a safe and trusted environment, to be able to leave my comfort zone a little bit because I know the Movement will be there wherever I go is very comforting. [...] I'm very grateful that we can make such connections because we are all part of this same organization, we all serve for the same mission.*

Below, youth leaders share the strong sense of community and family that they have through participating in VEYM.

*For me, with the Movement and what we have been taught and with what we have learned, with what I have seen is that we feel like one big family. Wherever we go, there's always a team there, a chapter there. We could ask, 'Hey? I'm going to this specific place. Is there a team?' And they are always so welcoming! Or if I go to training camp in another area, I have that social networking so when I return to that place I have someone that I could contact. And I think that is a great asset to us personally and professionally. Personally, we created that relationship and we have friends everywhere. Professionally, if we need something, if we need a recommendation for a job or if we need help within a certain area that we are dealing with, we always have that network to help us grow to help us solve the problems that we are dealing with.*

*I don't have my family here with me because I'm an international student and an international worker, so I don't have family to spend weekends with. So my whole weekend without VEYM is just hanging out or doing extra shifts, doing more work— it's absolutely more stress on me, and more chances to do whatever I shouldn't do. So VEYM is kind of like my family. I'm always kidding around saying all the students are my kids, and that this is absolutely my house right here. Whenever I go to the church, it's like going back to my house, and whenever I see the youth, it's like I go to see my brother and sister, or my kids. So they're kind of like family to me, and I feel not alone anymore in Canada because of them. I have someone to care of. I have someone to give presents, to think of, to take care of, to worry about, and to share time with.*

*One is how it affects my social life directly, and the other is how it affects the way I socialize with other people. I moved from California to Michigan and then to Seattle, very different states. But in all respects, I always had the Movement with me wherever I go. I'm very grateful for that. When I first moved to Michigan from California, I was 22 and had never moved, I had lived at home all my life, and I was going to a very, very different state. But VEYM is the same anywhere and everywhere. We wear the same uniform. I went to Toronto once, and VEYM Canada is also the same, it has the same uniform. So, it provided me with a sense of community and familiarity wherever I went. I remember when I first moved to Michigan, I told one of the Division leaders there, 'Hey, I'm moving from California and I don't know youth leaders there.' [And they said], 'Hey, we'll pick you up from the airport, we'll drive you! If you need to ship something here, you can ship your car here.' So there's a sense of community, even though we don't know each other. And I'm very grateful for that sense of familiarity.*

*When I was in VEYM as a Search versus when I was a Youth Leader, I think it has a different type of effect and different type of impact on my life. So as a Search, I found the most impactful part of the Movement is having a sense of community. But not only having a sense of community, but also having a God-centered community, and that's not something a lot of kids have nowadays. As a Youth Leader, you have a place where you can not only express who you are, but also express your faith in God, in a community that cares for you and cares for God. I think that's something very unique to the Movement, because you go to school, and they want you to be the best person, and a very smart kid.*

*But in the Movement, they not only want you to be a good person and a smart kid, but also a good Catholic. So I think, as a kid, the Movement really has that effect. I use two words: Creativity and confidence. These are what the Movement really teaches you. When you go to the Bible class, you have to act out the Scriptures. That's very hard, because you have to act it out with confidence, speaking loudly as a kid. So it teaches you confidence. But it also teaches you creativity. How can I convey the Scripture, how can I convey this story in a creative manner? So as a kid that's what I took out of it. And as a Youth Leader, I think it builds a sense of community, but now we have the responsibility to build the sense of community.*

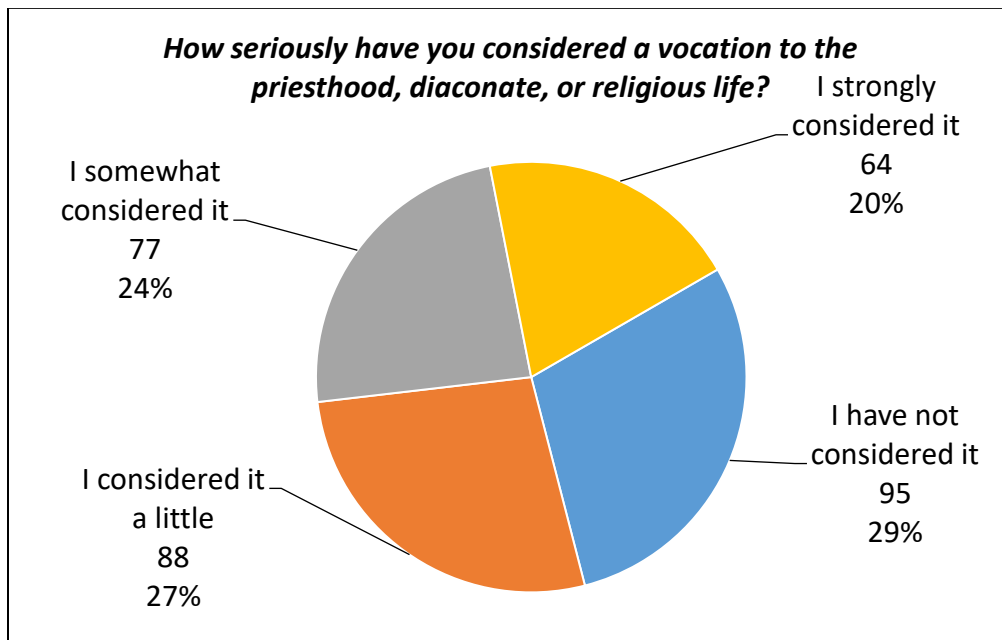
## Section 5: VEYM Impact on Youth Leaders' Vocational Discernment

When asked how much of an impact their participation in VEYM had on their faith life, eight in ten responding youth leaders (83%) report that participating in VEYM has had an impact on them seeking and doing God's will in their life. Three in four (74%) report it having an impact their discernment of their life's vocation. Half (48%) indicate that it has had an impact on igniting their vocation to the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life.

**How much of an impact has your participation in VEYM had on your faith life?**  
Percentage responding

	<b>"Some Impact" or "A Great Impact" Combined</b>	<b>"A Great Impact" Only</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Seeking and doing God's will in your life	83	51
Better discerning your life's vocation	74	35
Igniting your vocation to the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life	48	16

When asked how seriously they have considered a vocation to priesthood, diaconate, or religious life, more than four in ten (44%) say they at least "somewhat" considered a vocation to priesthood, diaconate, or religious life.



## **How VEYM Helps Discern to Vocations in Life**

Respondents were asked in the survey and focus group to answer this question: *In what ways has the VEYM helped you to discern your vocation in life – as a priest, deacon, consecrated member, or other vocation/calling?* This section presents their responses to that question.

Participants report that participating in VEYM has helped them to discern their various vocations through witnessing the significant presence of both those who live married life as well as those in priesthood and religious life. Youth leaders participating in VEYM have witnessed the significant presence of members who are currently priests and religious members actively engaged in the VEYM activities, understanding better what life in the religious life and priesthood is like. It helps them to see if they are a good fit in those lifestyles and vocations. Participants also report the VEYM weekly activities are kind of dating network. They are exposed to members in the VEYM who follow different kinds of life vocations.

### **Better Discerning Life Vocations**

Firstly, participating in VEYM helps ignite youth leaders to discern various life vocations through service opportunities. Several respondents expressed that they found that their vocation towards service, particularly teaching of youth, was fulfilled through VEYM.

Many respondents mentioned that meeting those with a variety of vocations allowed them to learn more about different vocations.

*All the ways that I grew in my faith through my participation in VEYM helped me to grow in trust in the God and His will for my life. I learned to pray not for what I wanted, but rather for God to reveal to me what He wanted. This also helped me through the ups and downs in my vocation.*

*VEYM has helped me in the prayer aspect of discerning my vocation.*

*When I first joined, because I'm not socially around people much and I'm a little bit awkward, I think there were a lot of people who put religious life to associate with me. I'm really active, but at the same time I'm kinda shy and I don't talk to a lot of people. So I think people have this perception that seminarians or those who join religious life are supposed to behave. So, for me, it does open up the thought of vocation. I did think about perhaps, exploring that opportunity, and maybe if I hadn't met my wife that would be a few years down the road. Joining VEYM makes that a possibility.*

*Connection to attend retreat/come and see, witness of faithful individuals of all different vocations.*

*Being in VEYM has helped me discern my vocation in life by giving me opportunities to be in a leadership and teaching position. I did not know I felt a calling to teach and enter*



*the education field until I had the opportunity to interact with and teach the kids through VEYM.*

*For me, VEYM kind of opened my eyes and let me know what kind of way I wanna go. Since I joined VEYM I have more like communication with priests and sisters. Before that I rarely saw religious sisters in my parish. I now know a little bit about the life and priests and sisters. Before I thought sisters just prayed and had relationship with God. I thought it was a very boring life. I was not going to be a sister, no! It's a no! But then joining VEYM I know more that religious sisters are not just always praying and staying there and praying for the whole day. I know more about how that life is, and it got me more excited. I know in a sense how it is going to be, but I also know what kind of thing you will need to sacrifice. So I have more sense of whether or not I want to be on that way [of life], with the proper idea of what I need to do and what I need to stop, and then I can decide.*

### **Witnessing Religious/Ordained Members in VEYM**

One of the most frequently mentioned way that VEYM helped with their discernment of vocation was by putting respondents in contact with those who are ordained or in religious life.

