

DETAILED TYPOLOGY

MAPPING THE TERRAIN:

Discovering the reality of young Catholics

Edited by Danny Curtin

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Foreword

The complexities of young people's lives, the diverse nature of their experience and beliefs, their interaction with one another and the speed at which young people move through the world can appear to us as a blur. As youth ministers we know that sometimes we need help to make sense of the reality of the young people who we are in contact with. How much more do we need support to understand the lives of those who are not clearly visible to us? Our ministry is called to flourish within the lives of all the young people of the wider Catholic world. A rich understanding of the range of young people will introduce us to the breadth and the depth of what it means to young people to be Catholic, of how they relate to the Church, and of how they live in the world. It will undoubtedly present us with challenges. However, it can also fill us with hope as we highlight the immense potential for our work to find relevance and purpose in young people's lives today.

This booklet goes hand in hand with 'Mapping the terrain – discovering the reality of young Catholics' (see www.cymfed.org), which presents an overview of a wide ranging research project into the lives and faith of young Catholics in England and Wales. What follows in this resource will help you in your parishes, schools, communities, youth projects and initiatives to apply the findings of the research in your own youth ministry context.

By combining the research findings with the rich experience of youth ministers, we present here twelve Typologies of young Catholics. Each Typology has a varying degree of engagement with the Catholic community, belief in God, and engagement with the world. It is hoped that the Typologies will help the Catholic youth ministry community to appreciate who we are working with, and invite us to ask if there are others we could potentially reach. The Typologies will assist us to use our limited resources most effectively. For some youth ministers it will challenge them to move beyond those young people they work with at present. For others it will affirm their work and help them to see how they can be more focused in developing different approaches to work most effectively with different young people.

As I travel up and down England and Wales visiting parishes, people sometimes tell me that "we have no young people here". Well, that is clearly not true. As you get to know the young people in this toolkit, albeit that they are all 'typologies' and not actual young people, you will recognise some of them. You may say that you have a few young people like Sophie or Luis, but there is also no denying that in any community there are Joes challenging us, or Hannahs drifting away in a search for something else. And there are literally hundreds of thousands of young Francos, Amys and Ciarans out there. Many of them are people we could be in touch with. The question which arises for me is *what can I do about it?*

This has changed the way I work, for the better. It has encouraged me, and I trust that it will give you hope in your work also.

Danny Curtin
(YCW National President and Vice-Chair CYMFed)



Introduction

There are over a million young Catholics in England and Wales from many different backgrounds. This research project, undertaken by CYMFed, looked at young Catholics; those identifying as such and those who don't, those who are going to church and those who aren't, those who hold Catholic beliefs and those who don't. It looked at the broad range of 11-25 year olds. Some might describe themselves as Catholic, and yet hold little in common with the practices and beliefs of the Church, whilst others who are more hesitant to describe themselves in this way are mindful of the impact that Catholicism has had on their daily lives.

They present a whole spectrum of concerns about their own lives and about the world. They have a variety of different ways of engaging, or not, with their Catholic faith. Although young people have strong views about what it means to be a Catholic, relatively few of them attempt to live by the beliefs and practices which they see as important for someone to be a Catholic. For many, they are happy to hold different beliefs side-by-side with no apparent tension arising from the contradictions.

In short, the present generation of young Catholics¹ is a broad and colourful group of teenagers and young adults with a complex religious identity of belief, practice and behaviour. There is no single way of being a young Catholic. They are all Catholic. In developing our research to look at the different types of young people we could be working with, we are not saying any one type of Catholic is better than another. Each has different emphasises and different strengths in their faith, practice, behaviour and life. Without recognising and responding to this diversity within Catholic young people, we run the risk of providing ministry for only a small sector of our community.

The Typologies presented here were formed after the research results demonstrated the overlapping relationships between young people's beliefs, religious practices, and worldly behaviours. It led us to ask what the research is saying about young people's Catholic identity, their participation in the Catholic community, their understanding, engagement and attitudes towards faith, alongside their engagement with the world. How do these factors overlap and interplay with one another?



