

# BEYOND CATHOLIC GRADUATION

How Graduates of  
Ontario Catholic  
Secondary Schools  
Live Their Faith



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“During secondary school, you really begin to learn who you really are, so the values encouraged at my Catholic secondary school played a large role in my overall development as an adult.”

- a Catholic secondary school graduate

## **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to the thousands of graduates of Ontario Catholic secondary schools who shared their perspectives and experiences with the research team. Thank you to the teacher candidates who were part of that team – Cristina Peters, Cinzia Piccioni, Susan Caschera, Peter Ricci, and Patrick McGarry – and to the research advisory committee, who guided the research – Angelo Bolotta, Carol Bryden, Marcelle DeFreitas, Michael Gray, Theresa Harris, Greg Rogers, Orlanda Sousa, and Lyn Vause, led by Sister Joan Cronin, Executive Director of the Institute for Catholic Education.

## **Executive Summary**

In the Fall of 2012, past graduates of Catholic secondary schools across Ontario were asked how the goals of Catholic education, outlined in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs), are reflected in their lives. Almost 6,000 graduates spanning several decades of Catholic secondary schooling in Ontario responded to the online *Beyond Catholic Graduation* survey; seven graduates were interviewed.

### **Volunteering**

Those who had graduated recently (that is, those who were 30 years old or younger) were more likely than those who had graduated earlier to have volunteered while still in secondary school (94% vs. 75%). They were also more likely to report that their secondary school provided them with opportunities to participate in social justice projects (89% vs. 73%). Some of these differences may be due to changes in the availability of courses requiring volunteering and in graduation requirements.

Many of the graduates have maintained their volunteering. In fact, 72% had volunteered within the past year, most frequently in activities related to education (56%), church (39%), sports (33%), community service organizations (27%), and not-for-profit organizations (22%). Of those who volunteered, 79% were motivated to make a contribution to the community, 45% because it was the right thing to do, 39% because they or someone they knew had been personally affected by the group or organization, 30% to explore strengths, 30% to improve skills, and 30% to fulfill religious or other beliefs.

### **Charitable Donations**

While still in secondary school, 76% of the graduates had helped to raise money for a cause or charity. Within the past year, 82% had made a charitable donation, most frequently to a specific cause (72%), by buying raffle tickets, entering a draw or sponsoring someone in an event (70%), through collections at church (69%) and when asked by a family member (60%). Of those who donated, 75% gave to help a cause in which they personally believed, 69% because they felt compassion towards people in need, 63% because they wanted to make a contribution to the community, 63% because they or someone they knew was personally affected by the cause the organization supports, and 43% to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs.

### **Voting and Career Choice**

Values were the most frequent consideration when graduates decided whether to vote (73%) and how to vote (73%). When choosing a career, graduates were influenced by their personal interest/passion (66%), academic qualifications (61%), location (61%), salary (58%) and values (57%).

### **Importance of Catholic Education**

Graduates wrote that Catholic education was important because it incorporated beliefs, values, morals, ethics and guiding life principles that have helped to shape who they are; gave them a sense of community in which they could participate in social activities, build

relationships and connect with members of the school community; provided an inclusive environment where they could openly and freely practice their faith; helped them to develop their faith; and provided them with insight and inspiration to guide their decisions. Catholic education, they wrote, taught them the importance of social justice, altruism, and helping others.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since 1998, the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations* (OCSGEs) document has provided a framework for “designing Ontario Catholic curriculum, in the development of youth leadership, teacher education and administrative programs and to support the work of local board initiatives” (Institute for Catholic Education website). The OCSGEs document describes seven overall expectations, representing broad exit standards, for graduates of Catholic schools:

- A discerning believer formed in the Catholic faith community
- An effective communicator
- A reflective, creative, and holistic thinker
- A self-directed, responsible, life-long learner
- A collaborative contributor
- A caring family member
- A responsible citizen

Schools are encouraged to use the OCSGEs as the foundation for their work and programming. Although the OCSGEs were formally described in 1998 and revised in 2011, the expectations have always formed part of the framework for curriculum planning and the goals of Ontario’s publicly-funded Catholic schools.

The Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) contracted researchers from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto to collaborate with ICE on a research study of how the goals of Catholic education are reflected in the lives of graduates from Catholic secondary schools. Because the OCSGEs describe the characteristics students are expected to develop throughout their Catholic education and take with them beyond graduation, the OCSGEs provide the framework for the study. This report describes the results of the study.

## METHOD

This study used a sequential mixed-method design with two stages: (a) an online survey of graduates from Ontario Catholic secondary schools and (b) interviews with several graduates to explore more deeply their perceptions of the influence of Catholic education in their lives.

### Development of the Survey

The Beyond Catholic Graduation (BCG) survey was developed in collaboration with a research advisory committee, led by ICE’s Executive Director, Sister Joan Cronin, consisting of representatives from the following associations:

- Catholic Principals’ Council of Ontario,
- Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education,

- Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association,
- Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association,
- Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association,
- Ontario Catholic School Business Officials' Association, and
- Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario.

This committee was formed to advise the researchers about the areas of focus as well as the context in which the research would be taking place. Based on the input from the research advisory committee, the researchers identified relevant research and surveys that would help to inform the present research.

This search led us to the large-scale survey, the Canadian Survey of Giving and Volunteering (CSVG) distributed by Statistics Canada. The purpose of CSVG is to provide a window into the activities of Canadians in relation to giving, volunteering and helping others. That survey includes questions about formal and informal volunteering activities, reasons for volunteering, decisions about charitable giving, reasons for giving, and reasons for not giving more. Drawing on the concepts covered in the CSVG, other areas of interest identified by the research advisory committee, and our review of the literature, we drafted questions for the BCG survey. These questions were reviewed and revised multiple times by the research advisory committee and other stakeholders to ensure that the questions aligned with the purpose of the research and that the content and terminology were appropriate for graduates from Ontario Catholic secondary schools. A small pilot was conducted with teacher candidates enrolled in the Catholic education focus at an Ontario Faculty of Education, leading to additional small refinements to the survey.

The final survey included both selected-response questions and questions that asked graduates to write a short response. Graduates were asked about their educational background; youth experiences and attitudes; volunteering; charitable donations; decision-making; their Catholic education; and employment. At the end of the survey, graduates were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

## **Development of the Interview Protocol**

To develop the questions for the follow-up interviews, the researchers consulted with the research advisory committee and other stakeholders, and also reviewed a preliminary summary of the responses to the online survey. The initial draft of interview questions about graduates' experiences while attending Catholic secondary school, how these experiences affect the decisions graduates make today; and their views about Catholic secondary education was pilot-tested with a few graduates to refine the wording and order of the questions. All questions in the interview were open-ended. A copy of the interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

## **Participants**

The target population in this study was graduates of publicly-funded Ontario Anglophone Catholic secondary schools. The research advisory committee in consultation with the researchers identified several partners (for example, trustees, teacher organizations, principals' organizations, parent organizations, churches) within the Ontario Catholic education system and the broader Ontario Catholic community that could assist in getting the word out to graduates



across Ontario. An email was sent to partners from the Executive Director of ICE briefly outlining the purpose of the survey and its benefits to Catholic Education, providing a link to the survey and requesting partners to participate and to share the information with as many graduates as possible. A bookmark with information about accessing the survey was developed for distribution at events such as When Faith Meets Pedagogy.

Because it was important that the survey be available province wide, it was administered online. Graduates were asked to click on the link [www.beyondcatholicgraduation.com](http://www.beyondcatholicgraduation.com), where they were able to access the survey. The survey was anonymous and therefore no identifying information was collected from graduates unless they indicated a willingness to participate in a follow-up interview and therefore provided contact information.

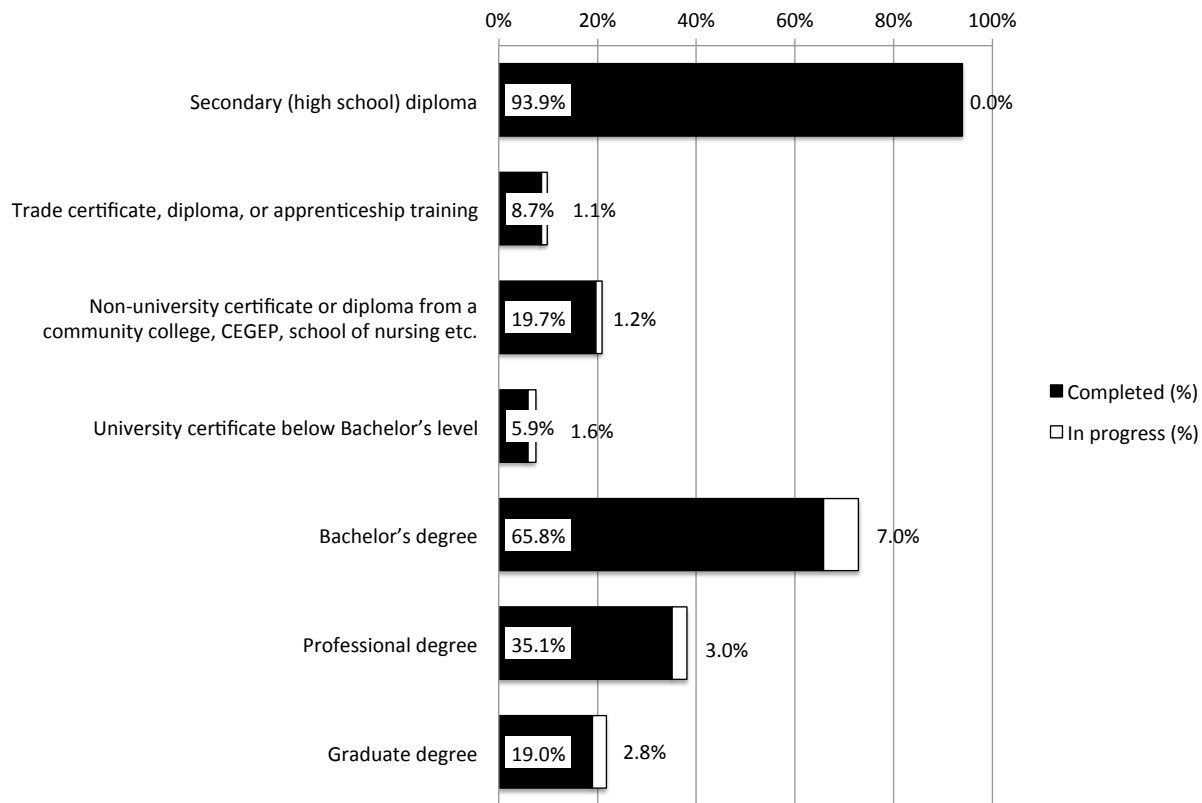
Between September 2012 and December 2012, 5,988 graduates responded to the survey.<sup>1</sup> Ontario Catholic secondary schools across Ontario were represented: 45.5% of respondents had graduated from an Ontario Catholic secondary school in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), 26.6% in South West Ontario, 14.8% in Central or Eastern Ontario, and 7.0% in Northern Ontario.<sup>2</sup> More than half (58.2%) had graduated in 1994 or before, and 32.9% graduated between 1998 and 2012. Most (85.9%) had attended a Catholic secondary school for at least 4 years and 91.9% also attended Catholic elementary school. Almost three-quarters (73.0%) were female. Graduates were asked if one or more of their parents/guardians had attended a college/university; 46.3% said “yes.”

Figure 1 summarizes the degrees, certificates and diplomas that the respondents had completed or were in the process of completing. Almost all (93.9%) had completed their secondary (high school) diploma (those who had not completed secondary school were no longer enrolled in school). Almost two-thirds (65.8%) had completed a Bachelor’s degree and 35.1% had completed a professional degree. For other credentials, 19.0% reported they had completed a graduate degree and 19.7% a non-university certificate or diploma from a community college, CEGEP, school of nursing, or similar program.