*VEYM helped me realize that I want to teach and be a mentor to younger kids, leading them and helping them find their way to God.*

*VEYM has helped me discern my vocation by deciding to become a layperson to serve God through others in the community and hoping to be called later to marriage life in the future.*

*I never liked being a teacher or considered education a promising career field. Through spending time with youth who lacked skills in their behavior or just atypical behaviors compared to their peers motivated me/introduced me to the Special Education field.*

*By being introduced to many religious and priests that we can talk to and develop a great relationship with to be more open about sharing discernments.*

*I feel a deeper calling to religious life when I interact with the youth in VEYM each weekend. I can better see Christ through the people around me.*

*VEYM allows me many chances to interact with priests and religious. It helps me to know them and their vocation deeper which allows me to get into know my vocation as well and what I really want to do in life with that vocation.*

*VEYM has connected me with many people including diocesan priests, religious orders, other youth leaders to have the same intention and the deep discussions these people have engage in me so I can further my discernment.*

*I think in the Movement, it's helpful to have sister like you. Priests and sisters are around and it's helpful because you're reminded that there is an alternative to married life. I actually went through Come and See three times with [Name of Religious Institute] in various parts of my life and seriously discerned if consecrated life is something that I'm pursuing. Having religious sisters around and seeing priests and religious sisters interact with youth leaders with such liveliness, it certainly dispels the stereotype of what priests and religious sisters are like. So that is helpful. It provides a positive image of consecrated living and religious life.*

*In terms of religious life, the key word in the discussion is exposure. You get exposure to what they do. I was thinking of the three groups I was at, and until that there wasn't a lot of involvement with priests and religious sisters and brothers, but in one of the groups, religious sisters were very, very, very, very involved. They were even teaching lessons in Michigan, on Sundays, doing volunteer and doing a lot of stuff. I think the exposure is really good, because you get to see what they do not only in their own prayer life, but the impact that they have. [...] So I think in that sense it fosters a sense of religious life because you realize you are the impact of priests and sisters and you want to foster that same impact that they had on you to the next generation. You want to pay it forward. So in that sense, I think that exposure to religious life is something very unique to the Movement.*

*Also, it makes the priests, religious sisters and brothers, approachable. Before, I might notice priests and sisters but I would not talk to them. Just because, first of all, I don't talk to strangers or different people, especially people who seem so different from me. So I think that does open up the door. Just because you have events that you have to work together with the priests and sisters to go over plans. You do talk to them regularly, and so it becomes that their vocation is a little bit something that you might think about, just spending more time with them you do think about them. And then, at the same time, it makes them more approachable, more human. You can see that they're just like other people, they just have a different way of living.*

*So, actually, going to training camps where sisters invited from other States would come and journey with us— sometimes as participants, sometimes teaching lessons— was so very valuable for me to see both men and women religious come to our camps and to share their vocations. Some of them were even born in the U.S. like me and many of our other members, and so to see Vietnamese American vocations flourish is something that I never saw before going to these training camps as a youth leader. It helped me to see how beautiful those vocations are.*

*This really hits home with me... Then when I joined VEYM, I interacted more with priests and religious. If you meet me in person and hear my vocation story, it really helped me when I saw priests and religious because, like you said, you guys are all human. Sometimes I talk with you guys about your discernment piece, and I use that to help me to*

*discern my own vocation. Maybe I am meeting an obstacle in life and priests and religious sisters really helped me navigate because you too, were once in my place as a teenager, young adult before you entered. So that really helped me when I went to training camps. and then from those training camps I meet priests and sisters and I invite them home to chapters, groups, or those camps that we organize at home. So with that it helps me to grow my vocation as a youth leader, and maybe later to become seminarian or priest.*

### **Relationship with Others in VEYM**

Responding youth leaders report that VEYM helped them with their discernment through the relationships they build with others in VEYM. These responses include those who saw examples of vocations from others in VEYM, those who mentioned community support while discerning their vocation, and those who met their spouses through VEYM.

*Quoting from JP II from Gaudium et spes, n. 24, Christ teaches us that, "if man is the only creature on earth that God has wanted for its own sake, man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself." It led to realize that we need to give ourselves in service to others, finding meaning through self-gift, and connected with our fellow brothers and sisters. Being in VEYM helps me to accomplish all those.*

*I met my wife through VEYM.*

*A lot of faith sharing, that isn't just from my local parish. Going out to different events and meeting others who have a different perspective in faith.*

*So just wanted to note that. And then as for finding a partner, a husband, wife in VEYM, it certainly has opened lots of possibilities. I joined when I was 16 so there were a lot of teenagers that I hung out with, and so it's almost like a dating network. And as a youth leader you're exposed to many people, both actively and those who are more reserved. In a nutshell, it opens a lot of doors in terms of religious life and married life.*

*At the same time, I also got to witness very beautiful married life vocations where husbands and wives dedicated themselves to the service of the Movement, and to raising these big, beautiful, flourishing families of faithful children as well. That's very hard to see elsewhere. And of course they weren't perfect, but just being able to see these as examples of different vocations, where people get to live to the fullest, and sacrifice themselves in any of these vocations that are all equally beautiful and life-giving to the church. Something I've come to realize recently is, being a youth leader is a vocation, too. It's a very important vocation that I didn't realize when I was 18 and I took this oath. But it's a very big responsibility to have the Christian formation of young people in our hands and to be the role models. Like [Name] was saying that it is a vocation, it's a calling in not everyone. It's not that once you turn 18, you can just become a leader. You really have to go through a lot of training and spiritual discernment to even become a leader. And as we advanced through the different levels of being a youth leader, is a deeper step into that vocation in different leadership positions and all.*

## **Other Impacts**

Some responses did not fit into any of the above six categories. This includes responses which mentioned how VEYM helped with development of personal life skills, provided opportunities for education, and provided opportunities for reflection, to name a few. Below are some examples of these miscellaneous responses.

*VEYM helps me understand my role and responsibilities as a youth leader, and now a mother and a wife. Through VEYM, because I need to learn and improve myself naturally and spiritually in order to teach kids, I learn a great deal on leadership in the family and the local church community, Vietnamese cultures, church's teachings and traditions, and the bible.*

*Do self-analysis and career analysis. Self-analysis: Career design, through the method and means of scientific cognition, to have a comprehensive understanding of their own career interest, temperament, character, ability and so on, clear of their own advantages and strengths, weaknesses and shortcomings.*

*During pandemic, VEYM hosted multiple webinars to help members understand more about each vocation. The session about marriage life vocation helps me understand more about my call. The guest speakers' advice on how to let God help me find the right person through prayer and how to raise children to help them grow deeper in Faith and relationship with God were so helpful; they helped me see my vocation more clearly.*

## **No Help**

Few responding youth leaders mentioned that VEYM did not help them with their discernment.

*VEYM was not an active factor in determining my vocation in the religious life, but it has allowed me to grow as a person, which helped me be more effective at other things in life.*

*Not much, just that I should go discern sometime.*

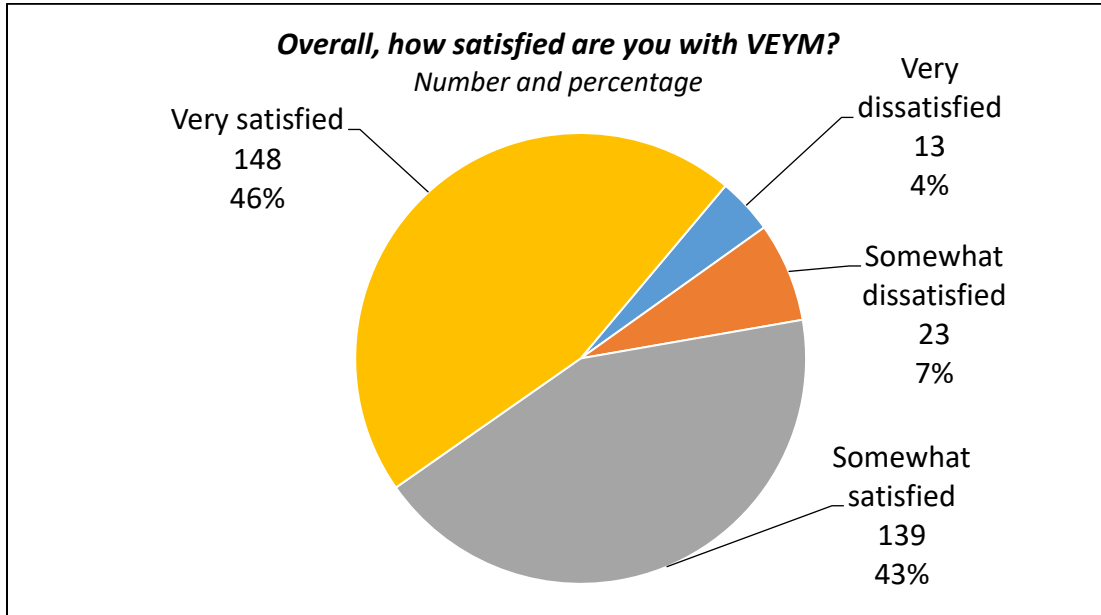
*It didn't, I discerned after I stopped participating in VEYM for a while.*

*It hasn't due to no personal interest.*

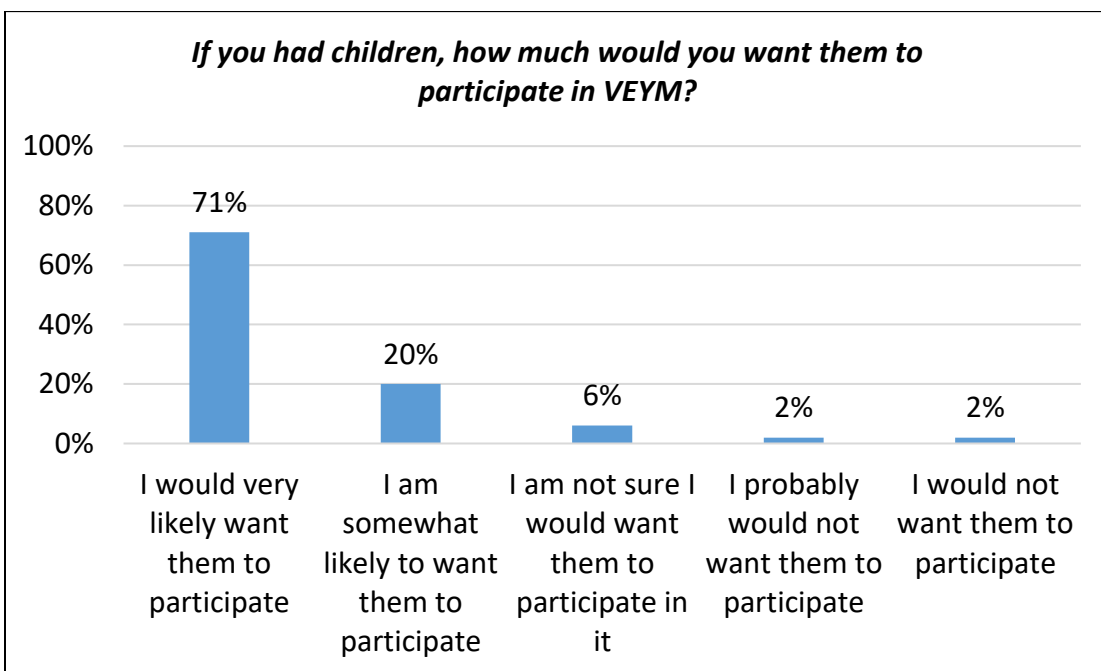
*It hasn't. I discerned my vocation to the priesthood/religious life through seminary.*

## Section 6: Satisfaction with VEYM

When asked to gauge how satisfied they were with VEYM, a combined nine in ten (89%) report that they are “somewhat” (43%) or “very” (46%) satisfied with VEYM.