Using the Typologies - An Art not a Science

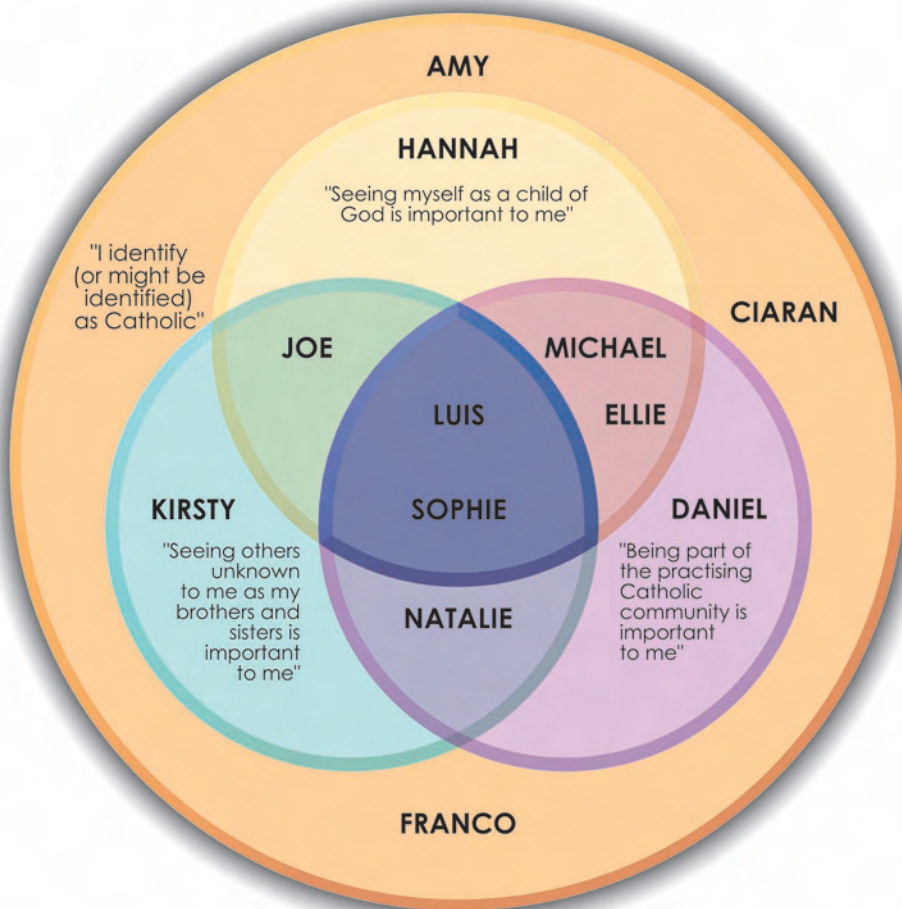
Constructing these Typologies was an interplay between the research conducted by CYMFed, and the day-to-day experience of those working with young people. It is, then, an art rather than a science, involving a broad group of people with considerable experience of the young people we have researched. The types were tested with even wider groups, and so they have passed the credibility test. The ones presented are an *informed* view of the young Catholics in England and Wales, not *the* view.

Some statistics have been given for each type to help you think about what makes them distinctive from others who we might call Catholic. These statistics are taken directly from our survey of 1000 young Catholics, specifically the 886 15-25 year olds², and are intended to give a suggestion of the kind of comparisons that it might be helpful to make in thinking about this type of person. They reflect those who identify as Catholic and those who don't – intending to give the opportunity to compare each type right across the spectrum of belief and practice.

Types not stereotypes

The best way to understand a type is to see him or her as a real person. We have given them photos to help you get to know them. That is why they all have names, ages and ethnicities. In some cases these specific characteristics are absolutely typical of the type and we make that clear, but for some types a characteristic may be secondary. One of the most effective ways of using the types is not to talk about 'Joe' and 'Ellie', but about 'people like Joe' and 'people like Ellie'. They are representatives of groups and as with any groups there will be variations within them.

The Youth Typology Diagram



The diagram was created to reflect the inter-relationship of young people's engagement with the Catholic community, faith in a personal God, and engagement with a lived response in the world. Within the outer circle of those young Catholics who identify (or could be identified) as Catholic we have set three overlapping criteria to establish our 'types':

- Seeing myself as a child of God is important to me
- Seeing others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters is important to me
- Being part of a practising Catholic community is important to me

We are not suggesting that these are statements which young people will be heard saying, but rather that they can be inferred by their behaviour, attitude and belief. It is also important to note that where a young person is placed in the diagram as not assenting to a statement, we are not suggesting they are positively rejecting it. Instead, they simply do not place particular importance on it.