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<sup>1</sup> There were a total of 7,084 instances of individuals accessing the BCG online survey. However, of these, 1,054 answered fewer than 25% of the common questions (that is, questions that were asked of all respondents, not conditional on previous answers) and so were not included in the analyses. Because of the anonymity of the survey, it is not possible to know how many of the instances were created by graduates who returned to the survey later. An additional 42 respondents were not included in the analyses because they were still enrolled in secondary school. The final sample size was 5,988.

<sup>2</sup> Compared to the distribution of students enrolled in Ontario Catholic secondary schools in 2011/2012 (51% in the GTA, 4% in Northern Ontario, 11% in Southwest Ontario, and 34% in Central and Eastern Ontario), the survey had relatively more respondents from Southwest Ontario and fewer from Central and Eastern Ontario.



*Figure 1.* Degrees, certificates and diplomas respondents had completed or were in the process of completing (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).

Interviews were conducted by telephone between February 2013 and May 2013. Potential interviewees were selected from among those who indicated on the online survey a willingness to be interviewed. The list of potential interviewees was intended to include all the geographical regions across Ontario and to reflect the gender and age distribution of the respondents to the survey. The interviews were conducted by students in the Catholic education focus at Faculties of Education at two Ontario universities. These students attempted to schedule interviews, to be conducted by telephone or face-to-face, by calling and emailing graduates from the list of potential interviewees. Seven interviews were completed.

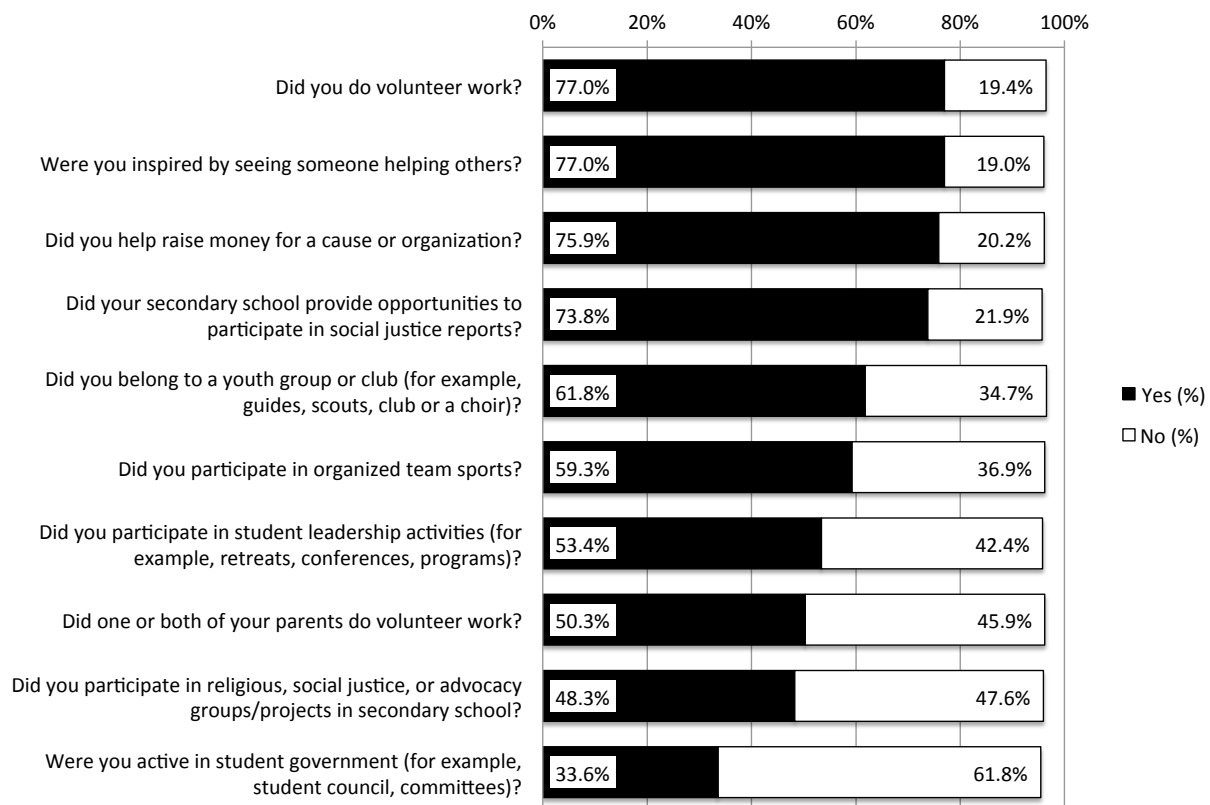
## Analyses

The distributions of responses to the selected-response questions from the survey were computed. Responses to the open-ended questions from the survey and to the interview questions were analyzed to identify themes. Where relevant, analyses were performed by age (30 years and younger versus over 30), whether the graduate had earned a professional degree (for example, B.Ed., M.D., J.D., or Pharm.D.), and year of graduation (before 1998 versus 1998 or after).

## RESULTS

### Youth Experiences and Perspectives

Graduates were asked about their experiences and perspectives in secondary school, especially related to team sports, clubs/groups, leadership activities and volunteer work. Figure 2 summarizes the graduates' experiences and perspectives during secondary school. A few graduates specified other experiences; these are summarized in Appendix C.



*Figure 2.* Experiences and perspectives during secondary school (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).

More than three-quarters (77.0%) of graduates volunteered or helped raise money for a cause or an organization (75.9%) in secondary school. About half (50.3%) reported that one or both of their parents did volunteer work and 77.0% were inspired by seeing someone help others. Further analysis showed that, of those graduates who indicated they volunteered in secondary school, 58.1% reported that one or both of their parents did volunteer work and 83.0% were inspired by seeing someone help others. Of those graduates who indicated they helped raise money for a cause or organization, 55.7% reported one or both of their parents did volunteer work and 83.9% were inspired by seeing someone help others.

More than half of the graduates belonged to a youth group or club (61.8%), participated in organized team sports (59.3%) or participated in student leadership activities (53.4%). Just under half (48.3%) of graduates participated in religious, social justice, or advocacy groups/projects in secondary school and about one-third (33.6%) were active in student government.

Additional analyses were conducted to see whether there were differences in responses by age, by whether the graduate had earned a professional degree, or by year of graduation. Graduates who were active in student government in secondary school were significantly more likely to have completed a professional degree (42.5% vs. 30.7%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,711) = 81.53, p < .01$ ). A similar result was found for those who participated in student leadership activities (62.9% vs. 51.3%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,737) = 73.56, p < .01$ ) and in religious, social justice, or advocacy groups/projects in secondary school (58.0% vs. 45.6%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,741) = 83.75, p < .01$ ).

A few differences were also found by year graduated. Those who graduated in 1998 or after were significantly more likely to report participating in student leadership activities (62.3% vs. 52.5%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,728) = 48.62, p < .01$ ), to have volunteered while still in secondary school (90.8% vs. 74.6%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,763) = 208.13, p < .01$ ), and to indicate that their secondary school provided them with opportunities to participate in social justice projects (87.5% vs. 71.9%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,720) = 174.85, p < .01$ ).

Those who were 30 years of age or younger were significantly more likely to have participated in student leadership activities (63.6% vs. 53.0%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,729) = 50.30, p < .01$ ), to have volunteered while still in secondary school (93.5% vs. 75.0%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,764) = 236.77, p < .01$ ), and to report that their secondary school provided them with opportunities to participate in social justice projects (88.8% vs. 73.0%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,722) = 158.69, p < .01$ ). It is important to note that some of these differences may due to changes in the availability of courses in leadership and courses requiring volunteering. In addition, students beginning Grade 9 in 1999 or later were required by Ontario's Ministry of Education to complete 40 hours of community involvement as a graduation requirement.

## Recent Volunteering Experiences

Graduates were asked to think about the past 12 months and indicate whether or not they had volunteered. Those graduates who reported volunteering in the past 12 months were asked to respond to additional questions about how often they volunteered, the types of activities, and the reasons they volunteered. Those graduates who did not volunteer in the past 12 months were asked to indicate reasons why. All graduates were also asked if they had provided assistance in ways other than on behalf of an organization or in their homes.

Almost three-quarters (71.9%) of graduates had volunteered in the past 12 months.<sup>3</sup> Additional analyses were conducted to see if there were differences in responses by age (30 and under vs. over 30), year graduated (before 1998 vs. 1998 and after) and degree (professional

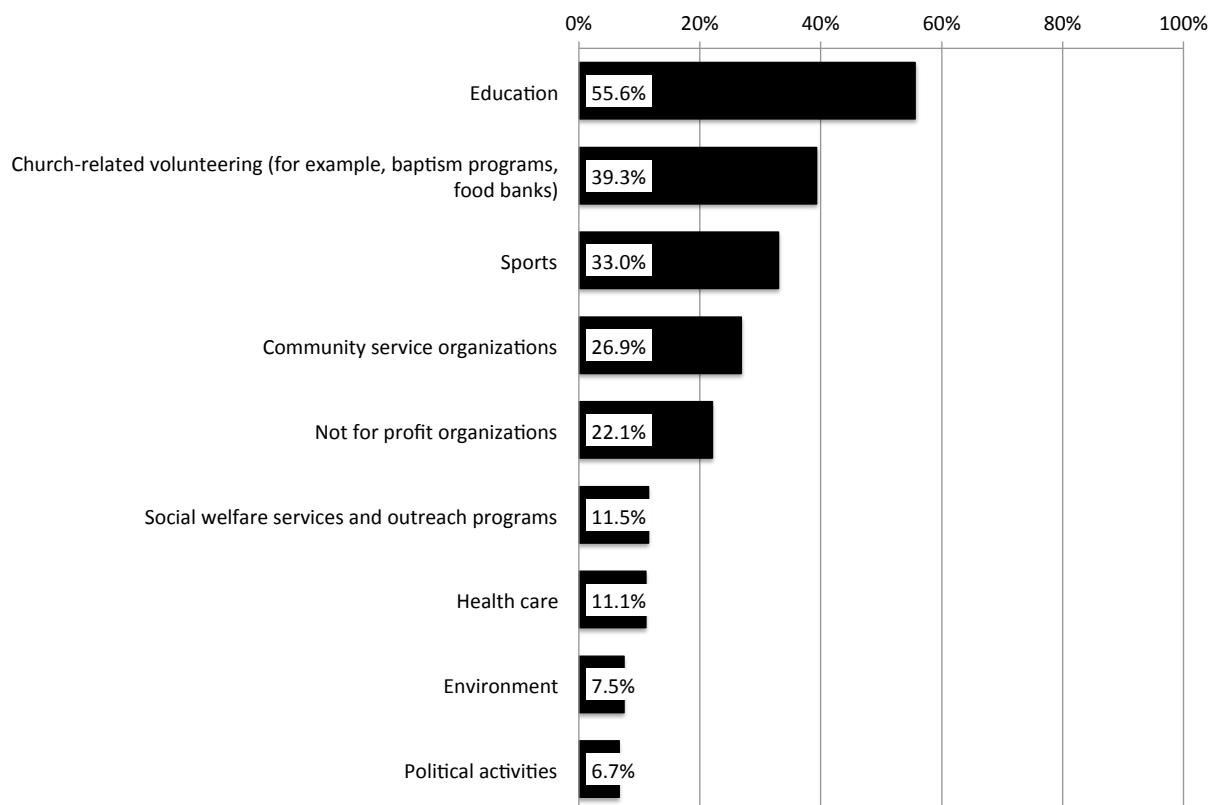
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<sup>3</sup> Although differences in wording prevent direct comparison between the *Beyond Catholic Graduation Survey* and the most recent (2007) *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (CSGVP), it is nevertheless interesting to review that survey's results. In that study, 46% of Canadians reported volunteering in the preceding 12 months. For more information, see Hall, M., Lasby, D., Ayer, S., & Gibbons, W. D. (2009). *Caring Canadians, involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

degree completed or in progress vs. other degrees). No differences were found by age or year graduated but a difference was found by professional degree. The percentage of graduates who had volunteered in the past 12 months was higher within the group who had completed or were in the process of completing a professional degree compared to the group who had completed or were in the process of completing other types of degrees (80.0% vs. 71.1%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,781) = 56.11, p < .01$ ).

