

A Survey of Christian Education and Formation Leaders Serving Episcopal Churches

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In the late fall of 2004 and spring of 2005 a survey developed by the DFMS research office and Ministries with Young People was mailed to a random sample of 1,000 Episcopal congregations. The survey instrument was designed to gather information about persons currently serving Episcopal parishes and missions in Christian education and formation ministries.

Each parish and mission was asked to distribute the survey to all persons who play a leadership role in the education/formation ministries of the church. Four copies were mailed to each congregation in the sample, and 823 completed surveys were returned from 452 congregations.

Who are Educator and Formation Leaders?

Not surprisingly, in many Episcopal churches the clergy leader plays an important educational role. A total of 41% of survey respondents were ordained persons—with the average length of ordained ministry being 18 years. The vast majority of ordained persons were ordained as priests (91%). The rest were deacons and one was an ELCA minister.

The majority (65%) of responding education and formation leaders were female. However, among ordained leaders, only 39% were female. *Among lay educational leaders, 82% were female.*

The average age of all leaders was 53 years old in 1995. Ordained leaders were somewhat older at an average age of 56, as compared to age 50 for lay leaders. The national average for all active parish clergy (non-retired) was 53 in 2004, so the age of clergy survey respondents (which may include some retired clergy) is slightly above the national norm.

Respondents were predominantly white (92%), with African American/Black respondents being the largest minority group (3.5%), followed by Asian Americans (1.6%) and Hispanics (1.2%). The percent white total is similar to, but slightly higher than, the estimated proportion of White/Anglo members (89%) in the entire Episcopal Church.

In terms of church background, the sample was split between those who were active in an Episcopal church when they were growing up (43%) and those who were active in other (non-Episcopal) churches (45%). Much smaller proportions of current education and formation leaders were inactive or sporadic in their church involvement as children (5% and 6%, respectively). The difference

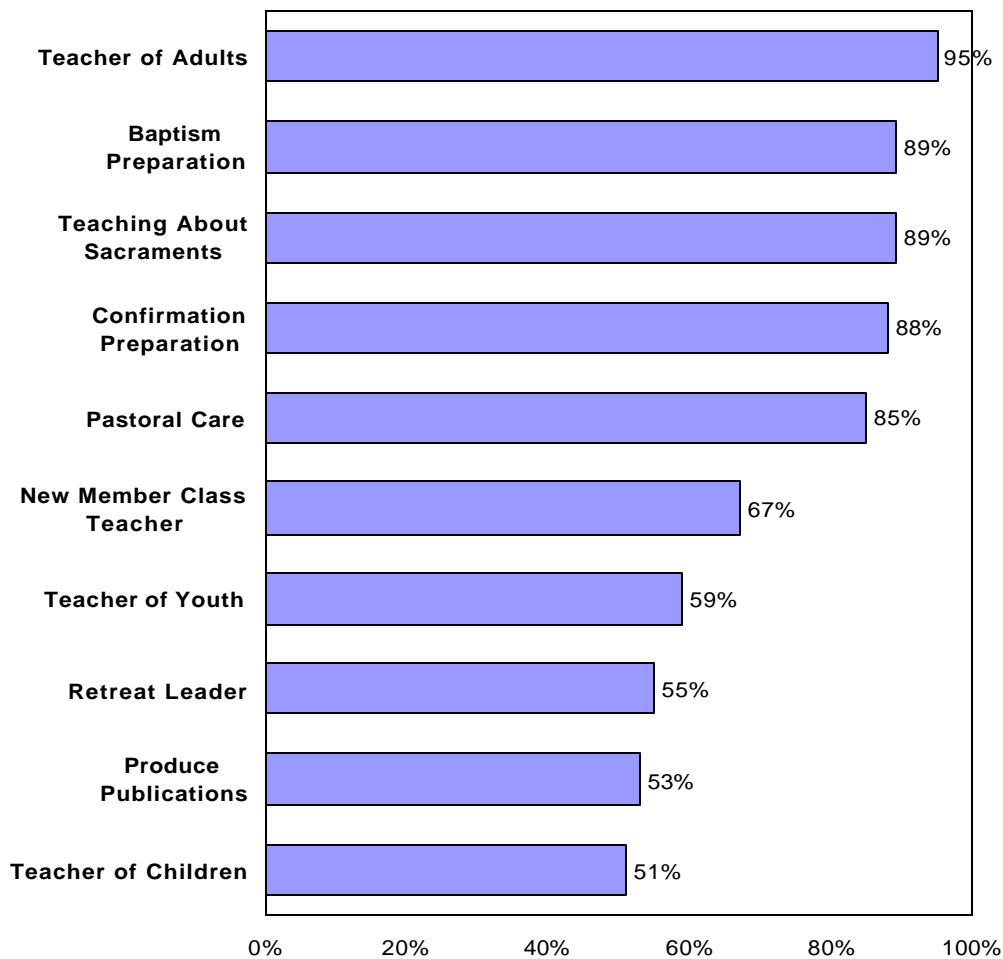
between ordained and lay persons was minimal in terms of being “cradle Episcopalians.” Likewise, about the same percentage (61%) of ordained and non-ordained leaders had been members or active in a non-Episcopal church at some point in their lives.

Less than a quarter of all respondents indicated having attended an Episcopal summer camp as children (22%). Ordained persons were slightly more likely to have been Episcopal campers (24% vs. 20% for laity).

Education and Formation Service

Survey respondents were given a list of 18 possible education/formation roles and asked if they participated in or led one or more of the ministries. Because responses from clergy and laity were so different, two separate graphs show how each group responded in terms of the ministries that were selected most frequently.