In drawing up these three overlapping criteria we have created a flexible tool to help us imagine where on the diagram young Catholics are found. We have identified twelve distinct types within the various sections³, both within and outside the overlapping circles. In some cases there are more than one type in a section. In the way that the diagram has been constructed, it is interesting for youth ministers to note that half of all the respondents fall outside of the three circles (after we have inferred that they would not assent to the statements). 4% of respondents would affirm all the statements, hence falling in the central overlap.

Young people are, of course, not placed hard and fast within one particular section of the community. Instead they blend into each other. Our twelve young people have been created with strong characteristics and distinctions, so that they are easy to understand, but they should not be viewed as having hard edges. As you begin to explore the types you will notice that there are people between each type as you move from one to another.

Getting started with the Youth Typologies

- Give yourself some quiet time to start considering these.
- Begin by reading through the Typologies yourself and consider whether you recognise the young person. Depending on the particular Typology, remember that you may discover you know a young person of a different gender, age or ethnicity who generally fits the Typology. Consider the questions at the end of each Typology.
- Use the questions on page 19 to further your own reflection on how the Typologies can help you in your youth ministry. Take time to consider all the questions appropriate to your own work and make notes so you can refer back.

Meet with others

- Get together with others, for example:
 - Those who work alongside you in youth ministry
 - Your Parish Priest and parish team
 - Your chaplaincy group or school pastoral team
 - Other adults who you think, as a result of this, may be inspired to work with you
 - Young adults you already know who would be mature enough to help you develop this conversation and offer fresh insight.
- As a group consider the types, using both the questions within each Typology and the group questions at the end of the resource.

Look at the Conclusion

Finally, the hope is that the Typologies can help you in your work with young people. Where will you, in your own youth ministry, or as a team, go next? How will these Typologies challenge and benefit your work?

Sophie

Age: 20

(but she could be 15-25).

Self identifies as Catholic.

- *Seeing myself as a child of God is important to me.*
- *Seeing others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters is important to me.*
- *Being part of the practising Catholic community is important to me.*

"Being Catholic is about growing and changing every day – it's difficult but it's worth it!"

Sophie is a popular young woman, from a Catholic family, with lots of friends of different backgrounds and beliefs. She is known to be a Christian and to be involved in her parish Church, where she takes on responsibility and leadership positions. She has made her own choice to be a practising Catholic, and has formed her opinions and beliefs within a context of having to develop an understanding of the way faith and Catholic teaching should best be lived out in life. The youth minister in her parish always ensures that the Bishop meets Sophie when he comes to visit!

Young people like Sophie:

- are more likely to be female, but may be from many different ethnicities and classes
- will be able to tell you about a defining experience in their faith life
- may have been away on retreat or on pilgrimage
- will probably go to university, although may not choose to take part in the chaplaincy
- are known as being a Christian, and are not embarrassed even if others are different

"Life's not always straightforward, but there's always something new to discover every day"

Some of the ways that Sophie is similar to other young Catholics are:

- She believes that the purpose of religion is to tell right from wrong (like 67%), to make people feel better (like 59%) and to make the world a better place (like 55%).
- Like around six in ten of the group, she talks to her friends about religion.
- She agrees with just over half the group that it is important for a Catholic to go to Mass.

Some of the ways that Sophie is distinctive from other young Catholics are:

- She is one of the few who would identify one of her top ambitions as to 'be the person God wants me to be' (like 6% of other young Catholics).
- She is also among only one in ten for whom Mass is important personally and in the future she intends to go to Mass more often (like 15%).
- Her religion/beliefs are important in making important decisions and in her daily life (like 16%).
- She disagrees with the 61% who think you can follow parts of different religions at the same time and with the 51% who think that religion does more harm than good.
- In terms of describing her spirituality, she represents around one in ten who would say that she has had an experience of being in the 'presence of God' or the Holy Spirit or 'forgiven by God'.

Things which might surprise you about Sophie:

- She is not among the 14% who would seek information from priests, nor among the 37% who agree that if you are a Catholic you should follow all the rules.
- She often has doubts about religion (like 12% of others).

Get to know Sophie. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Sophie? Where might you meet Sophie? How does Sophie view the world? What do you think matters to Sophie?*



Luis

Age: 16
(could be 15-22).
Self identifies as Catholic.