When asked if they had children, how much they would want them to participate in VEYM, a combined nine in ten (91%) report that they would be “very” (71%) or “somewhat” (20%) likely to want their children to participate in VEYM.



## Section 7: Influencing Factors for Continuing to Participate in VEYM

There are many factors that impact whether respondents continue participating in VEYM, as is shown in the table below. All of the factors in the table below were influential for at least seven in ten respondents (70% to 92%), with those related to having an impact on Vietnamese youth, the sense of community and fun they experience there, and it helping them keep in touch with their heritage especially likely to be cited.

<b><i>How much do the followings influence your decision to continue participating in VEYM?</i></b>		
	Percentage responding	
	<b>"Somewhat" or "Greatly Influences" Combined</b>	<b>"Greatly Influences" Only</b>
	%	%
Having opportunities to make a good impact to youth	92	72
Having friends in VEYM	91	60
Having a sense of community	90	65
Helping me keep in touch with my Vietnamese heritage and traditions	88	59
Finding many parts of it to be fun	87	55
Having opportunities to develop my leadership skills	87	56
Believing that it will continue to strengthen my faith	83	54
Having opportunities to learn more about my faith	83	53
Having opportunities to serve the broader local community	83	47
Feeling that my vocation is to serve God through VEYM	81	51
Having opportunities for prayer and faith sharing	80	46
Feeling that I can talk to leaders and friends about problems and issues important to me	73	43
Getting to know more clergy, and religious sisters and brothers	70	32

Half to seven-tenths of respondents cited these factors as “greatly influencing” their decision to continue participating in VEYM:

- Having opportunities to make a good impact to youth – 72%
- Having a sense of community – 65%
- Having friends in VEYM – 60%
- Helping me keep in touch with my Vietnamese heritage and traditions – 59%
- Having opportunities to develop my leadership skills – 56%
- Finding many parts of it to be fun – 55%
- Believing that it will continue to strengthen my faith – 54%
- Having opportunities to learn more about my faith – 53%
- Feeling that my vocation is to serve God through VEYM – 51%

### **Focus Groups**

In the focus groups, participating youth leaders were also asked what made them continue to participate in VEYM. Some youth leaders mentioned their passion, having fun, and believing in the mission of the Movement.

*For me, it is the passion and wanting to pass it on to the future generation. I use certain leadership as my foundation. Even though I was born here in America, lived here all my life, I still want to connect with my roots as a Vietnamese. So with the younger generation, they begin to lose that connection with their roots as a Vietnamese or as a practicing Catholic. I want to use my life or what I am doing in the Movement to influence them. Even though they might not be listening to me, I want to use my time, even though I feel burnt out, even though the leadership that I work with do not listen to me. I still want to push through. I am doing this, not because I want to show you that I have the ability, but I want to show the youth or to show you that no matter what happens, I want to be firm in my faith and in my heritage. Because once I die, who will continue the Vietnamese culture, who will continue that Vietnamese Catholic faith? Within certain dioceses, we have processions, and as you said, that the bishops or the parish, sees how faithful we are in our faith. Once our grandparents, our parents, us, we die, who will continue that? So I want to use my passion or what I know to influence. Even though I am tired and fed up with what's happening, I still want to do that.*

*The first answer that comes to mind very quickly is that it's fun. Despite all the stress, at the core it's fun. There's no other opportunity in life where youth leaders get to dress up as Roman soldiers and act out at Sa mac – really bringing that Bible environment to life through fun activities and through games. And being able to interact with the youth—because they're so young, we can also be young as well, and have fun and goof off with them. Growing up in VEYM is such a unique experience— you do meet a lot of friends and youth leaders who are devout and also faithful. I haven't found many opportunities to meet other people who are also devout and faithful and who are my age. And at the core, I just really believe in the mission of the Movement which is to evangelize and pass on the faith to the youth.*

*I think it is very important that we carry on our missions. Everybody participates in VEYM. It's a very special call. It's not that we go there because our parents want us to do that— maybe at a young age we don't realize the value of that, but I think during middle school and high school, or even growing up as a youth leader you realize that this is something special in my life. At a certain age you have a certain point that you need to mark to your life. At middle school, I want to do something, in high school I'm going to do something. Same thing here in the Movement. When you get to a certain level, you can set up something for your goal. The Eucharist Movement is very important for the Eucharist and for us living the life of Christians, because that is driving the rest of our life. I can see often that a lot of youth leaders get married, have families and kids growing up— they don't have tie to continue VEYM anymore, but they do carry the mission in their life.*



## **Section 8: What VEYM Can Do to Help Increase its Impact on their Faith Life**

In the survey and the focus group, respondents were asked what VEYM can do to have a greater positive impact on VEYM participants. Responding youth leaders are especially likely to report the need for more faith formation among youth leaders, providing more educational resources, and creating more events for networking.

### **Developing Faith Formation Programs for Youth Leaders**

One of the themes frequently mentioned both on the survey and in the focus groups is to improve the faith formation programs for youth leaders.

*Ensuring youth leaders are equipped with the knowledge of faith. It is hard to have youth leaders teach and instruct others on the faith when they themselves do not know the faith and do not have any faith at all.*

*We do a lot for the kids but it seems like not a lot is done for the faith formation of adults. We can't give what we don't have, and it seems like there are a lot of youth leaders who don't have faith. They instead become too focused on putting together events for the kids.*

*I think VEYM needs to reemphasize itself in the Eucharist. [...]. This means that our Leaders, especially youth leaders need to be trained about the Eucharist. Too often, we stay away from teaching the basics of the Eucharist, but I feel most youth leaders, at least from the ones I see, must be brought back to the basics of the Eucharist and we must be able to understand the deep mysteries of this Holy Sacrament. If we fail to appreciate the Eucharist as youth leaders, I think VEYM is doomed for failure.*

*I think it's somewhat difficult to effectively develop my faith life only through VEYM. In the past few years, I've realized that being a youth leader can sometimes have a negative impact on my faith life because I'm usually so busy with planning events or teaching, and I felt like I couldn't relate to other youth leaders in my Division about my faith life.*

*In my opinion, one thing we can provide more or improve on is more youth leader formation or providing them the opportunities to grow in their faith more. I think currently the way we develop our own faith is kind of on our own. So if the youth leader doesn't take it upon themselves to read the catechism or learn catechism or go to workshops or retreat, then they don't really gain that knowledge and that formation to teach the youth.*

## Helping Youth Leaders to Avoid Being Overwhelmed

Youth leaders report being overwhelmed by the workload of activities in the Movement. They suggest that the Movement explore ways to reduce the workload among youth leaders, helping them release the pressure that might come from peers or youth.

*The Headquarter needs to be more organized so that they can pass down info to their chapters faster/sooner. The news we get comes too last minute to effectively integrate into our schedules. We're usually scrambling. For example, this year, the National Day of Apostolic Works (NDAW) campaign was announced a month or less in advance. Our chapter had already organized something because we didn't hear word of the campaign, so we were not able to adjust and align our event with the NDAW.*

*I am no longer a part of VEYM but our chapter got to a point where we were too focused on our outcomes for the kids and not enough resources for our youth leaders to feel less burned out. We needed spiritual rejuvenation.*

*There was a time when I was almost doing everything and attending every single event of the church. It reached the point where whoever every priest came to visit my division, they're like, is this girl living here now? I heard that all the time, like, Oh, yeah, ask me that question, yeah, I don't live here but you see me everyday. So, it reached a point where I was so stressed out and it was so hard for me. For now I delegate stuff, work for my friends, for my coworkers. But I think, because in every training we receive, in every camp, we always learn to contribute, to be so passionate— it's in our mind and in our heart from those trainings, and it's just automatically applied. But sometimes, in camps or in training, we need somebody to tell us, 'yes, you're passionate, you help, you're helpful, you contribute— But you have to balance your personal life and your church life at the same time.' ... We need, in those camps, lessons or sharing, we need someone to tell us, 'yes, you're passionate, but you need to step back sometime.' And you need to know that there would be someone there for you to allocate tasks to, to work with you ... There will be someone for you. You're not the only one. You're not the Savior. So you have to work with your friends, work with your co-workers, and you need to step back sometimes. We need someone to tell us that.*

*I think a negative with the Movement is that oftentimes it perpetuates the savior complex— I have to be the youth leader to do X, Y, and Z. I have to show up every single week to the Movement. I have to do everything. And a lot of youth leader they get burnt out because of that. Especially when I was a younger youth leader, I wanted to do everything. I think a lot of youth leaders are like that, and because of that a lot of youth leaders get burnt out. And there's sometimes a sense of pressure, the sense that if I don't show up to the Movement this week then I am a bad youth leader. If I don't sign up for this role, or if I don't spend my whole weekend doing VEYM stuff then I'm a bad youth leader. I think that's something in the Movement we have to fix, because a good leader knows when to take a step back and say, I need a break. You know what I mean? I think it's particularly a bigger role and a smaller one with fewer people. I call it the Savior*

*complex just from the conversations I've been having with people. A quote that I think people need to know is that, as youth leader, we are not the Savior. The Savior has already come, and that's Jesus Christ our Lord. Someone asked me, "[Name], you are the assistant team leader. ... So I think the Movement needs to do a better job in teaching that leadership skill of saying you are the assistant team leaders and you don't have to do everything. Jesus Christ will be the leader. You know he has our Movement leader. I think that's something the Movement needs to work with in terms of building better leaders and helping them to take a step back.*