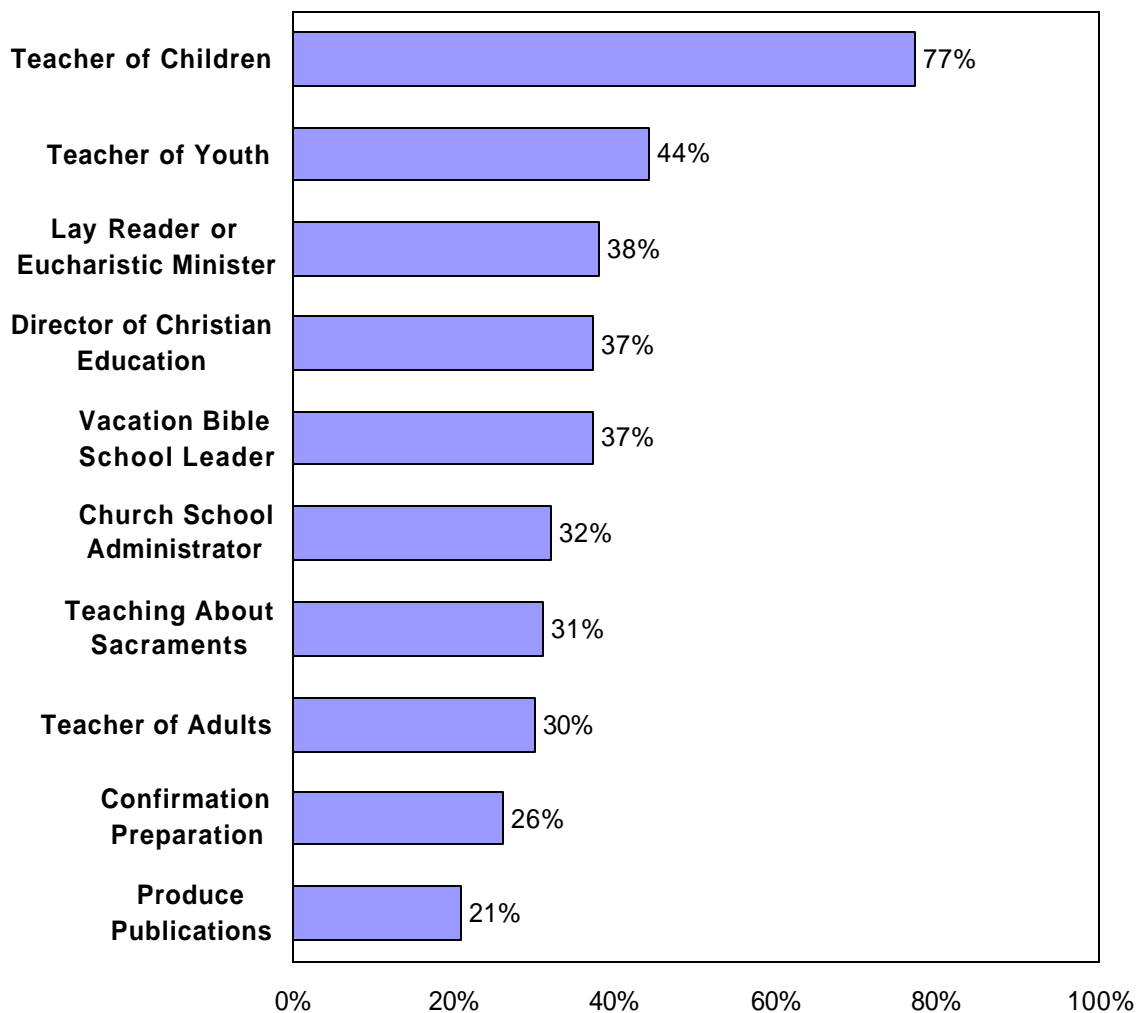
Figure 1: Christian Education/Formation Roles of Ordained Persons



As can be seen above, ordained leaders indicated that they served most frequently in the ministries most typically associated with clergy: teaching adults, baptism preparation, teaching about the sacraments, confirmation preparation and pastoral care. And because Episcopal clergy tend to play a wide variety of roles (especially in smaller, single-staff churches), large numbers indicated that they taught new members, youth and children while also leading retreats and producing publications. However, very few clergy served as nursery teachers (1%), worked in the church library (4%) or worked as a before or after/school program leader (5%).

Lay Christian education and formation leaders participated in a different set of ministries—and in general, they tended to participate in fewer ministries than clergy.

Figure 2: Christian Education/Formation Roles of Lay Persons



“Teacher of children” is the role played by the largest proportion of lay education leaders. In fact, teaching children is the only leadership role that more than half of laity selected. Much smaller proportions of laity indicated that they taught youth (44%), served as lay readers or Eucharistic ministers, held the position of director of Christian education or taught/led vacation Bible school.

Laity participated in many of the same ministries that are associated with clergy leaders, although in smaller proportions. Substantial minorities of laity said that they taught about the sacraments, taught adults, participated in confirmation preparation and produced publications.

Like clergy, lay leaders tended not to work in the library (only 4% worked in the library) or serve as before or after school program leaders (6%). However, unlike clergy, few laity also taught or led new member classes or orientations (only 7%).

Calling and Certification

A series of five questions was asked about calling, certification, ordination and mission. Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

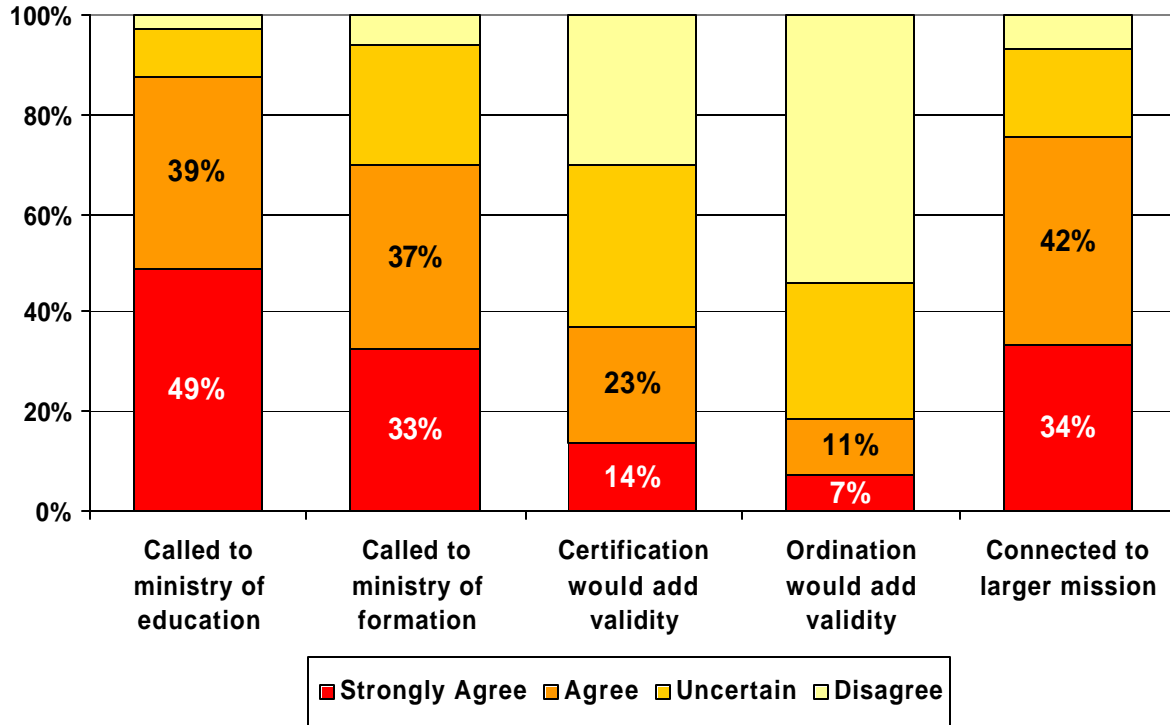
1. I am called by God to a ministry of education
2. I am called by God to a ministry of Christian formation
3. Certification would add validity to my educational ministry
4. Ordination would add validity to my educational ministry
5. My educational work is connected to the larger mission of the Episcopal Church

Responses to the five questions for Laity are shown in figure 3. As can be seen, the vast majority of lay leaders (88%) agreed or strongly agreed that they are called by God to a ministry of education. A smaller percentage of laity, but still a majority (70%), agreed that they are called by God to a ministry of formation. It is likely that the primary difference between responses to the question about education and formation is in the percentage uncertain—which is greatly expanded in responses to the formation question. Education is a widely understood concept, but formation may be much less well understood. In any case, however, Episcopal laypersons believe that they are called by God to the leadership roles they are playing.

Certification and ordination clearly provoke a different response than the questions about calling. Certification would help validate the educational

ministries of 37% of lay education leaders, but 30% feel that it would not. Another 32% are uncertain. So there are mixed feelings here. Responses to the question of ordination were more negative. Over half (54%) of educational leaders do not think that ordination would add validity to their educational ministries and another 27% are uncertain. Only 18% of laity would see ordination as something that would add validity to their ministries.