- *Seeing myself as a child of God is important to me.*
- *Seeing others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters is important to me.*
- *Being part of the practising Catholic community is important to me.*

"I've been an altar server since I was in primary school"

Luis takes being a Catholic as part of life. He is from a Portuguese family who arrived in the UK a few years ago. Luis unquestioningly accepts the family Catholic traditions and piety. He goes to a Catholic school, with a strong expectation from his family that he will stay on in sixth form. The family are fairly visible in the parish life, but Luis' Church community is much wider than this, extended through his family network and family friends.

Young people like Luis:

- are fairly easy to recognise in some parts of the country, but in other places they may not be seen at all
- have had moments in life which have defined their faith (special occasions and spiritual experiences), but won't necessarily explain them as such
- are as likely to be male as female
- some young men like Luis would find it natural to consider priesthood, and it is likely to be one of the options presented to them by their grandmothers

"At the end of the day, I'm lucky to have what I've got. Never take anything for granted"

Some of the ways that Luis is similar to other young Catholics are:

- Although he says his friends are not religious, he does talk to them about religion (like 62%). He also talks to his family about religion (like 61%).
- He thinks if you are a Catholic it is important or very important to be baptised (72%), help others (72%) and to believe in 'Catholic things' (70%) – although that does not mean that he does all these things himself.
- He disagrees with the idea that if you are Catholic you should keep your views to yourself, unlike 35%.

Some of the ways that Luis is distinctive to other young Catholics are:

- His belief in a Creator God who is involved with what happens in the world means that he's only like 23% of other Catholics.
- Like only around one in five, Luis believes that it's OK to convert someone to your religion. He also believes that if you are a Catholic you should follow all the rules, like around a third.
- He disagrees with the 61% who think you can follow parts of different religions at the same time and with the 51% who think that religion does more harm than good.
- He thinks that if you are a Catholic it is important or very important to pray – like only 22%. This doesn't necessarily mean that he does this himself!

Things which might surprise you about Luis:

- Given a range of options, Luis' top priorities in life do not include 'helping others' or 'being the person God wants me to be' (12% and 6% respectively would choose these).

Get to know Luis. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Luis? Where might you meet Luis? How does Luis view the world? What do you think matters to Luis?*



Ellie is from a 'good Catholic family' and her parents have been a strong encouragement to her. She has a deep personal faith and a commitment to Jesus, and she wants others to experience the same. She has a strong life of prayer and listens to Christian music. Although she will be generous to charity, her time commitment and passion will be directed to the building up of the Church, taking priority over justice issues. She has a strong peer group, including a variety of non-Catholic Christian friends. She is currently going out with a guy from the local Baptist church. Her own Christian identity is a priority in the group and she speaks quite freely about her faith.

Young people like Ellie:

- often seem self-motivated, concerned about their own lives and the influence they can have in their world
- may be academically ambitious
- may be male or female, but are most likely to be from a middle class background
- are often present in good numbers in some of the New Ecclesial Movements and Communities
- read spiritual books or online material

"I hope to have a family in the future - I'm pretty sure that I'll find contentment if I keep trusting every day"

Some of the ways that Ellie is similar to other young Catholics are:

- Ellie is among the 67% who think the purpose of religion is to tell right from wrong, and among the 61% who think you can follow different parts of religions at the same time.
- Like seven out of ten Catholics, Ellie has given money to charity in the past year, although she hasn't been involved in a charity event (34% had), or voting in an election (31% of eligible voters had).
- She does talk with her friends about religion, like 62% of other young Catholics.

Some of the ways that Ellie is distinctive to other young Catholics are:

- Like only one in ten, Mass is personally important for Ellie.
- Given a range of concepts, Ellie is not part of the 72% of other young Catholics who believe that to be a Catholic it is important or very important to help others.
- Ellie is among the minority 19% who think it is OK to convert someone to your religion.
- She is part of the 12% who would say that she has had an experience of being in the 'presence of God' or the Holy Spirit or 'forgiven by God'.

Things which might surprise you about Ellie:

- She is concerned that she has no one to turn to, like 45% of young Catholics.
- She is not among the 37% who agree that if you are a Catholic you should follow all the rules.

Get to know Ellie. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Ellie? Where might you meet Ellie? How does Ellie view the world? What do you think matters to Ellie?*

Ellie

Age: 18

(but could be 15-25).

Self identifies as Catholic.

- *Seeing myself as a child of God is important to me.*
- *Being part of the practising Catholic community is important to me.*
- *It's not important for me to see others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters.*

"Following Jesus means everything in my life. I just wish more people felt the same way as me"



Michael

Age: 23

(could be 18-25).