*There are good activities. There are activities at the central level, all the campaigns and stuff. So there's that on top of all our Movement's activities, so that Division's activities or retreat or adoration. And then we have to fit in the Movement's activities, too. So that means we're pretty much involved in ministry all year round. I think with formation, what I was imagining was that on the Core Team level they would be the ones who would be in charge of the formation of all the other youth leaders in the Division, which I think the structure of the VEYM is already there, but oftentimes with the amount of work, it's not time to focus on.*

*From what I heard, the Headquarter has their agenda, and then on top of the Headquarter is the League of chapters. And then the Division, with the Core Team, we have that structure, we have the people, but we don't have the resources to actually help youth leaders. We have the people, but we don't know what to do and how to help our youth leaders. And then, on top of that, with our personal life and our VEYM life, it's so hectic that we have to prioritize what comes first. Do I prioritize what comes first? Do I prioritize the League of chapters or Division first? Or do I prioritize the Headquarter or do I prioritize the Division? And then on top of that, my personal life. When we tried to look up to our leaders at the Division, Core Team, or League of chapters, we don't have that resource to help us grow or to help us deal with what is happening, and sometimes we have to cram everything into our schedule and it really wears us out.*

*In the Movement, where I meet a lot of people in VEYM who only want to do with VEYM, they only help with VEYM. And at certain times it comes at the expense of their own personal life or their own romantic life or their own social life, in the sense of— they put so much effort into VEYM that oftentimes it actually can hinder— this is a very small subset of people— it can hinder the way people progress their own romantic life. They're always focusing, like, I have to help out every single event, etc., etc. So, sometimes it can be a negative.*

### **Developing Better Skills Training Programs for Youth Leaders**

Another aspect that is frequently mentioned is the inadequate training for various skills needed for youth leaders. It is necessary that the Movement provide training for youth leaders on how to master various skills as youth leaders, so that they are prepared to oversee leadership positions within the Movement.

*I think VEYM could do a better job helping us on the management side. I think it's the delegation, and I think a lot of youth leaders, myself included, are not good at delegating, and sometimes we feel compelled to do it all because, one, maybe we're too passionate. But also, we don't have formal training on how to delegate and on following through, and the mentoring that comes with it. In a professional world, you get managers' training, and they give you tips on how to guide people, or how to provide feedback, both constructive and positive feedback, and how often and when. But I don't think there's that type of training, and a lot of times we are encountering our first experience managing in VEYM instead of the professional world, because a lot of youth leaders become Division leaders fairly quickly. So, I think VEYM could benefit in the long term by investing in that type of professional development which could really help VEYM in the long term.*

*I do see a good number of problems. One of the main thing is when my Division got to vote, when we had to vote in. We had a whole bunch of people who went to training that like youth leaders, division leaders, trainers, things like that, they don't want to serve. And you have a whole bunch of people who are at the first level who want to do things, and they're not qualified. So with the way that we have it set up to join the Administrative Affairs, there's a lot of issues there. You have requirements that don't really fit with the way that people are in their Division. You have a lot of qualified people who just don't have time, or they're not willing to serve, and you have a lot of young leaders who really want to serve but they're not really qualified. So there has to be some sort of balance, things that need to be addressed with training. Where training doesn't become a thing that you go to as a requirement, but something that you would want to go to.*

*In terms of training, I feel like the only sense of training the Movement gives is that you have to commit a whole four days to go to every training level, and you only have so many opportunities to go, etc. It's a very big commitment. The Movement needs to have a smaller type of training, like, maybe each Division does a one-day workshop on how to teach the Gospel, or how to organize games. When I was in [Name of Conference] they actually had something like that. It was interesting. They had a workshop on games and songs. I still use a lot of lessons there. So there needs to be a level of training that's not as high as a Sa Mac, but that you can do maybe a couple of times a year, or maybe once a month. A sense of continuous training that's not too big like a Sa Mac. [Name] gave a really good example.*

*As [Name] mentioned resources to better youth leaders. But a problem I see with that is that those retreats or those training camps are done in places where we have to pay to get there. Maybe I am in the South, like Oklahoma and Texas, and I have to go to Washington, DC or California, and at the time of the camp the flight is very costly. I wish there were more retreats or more training camps that are within my area so I can go. Promote and support financially with more camps.*

## **Developing More Events and Networking**

Another category of responses was those requested VEYM to have more events or programming. Within this category were several respondents who asked for more retreats, more service opportunities, more virtual events, and a particularly large group of responses asking for more opportunities for networking or making connections outside of one's local chapter.

*Offer more retreats.*

*Hold a training session with members all over the country to come together and share their real-life experiences and have the training focus on the teachings of God and its application in our current world affairs.*

*Maintain a support role in life of every member while keeping things engaging and directly contributing to the community.*

*More volunteer opportunities and events to bring different divisions together to learn from one another.*

*I think things the way they are right now are great. I would like to meet more people from outside my own region and chapter, and through that be able to learn from the various ways people live their faith. Meeting others through VEYM events would go a long way in learning about how others live their faith.*

*Hosting more big events for all youth members and leaders to bond together and grow in faith, for example, a big retreat trip or visiting the holy land.*

*Continue providing more interactive activities that can be done virtually such as training development sessions, nationwide competitions (song contest, shirt design for conventions, etc.).*

*Having more webinar sessions for members to listen to guest speakers. Give more insight of their vocations.*

## **Providing Educational Resources**

Responding youth leaders wish VEYM would offer more educational resources. Most of these requests were for education on faith topics, and several requests were for resources for VEYM leaders to use in their activities with the youth. Several responses also mentioned a desire for online resources specifically.

*More activities to learn about Bible (other than weekly gospel), teaching of the church, and Vietnamese Catholic heritage and culture.*

*Having opportunities to ask my unanswered questions and doubts about my faith would help me greatly to learn more and strengthen my faith.*

*I think VEYM can develop more applicable curriculum/lessons on morality or faith life workshops for Companions and Knights of the Eucharist level, as well as training for the Youth Leaders level.*

*More religious resources like songs: English and Vietnamese songs. More resources for retreat ideas, prayer resources.... Like what life-teen has access to that youth leaders and members need.*

*After leaving VEYM to raise my young family I realized VEYM leaders should have a strong understanding of our Catholic faith along with knowledge on the Bible and Catechism of the Catholic Church so that we can better share our faith and knowledge according Church teachings.*

*Seriously teach about the reality of the Eucharist, answer questions and objections to it, and teach more devotions like the spiritual bouquet. Lead by example in the spiritual bouquet and Eucharistic day. This is in our Ten Vows that few understand anything serious about what seems pretty essential to our movement.*

### **Creating More Faith-based Activities**

Another way VEYM can increase their impact is to have more faith-based VEYM activities.

*Stick to the basic. I think VEYM tries to “get with the time” so much that we forgot to teach the youth the basic of their faith.*

*More focus on the Eucharist and training on faith, versus many outside non-religious activities (which is of course good for fellowship).*

*Focus more on the spiritual life and emphasize more on living the life in Christ (morality).*

*Keep challenging us with continuing spiritual activities.*

*Continue with the practice of Holy Mass and Adoration at all events.*

*And I think, as far as VEYM being here for a while, I do see it becoming more mature. You have the weekly gospel, things that really help with the way that you teach. But at the same time, I think it's become a little bit too mature, and it's taking out a lot of the spontaneous and the fun from VEYM as well. I have youth leaders that just go to the weekly Gospel and just read off from it. Whereas before they were a lot more creative. They were more creative with their games. Even daily prayers. We had a song before that was short, simple, the kids did it plenty of times. But now you have a daily prayer, it's a long one, you have to follow a certain format, I don't know how many kids actually do it. But a song for me, I remember songs that I learned from VEYM when I was four or five years old, I still remember. So all of a sudden we had a switch— I don't know how*

*wise it is. It's becoming more mature, and at the same time it's taking out a lot of the creative thinking and the spontaneity of the youth, the innocence of the kids.*

### **Providing Further Training to Assist Children with Special Needs**

While a number of youth leaders in the focus groups report encountering children with special needs in their classroom, they have little knowledge or experience of how best to help with children with such needs. Thus, it is important the Movement is aware of this need and develops training programs to assist the youth leaders.

*The other thing I think would be helpful, and I bring this up because of personal experience, is helping with special education— kids who are not neurotypical. As a youth leader of seedlings, I have had seedlings who, well-meaning or not well-meaning, don't fit the traditional student type, where they can't sit down, or they won't sit down for various reasons. I think that type of special education, training, or knowledge would be helpful. I also know this from personal experience because I have a child who is autistic and who has a different way of interacting. That's part of the reason I'm back in VEYM as a youth leader because I wanna be a resource for the Division in case, for example, he doesn't listen, or in case he starts to run away. But I don't think youth leaders maybe due to age or due to experience, don't have that knowledge or training to deal with this type of students or children.*

*I really agree with [Name] about the special kids because, personally, in my class there were like three or four of this type of kids – this year especially there are like four of them who are special. Four of them, they learn faster than everyone, and then for four of them it's Vietnamese-only, or English-only. It's not a hard time, I enjoy helping them, but I tried to give them all knowledge for their first communion as much as possible, and because we don't, as [Name], we don't have the special structure for that, so I just did it with my own decision, just making every decision based on my observance and based on what I think is right and communicating with the parents. So it's kind of hard. So yeah, what [Name] said is like, absolutely helpful.*

*And [Name] talked about the autistic, the kids that are maybe needing some help— for the last retreats that I went to, the friar, he emphasized that belonging is before belief. It's one of the things I took back from that, and I did reflect on that. And it's true. We did have kids who came to VEYM and just because they have ADHD or they have trouble learning they stayed not too long and they become off of VEYM because we can't really incorporate them into our VEYM group. And my kids also have problems, and I do have a couple of nephews that have autism. We need to reach out to those kids more, and I wish there's a good way that the Movement can incorporate that into our lessons and things like that, our training.*

## **Creating an Inclusive Environment**

The next category of responses were those which requested that VEYM become a more inclusive environment. Some responses mentioned inclusivity in general, where others brought up specific groups in which VEYM should show more inclusivity.