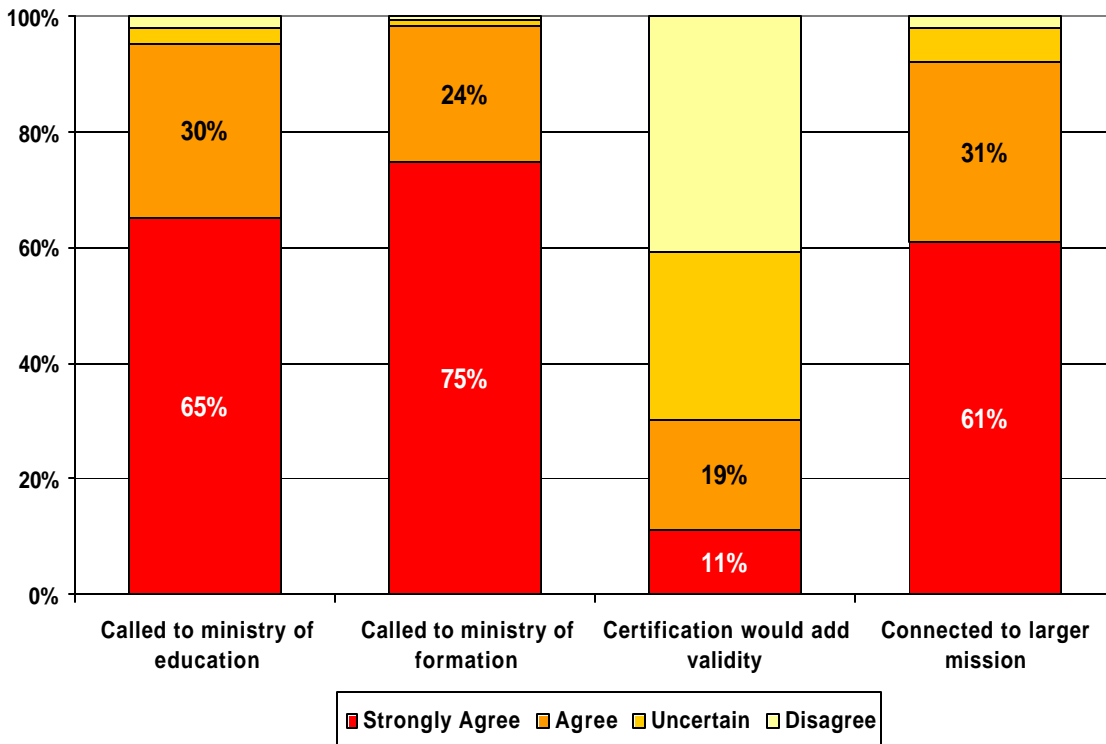
Figure 3: Calling & Certification for Laity



Most lay Episcopal education/formation leaders see their educational work as connected to the larger mission of the Episcopal Church. Apparently Christian education is not simply a job or chore that helps one’s local church for most Episcopalians. It is a calling with broader connections.

Since being ordained implies a calling, it was no surprise that clergy, even more than laity, were likely to feel called by God to ministries of education and formation. As shown in Figure 4, three quarters of Episcopal clergy leaders strongly agreed that they were called by God to a ministry of formation and two thirds to a ministry of education. This difference, although not large, probably indicates that many Episcopal clergy see education as part of their larger task of formation.

Figure 4: Calling & Certification for Clergy



The question on ordination validating one’s educational ministry was asked of everyone, even clergy, but responses were not interpretable. Many clergy did not answer the question and those that did respond were referring to the ordination that they already had. Responses by clergy were also diminished for the issue of certification, although not to the extent as the question on ordination. For those who did answer the question, only 30% indicated that certification would add validity to their educational ministries—fewer than the 37% of laity that gave the same response to that question.

Over 90% of clergy strongly agreed or agreed that their educational work is connected to the larger mission of the Episcopal Church. This proportion greatly exceeds that of laity—particularly in the proportion who responded “strongly agree” (61% for clergy; 34% for laity).

Educational Background & Training

Respondents were asked about formal training in education (rather than about highest degree or years of formal education). The table below shows the percentage responding “yes” to each question by ordained status. In the first row of data, for instance, 22% of all ordained clergy said they had a bachelor’s degree in education, as compared to 30% of all lay respondents, indicating that lay respondents are more likely to have undergraduate degrees in education.

Question:	Clergy	Laity
A. Bachelors degree in education	22%	30%
B. Teacher certification	19%	28%
C. Masters degree in education	13%	20%
D. Doctorate in education	4%	1%
E. Seminary courses in education	64%	6%
F. Seminary courses in formation	67%	6%
G. Seminars or workshops in education	45%	23%
H. Degree in religious education	16%	3%

Lay education leaders are also more likely than are clergy to have master's degrees and teaching certificates. The difference in the percentage with a teacher's certificate is largely a function of gender rather than ordained status, however. Females are much more likely than males to have teaching certificates and there is no difference between female clergy and female laity in the likelihood of having a certificate (31% for both). Male clergy are somewhat less likely than male laity to have teaching certificates (12% to 16%, respectively).

The same intervening effect of gender is seen with respect to educational degrees. Females were more likely than males to have bachelors or master's degrees in education and the difference between female clergy and laity was less than it was between male clergy and laity. However, unlike for teaching certificates, the difference between clergy and lay females were not eliminated. So, for example, 24% of female clergy have bachelor's degrees in education, as compared to 31% of female laity.

Since seminary is a requirement for ordination for almost all Episcopal ministers, and few lay persons have attended seminary, it was no surprise that clergy were more likely to have taken seminary courses in education and formation. In the table above we see that most clergy have taken such courses, but that few laity had done so. A similar effect is seen for a degree in religious education. Relatively few respondents had such degrees and most who did were clergy. In looking at write-in specifics about such degrees it was interesting that many clergy were counting the Masters of Divinity degree as a degree in religious education. Similarly, a number of the non-ordained respondents counted undergraduate degrees in religion as degrees in religious education.

Clergy were also more likely to have received formal training in the form of seminars and workshops in education. Not many respondents mentioned specifics on the type of workshops that they had attended, but a few listed seminars held by their diocese and two mentioned workshops on Godly Play.

In addition to formal training in education, all survey respondents were asked about continuing education courses in Christian education or formation.

Question:	Clergy	Laity
A. Diocesan events or courses	75%	51%
B. Provincial events or courses	19%	9%
C. National events or courses	41%	13%
D. Seminary continuing education courses	50%	9%
E. On-line courses	4%	3%
F. Other continuing education courses	48%	25%

Three quarters of clergy and slightly over half of lay education leaders indicated that they had attended continuing education courses or events held or sponsored by their diocese. Many clergy had also participated in events held by the national church and continuing education courses offered by seminaries. However, relatively few laity indicated participating in such offerings for continuing education.

Provincial events or courses were attended by fewer than 20% of clergy and less than 10% of laity. And, apparently, on-line courses have not made much of an impact on continuing education for Episcopal Christian education and formation leaders. Fewer than 5% of clergy or lay education leaders had taken on-line courses.

Diocesan events that were mentioned most frequently (in descending order of number of mentions) were: Godly Play, sexual abuse, youth ministry, safe church, and Safeguarding God’s Children. National events that were mentioned most frequently included: Education for Ministry, CREDO, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, and Will Our Faith Have Children?