Graduates were also asked how often they volunteered in the past 12 months. The majority reported a weekly commitment to volunteering.

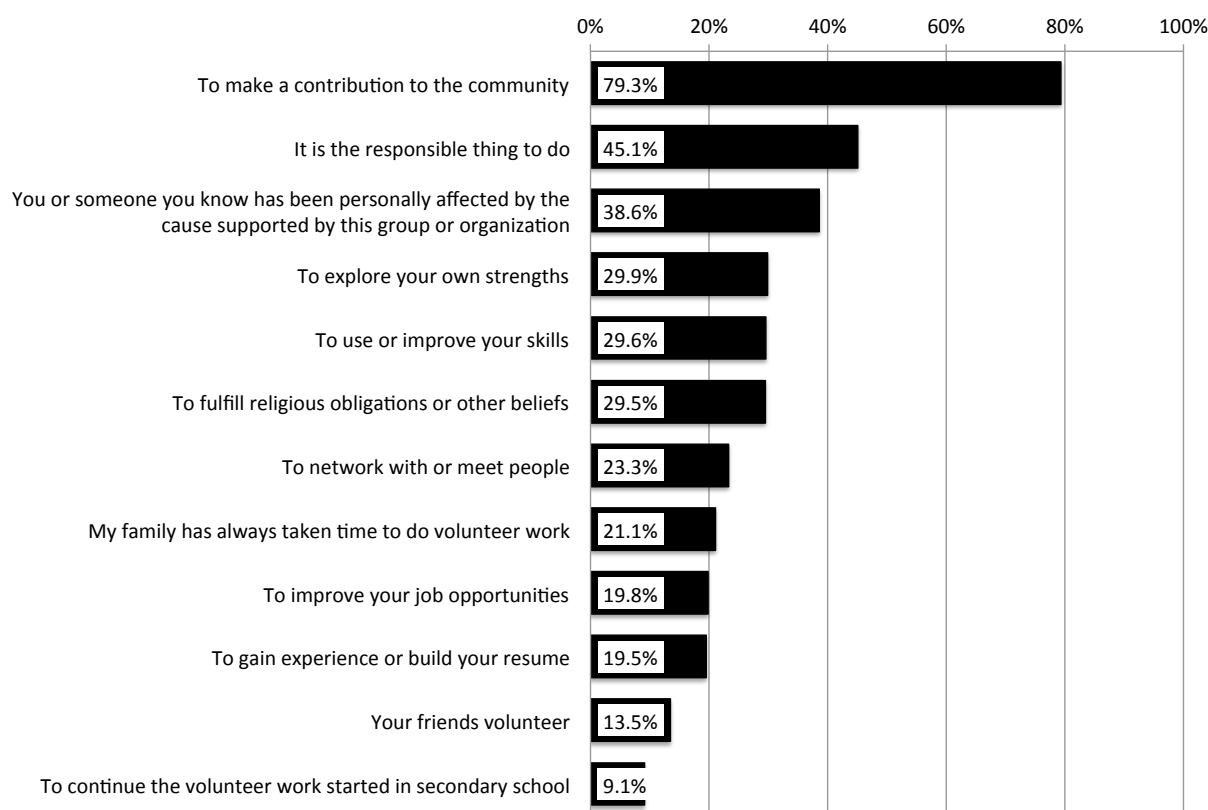
Figure 3 summarizes the areas in which graduates had volunteered in the past 12 months. The most common responses were education (55.6% of those who volunteered), church (39.3%), sports (33.0%), community service organizations (26.9%), and not-for-profit organizations (22.1%).



*Figure 3.* Volunteer activities in the past 12 months (percentages are of the 4,308 graduates who had volunteered in the past 12 months).

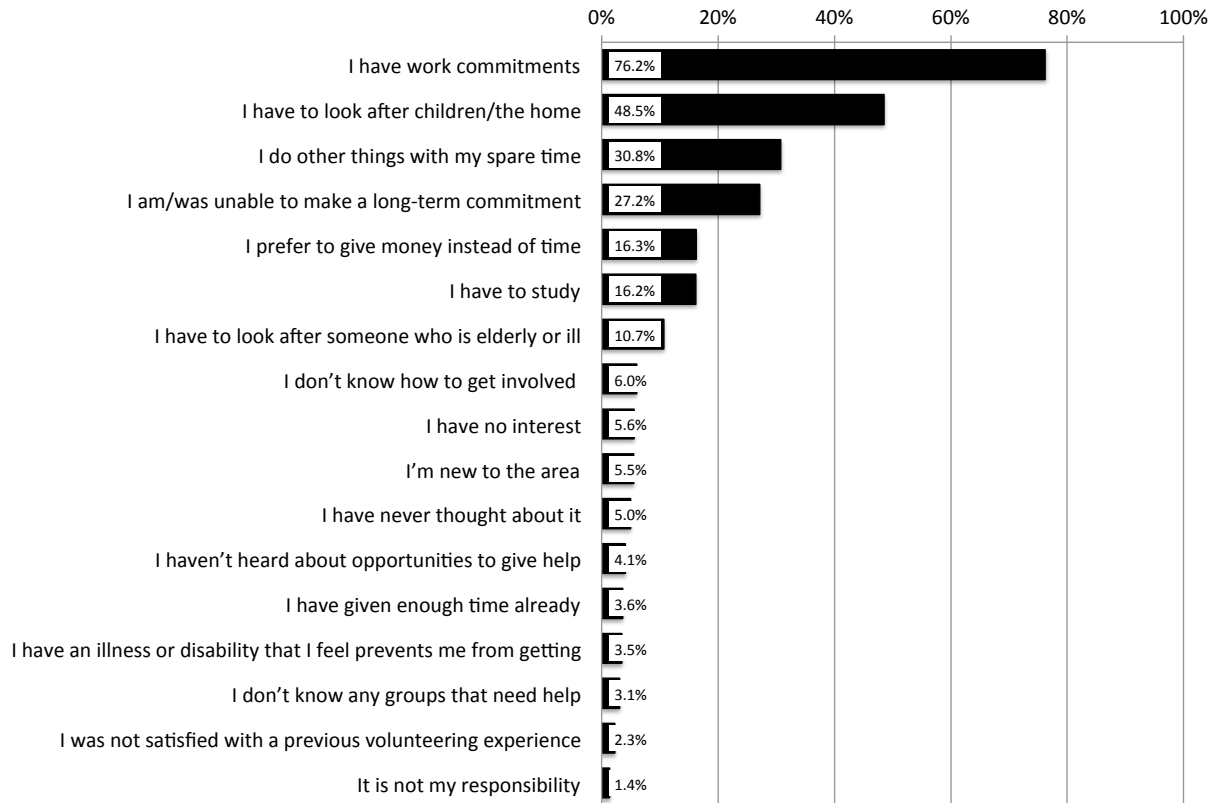
As summarized in Figure 4, of those who had volunteered in the past 12 months, 79.3% were motivated by the desire to make a contribution to the community, 45.1% felt that it was the responsible thing to do, 38.6% reported it was because [they] or someone they knew were

personally affected by a cause supported by a group or organization and 29.5% indicated it was to fulfill religious obligations or other beliefs, to explore their [own] strengths, or to use or improve [their] skills, respectively. Just over a fifth volunteered in order to network with or meet people (23.3%) or because family has always taken the time to do volunteer work (21.1%).



*Figure 4.* Reasons for volunteering in the past 12 months (percentages are of the 4,308 graduates who had volunteered in the past 12 months).

Graduates who had not volunteered in the past 12 months were asked to identify some of the reasons (Figure 5). The most often selected reasons were work commitments (76.0%) and having to look after their children/the home (48.4%). Thirty-one percent said they did other things with their spare time and 27.3% are or were unable to make a long-term commitment. Sixteen percent preferred to give money instead of time.



*Figure 5.* Reasons for *not* volunteering in the past 12 months (percentages are of the 1,473 graduates who had *not* volunteered in the past 12 months).

Graduates were also asked if they had helped others in less formal ways in the past 12 months (Figure 6). More than half had helped others with work at their home (56.4%) or provided health-related or personal care to someone (54.8%); 49.2% helped others with shopping or drove someone to the store or to an appointment and 47.3% helped someone through teaching (unpaid), coaching, tutoring, or assisting with reading. A similar percentage helped someone with administrative tasks (42.2%) or in other ways, not on behalf of an organization (41.9%).

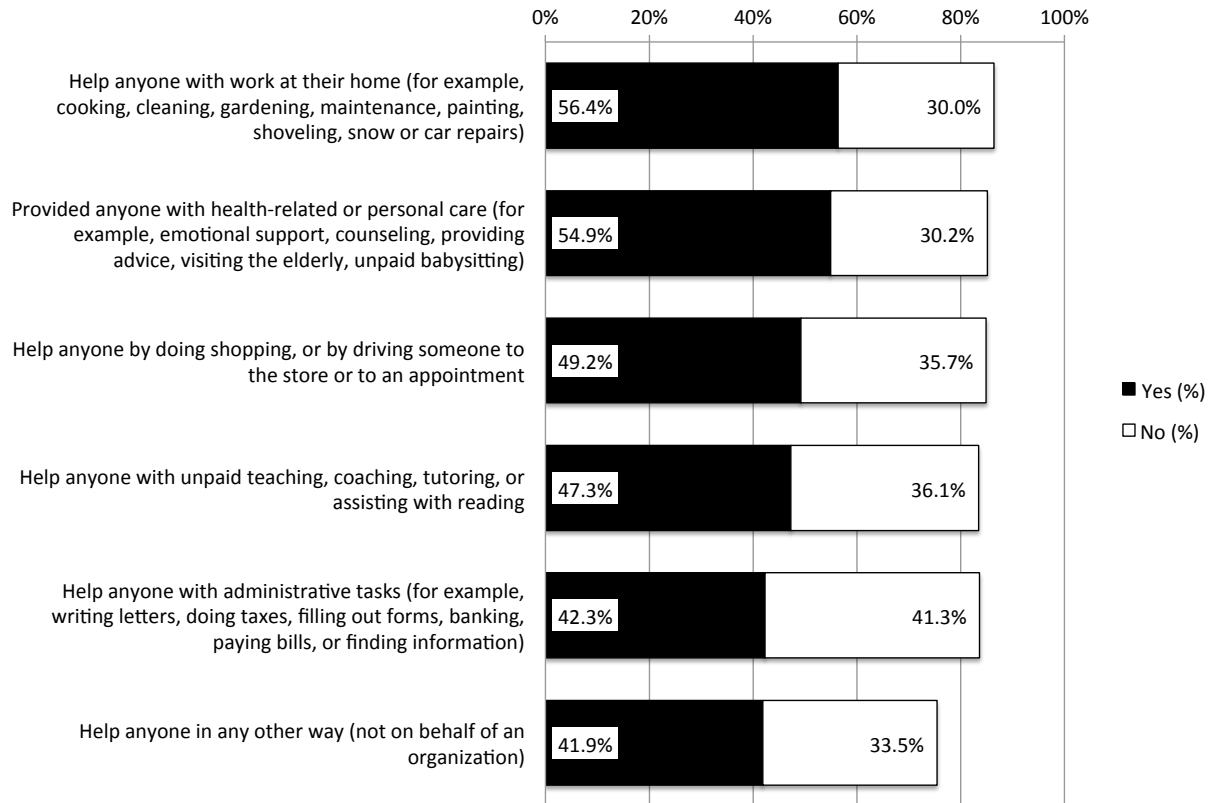


Figure 6. Informal volunteering in the past 12 months (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).