*Making more of an effort to be inclusive to those who might not have as strong a connection or either faith or culture.*

*People need to be less hypocritical and be more welcoming to people with different ideas/races.*

*I have no doubt in my faith. I am a truly believer of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It's just other's faith that I have concerned of. VEYM or the Catholic in general should be up to date with current society's issues, such as homosexual, LGBT community, be understanding and accepting them more, etc ...*

*Continue its inclusivity and openness.*

*Recently, I have been very disgusted by a lot of the politics behind the organization. It really hurts my faith and my participation in the Movement.*

*Become a welcoming place for children of all abilities. Currently my son probably would not be able to participate as he has special needs but I hope that in the future it can be a program that welcomes those with special needs.*

## **Connecting to Contemporary Affairs in Church and Society**

The final theme of responses were those which requested for VEYM activities or programming to have more connection to the day-to-day lives of young VEYM members.

*Understand the common experiences of young people in the present. What worked and was important for past generations is outdated now and we tend to rely on that often instead of adapting and evolving.*

*For me, I think my concern is the youth, some of them are born over in America, and they don't follow what our parents grew up with. Most of our parents, or some of the older youth leaders, they grew up with— 'If I tell you, you are supposed to do it.' If we had resources for the youth who are like, 'my parents forced me to go to VEYM and I do not like it.' I wish we had more resources on that.*

*Resources on real life issues.*

*More engaging discussions on controversial topics to help youth understand their faith.*

*Make it less about bible teachings and more about modern day social activities.*



*Host more workshops to help understand how to build the connection more effectively with the wavering youth. Especially those that believe if God is everywhere why do I need to go to church every Sunday since he is with me always wherever I go or why God's choice is greater than human choice, ie abortion, euthanasia, LBGTIA+, etc.*

## PART II: FINDINGS FROM THE PRIESTS' AND RELIGIOUS' SURVEY

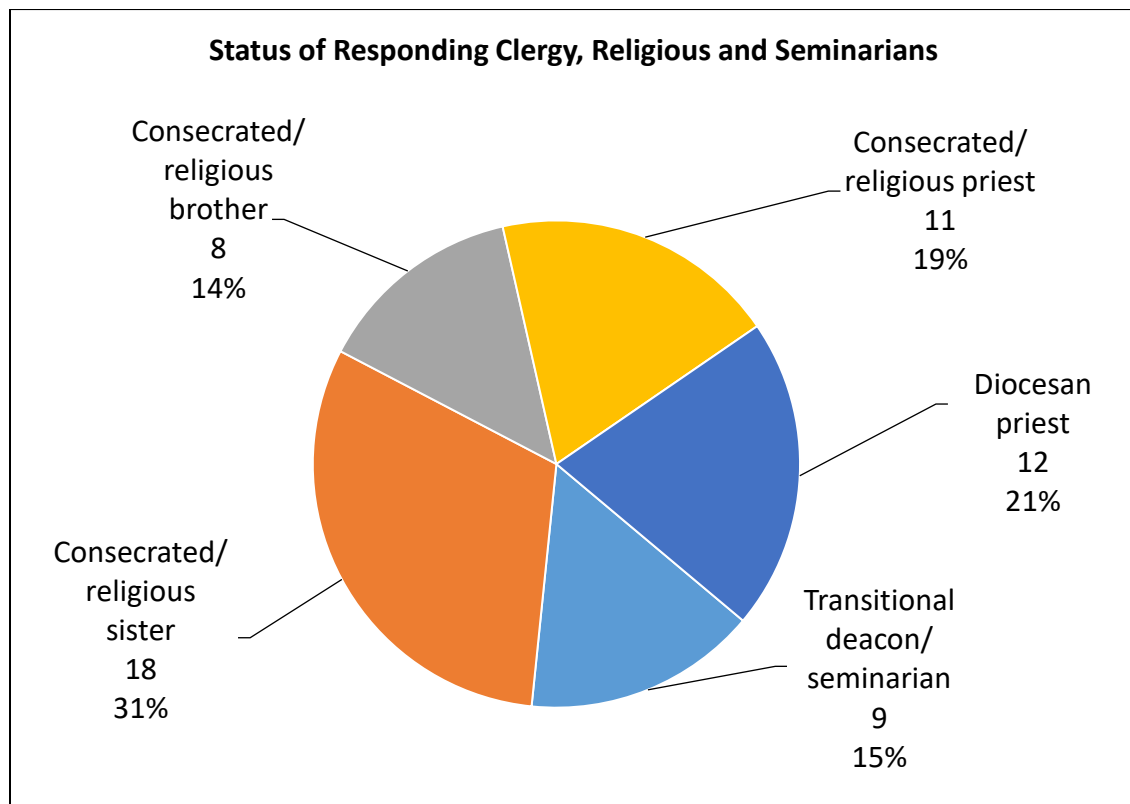
This part of the report presents findings from the survey of priests and religious who had previously and have continued to participate in VEYM. This part discusses the background and characteristics of respondents, the impact of the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement on their faith life, and the impact of VEYM on their life vocation discernment.

### Section 1: Background and Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics and relevant experiences of the 98 respondents, including their gender, age, country of origin, and educational background.

#### Status and Gender of Responding Clergy, Religious and Seminarians

A combined seven in ten (69%) are men who are diocesan priests (21%), religious priests (19%), transitional deacon/seminarian (15%), or consecrated or religious brothers (14%). Three in ten participants are consecrated or religious sisters (31%).



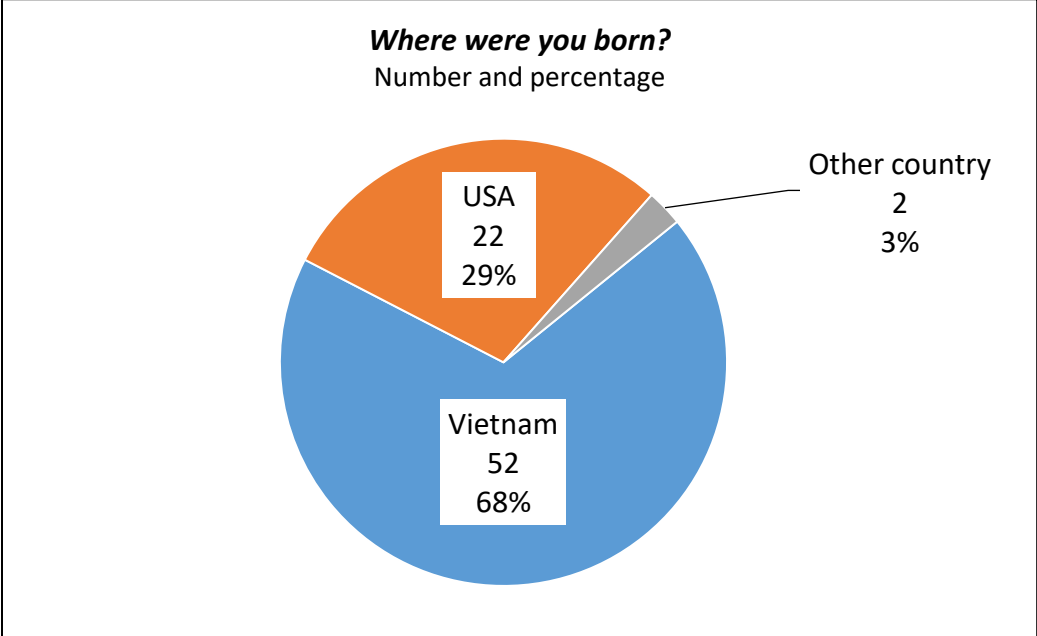
### Age of Responding Clergy, Religious and Seminarians

Respondents were born between 1948 and 2005 and thus range in age from 17 to 74 in 2022. The average age of the respondents overall is 38 (37 for men and 44 for women). The median age for the entire sample is age 35 (age 35 for men and age 46 for women).

	<b>All</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
	%	%	%
30 and younger	34	31	19
31-40	32	40	24
41-50	17	14	25
51 and older	17	14	31
Age range	17-74	19-62	22-74
Average age	38	37	44
Median age	35	35	46

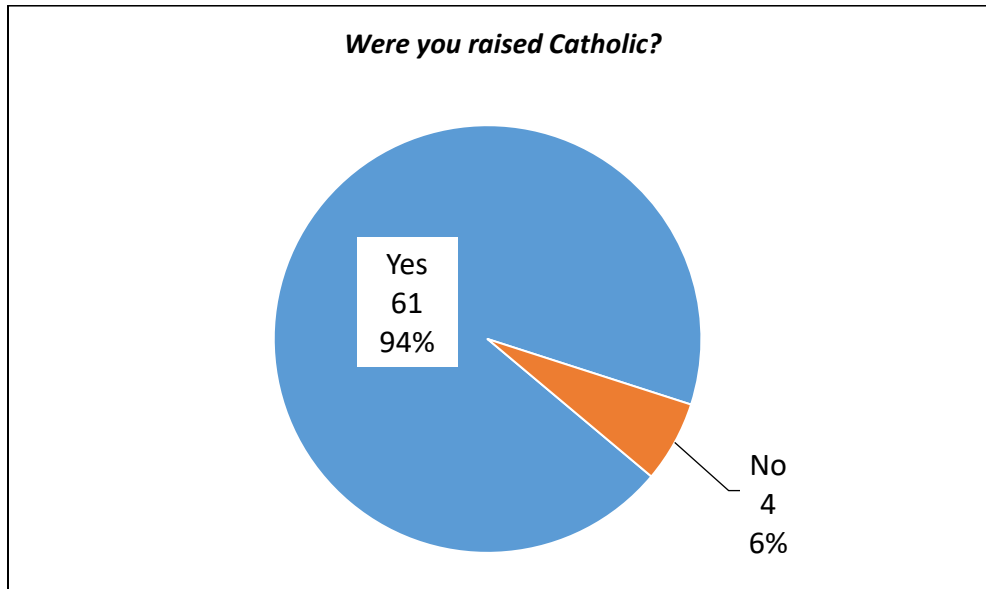
**Country of Birth**

The figure below shows the respondents' country of birth. Three in ten were born in the United States (29%) and seven in ten were born in Vietnam (68%). Three percent report being born somewhere else.



## Religious and Educational Background

More than nine in ten were raised Catholic (94%).



About one in ten attended a Catholic elementary or middle school (12%) or a Catholic high school (8%). A combined 20% have attended a Catholic elementary, middle, or high school. Nearly two in ten attended Catholic college/university (17%). Men are more likely than women to report that they attended a Catholic college/university, meanwhile, women are more likely than men to have attended a Catholic high school.