Self identifies as Catholic.

- *Seeing myself as a child of God is important to me.*
- *Being part of the practising Catholic community is important to me.*
- *It's not important for me to see others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters.*

"It's not the Church which is struggling, it's society – they just haven't realised it yet"



Michael is quite clear about what he believes in, and he defines himself first and foremost as Catholic. He can sometimes be outspoken about how the Church is right about its belief and moral teachings, and he experiences a lot of personal comfort and support from the celebration of the Liturgy. Michael's own faith journey includes a key person, most probably a priest, who has influenced his traditional view of the Church, and enabled him to hold the riches of the Catholic faith as something which gives him great joy. At the same time, for Michael Catholicism provides clear boundaries and a clarity of what is right and what is wrong. He is nourished by the Mass and is sometimes seen in Church during the week as well as at weekends.

Young people like Michael:

- are more likely to be male, but there are some young women like Michael, and they come from all social and economic backgrounds
- may be from a Catholic family, but could equally be from a non-Catholic tradition, in which case they are likely to be quite proud of not having been at a Catholic school
- are happy to act as a leader amongst others

"I'm so glad that I have something certain to hold on to - it gives me stability and a sense of purpose"

Some ways in which Michael is similar to other young Catholics are:

- Along with half of young Catholics, Michael's friends have similar beliefs to him, and he feels comfortable to talk to them about his religion (like 62%).
- He also says that he has similar beliefs to his family (like 62%) and talks to them about his religion (61%).
- He disagrees that you should keep your religious views to yourself – which only around a third of young Catholics would affirm.

Some of the ways that Michael is distinctive to other young Catholics are:

- Only four in ten other young Catholics agree with Michael that the purpose of religion is to gain eternal life. Around the same number agree with Michael that to be a Catholic you should follow all the rules.
- He would identify that one of his top personal ambitions is to be the person God wants him to be – like only 6%.
- Unlike 70% of young Catholics, Michael says he has not given money to charity in the past year.
- Michael is among only 14% who would actively seek information from a priest.

Things which might surprise you about Michael:

- In the future he intends to go to Mass more often (like 15%), but does not intend to do more volunteering (unlike 41%).
- Michael would not rank 'helping others' as one of his top priorities in life (unlike the 12% who do).

Get to know Michael. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Michael? Where might you meet Michael? How does Michael view the world? What do you think matters to Michael?*

Natalie

Age: 16

(could be 15-20).

Self identifies as Catholic.

- Being part of the practising Catholic community is important to me.
- Seeing others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters is
- It's not important for me to see myself as a child of God

"Yeah, yeah. Done Catholic stuff before. It's okay"

Natalie is from a strong Catholic family, but she stopped going to Church every week during her GCSEs. When she does go it is largely because she is 'going through the motions' as part of the family, rather than as a conscious choice. She is happy to help out sometimes with things in the parish, and always goes with her mum to the Children's Liturgy, when it is her mum's turn on the rota. Often she slips off home when the children go back into church. Although she will say she believes in God, any sense of a personal God active in her life is a bit remote to her. As such, she often thinks of herself as a 'searcher' in life (and also faith), and is therefore more likely to be a 'follower' in a group setting rather than a leader, and drifts in and out of things which don't offer consistency. Natalie's mates are mostly not Catholic, but her best friend is quite committed and sometimes used to take her along to her youth group.

Young people like Natalie:

- would most likely have been reluctant members of the Confirmation group
- have a sense of social justice from their family and Catholic school
- are genuinely concerned about other people and happy to give of their own time to help
- would have been comfortable in a school or parish group like Youth SVP or YCW-Impact
- sometimes browses the internet looking to find answers to their questions about God
- are equally likely to be male or female

"Life's for living. Love your friends and family. You should try and enjoy every moment you can..."

Some ways in which Natalie is similar to other young Catholics are:

- She does not reject God's existence, but neither does she affirm belief in a personal, creator God - 62% of other young Catholics are similarly in between the two.
- She thinks that if you are a Catholic it is important or very important to: be baptised (72% agree), to go to Mass (54% agree), and to help others (72% agree) – although that does not mean that she does all these things herself.
- Along with around six out of ten others, Natalie agrees that you can follow parts of different religions at the same time.