Finally in this section of the survey, leaders were asked of the continuing education courses they had taken, which two were most helpful to their work in Christian education or formation. Three courses were mentioned much more frequently than any other (particularly the first): Education for Ministry, Godly Play, and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

Employment Status

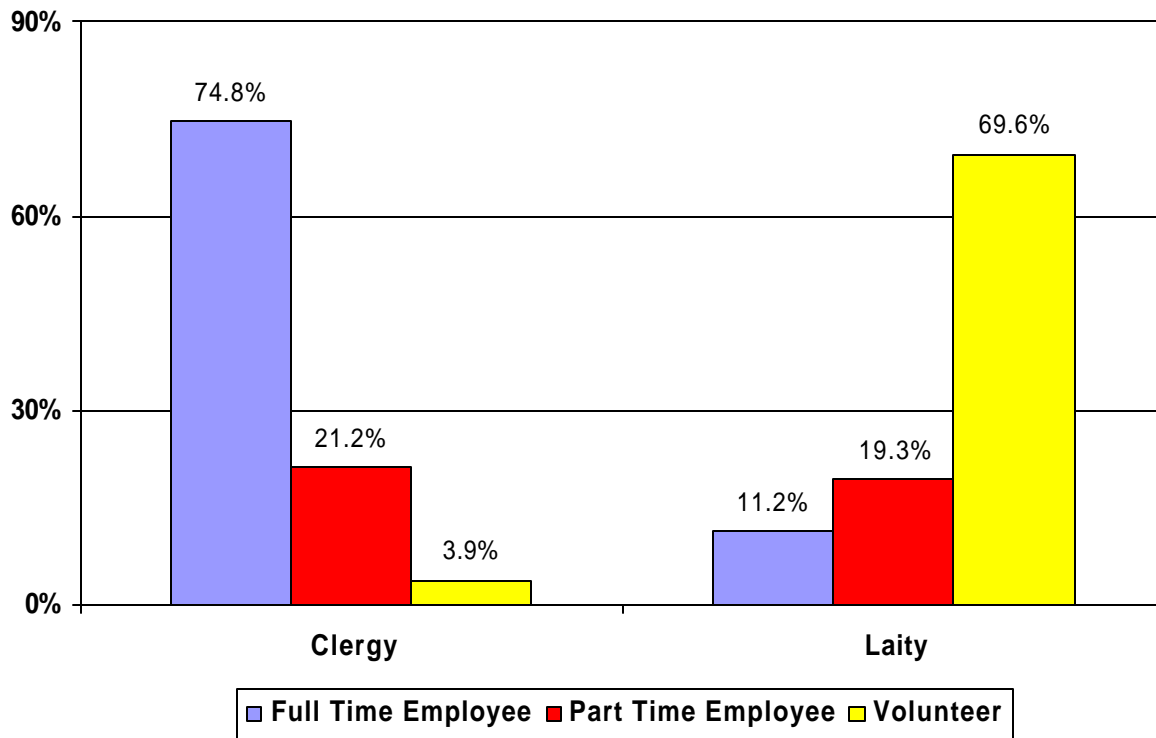
Overall, 57% of education/formation leaders were employed by their congregation, with 37% employed full time and 20% employed part time. Not surprisingly, ordained clergy were much more likely to be paid church employees than were lay members. Figure 5 shows that three quarters of responding clergy are full time church employees and another 21% were part time employees. Most of the part time clergy were deacons who served in a variety of capacities: preacher, Sunday school administrator, hospice chaplain, etc., and they listed a variety of educational functions (pastoral care, teacher of baptism, teacher of

children, etc.). The few volunteer priests served as either associate/assistant rectors or as volunteer Sunday school administrators.

Most lay education/formation leaders were volunteers (70%). Of laypersons who were full-time employees, the most frequently mentioned position was that of youth minister/director, followed by Christian education/formation director. A smaller number of lay respondents who were full time employees listed the positions of director of children’s ministries and program coordinator.

For laity in part-time positions, the three positions mentioned most frequently were youth minister/director, Christian education/formation director, and director of Children’s ministries. A smaller number of lay respondents also mentioned the part-time position of Sunday school/church school director.

Figure 5: Employment by Ordained Status



Volunteers were not asked about their title, however one listed her role as “rector’s wife” and that she contributed two hours per week to this task.

On average, clergy working part-time worked 21 hours per week, as compared to 17 hours per week for laity working part-time.

On average, clergy who were volunteers contributed 7 hours per week to their education/formation roles, as compared to 5 hours per week for lay volunteers.

On average, ordained full-time employees had held their current position for 6.3 years, as compared to 5.2 years for full-time lay employees. For part-time employees, the averages were 5.2 years for clergy and 4.3 years for laity.

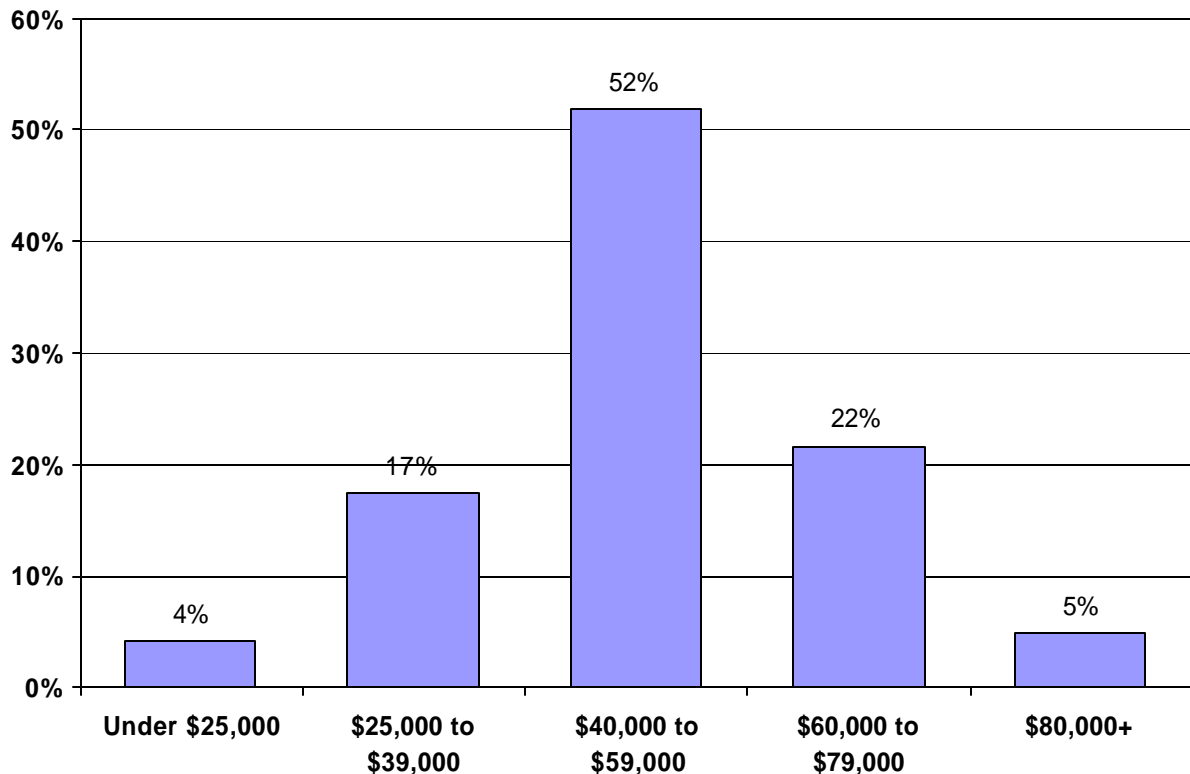
Compensation & Benefits

Education & formation leaders who were employed by their churches were asked about the salary they received. The income data for clergy can be seen in Figure 6, below.