**Did you attend any of the following before you entered? \***  
Percentage responding "Yes" to each question

	Overall	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Parish-based religious education/CCD/RCIA	40	63	68
Catholic elementary or middle school	12	23	17
Catholic high school	8	10	22
Catholic college/university	17	30	17

A combined two in five (43%) had earned an undergraduate (29%) or graduate (14%) degree before entering the seminary or their religious institute.

<b>Highest Education Completed Before Entering</b>			
<i>Percentage responding</i>			
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
	%	%	%
High school	30	26	41
Trade or technical school	14	13	18
Some college, no degree	13	15	6
Undergraduate degree	29	28	29
Graduate degree	14	18	6

Three in ten completed high school or less before entering the seminary or their religious institute.

## Section 2: VEYM Impact on Priests and Religious' Faith Life

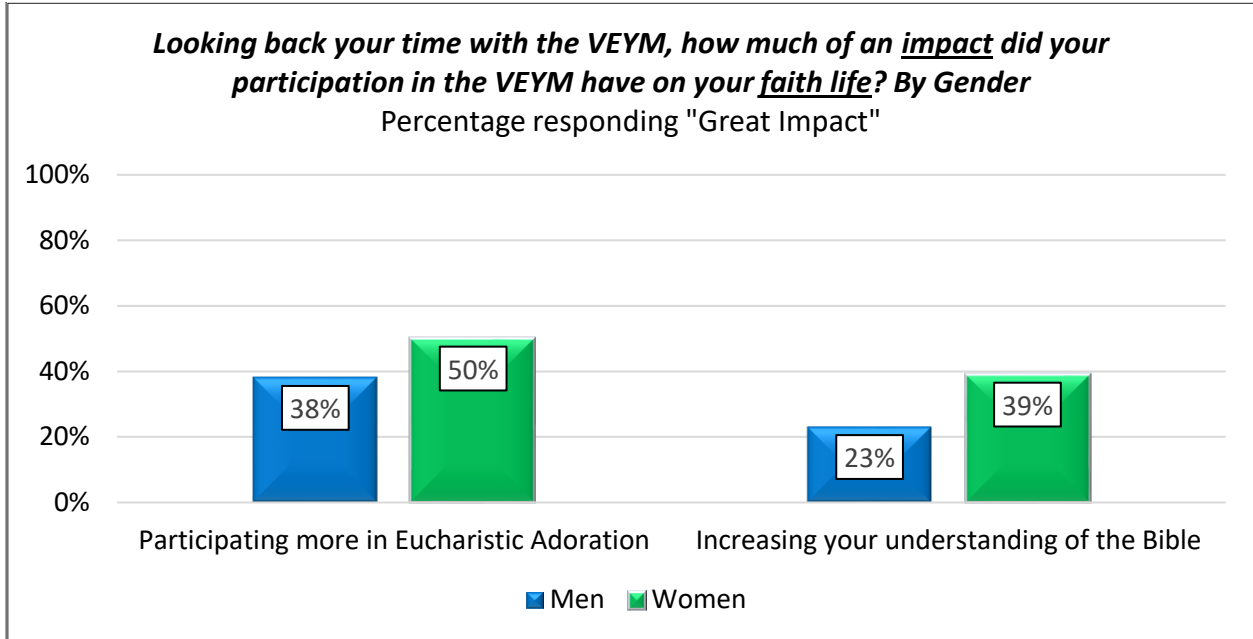
Nine in ten respondents report that participation in VEYM had an impact on them participating more in parish life (90%), with more than half (54%) saying VEYM had “a great impact” in that area. Six in ten or more (60% to 90%) report that participation in VEYM has had impact on the other aspects of their lives listed in the table below.

<i>How much of an impact has your participation in VEYM had on your faith life?</i>		
Percentage responding		
	<b>“Some Impact” or “a Great Impact” Combined</b>	<b>“A Great Impact” Only</b>
	%	%
Participating more in parish life	90	54
Living your faith in your daily life	83	47
Increasing or strengthening your belief that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist	82	53
Developing your leadership and pastoral skills	81	48
Growing in your relationship with God	80	52
Following the teachings of the Catholic Church	79	35
Seeking and doing God’s will in your life	79	48
Praying more often	75	42
Participating more in Eucharistic Adoration	75	42
Understanding more fully what it means to be Catholic	74	45
Better discerning your life’s vocation	72	35
Igniting your vocation to the priesthood, diaconate, or consecrated life	70	33
Identifying your talents and special gifts	70	29
Increasing your understanding of the Bible	69	32
Better serving the poor and needy	68	31
Understanding the history of the Church in Vietnam (such as the importance of Our Lady of La Vang and the Vietnamese Martyrs)	60	20

About half say their participation in VEYM had “a great impact” in these areas: participating more in parish life (54%), increasing or strengthening their belief that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist (53%), growing in their relationship with God (52%), seeking and doing God’s will in their lives (48%), developing their leadership and pastoral skills (48%), and living their faith in their daily lives (47%).

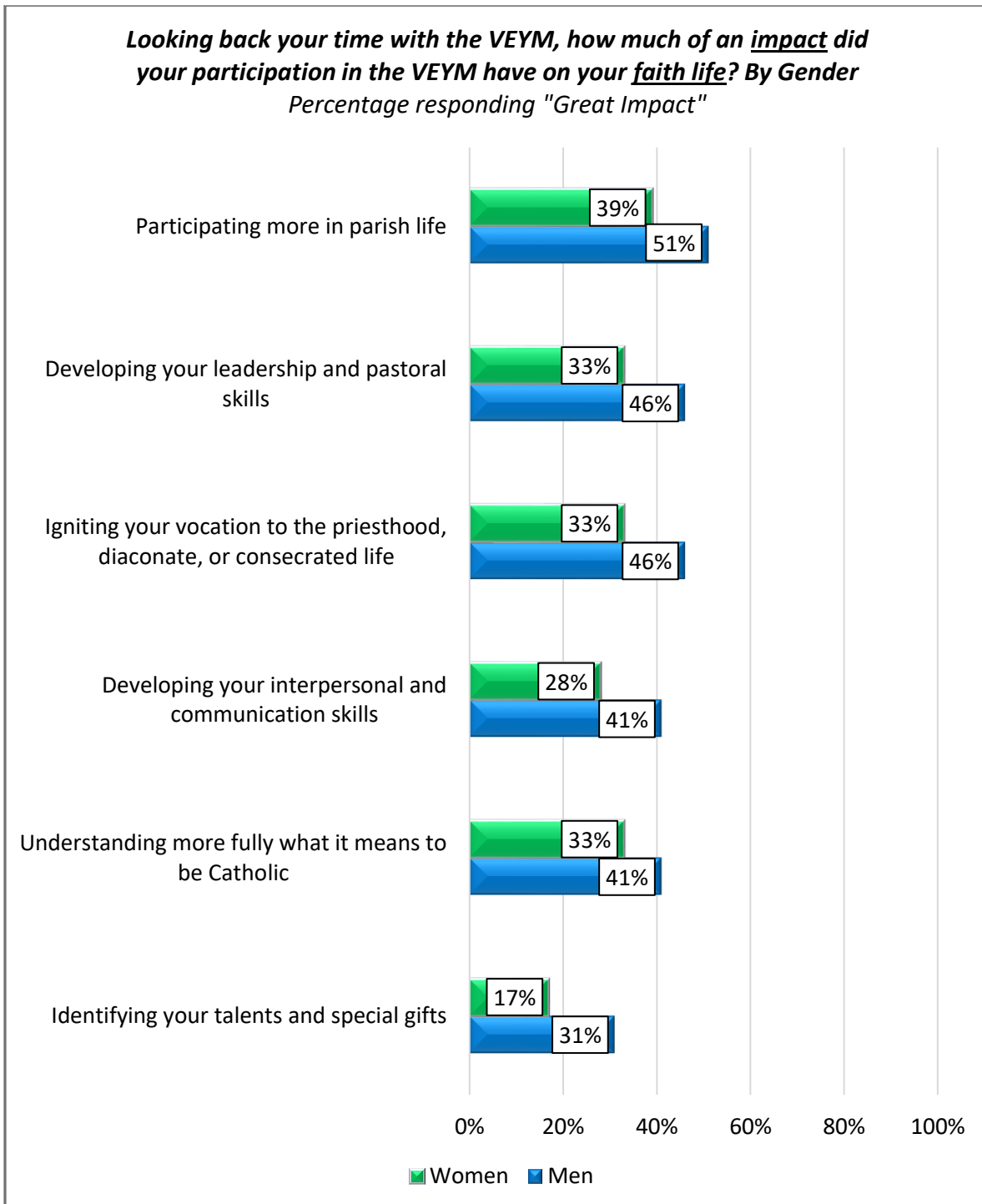
## Difference by Gender

Responding women religious are more likely than seminarians, male religious or priests to report that VEYM has “great impact” on them participating more in Eucharistic Adoration and increasing their understanding of the Bible.





Responding seminarians, male religious or priests are more likely the women religious to report that VEYM had “a great impact” on them for the aspects listed in the chart below.



## **Aspects/Activity of VEYM on Faith Life**

Respondents were asked to provide a response to this prompt: *Please identify a VEYM activity that has the most impact on your faith life.* Sixty-five responded to this question.

Their responses can be grouped into the four broad categories below, with an additional “others” category for miscellaneous topics. However, many respondents mention topics from multiple categories. A discussion of each category follows with some sample comments.

- Eucharistic Adoration
- Camps
- Community building
- Service activities
- Other activities

### **Eucharistic Adoration**

The most frequently mentioned VEYM activity that was said to impact the respondents’ faith lives was their participation in Eucharistic Adoration. Some respondents wrote about Eucharistic Adoration at retreats or camps specifically. About a third of respondents mentioned Eucharistic Adoration in their response.

*Consistency of Eucharistic adoration.*

*Going to Church and staying back for Adoration every Thursday.*

*Eucharistic adorations during retreats and camps.*

*Adoration as well as weekly Gospel.*

### **Camps**

The second most frequently mentioned VEYM activity that impacted respondents’ faith lives were the VEYM camps. About a quarter mentioned these camps as the VEYM activity that had the most impact on their faith life.