Graduates 30 or older were significantly more likely to report helping someone with administrative tasks (53.5% vs. 42.8%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 4,997) = 44.37, p < .01$ ). Graduates who earned a professional degree were more likely to report helping anyone with unpaid teaching, coaching, tutoring, or assisting with reading (67.6% vs. 49.6%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 4,993) = 158.70, p < .01$ ).

Graduates were asked how often they did informal volunteering activities in the past 12 months. The responses varied widely as graduates were not given a prescribed list to choose from. Some graduates found it hard to provide an estimate. However, most indicated a weekly or monthly commitment.

## Charitable Donations

More than four-fifths (82.4%) of graduates reported giving charitable donations.<sup>4</sup> Additional analyses showed that there were differences by professional degree earned, year graduated, and

<sup>4</sup> Although, as noted earlier, differences in wording prevent direct comparison between the *Beyond Catholic Graduation Survey* and the most recent (2007) *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (CSGVP), it is interesting to note that the percentage of Canadians who reported giving to charity in the 12 months before completing the 2007 CSGVP was also 84%. For more information, see Hall, M., Lasby, D., Ayer, S., & Gibbons,



age. Graduates who earned a professional degree, those that graduated before 1998, and those who were 30 or older were more likely to report making charitable donations (94.4% vs. 88.5%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,432) = 53.42, p < .01$ ), (96.1% vs. 79.9%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,425) = 371.51, p < .01$ ), and (95.9% vs. 76.3%,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 5,425) = 474.10, p < .01$ ), respectively.

For the graduates who made charitable donations, Figure 7 summarizes the types of donations. The majority of the graduates made charitable donations to support a specific cause (72.1%), by buying raffle tickets, entering a draw or sponsoring someone in an event (69.6%), through collection at church (68.6%) or when asked by a family member (59.6%). Fewer graduates made donations by contacting a charitable or non-profit organization on their own (18.0%), when asked by someone doing door-to-door canvassing in a shopping centre/on the street (27.8%), through automatic donations (28.0%), or by buying goods from a charity shop or catalogue (28.8%).

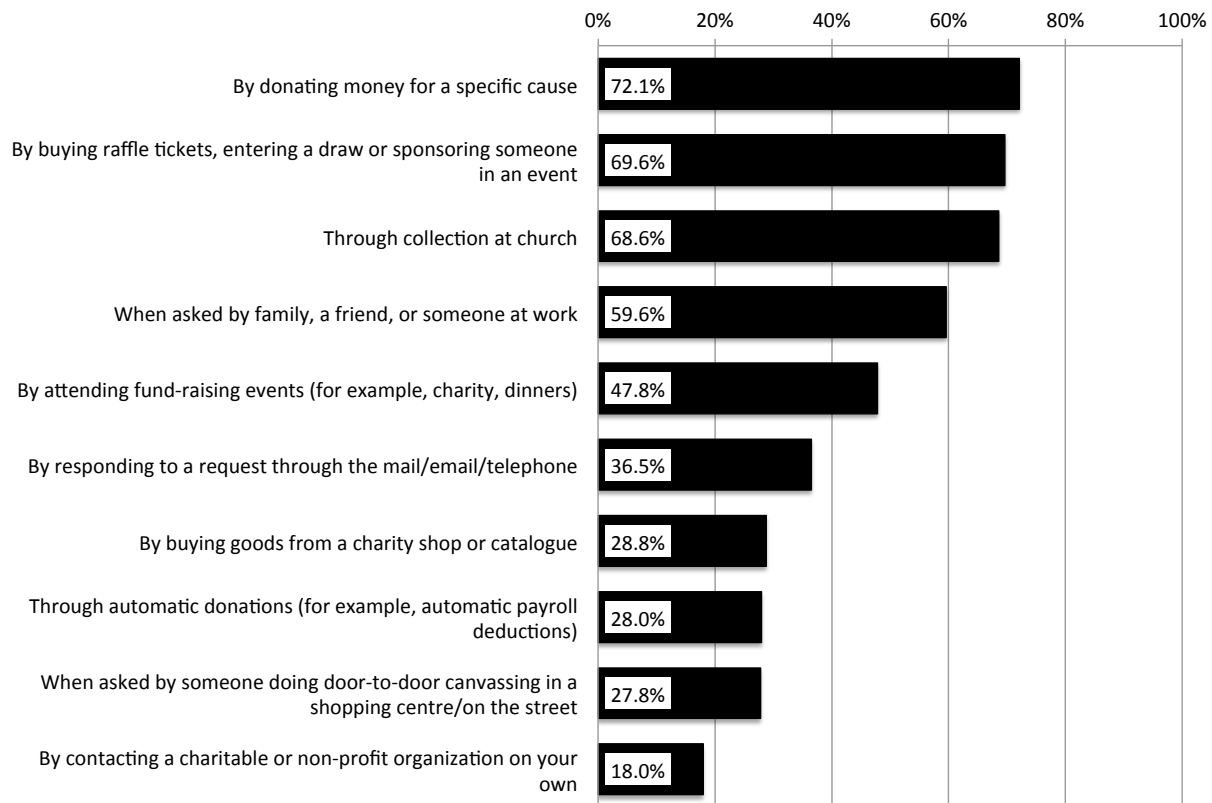
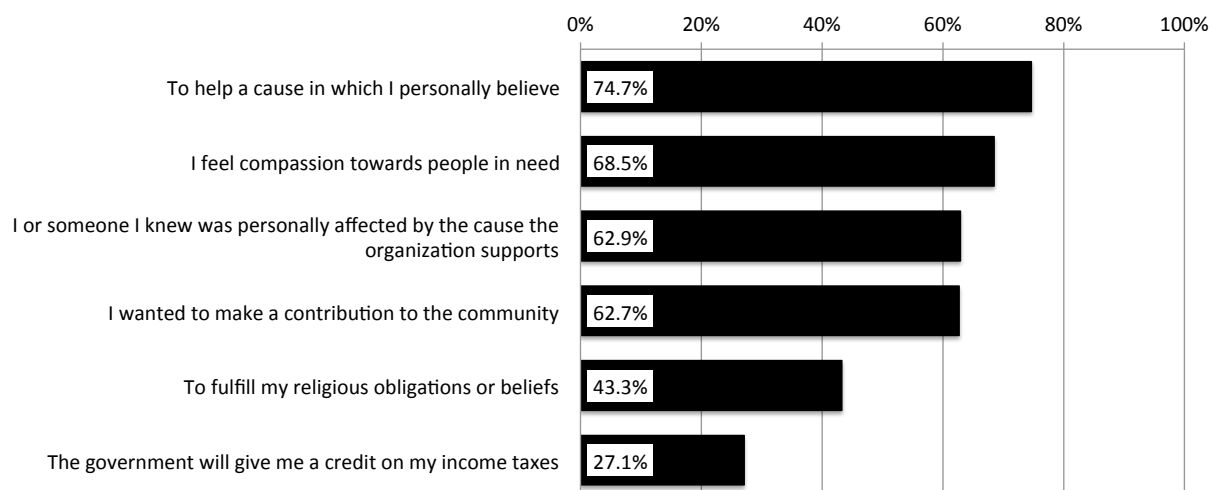


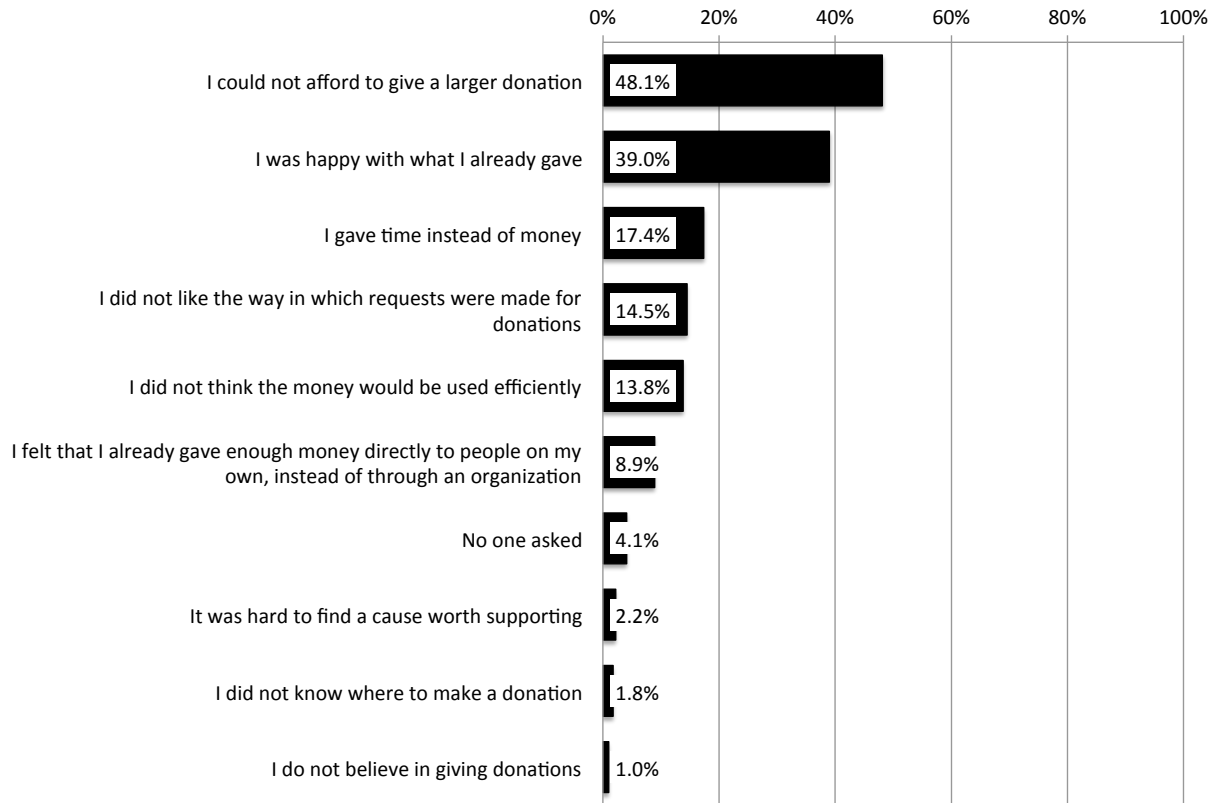
Figure 7. Charitable donations in the past 12 months (percentages are of the 4,933 who had given to charity in the past 12 months).

As summarized in Figure 8, of those who had given to charity in the past 12 months, 74.7% had given to help a cause in which they personally believed, 68.5% because they felt compassion towards people in need, 62.8% because they wanted to make a contribution to the community and 62.9% because they or someone they knew was personally affected by the cause the organization supports. More than 40 percent (43.3%) made charitable donations to fulfill their religious beliefs. A smaller percentage (27.1%) made charitable donations because the government gave a credit on their income taxes.



*Figure 8.* Reasons for giving to charity in the past 12 months (percentages are of the 4,933 who had given to charity in the past 12 months).

Figure 9 summarizes the reasons given for not donating or not donating more. These were because the graduates could not afford to give a larger donation (48.1%) or because they were happy with what they already gave (39.0%), because they gave time instead (17.4%), did not like the way in which requests for donations were made (14.5%) or did not think the money would be used efficiently (13.8%).