By far the largest number of Episcopal clergy earn between \$40,000 and \$60,000 a year. For full time church-employed lay education leaders the range of salaries was restricted to an even smaller range: 20% earned under \$25,000; 58% earned \$25,000 to \$39,000; and 22% earned \$40,000 to \$59,000. No lay employees reported earning \$60,000 or more, although it should be noted that there were relatively few full-time lay employees in the sample and only 50 responded to the salary question.

Part time salaries were lower than full time salaries, of course. And laity tended to be paid less than clergy.

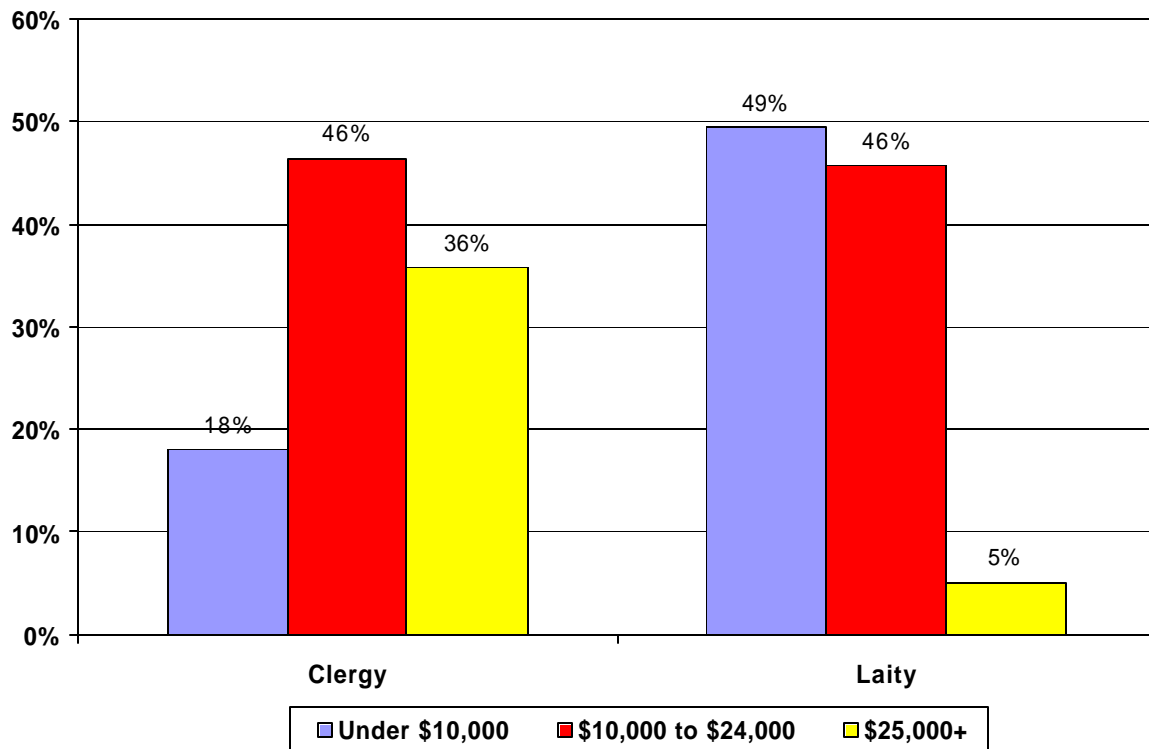
Figure 6: Full Time Salaries for Clergy



Comparing the salary data in the sample to national Episcopal norms is somewhat difficult due to the fact that the Church Pension Group reports actual total compensation figures from congregations and the Christian Education/Formation survey reported salaries within the categories shown in Figure 6. It is nevertheless likely that the 2004 median total full-time compensation of \$60,000 for active clergy would indicate a median salary around \$50,000—which is consistent with the large percentage of clergy in the \$40,000-\$59,000 category above.

Figure 7 deals with part time salaries. It shows that although the proportion earning \$10,000 to \$24,000 is identical for clergy and lay employees, a large proportion of part-time clergy earn more than \$25,000, but hardly any part time laity are paid that much. Conversely, the largest proportion of part time lay employees earned less than \$10,000. As noted earlier, part-time clergy employees tend to work more hours on average than part-time laity, but the disparity in time worked is not enough to fully explain the salary gap.

Figure 7: Clergy & Lay Part Time Salaries

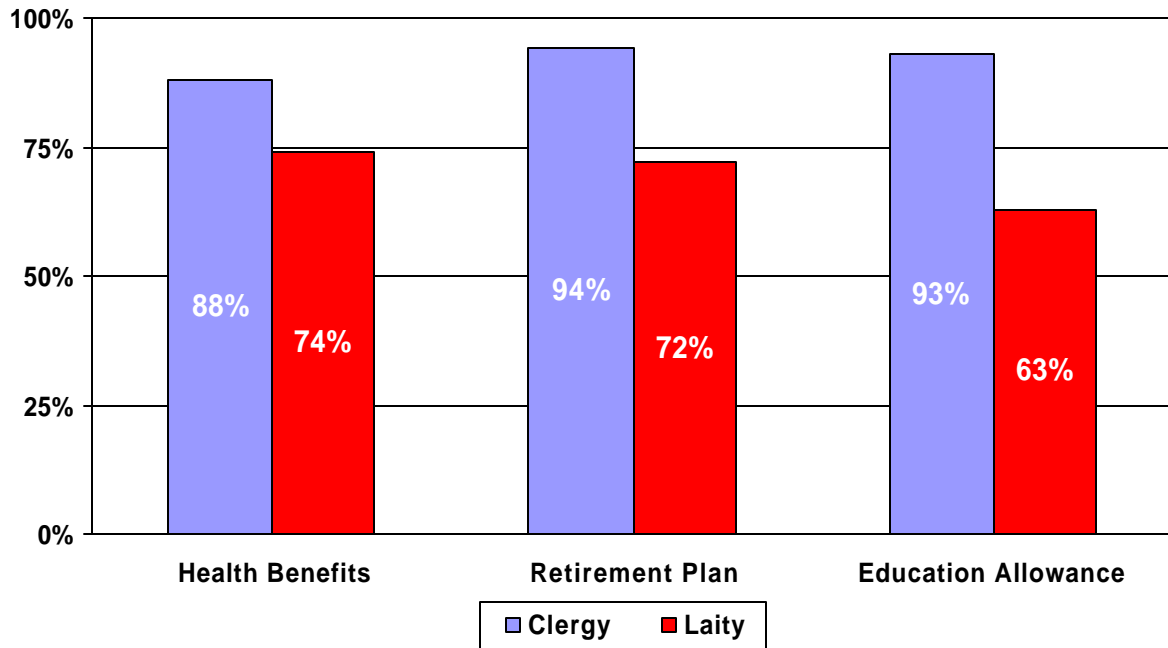


The majority of full time church employees receive benefits from their congregation. Figure 8 shows that almost all full time clergy are on a retirement plan and receive an educational allowance, and the vast majority also receives health benefits. Of course, in nearly all cases congregations are required to

provide such benefits for their clergy. A few of the clergypersons not receiving full benefits were supply priests, interims or deacons.

Nearly three quarters of full-time lay employees were on health and retirement plans. A smaller percentage received an education allowance—even though the employee worked in the educational ministries of the church.