*Training camps and youth leader conferences.*

*Attending the Regional Convention and the Youth Leader Trainer training Camp.*

*Camping and training camps.*

*Group Activity, camps, and going to Mass.*

## **Community Building**

The third most frequently mentioned VEYM activity (mentioned by about one in six respondents) that impacted respondents' faith lives was the opportunity for community through VEYM. Several respondents wrote about finding friendship and experiencing bonding with others.

*Going to Mass every Sunday and creating great Christian support community/system. If it weren't for these relationships, I'm not sure if I would have the vigor and passion that I do. Though I do have to say that the impact also has to come from family life. The community activities and family-style type of community with Thieu Nhi helped me to feel a sense of belonging and growth.*

*When we gathered with the other VEYM at conferences around the States yearly.*

*The sense of a youthful community fully gathered together at Mass and after Mass during Sinh Hoat Chung.*

*I really love going to the camps that my church has every year. All of us go to a little campground for a weekend and are able to get away and bond with each other.*

*Created many opportunities for service, prayer, and friendship.*

## **Service Activities**

The fourth most frequently mentioned VEYM activity that impacted respondents' faith lives was the opportunity for service, mentioned by about one in ten respondents.

*Volunteering at food drives and nursing homes.*

*Service for the poor.*

*Doing Apostolic works volunteering and helping the needy during the holidays.*

## **Other Activities**

Some responses did not fit into any of the above categories, including those mentioning activities like prayer, retreats, or weekly VEYM activities. Below are some examples of miscellaneous responses in the "others" category.

*Connecting with the kids and showing them that we all are sinners and are forgiven by God.*

*Group sharing and activities around the parish*

*Retreats*

*Teaching Catechism*

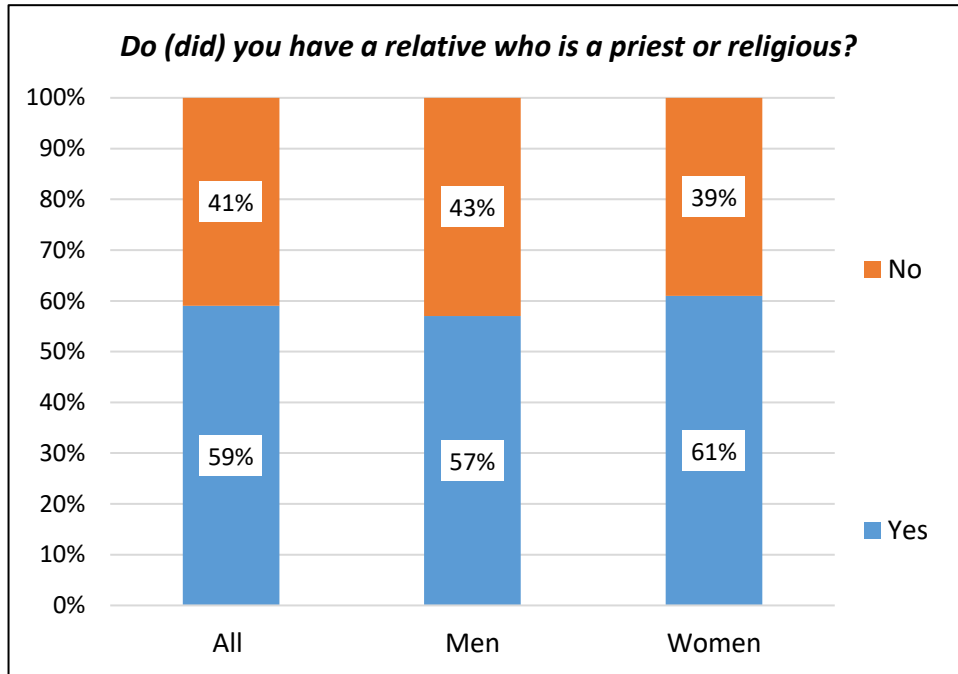
*After some 30 years now, I remember to lead my altar servers always win in any game.  
Our group is always great with Morse code etc.*

### Section 3: VEYM Impact on Priests' and Religious' Vocational Discernment

This section of the report examines what responding clergy, religious and seminarians say influenced their vocational decisions.

#### Influence of Priests and Religious on their Vocations

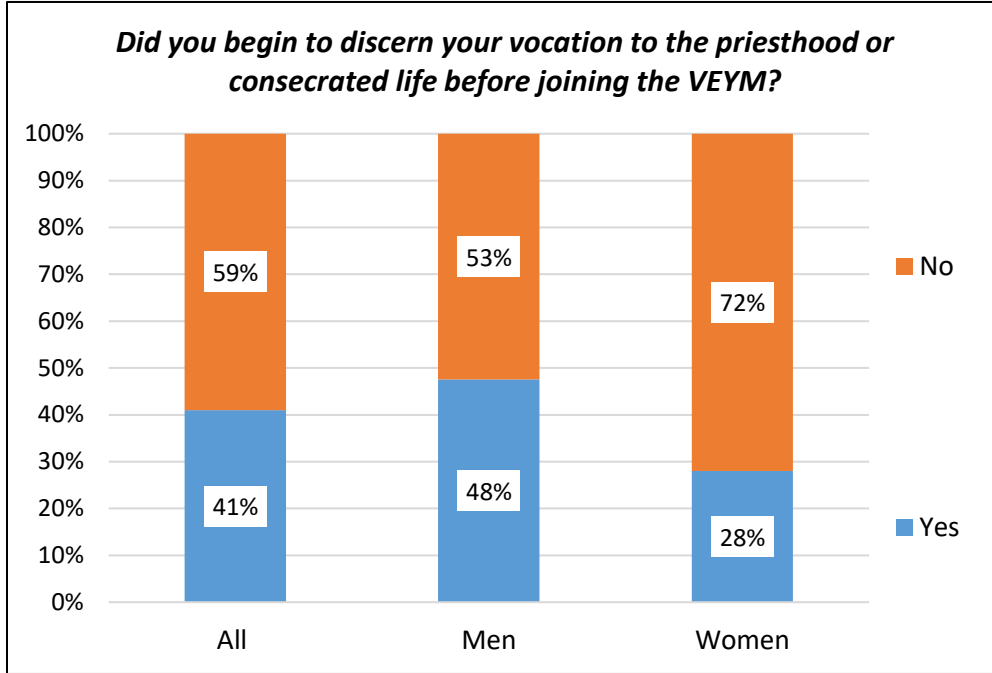
Six in ten (59%) report having a relative who is a priest or a religious. Men and women do not differ significantly.



About three in four (77%) report that outside of family members, there were priests, brothers, or sisters who personally influenced their vocational discernment.

### VEYM's Influence on their Discernment of their Vocation

Four in ten already began to discern their vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life before joining the VEYM. Men were more likely to do so than women religious.



Many activities at VEYM are reported to have impacted their discernment of their vocation. More than three in five (64% to 82%) report that the activities in the table below helped them to discern their vocation to priesthood or religious life.

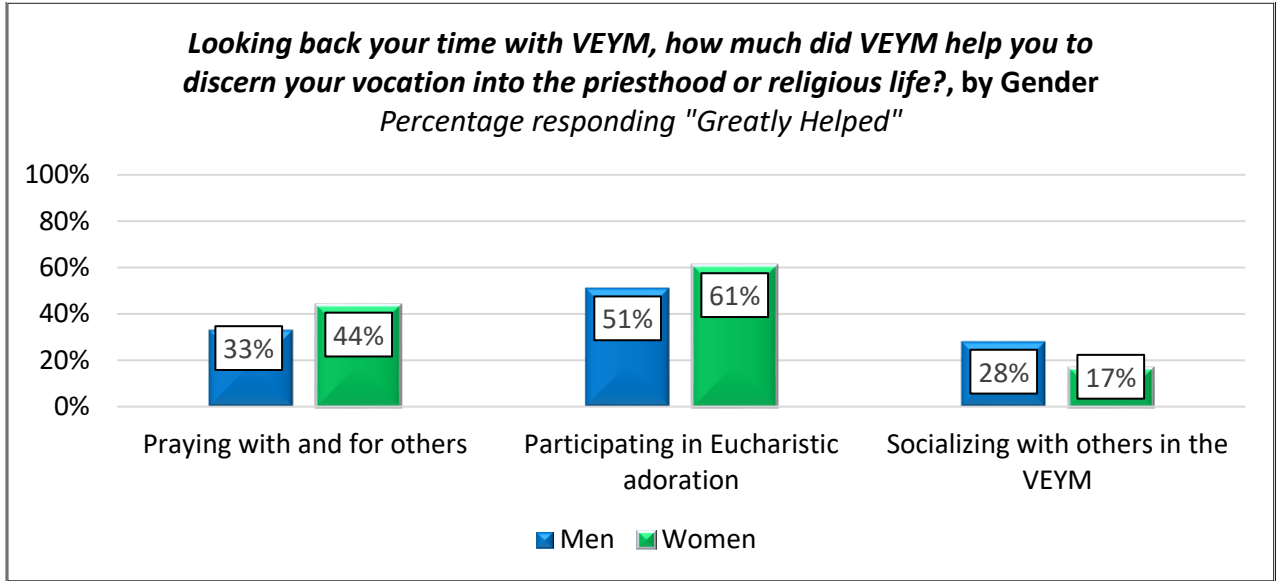
	<b>“Somewhat” or “Greatly Helped” to Discern Vocation to Priesthood or Religious Life</b>	<b>“Greatly Helped” to Discern Vocation to Priesthood or Religious Life</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Having opportunities to lead and serve in VEYM	82	49
Socializing with others in the VEYM	80	33
Participating in Eucharistic adoration	78	49
Praying with and for others	76	41
Attending VEYM training camps	73	33
Witnessing the ministry of priests or consecrated sisters/brothers through the VEYM	73	33
Studying the Bible and catechism	68	22
Receiving encouragement from your VEYM peers/members to discern your vocation to the priesthood/consecrated life	67	26
Doing VEYM community service projects	66	31
Receiving motivation from VEYM National Convention/Congress to discern your vocation to the priesthood/consecrated life	56	19
Receiving encouragement from priests or consecrated sisters/brothers through the VEYM	64	25