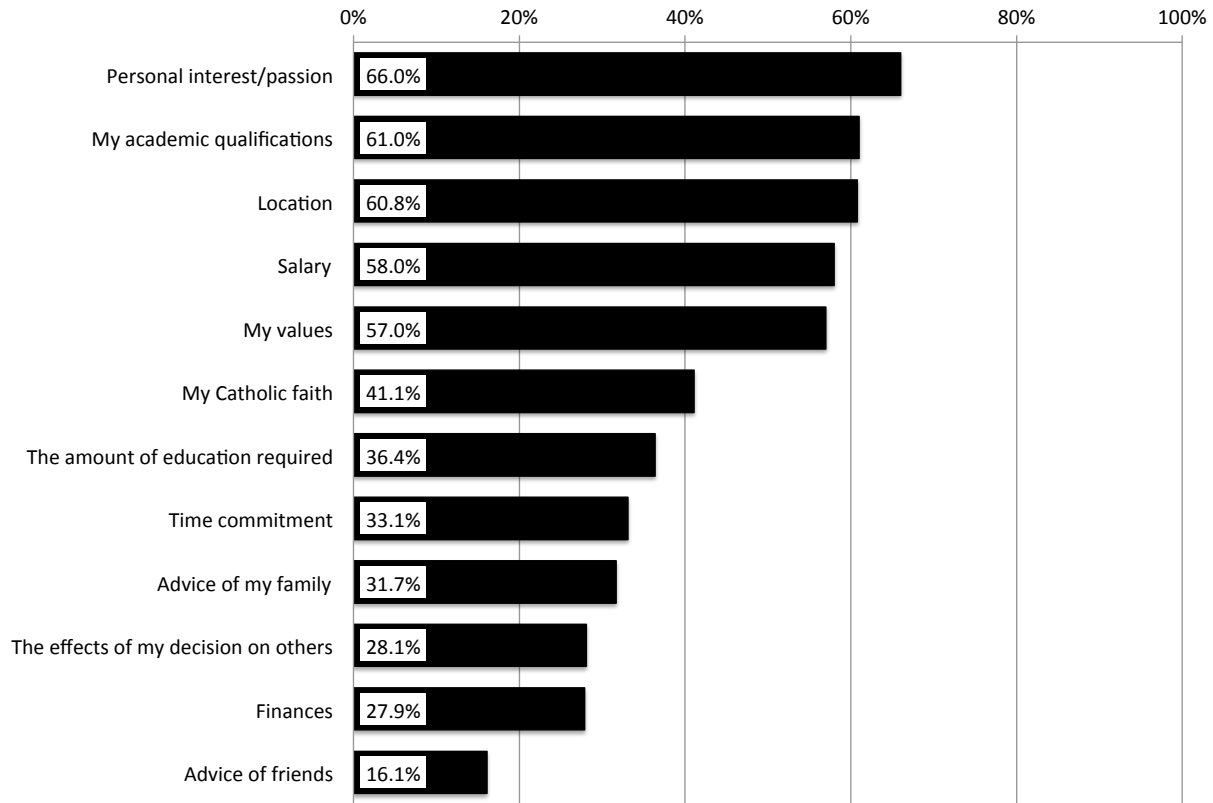


*Figure 9.* Reasons for not giving or not giving more to charity in the past 12 months (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).

## Factors Influencing Decision-Making

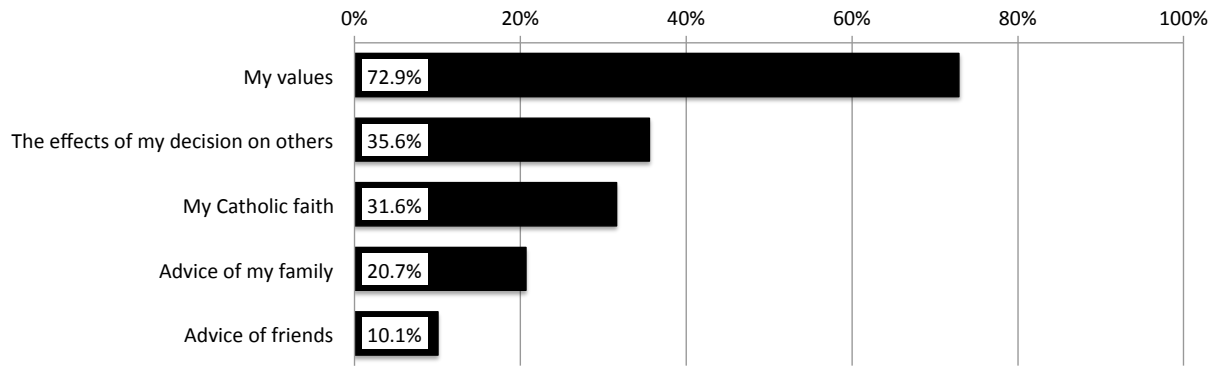
Graduates were asked what influenced their career choices, voting practices and preferences, and choice of friends.

As Figure 10 shows, when choosing a career, graduates were most likely to do so based on a combination of factors: personal interest/passion (65.9%), academic qualifications (60.9%), location (60.7%), salary (57.8%) and their values (56.9%). Their Catholic faith was also an important factor for 41.0% of graduates.

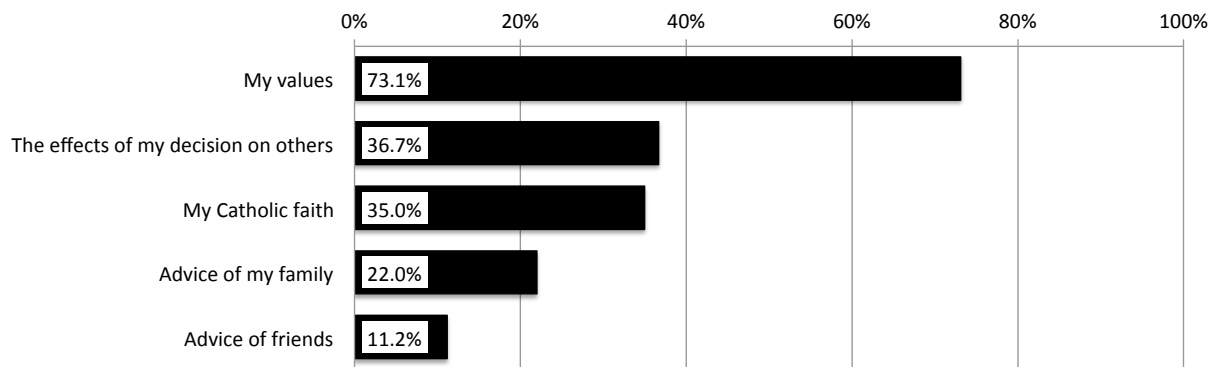


*Figure 10.* Factors affecting career choice (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).

The majority of graduates had voted in the municipal (71.1%), provincial (74.7%) or federal (74.3%) elections. As Figure 11 shows, when asked what they would consider when deciding whether to vote, 72.9% said their values was an important factor, 35.6% the effects of their decision on others, and 31.6% their Catholic faith. As Figure 12 shows, there was a similar pattern of response when graduates were asked to choose factors that influence who they vote for: their values (73.1%), the effects of their decision on others (36.7%), and their Catholic faith (35.0%).

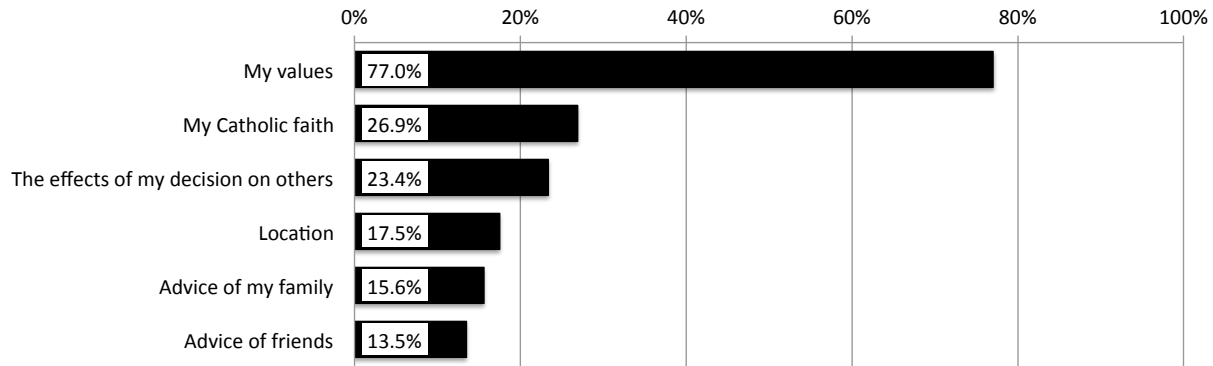


*Figure 11.* Factors affecting the decision to vote (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).



*Figure 12.* Factors affecting the decision of who to vote for (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).

Similarly, graduates indicated that their values (77.0%) were an important factor when choosing friends. Although the percentages were not as high, their Catholic faith (26.9%) and the effects of their decision on others (23.4%) were also identified. Graduates also considered whether they shared common interests with someone, their character/personality, their belief in God, a person's morals, values and how they treat others as factors that influence their choice of friends.

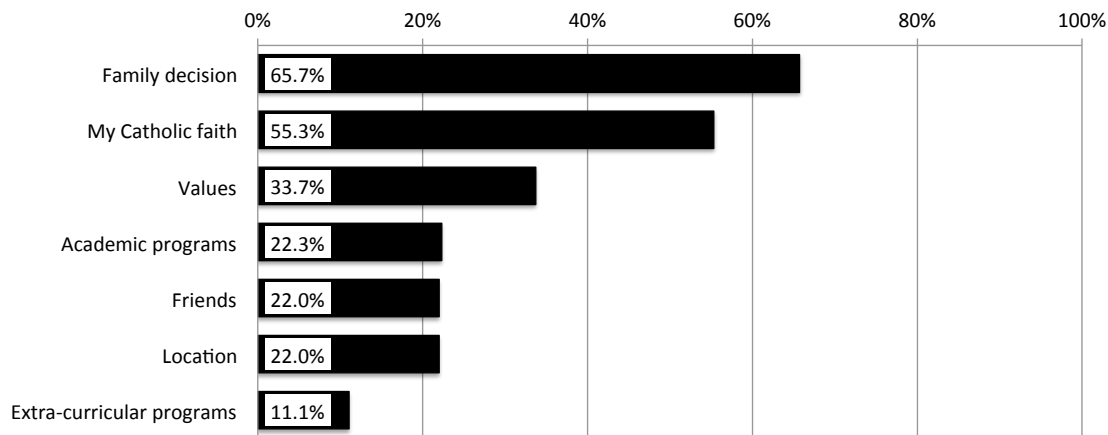


*Figure 13.* Factors affecting the choice of friends (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).

## Your Catholic Education

Several questions related to Catholic education were included in the survey. These include reasons for attending a Catholic secondary school, the extent to which Catholic education has shaped their lives in various ways, why Catholic education was important to them and what it taught them about building a better world.

As Figure 14 shows, about two-thirds (65.7%) of graduates reported that it was a family decision that led to them attending Catholic secondary school, 55.3% indicated it was because of their Catholic faith, while 33.7% chose values as the reason. It is interesting to note that although values was the third highest reason (33.7%) for choosing a Catholic secondary school education, as reported in the preceding section, graduates now recognize its predominant influence in decision making, including the choosing of friends (77.0%), voting (73.1%), and choosing a career (57.0%).



*Figure 14.* Reasons attended Catholic secondary school (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).

Graduates were asked to rate the extent to which they believed their Catholic education influenced them to act according to the goals described in the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations* (OCSGEs). As Figure 15 shows, considering the ratings of 5 (very much) and 4 (less than very much, but more than moderately), more than half of graduates felt that their Catholic education influenced them being a *caring family member, influenced by Gospel values* (55.5%) or a *responsible citizen, informed by Gospel values* (53.5%). Almost half (49.2%) felt their Catholic education influenced them as a *self-directed, responsible, life-long learner, informed and influenced by Gospel values*, 45.0% felt they were influenced as a *collaborative contributor, informed by Gospel values* and 43.7% as a *reflective thinker, informed by Gospel values*.