Figure 8: Benefits for Full Time Church Employees



A little over a third of part-time clergy reported receiving health benefits, as compared to only 10% of part-time laity. Around half of part-time clergy also received retirement benefits and an educational allowance. For laity, the corresponding percentages were 16% and 32%. So in terms of benefit disparity between clergy and lay employees, the narrowest gaps were for full-time health benefits (14 percentage points) and part-time educational allowance (16 percentage points).

Involvement in Education Associations and Teaching Positions

Very few Episcopal Christian education/formation leaders are members of Christian education-related associations or networks. Only 1% of clergy and 5% of lay leaders indicated membership in the National Association of Episcopal Christian Education Directors (NAECED). Likewise, only 1% of lay leaders are members of the National Network of Lay Professionals. And no survey respondents (clergy or lay) indicated membership in the Religious Education Association (REA) or APRRE.

Around one third of survey respondents either currently teach or have taught in an elementary or secondary school (public or private). The majority of leaders no longer teach, but the percentage still teaching is understandably higher among lay leaders. Overall, 11% of lay leaders are currently school teachers, 26% are former teachers and 63% have never taught elementary or secondary school. Of the few ordained clergy who are currently teaching, most report their church employment as part time. One full-time priest who also teaches responded that his position was school chaplain.

A larger proportion of education/formation leaders are currently employed as educators rather than school teachers (serving as school principals, school administrators, college professors, seminary professors or staff, diocesan staff, etc.). Overall, 13% of respondents are educators (but not teachers), whereas 8% are currently school teachers. Among laity, 15% are employed as educators, as compared to 9% of clergy.

Among clergy educators, the largest numbers teach as adjunct faculty in colleges or universities. A few others are part-time in their churches and serve full-time as educators elsewhere. Lay educators serve in a wide variety of roles including school principal, college professor, college dean, school psychologist, private instructor/trainer and consultant.

Denominational Meetings & Committees

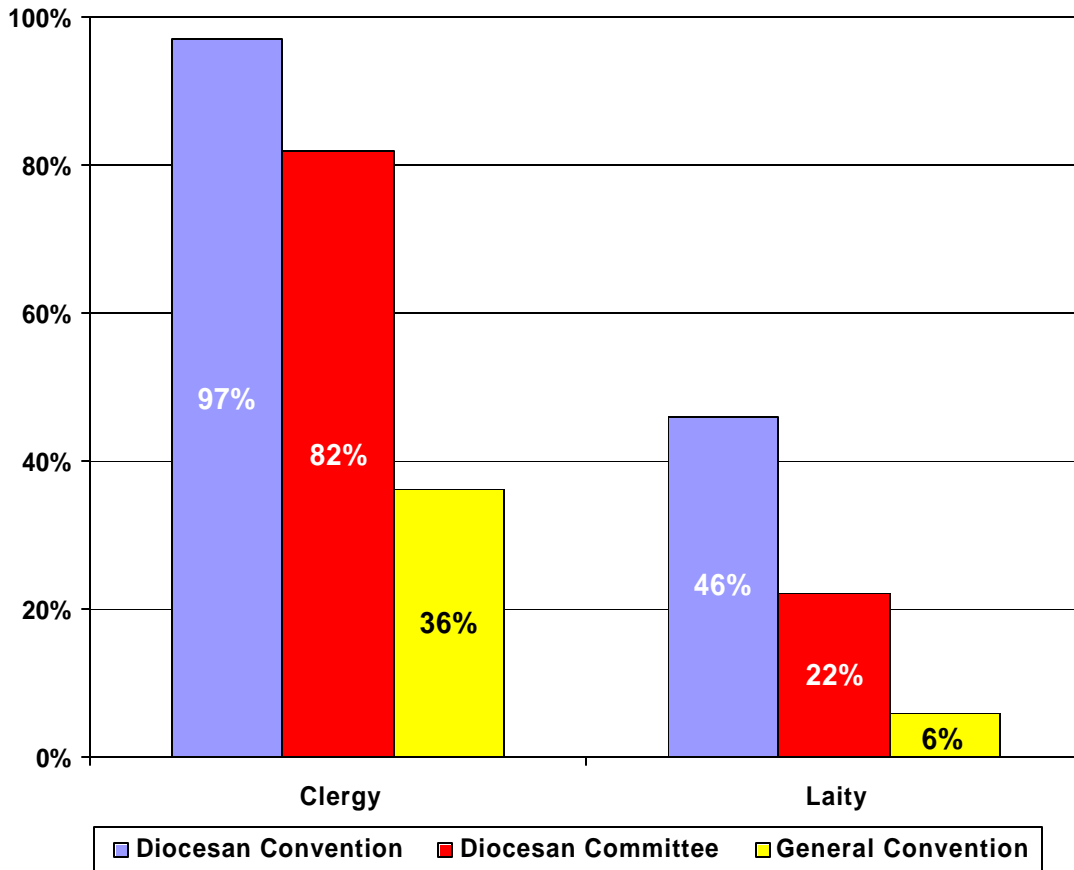
Christian education/formation leaders were asked three questions about their involvement in denominational activities beyond the parish: 1) how many diocesan conventions have you attended; 2) on how many diocesan committees have you served; and 3) how many General Conventions have you attended?

Among responses to these three questions, more education/formation leaders answered affirmatively to attending at least one diocesan convention than to serving on diocesan committees or attending General Convention. Overall, 69% of respondents had attended a diocesan convention. However, clergy were much more likely to have attended a diocesan convention: 97% of clergy indicated attending at least one convention, as compared to 46% of laity. The average number of diocesan conventions attended for clergy was 17, whereas the average for laity was 4.

The disparity between clergy and laity involvement is even greater with respect to participation in diocesan committees. Overall, 46% of education leaders have served on such committees. Among clergy, 82% reported serving; and for laity only 22% have served. The average number of committees on which clergy reported serving was 4. Since so many laity had not served on a diocesan committee, the average number of committees served was less than 1.

The most often mentioned committees on which respondents had served included: 1) education & formation; 2) diocesan council or other executive boards/committees; 3) commission on ministry; 4) youth commissions & committees; 5) standing committees (non-defined); and 6) liturgy & music.