Examining the VEYM activities that most helped respondents to discern their vocations, at least a third report that these “greatly helped” them:

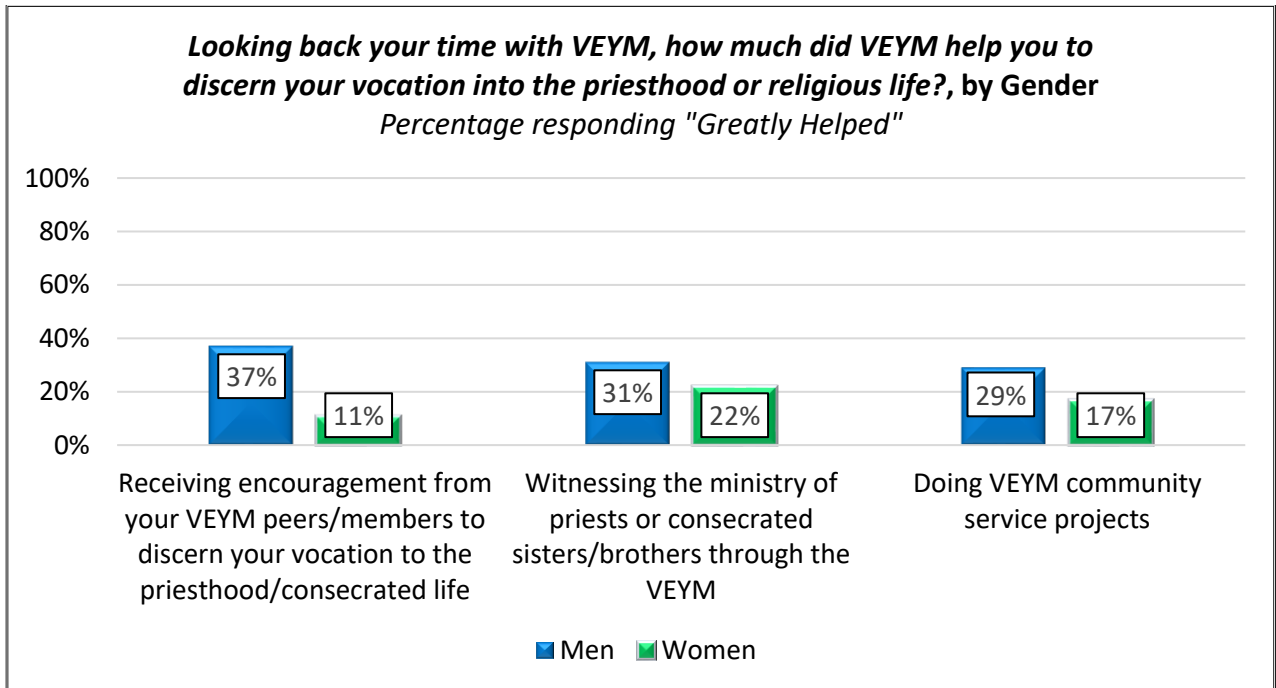
- Having opportunities to lead and serve in VEYM – 49%
- Participating in Eucharistic adoration – 49%
- Praying with and for others – 41%
- Socializing with others in the VEYM – 33%
- Attending VEYM training camps – 33%
- Witnessing the ministry of priests or consecrated sisters/brothers through the VEYM – 33%

**Difference by Gender**

Women religious are most likely to say the first two aspects of VEYM such as praying with and for others and participating in Eucharist adoration “greatly helped” them to discern their vocations.

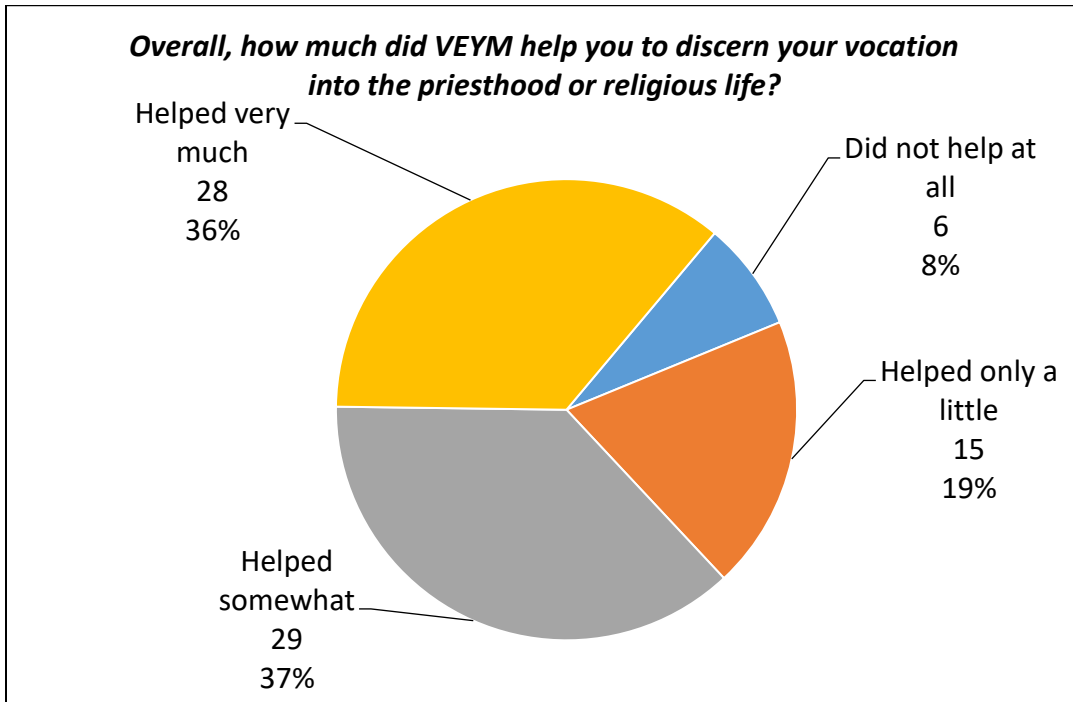


Men religious are most likely to say the aspects of VEYM showed in the figure below “greatly helped” them to discern their vocations.





When asked how much VEYM helped them overall to discern their vocation into the priesthood or religious life, almost three in four (73%) say VEYM at least “somewhat” helped them discern their vocation into the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life.



## **How VEYM Helped Them Discern Their Vocations**

When asked to identify the one way that VEYM most helped them to discern their vocation to the priesthood or religious life, half responded to this question. Responses can be grouped into the four broad categories with an additional “others” category for miscellaneous topics. However, many respondents mention topics from multiple categories. A discussion of each category follows with some sample comments.

- Eucharistic Adoration
- Opportunity for Service
- Encounter with Religious and Ordained
- Prayer and Mass
- Others

### **Eucharistic Adoration**

The most frequently mentioned way that VEYM helped respondents with their discernment of vocation was by giving them opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration, which was mentioned by about a quarter of those responding.

*Being at Mass, Eucharistic Adoration many times with members of VEYM really helped me contemplate and think that I need to do some better things with my life for God and his people.*

*Prayer, Adoration Hour.*

*Retreat, mass, visiting the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Hour.*

*Adoration at camps and retreats.*

### **Opportunities for Service**

The second most frequently mentioned way that VEYM has helped them discern their vocation is by their participation in service opportunities. Several respondents mentioned that it was through service that they learned more about themselves and their vocation. About one in five mentioned this topic in their responses.

*Serving youth in the capacity of a leader: teaching, leading prayers, advising, accompanying*

*Praying together accompanied by doing outreach, helping others.*

*I think just connecting with the kids made me realize what it would sort of be like if I were to have kids.*

*Activities we had at camps, and I was the leader that helped me and formed me to become priest now.*

*It helped me when I was growing up as adults to develop the sense of services and confidence when I supervised others at work, it helped me to know how to organize the task and plan well from what I learnt from VEYM.*

*One of the values of the Movement is the sacrifice in praising God and service. Working with the youth and other youth leaders is the sacrifice in service. Service in the Movement helped me decide the priesthood vocation. If I did not join the Movement, I might not have thought of serving the youth and being a priest.*

### **Encounters with Religious and Ordained**

Another frequently mentioned way that VEYM helped with discernment was by providing opportunities for them to encounter and interact with clergy and religious persons, which was mentioned by about one in five respondents.

*Got to know other religious and priests and had opportunities to talk with them.*

*That summer, Ve Dat Hua (the Promised Land) for all Huynh Truong was held at Orange County, CA. I was thrilled for the opportunity to travel out of state and little did I know, God opened my ears and heart to be more keen to his words and the religious life. As I helped a Dominican Sister bring her props to her room, and during that short distance, she shared with me about her prayer life and invited me to Come and See.*

*Having a sister assisting with religious education and being there to join us made me question what religious life is about.*

*Witnessing priests and religious persons at camps. Daily encounters with priests and religious who are VEYM chaplain and chaplain assistants.*

*In the movement, always is there a chaplain priest, who guides and accompanies the Movement. When I become a youth leader, I had opportunities to see the priest more at meetings, that helped me to discern.... The priest chaplain was the one who invited me to discern the vocation to the priesthood. There was a connection with him as well as other priests.*

### **Prayers and Mass**

Through their participation in VEYM prayer services and Masses, another one in six respondents say they were helped with their discernment. Several of these respondents also mentioned Eucharistic Adoration and fall into that category as well.

*Listening to God's word every week.*

*I think participating in the Mass and other prayerful services teaching ones to pray for discernment.*

*Praying together accompanied by doing outreach, helping others.*

*Going to church very often and praying.*

*Weekly Eucharist, adoration, and prayers as well as other devotional activities helped me to discern priesthood vocation.*

### **Other Ways**

Some response topics did not fit into any of the above categories. For example, multiple respondents mentioned the community or relationships they built with others in VEYM to have been helpful to their discernment. Multiple respondents also mentioned retreats or camps as a helpful VEYM activity. Below are some examples of these miscellaneous responses.

*VEYM training camp helps me to be a better person, leader, and good example for people around me.*

*Through normal gathering, working, interacting with one another that prompted me to look for deeper meaning long lasting relationship.*

*It helped my decision to not seek for a catholic peer and stay single for the rest of my life.*

*The Movement focuses on the Bible. Love for the Word of God and Jesus in the Eucharist inspired me to discern the vocation to priesthood.*