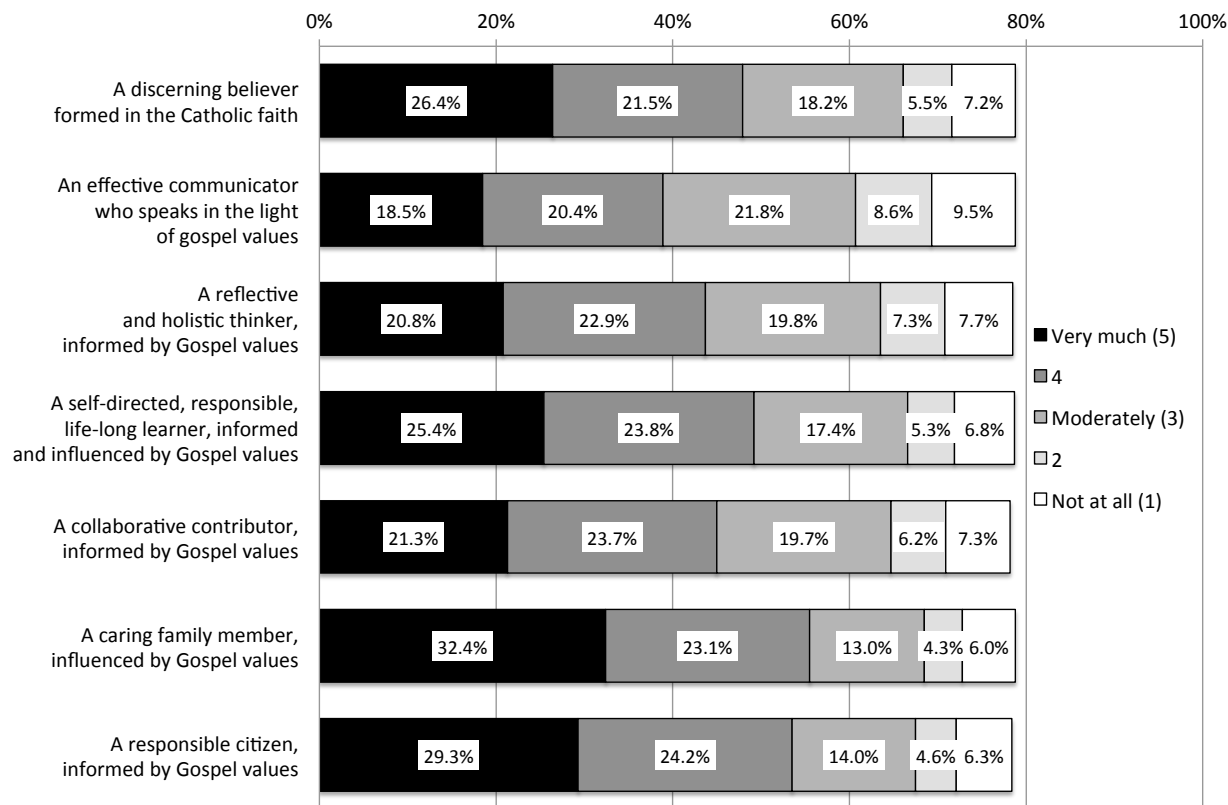


Figure 15. Influence of Catholic education (percentages are of the 5,988 graduates who responded to the survey).

More than half (53.7%) of graduates who responded to the survey had children and, of these, 67.6% reported having one or two children. More than three-quarters (76.4%) of those with children indicated they would send their child to Catholic school.

Graduates were also asked to respond to two open-ended questions about the importance of their Catholic education and what their Catholic education taught them about building a better world. These data were analyzed to identify themes that would add to our understanding of the value graduates place on their Catholic education. The interviews yielded similar insights to those from the open-ended questions on the online survey; the interview responses are summarized in Appendix D.

Graduates wrote that their Catholic education was important because it

- incorporated beliefs, values, morals, ethics and guiding life principles that have helped to shape who they are;

For example:

*...the lifelong friendships I made, the academic learning I received, shaped my value system and informs my decision making.*



*...it taught me the values about tolerance and empathy that I still hold today.*

*It had me reflect on situations in a spiritual manner (something I believe I would not have done having not attended a Catholic school). It taught me empathy and the importance of being a good person, not only for myself, but for others.*

*Not only did it provide me with a good education, but it gave me the opportunity to meet fabulous Catholic friends, understand my faith better, provide a safe environment in which to ask questions, and set me up with a strong sense of who I was and what I believed.*

- gave them a sense of community in which they could participate in social activities, build relationships and connect with members of the school community;

For example:

*It gave order and direction to my life by allowing me to be part of a large, faith-based community with exemplary role models.*

*As a very young immigrant to Canada, my Catholic faith and upbringing was the connecting factor with my fellow students. It made the transition to a new country that much easier. I cannot imagine what my childhood would have been like if I attended a public school as a newcomer to Canada.*

*I knew I belonged! My school was more than just a building, we all had a common belief system and set of values that made us a family.*

*I attended a high school which truly focused on Gospel values and on fostering community. It set me up for my work at University and it continues to strengthen my work in my present occupation.*

- provided an inclusive environment where they could openly and freely practice their faith;

For example:

*I felt safe and welcomed at school. There was an unstated, but understood warmth in the people and atmosphere.*

*I was able to live my Faith in a setting other than my home. Having the freedom to talk about God in a school setting made my education more meaningful.*

*I have a strong faith and my religion is very important to me. Catholic schools have an atmosphere that fosters caring, respect and love towards every human being. I love being in an environment where I can speak freely about my God.*

*There was an environment of faith in the classroom and you were not afraid to stand up for your beliefs...*

- helped them to develop their faith; and

For example:

*It allowed me to deepen the richness of my faith through academic programs.*

*It offered an education with a focus on the Faith. Catholic values were upheld both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities (sports & clubs).*

*My faith was part of my daily life. I was surrounded by others that shared the same values, and had similar priorities and beliefs. I was able to learn more about my faith and question it and discuss it during class.*

*... the school atmosphere provided ... an environment to explore personal faith development in a tumultuous age of adolescence. The faith development and growth of opportunities which coincided for my time during secondary made for a very rich learning time for the whole person.*

*It allowed me to continue to grow spiritually and openly discuss my thoughts and opinions with my fellow students and my teachers.*

- provided them with insight and inspiration to guide their decisions.

For example:

*My Catholic education was important because it allowed me a deeper understanding of the world around me, it further instilled the moral values that my parents started and it makes me the strong person I am today.*

*It gave me a foundation of inner strength that got me through the rough patches and tough times.*

*It was the foundation of my moral values. It taught me the importance of spirituality to balance my life and set priorities. It also emphasized compassion and less attention to the materialistic trappings of everyday life.*

*It showed me how to be a better citizen, daughter, sister, friend, and girlfriend. It showed me how to live to my full potential, and consider the implications my decisions have on others.*

*My Catholic education is important because it has given me more clarity in my life. It has also led me to have an open heart and mind about everything in life and the world.*

Graduates wrote that their Catholic education taught them about building a better world by

- communicating the importance of helping others, giving back, and serving the community;

For example:

*It taught me the importance of helping others and being a positive role model and influence on others. I feel very strongly that my Catholic education helped me to become a better person.*

*In my Catholic Education I was fortunate to have teachers who were great role models and taught me to always lend a hand to a person in need, be considerate towards your neighbour, friends and family...*

*My Catholic education taught me about building a better world by practicing my faith and expressing my feelings in a respected manner. I was taught to use my actions to be kind to others, help others in need in order to better the community.*

*It reinforced that as God's Stewards, we have a responsibility to use and improve our God given talents to educate, model and assist our "neighbours" when the need arose and to respond with a loving caring attitude despite any differences in opinion or view ...*

*To give back to all those around you in your neighbourhood, community and beyond. It provided me a foundation to live by my values ...*

- fostering an awareness and understanding of social justice; and

For example:

*It taught me the importance of being a global citizen who helps others through social justice initiatives.*

*We learned about the social justice aspects of religion but we didn't just learn about them; we implemented them. We donated to the poor, stood up for life at the March for Life, and stood up against bullying through several campaigns.*

*We were taught about social justice issues and world religions which made me a more tolerant, accepting person, appreciating differences.*

*Our school was involved in social justice primarily through fundraising efforts. The information gathered through these events left me with a real sense of responsibility for caring for my neighbour.*

- emphasizing altruism manifested by love of and respect for others, as well as tolerance and acceptance of others' beliefs and values.

For example:

*The importance of giving and expecting nothing in return; that you gain so much more than you give. "To love one another as I have loved you."*

*It showed me that there are people who do not believe or believe in other things and that I need to love them and accept them. It also gave me the knowledge that I have the power to change things in the world for the better.*

*It taught me to be a respectful being and to be open to all types of people and to everyone in the world, no matter what.*

*We are all children of God, created in the image of God and as such are equally deserving of dignity and respect. Keeping this in mind helps me to make decisions*

*about the way I react to others. My Catholic education has taught me about my place in the community and how to live in communion with others.*

## APPENDIX A. SURVEY

# Beyond Catholic Graduation Survey

Welcome to Beyond Catholic Graduation, a survey by the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) about the influence of Catholic education in the lives of graduates of Catholic secondary schools. The Institute for Catholic Education works to promote and maintain publicly funded Catholic schools.

This survey is part of a study of how the goals of Catholic Education are reflected in the lives of graduates of Catholic secondary schools. These goals have been summarized in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. Please take a few minutes to tell us about your experiences.

This survey is being conducted by researchers at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto on behalf of ICE. The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete and includes questions about your everyday decision-making, volunteer activities, and your Catholic education experience. Your responses to this survey will be strictly confidential; no identifying information will be linked to your survey responses. At the end of the survey you will be asked if you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Monique Herbert by email at [monique.herbert@utoronto.ca](mailto:monique.herbert@utoronto.ca).

Thank you!

## BACKGROUND

This section will ask you for some general information about yourself.

### 1. Gender:

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female

### 2. What was your age at your last birthday?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	16-18
<input type="checkbox"/>	19-21
<input type="checkbox"/>	22-24
<input type="checkbox"/>	25-27
<input type="checkbox"/>	28-30
<input type="checkbox"/>	31-33
<input type="checkbox"/>	34-36
<input type="checkbox"/>	37 and above

### 3. Where did you live when you graduated from secondary school?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	NORTHWEST: Kenora, Northwest, Superior North, Thunder Bay
<input type="checkbox"/>	NORTHEAST: Huron-Superior, Nipissing, Northeastern, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie
<input type="checkbox"/>	GTA: Dufferin-Peel, Halton, Toronto, Wellington
<input type="checkbox"/>	CENTRAL: Bruce-Grey, Durham, Peterborough VNC, Simcoe-Muskoka, York
<input type="checkbox"/>	EAST: Algonquin-Lakeshore, Eastern, Ottawa, Renfrew
<input type="checkbox"/>	SOUTHWEST: Brant Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton-Wentworth, Huron-Perth, Niagara, London District, St. Clair, Waterloo, Windsor-Essex

### 4. Other (please specify):

---

### 5. Where do you currently live?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ontario
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outside Ontario
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elsewhere in Canada
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outside Canada

## EDUCATION

This section asks you a few questions about your education.

6. In what year did you graduate from secondary school?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	2010-2012
<input type="checkbox"/>	2007-2009
<input type="checkbox"/>	2004-2006
<input type="checkbox"/>	2001-2003
<input type="checkbox"/>	1998-2000
<input type="checkbox"/>	1995-1997
<input type="checkbox"/>	1994 or before

7. For how long were you a student in a Catholic secondary school before graduating?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 year
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 year
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 years or more

8. Did you attend a Catholic elementary school?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

9. Are you currently attending a school, college or university?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

10. Are you enrolled as a full-time or a part-time student?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Full-Time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time

What degrees, certificates, or diplomas have you obtained? (check all that apply)

11. Secondary School (High School) diploma

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	In Progress

12. Trade certificate, diploma or apprenticeship training

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	In Progress

13. Non-university certificate or diploma from a community college, CEGEP, school of nursing, etc.

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	In Progress

14. University certificate below Bachelor's level

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	In Progress

15. Bachelor's degree

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	In Progress

16. Professional degree

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	In Progress

17. Graduate (for example, Master's)

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	In Progress

18. Did one or both of your parents/guardians attend college/university?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

## YOUTH EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES

This section asks about your experiences when you were in secondary school. Please check the appropriate response.