Figure 9: Convention & Committee Participation



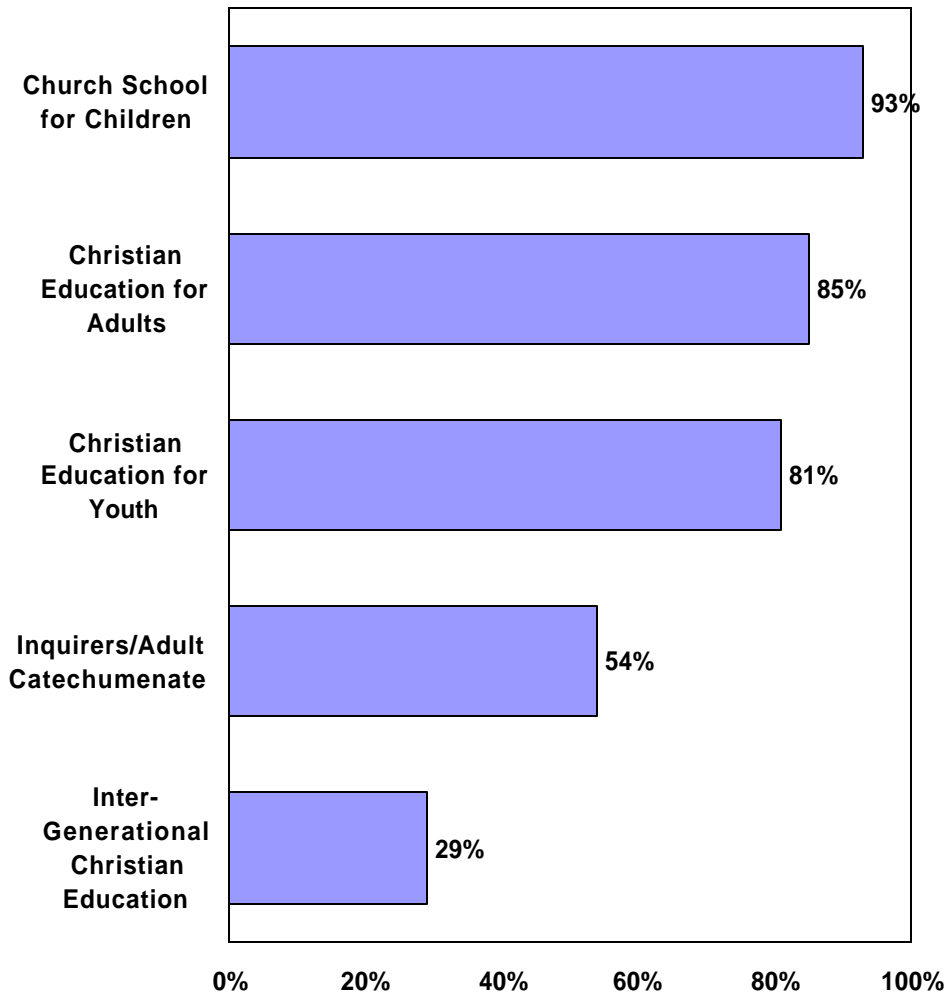
Overall, only 18% of education/formation leaders indicated that they attended one or more meetings of General Convention. Clergy were more likely to have attended GC (21% had attended one or two, and another 15% attended three or more). Only 6% of lay education/formation leaders said they had attended at least one General Convention.

Congregations: Time Devoted to Christian Education

In addition to questions about themselves, each education/formation leader was also asked questions about Christian education in his or her congregation. So now we shift analysis from the individual to the congregation, and because many churches returned more than one survey it was necessary to select only one respondent per congregation to represent that congregation. When a clergyperson completed a survey in a multiple-respondent church, that

individual's survey was used to represent the congregation unless a lay respondent gave more complete answers. When multiple lay responses were returned, the most complete survey was chosen.

Figure 10: Sunday Christian Education Activities



The first area that was investigated was the amount of time devoted to Christian education on a typical Sunday. Congregational respondents were asked about: 1) church school for children; 2) Christian education for youth; 3) Christian education for adults; 4) seekers/inquirers classes or the adult Catechumenate; and 5) inter-generational Christian education.

As shown in Figure 10, nearly all (93%) congregations report that they have church school for children. Most of those that do not have church school for children also lack Christian education for youth. However, since nearly all churches that lack church school for children have Christian education for adults,

it is likely that most churches which lack church school for children have few, if any, children in the congregation. The typical amount of time given to church school for children is less than one hour but more than 30 minutes (65% of all reporting congregations indicated using this time frame). Another 23% of congregations have church school for one hour. Very few churches have church school that lasts more than one hour, or 30 minutes or less.

The pattern for Christian education for adults and youth is similar to the pattern for children—except that somewhat fewer churches include such activities and proportionately more churches devote a longer period of time each week to these two areas of Christian education (an hour or more is proportionately more common). Still, the norm for most churches is more than 30 minutes and less than one hour.

The adult Catechumenate or classes for seekers/inquirers are much less frequently used than the three previous activities. Only slightly over half of churches report seekers/inquirers classes and for those that do, many do not fit the pattern of offering them weekly every Sunday. Some churches say they are held “when needed,” or “periodically.” A frequent pattern is to hold such classes for 1-2 hours per week for six to eight weeks. Another pattern is to hold them prior to confirmation.

Time devoted to inter-generational Christian education is scheduled by only 29% of responding Episcopal churches. For churches that use it, about half do so regularly on Sunday for the typical time period (more than 30 minutes to one hour) and about half schedule inter-generational education “occasionally,” “quarterly” or “intermittently.”

Congregations: Weekday Education & Formation

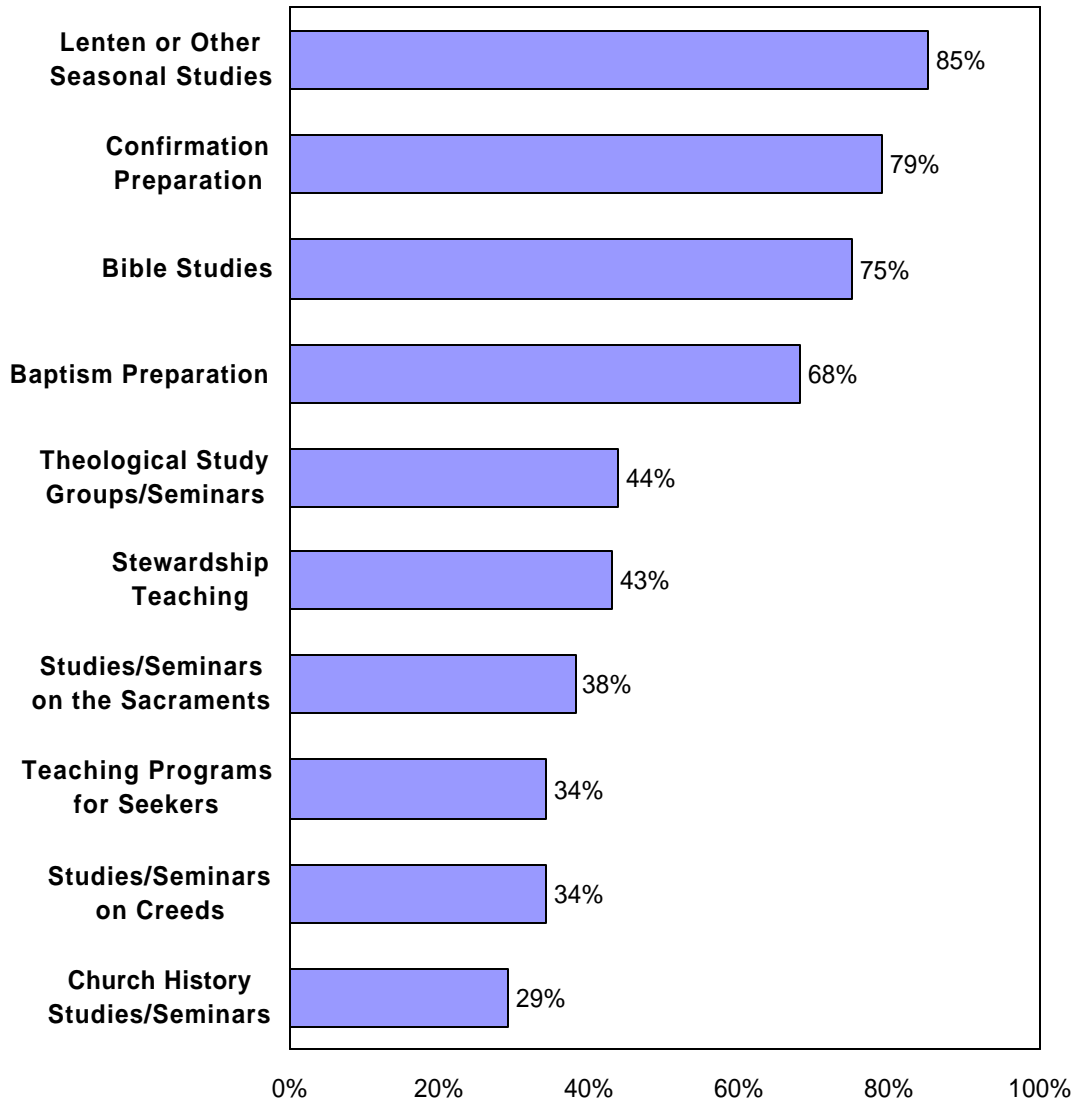
In addition to the normal Sunday schedule, most churches also offer weekday opportunities for education and formation—some seasonally and others offered throughout most of the year. The most frequently offered weekday educational activity is a Lenten study or other seasonal study (such as during Advent). The vast majority (85%) of responding congregations include such weekday studies.