19. Did you belong to a youth group or club (for example, guides, scouts, club, or a choir)?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

20. Did you participate in organized team sports?



Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

21. Were you active in student government (for example, student council, committees)?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

22. Did you participate in student leadership activities (for example, retreats, conferences, programs)

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

23. Did you do volunteer work?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

24. Did one or both of your parents do volunteer work?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

25. Were you inspired by seeing someone helping others?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

26. Did your secondary school provide opportunities to participate in social justice projects (for example, fundraising, awareness campaigns, advocacy, and international outreach)?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

27. Did you participate in religious, social justice, or advocacy groups/projects in secondary school?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

28. Did you help raise money for a cause or organization?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

29. Other

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

30. Other (please specify):

---

## VOLUNTEERING

This section asks about your volunteering experiences.

31. In the past 12 months did you volunteer? (This includes any unpaid help you provided to schools, religious organizations, sports or community associations).

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

32. In the past 12 months, how often did you volunteer (for example, per hour, per week, per month, total hours)?

---

33. In the past 12 months, have you volunteered in any of the following areas? Please check all that apply.

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Health care
<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sports
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Political Activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community service organizations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social welfare services and outreach programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not for profit organizations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Church-related volunteering (for example, baptism programs, food banks)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

34. Other (please specify):

---

35. Thinking about the reasons why you volunteered in the past 12 months, indicate whether the following reasons were important to you. Please check all that apply.

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	You or someone you know has been personally affected by the cause supported by this group or organization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Your friends volunteer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	To network with or meet people.
<input type="checkbox"/>	To improve your job opportunities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	To fulfill religious obligations or other beliefs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	To explore your own strengths.
<input type="checkbox"/>	To make a contribution to the community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	To use or improve your skills.
<input type="checkbox"/>	To gain experience or build your resume.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It is the responsible thing to do.
<input type="checkbox"/>	My family has always taken time to do volunteer work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	To continue the volunteer work started in secondary school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

36. Other (please specify):

---

37. Which of the following statements, if any, are reasons why you did NOT volunteer in the past 12 months? Please check all that apply.

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have work commitments.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have to look after children/the home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have to look after someone who is elderly or ill.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have to study.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I do other things with my spare time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know any groups that need help.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't know how to get involved.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I haven't heard about opportunities to give help.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm new to the area.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have an illness or disability that I feel prevents me from getting involved.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I was not satisfied with a previous volunteering experience.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have given enough time already.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am/was unable to make a long -term commitment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer to give money instead of time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have never thought about it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have no interest.

<input type="checkbox"/>	It is not my responsibility.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other.

38. Other (please specify):

---

Excluding help that you provide on behalf of an organization and help you provide to those in your home, in the past 12 months did you ...  
Please check the appropriate response.

39. Help anyone with work at their home (for example, cooking, cleaning, gardening, maintenance, painting, shoveling snow, or car repairs)?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

40. Help anyone by doing any shopping, or by driving someone to the store or to an appointment?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

41. Help anyone with administrative tasks (for example, writing letters, doing taxes, filling out forms, banking, paying bills or finding information)?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

42. Provided anyone with health-related or personal care (for example, emotional support, counseling, providing advice, visiting the elderly, unpaid babysitting)?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

43. Help anyone with unpaid teaching, coaching, tutoring, or assisting with reading?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

44. Help anyone in any other way (not on behalf of an organization)?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

45. In the past 12 months, how often did you do informal volunteering activities on your own, not on behalf of a group or an organization (for example, per hour, per week, per month, total hours)?

---

## CHARITABLE DONATIONS

This section asks about charitable donations.

46. In the past 12 months did you give any charitable donations?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

47. In the past 12 months did you make a charitable donation... Please check all that apply to you.

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	By responding to a request through the mail/email/ telephone?
<input type="checkbox"/>	By attending fund-raising events (for example, charity dinners)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	By donating money for a specific cause (for example, in response to a person in need, in memory of a loved one)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	By buying raffle tickets, entering a draw or sponsoring someone in an event?
<input type="checkbox"/>	By buying goods from a charity shop or catalogue?
<input type="checkbox"/>	When asked by family, a friend or someone at work?
<input type="checkbox"/>	When asked by someone doing door-to-door canvassing in a shopping centre/on the street?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Through collection at church?
<input type="checkbox"/>	By contacting a charitable or non-profit organization on your own?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Through automatic donations (for example, automatic payroll deductions)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

48. Other (please specify):

---

49. Thinking about the reasons why you have made financial contributions to charitable or nonprofit organizations in the past 12 months, indicate whether the reasons below were important to you. Please check all that apply to you.

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	I or someone I knew was personally affected by the cause the organization supports.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The government will give me a credit on my income taxes.

<input type="checkbox"/>	To fulfill my religious obligations or beliefs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	To help a cause in which I personally believe.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel compassion towards people in need.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I wanted to make a contribution to the community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

50. Other (please specify):

---

51. Thinking about the past 12 months, are any of the following statements reasons why you did NOT donate or did NOT donate more. Please check all that apply to you.

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	I was happy with what I already gave.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I could not afford to give a larger donation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	No one asked.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not know where to make a donation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It was hard to find a cause worth supporting.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I gave time instead of money.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I felt that I already gave enough money directly to people on my own, instead of through an organization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not think the money would be used efficiently.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not like the way in which requests were made for donations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not believe in giving donations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

52. Other (please specify):

---

## DECISION-MAKING

This section asks about factors that influence your everyday decision making.

53. Please indicate which of the following did you or will you consider when choosing a career (check all that apply):

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Location
<input type="checkbox"/>	Salary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice of my family
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice of friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	My Catholic faith

<input type="checkbox"/>	The effect of my decision on others
<input type="checkbox"/>	My values
<input type="checkbox"/>	My academic qualifications
<input type="checkbox"/>	Time commitment
<input type="checkbox"/>	The amount of education required
<input type="checkbox"/>	Finances
<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal interest/passion

54. Other (please specify):

---

55. Have you voted in one of the following elections (check all that apply)?

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Municipal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provincial
<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal

56. Please indicate which of the following did you or will you consider when deciding whether to vote (check all that apply):

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice of my family
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice of my friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	My Catholic faith
<input type="checkbox"/>	The effect of my decision on others
<input type="checkbox"/>	My values

57. Other (please specify):

---

58. Please indicate which of the following did you or will you consider when deciding who to vote for (check all that apply):

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice of my family
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice of my friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	My Catholic faith
<input type="checkbox"/>	The effect of my decision on others
<input type="checkbox"/>	My values

59. Other (please specify):

---

60. Please indicate which of the following did you or will you consider when choosing friends (check all that apply):

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Location
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice of my family

<input type="checkbox"/>	Advice of my friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	My Catholic faith
<input type="checkbox"/>	The effect of my decision on others
<input type="checkbox"/>	My values

61. Other (please specify):

---

## YOUR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

This section asks about your experiences in Catholic education.

62. What were the reasons you attended a Catholic secondary school (check all that apply)?

Please select all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	My Catholic faith
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	Location
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extra-curricular programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Values

63. Other (please specify):

---

To what extent do you believe your Catholic education influenced you to act as the following (1= not at all, 3=moderately, 5= very much)? Please check the appropriate response.

64. A discerning believer formed in the Catholic faith.

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5

65. An effective communicator who speaks in the light of Gospel values.

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5

66. A reflective and holistic thinker, informed by Gospel values.

Please select one of the following:



	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

67. A self-directed, responsible, life-long learner, informed and influenced by Gospel values.

Please select one of the following:

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

68. A collaborative contributor, who is informed by Gospel values.

Please select one of the following:

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

69. A caring family member, influenced by Gospel values.

Please select one of the following:

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

70. A responsible citizen informed, by Gospel values.

Please select one of the following:

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

71. My Catholic education was important because

72. What did your Catholic education teach you about building a better world?

73. Do you have any children?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

74. How many children do you have?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 or more

75. Would you send your child to a Catholic school? Please respond whether or not you have children.

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

76. Why would you or would you not send your child to a Catholic school?

## EMPLOYMENT

This section asks about your employment history.

77. Are you currently employed?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

78. Are you working full-time or part-time?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Full-Time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time

79. Are you working as an employee or are you self-employed?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Employee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-Employed

80. Have you been working (i.e., full-time or part-time) consistently in the last five years?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
--------------------------	-----

<input type="checkbox"/>	No
--------------------------	----

81. Would you be interested in participating in a follow-up interview?

Please select one of the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

82. Name:

---

83. Phone Number:

---

84. Email:

---

Thank you so much for filling out the survey. Please pass this along to a friend  
([www.beyondcatholicgraduation.com](http://www.beyondcatholicgraduation.com))

## APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hello <name of interviewee>

This is <name of interviewer>

I want to thank you for taking the time to complete the Institute for Catholic Education's "Beyond Catholic Graduation" survey, which asked about the influence of Catholic education in the lives of graduates of Catholic secondary schools. Thank you also for agreeing to participate in a follow-up interview. This interview will cover three aspects: (1) your experiences and perceptions while attending Catholic secondary school; (2) how these experiences affect the decisions you make today; and (3) your thoughts on how Catholic secondary education can be improved. *Please feel free to use specific examples and/or experiences that you are comfortable sharing.*

*Your responses to this interview will be strictly confidential; no identifying information will be linked to your responses.*

*Do you have any questions before we begin?*

\*Ok, I would like to ask you to think back to your Catholic secondary school experience.

1. When you think back to secondary school, what about attending a Catholic secondary school was important to you at the time?

*A way to maybe rephrase: Why was attending a Catholic Secondary school important to you at the time?*

2. During your secondary school experience, do you think that attending a Catholic secondary school affected the decisions that you made both inside and outside of classroom? If so, how?
  - a. *What kinds of decisions did you make inside/outside the classroom? Any specific examples?*
  - b. *How was this decision-making affected by your secondary school environment?*

\*I will now ask you a few questions about how the experiences you described previously affect the decisions you made after graduating and today:

3. Do you think that attending a Catholic secondary school affected your decisions about what to do right after graduation? If so, how?

4. Do you think having attended a Catholic secondary school affects the decisions you make today? Can you give some specific examples?
5. Do you think having attended a Catholic secondary school specifically affects the ways that you use your resources and/or means (such as time or money)?
6. Do you think you are a different person today because you went to Catholic secondary school than you would have been if you *hadn't* gone to a Catholic secondary school? If so, in what ways?
  - a. Do you have any specific memories of your Catholic Secondary School experience that were important to your development into the person you are today?

\*Now, thinking about your experiences before and after graduating from a Catholic secondary school:

7. What would you have changed about your Catholic secondary experience?
8. Based on what you know about Catholic secondary education today, what do you think distinguishes Catholic secondary education from other secondary education today?
9. How could Catholic secondary education, today, be improved?

\*Do you wish to add any other comments?

## **APPENDIX C. OTHER RESPONSES**

This appendix summarizes the responses that graduates gave when they specified “other” activities or reasons on the online survey.

### **Youth Experiences and Perspectives**

A small percentage of graduates (3.8%) listed other experiences they had during secondary school. Most of the experiences listed were related to school activities not explicitly listed in the survey and to activities that were outside of the school. While in secondary school, graduates reported that they were involved in school plays, talent shows, school band, student counseling (grief and/or support), school fund raising, and the organization of the school newspaper, yearbook, and school masses. Outside of school, graduates reported that they were involved in church-related activities such as facilitating Catholic Bible School, helping in church preparations, and participating in sports groups, in youth groups, as a server during Mass, and in retreats such as the Christ in Others Retreat. Collecting clothes, food, or gifts for the needy, participating in environmental causes, attending rallies and conferences for youth and organizing a blood donor clinic were also listed by graduates.