Confirmation and baptism preparation are also held by most Episcopal churches—although the need for such activities presumes that a congregation has young families or is attracting converts. Obviously, not all Episcopal churches can offer confirmation and baptism preparation, even if they would like to do so.

Bible studies are offered by nearly three quarters of Episcopal churches during the week.

Less than half of all Episcopal churches include the rest of the weekday educational activities shown in Figure 11.

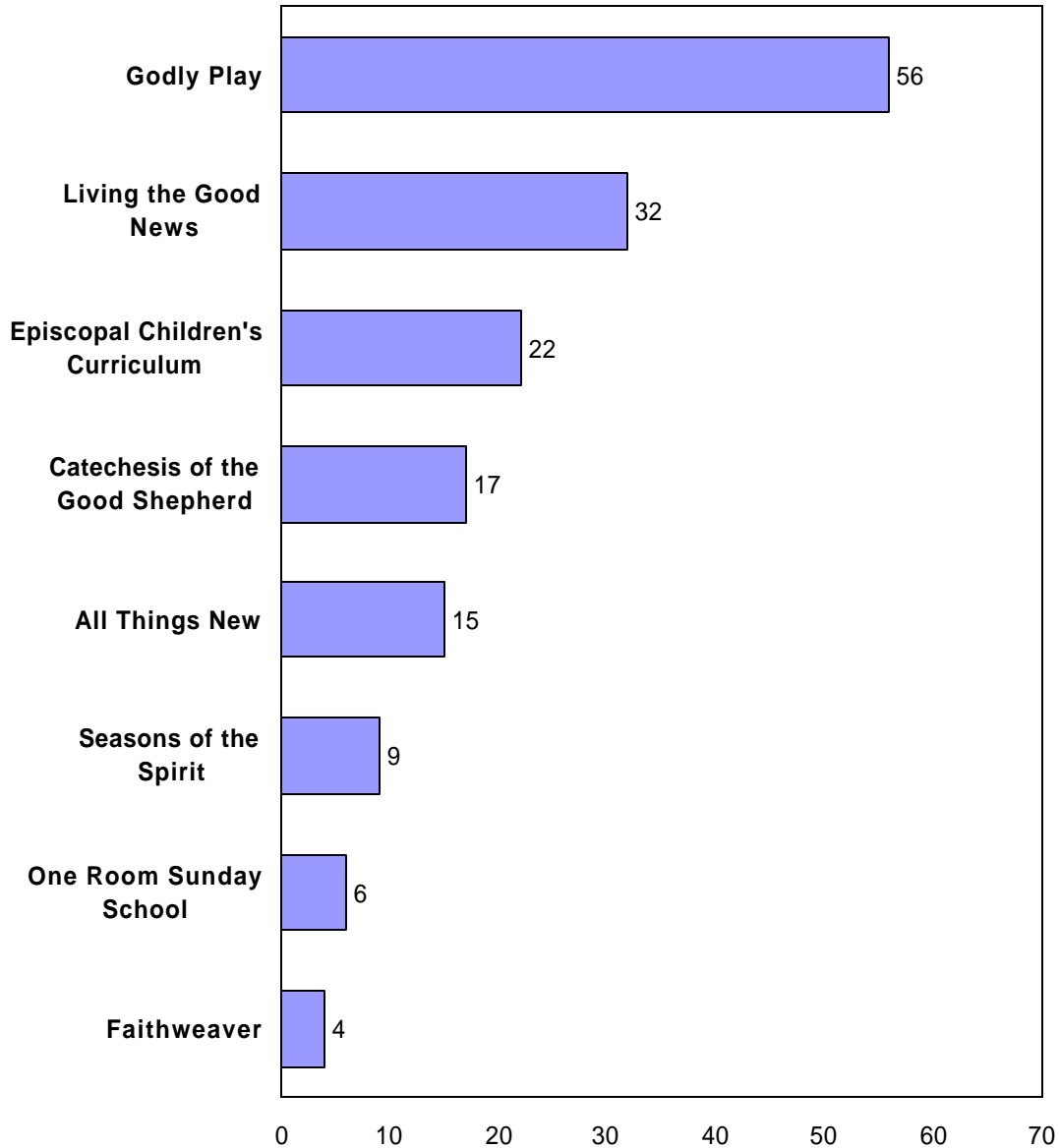
Figure 11: Weekday Opportunities for Education and Formation



Congregations: Curriculum Use

The vast majority of churches (83%) with a church school for children indicated that they use a published curriculum. Unfortunately, not all of these congregations listed the name of that curriculum.

Figure 12: Most Frequently Mentioned Church School Curriculum for Children



Godly Play was mentioned by more congregations than any other as the Church school curriculum that they use for children. Living the Good News was second in use, followed by the Episcopal Children's Curriculum, Catechesis of the Holy Spirit, and All Things New. In addition to the curriculum choices shown in Figure 12, a few congregations mentioned Weaving God's Promises, Share the Joy, Worm Hole, Life Together and Bible Quest.

Of those churches reporting Christian education for youth, 60% report that they use a published curriculum. By far the largest number of churches report using J2A (Rite 13 Portion)—mentioned 44 times. Living the Good News was listed as the youth curriculum by 15 churches and Episcopal Youth Curriculum by 12 more churches. Other curriculum choices included Serendipity, Seasons of the Spirit, I Will with God's Help and David C. Cook—but each was mentioned by only two churches each.

Only 30% of churches with Christian education for adults report using a published curriculum. The most frequently mentioned was EFM (7 mentions), followed by Kerygma (6 mentions), Alpha Course, Living the Good News and Via Media (5 mentions each).

Published curriculum resources were used by 28% of churches that reported a seeker/inquirer class or adult Catechumenate. Of the resources used, the most frequently mentioned were Via Media (6), I Will with God's Help (6), and Encountering Christ in the Episcopal Church (4).

Only 14% of churches who reported offering inter-generational Christian activities also reported using a published curriculum. However, of the nine resources listed, none was listed more than once.

A final series of questions asked about self-authored curriculum. A majority of congregations (61%) reported that they created their own curriculum for use in Christian education.

Churches that created their own curriculum were asked if the curriculum was: 1) lectionary based; 2) followed the liturgical seasons; 3) include story-telling; and 4) include opportunities for worship. Of the four options, story-telling was selected most often (81%) as being part of the self-authored curriculum, followed by opportunities for worship (76%), following the liturgical seasons (75%) and being based on the lectionary (55%).