### **Recent Volunteering Experiences**

Some graduates also listed other areas or ways in which they volunteered. These included helping individuals with disabilities (for example, swimming lessons for children with disabilities), independently caring for the elderly (not through an agency), acting as an interpreter for someone and raising funds on behalf of an organization (for example, Canadian Diabetes Association, Cancer Society).

Graduates were given the opportunity to indicate other reasons why they volunteered. Graduates said they volunteered to teach their children or students the importance of giving back/volunteering, to be a role model for their kids, to be a part of their kid’s academic experience, to give back to their school and/or community, to share their talents and skills with others, to grow as a person, to share their faith with others and enhance their Catholic formation and to bring God’s love to others in service.

Graduates who had not volunteered in the past 12 months listed several other reasons. Some of the reasons were not having enough time to do so because of work and family commitments (for example, juggling more than one job and raising children alone), having a long commute to and from work, and medical and other personal issues. Other reasons were not being able to find an organization/activity that matched the graduate’s interests and skills, already volunteering through their job, and giving money instead of time.

### **Charitable Donations**

Other ways in which graduates made charitable donations in the past 12 months were by donating clothes and other items or materials, through food drives, sponsoring or fostering children, buying food for a family in need, donating to a supper table, at cash registers at the supermarket or other stores, by making items such as jewelry or quilts and selling them for

charity or donating them for auction fundraising, by funding scholarships, and by sending money to relatives overseas who are in need.

Graduates could also identify other reasons for making a charitable donation. The responses demonstrate a strong need to give back because it was the right thing to do, the graduate wanted to repay charity that was shown to them, it was something that they grew up with and was a strong emphasis from their parents and teachers in school, or they felt fortunate and so wanted to pass on their fortunes and blessings. Similar to the reasons for volunteering, some graduates also felt that it was important to lead by example for their family and to teach their children the importance of helping others.

Other reasons for not donating or not donating more were because of a bad experience with an organization, limits on the monthly contributions that could be donated, unfamiliarity with the organization for which funds were being solicited, they felt the organization already received enough support, preferred to give personally to who needs rather than to an organization, what the organization was asking was against religious and moral beliefs or supported partners that violated Catholic moral teachings, organization was not transparent in demonstrating how money donated was spent, did not trust door-to-door or phone solicitations, and financial constraints (for example, a student paying for his or her own education and/or living expenses).

## **Factors Influencing Decision-Making**

Other factors identified by graduates as influencing career choice were prayer and conversation with God, Christian faith, vocation, prayer and discernment, the stability of employment, ability to spend time with family, whether or not it was in line with their Catholic faith and morals, religious values or beliefs, opportunities to effect change and make a difference/contribution, and opportunities for personal satisfaction and enjoyment

Some graduates mentioned that it was their civic duty/responsibility to vote and their choice of who to vote for depended on personal choice, the candidate in question, policies/views of the political parties, how these policies/views would affect the country and whether they aligned with their own values and beliefs. Some graduates noted that their choice to vote or who to vote for was also influenced by what was reported in the media.

## APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Interviewees were asked to respond to a set of questions related to three areas: (1) your experiences and perceptions while attending Catholic secondary school; (2) how these experiences affect the decisions you make today; and (3) your thoughts on how Catholic secondary education can be improved. The responses of the seven interviewees are summarized below.

### Experiences and Perceptions

#### 1. When you think back to secondary school, what about attending a Catholic secondary school was important to you at the time?

Similar to the survey responses, graduates indicated that attending a Catholic secondary school was important to them because of the values upheld by their school and they were able to attend a school with others who shared and were brought up with similar values. In addition, having an experience that was enriched by their religious beliefs and that combined faith and education was important to them. Finally, graduates felt a sense of community when attending their Catholic secondary school. For example:

*...The values that were encouraged and fostered by the school. The resources available to guide by spirituality/faith. My fellow classmates who had similar beliefs as I did...*

*Myself as a Catholic, it was important to intertwine both my faith and education.*

*I can say what I think I felt; there was a comfort zone aspect that I would be in a school where I could practice my faith without compartmentalizing it, I think that was true of me at 14.*

*Continuity of my Catholic faith.*

#### 2. During your secondary school experience, do you think that attending a Catholic secondary school affected the decisions that you made both inside and outside of classroom? If so, how?

a. What kinds of decisions did you make inside/outside the classroom? Any specific examples?

b. How was this decision-making affected by your secondary school environment?

Graduates felt that attending Catholic secondary school affected their decisions inside and outside the classroom as their decision/choices were based on the values and beliefs they developed during secondary school. For example:



*Yes, I think that attending a Catholic secondary school affected the decisions I made because I learned to base my choices on the values I obtained from attending a Catholic school*

*Yeah, it would be intertwined, because I think what I was taught affected myself and affected the decisions that I made, and intertwined my faith and education.*

*Everyday life; decisions that I made were continuations of what was going on in the classroom and at the school.*

Graduates provided examples of the kinds of decisions they made inside or outside the classroom. For example:

*Decisions I made were respecting my parents, which came to my advantage as they helped me through my journey in any way that they could; and deciding to one day be a teacher at a Catholic school.*

*... if someone would give you an answer for a test, would you take that answer or would you try to do it for yourself.*

Graduates felt that their decisions inside and outside the classroom were affected by their Catholic secondary school environment:

*My decision-making was affected by the environment because of the values/morals that are suggested and encouraged.*

*You would be able to tell the teachers had a certain kind of respect for you if you did things in a moral way and if you did things in an immoral way there was a different type of vibe you'd get from them.*

*Reminded me of the value and culture school had and being immersed in the culture and having similar values as those around me allowed me to reflect on what I was doing.*

*It reaffirmed a lot of the things I already believed as a Catholic, but coming to know the teachers and the priests ... outside of the classroom, I felt very comfortable addressing those issues and discussing them with them and they certainly were open to discussing it; there was no separation with respect to that.*

## **How Experiences Affect Decision-Making**

### **3. Do you think that attending a Catholic secondary school affected your decisions about what to do right after graduation? If so, how?**

In responding to this question, some graduates made reference to their choice of career while others made reference to general decision-making. For example:

*I really value attending a Catholic school for my entire academic career and feel I truly benefitted from the overall experience; therefore, yes, I do think that attending a Catholic secondary school affected my after graduation plans ... I*

*absolutely believe that my choice to attend a Catholic secondary school has helped, and guided me, to where I am today.*

*Yes, I did take religion in my first year, I was interested in deepening the knowledge of my faith, understanding Catholicism and how my Catholicism helped me relate to the rest of the world....*

*I would say yes it does because you were able to get that knowledge first hand and it was a different kind of learning than the public board had got in regards to morals, and in regards to my faith.*

*I felt that somehow I was sort of part of a larger legacy of graduates from Catholic institutions who had preceded me and I was going into the world independently living those beliefs in a fashion that permeated all aspects of my life; faith wasn't compartmentalized; not a Sunday faith, not limited to weekly practice.*

**4. Do you think having attended a Catholic secondary school affects the decisions you make today? Can you give some specific examples?**

Most graduates felt that attending a Catholic secondary school has affected their decision-making today through the values and traditions they uphold (for example, being respectful, showing empathy, appreciating differences). For example:

*... I've learned to be compassionate, understanding, and respectful, to say the least, by attending a Catholic secondary school. These characteristics each affect the way in which my decisions are made.*

*... I believe it has given me different values than some of my friends/peers that went to public school, which I feel is a positive difference. I feel I am more respectful and can easily empathize with others more freely.*

*Most definitely. Helps in everyday living, respecting people, appreciating differences, appreciating my own faith, getting along with people on a day-to-day basis. Helped me to become more open minded, appreciating people from all walks of life, from all backgrounds, getting along with people; the social dynamics of the high school.*

**5. Do you think having attended a Catholic secondary school specifically affects the ways that you use your resources and/or means (such as time or money)?**

Graduates were divided in their responses to this question with some indicating that attending a Catholic secondary school did not affect the ways in which they use their resources and/or means, while others felt that it did have an effect. For example:

*I don't think so. For the most part, my parents have affected the ways in which I use my resources.*

*Yes, I would say those were affected by going to a Catholic high school in particular, by me not using too much or not using too little.*

*In terms of time, being involved with my parish but also time invested in expanding my faith from a knowledge aspect, actually pursuing and feeding that faith by what I read, what I experienced and what I participated in in a matter of course, that meant that financially I would invest in things that would help me do that. Moreover I would contribute to those causes that would help those with my faith and those that were ... developing my own faith.*

**6. Do you think you are a different person today because you went to Catholic secondary school than you would have been if you hadn't gone to a Catholic secondary school? If so, in what ways?**

Graduates' responses to this question focused mainly on their faith and values and how these played a major role in their development as an adult. For example:

*Yes, I truly believe attending a Catholic secondary school affected my overall being. During secondary school, you really begin to learn who you really are, so the values encouraged at my Catholic secondary school played a large role in my overall development as an adult.*

*... my faith is a big part of my life and having that intertwined was a big thing. Having intertwined faith and education was a big thing.*

*Yes. Opportunities given to me were things I wouldn't have been able to have done [for example, being part of the Chaplaincy team, donating time to programs, participate in a more active role in church traditions].*

*Definitely. The whole atmosphere encouraged confidence, I was encouraged to try out for teams and drama ..., encouraged to be part of the executive of student council. These were all foundations for my job. Becoming secure in my faith helps me appreciate other people's faiths and belief systems and also gives me impetus to keep on studying and keeps me inquisitive....*

## **Catholic Education**

**7. What would you have changed about your Catholic secondary experience?**

Some graduates said they would not have changed anything about their Catholic secondary experience while others were interested in more experiences outside the classroom setting or the school environs or in learning more about religion. For example:

*I actually really enjoyed my Catholic secondary experience, so it's difficult for me to think of anything I would have changed. I guess it would have been interesting to maybe attend a retreat of some sort; maybe more experiences out of the school with my fellow classmates. For example, a workshop at a church, or local community center. Most of my spiritual experiences were in a classroom, or school gym; I don't recall any outdoor, or out of the school experiences. I think this would have reinforced our beliefs or encouraged us to apply our beliefs outside of the school environment.*

*I would say just learning more about religion.*

*Relating teaching back to Gospel values/religion a little more.*

*Nothing I would have changed; perfect environment for me.*

*In terms of my exposure to the faith and my connection to the teachers, particularly to the religious members, I wouldn't have changed a thing, they were magnificent.*

**8. Based on what you know about Catholic secondary education today, what do you think distinguishes Catholic secondary education from other secondary education today?**

Most of the graduates identified differences between Catholic secondary education and other secondary education. For example:

*... In general, Catholic secondary education is "regular education" following a standard curriculum, however, with a basis of, or integration of Catholic theology. This involves Catholic inspired values that are ingrained within the curriculum. I think the most significant aspect of Catholic secondary education is the encouragement of developing good character.*

*A big thing would be crucifix in the office and on the top of the doors, prayer in the morning. Ultimately I thought it was a happier environment, ... there was an uplift in a Catholic environment.*

*Obviously a sense of community that is involved in being a Catholic school; whether or not you can't find a similar community in a public school is something I can't say.*

**9. How could Catholic secondary education, today, be improved?**

Some graduates suggested a continued and renewed focus on Catholic faith in staffing and the curriculum. For example:

*I think it could be improved by having teachers that are more knowledgeable and more committed to the faith.*

*I wish we had more Bible studies, because I'm doing that now and I feel like we could have had more; I'm realizing how important the Bible is and how it relates to today as well; not just a book stuck in time, but a formula for living. Engage more of the kids in doing more social outreach like we did ...*

*There should be no distinction between ecclesiastical structure of the [parish] church and the school ... a flow through where the religious encounter young lives and young lives encounter those who have dedicated their lives to religious life.... At a secondary level, the greater the encounter will have, the more approachable and realistic these people are for them, which will foster an enhanced faith and*

*future vocations .... We have to lose the idea of religion as subject, not a 70 minute segment.*