Some ways in which Natalie is distinctive to other young Catholics are:

- She attends Mass at least once a month – along with around a quarter of others.
- Unlike 70% of others, she thinks that if you are a Catholic it isn't important to believe in 'Catholic things'.
- Natalie doesn't believe that religion's about making her feel better – unlike 59% of other young Catholics.
- Along with only 12%, she identifies one of her top ambitions as 'to help others'.

Some things which might surprise you about Natalie:

- Although she is unsure about her belief in God, Natalie agrees that Jesus is the Son of God (like 41%).
- Natalie is among the 16% for whom religion/beliefs are important in making both important decisions and day-to-day decisions.

Get to know Natalie. Ask yourself: Do you recognise Natalie? Where might you meet Natalie? How does Natalie view the world? What do you think matters to Natalie?



Joe

Age: 17

(could be 15-25).

May or may not self identify as Catholic.

- *Seeing myself as a child of God is important to me.*
- *Seeing others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters is important to me.*
- *It's not important for me to see myself as being part of the practising Catholic community*

"What does the Pope know about poverty? I heard he wears Prada shoes."



Joe is from a Catholic family. Even though his parents still practise, he has decided not to go to church anymore. He doesn't feel guilty about it, as the Church is irrelevant. Like his friends, he does go to a Catholic school, which may help to account for his sense of social justice and a commitment to making the world a better place. He likes to know what is going on in the world and engages with the news online, on TV and in the newspapers. When the opportunity arises he gets involved in voluntary work. He usually gets his friends to do something with him for Red Nose Day. He thinks the purpose of religion should be to make the world a better place, and although he knows that God is involved in the world, it's not in the Church where he thinks God is to be found. Joe is happy to talk to God in his bedroom, or when he is walking home after a night out.

Young people like Joe:

- are 'leaders' and 'joiners', not 'followers'
- often find the Church frustrating, and on occasion they can be 'anti-Church'
- do not relate to Catholic language and imagery
- sense of wellbeing is likely to come from helping other people
- may be male or female

"Everybody's on their own path, but we should look out for each other"

Some ways in which Joe is similar to other young Catholics are:

- He has had some kind of spiritual experience (like 59%) – but wouldn't use traditionally Christian terms to describe this experience.
- Joe is in a slight majority (51%) who believe that religion does more harm than good.
- He is concerned about the environment (65% agree), human rights (67% agree), UK poverty (62% agree) and overseas poverty (61% agree), among other issues.
- In the past year he has given money to charity (like 70%).

Some ways in which Joe is distinctive to other young Catholics are:

- In the past 12 months, Joe has not gone to church for a specific occasion (unlike 55%)
- Like almost a quarter, he believes in a God who is involved in the world - though he thinks that Jesus is a very wise or a very holy man rather than the Son of God (like 32%)
- He is not among the 67% who think that one purpose of religion is to tell right from wrong.
- Along with nearly four in ten, Joe agrees that being Catholic means you should follow all the rules.

Some things which may surprise you about Joe:

- He is among the 16% for whom beliefs are important in making important and day-to-day decisions.
- In the last year, Joe has given up something for Lent (like a third of young Catholics).

Get to know Joe. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Joe? Where might you meet Joe? How does Joe view the world? What do you think matters to Joe?*

Kirsty sees the Church as an institution, which is irrelevant to her life and missing the whole purpose of what religion should be about, which is to help others. She doesn't understand the place of God in the world, and questions whether he exists as surely he wouldn't let suffering happen if he was real. Her friends aren't practising Catholics so there is little to keep her interested in the Church, even though she did go to Lourdes a few years ago through her school, but that was to help the sick. She is completely committed to justice and fairness. She likes to know what is going on, reading newspapers and online material for information. She is prepared to 'get up and go' by doing some campaigning, fundraising and motivating others to get involved.

Young people like Kirsty:

- are as likely to be male as female, and are found in a range of social classes and ethnicities
- may do a gap year after finishing school in order to make a difference, not to see the world
- are likely to vote in elections

"I'd hate to be complacent. Nobody should ever get to the stage where they feel like they need to stop caring"

Some ways in which Kirsty is similar to other young Catholics are:

- Like a majority of her Catholic peers, Kirsty believes the purpose of religion is to help make the world a better place (55%).
- She considers that religion/beliefs are irrelevant in making either important or day-to-day decisions, like around six out of ten young Catholics.
- Alongside 61%, Kirsty thinks that you can follow parts of different religions at the same time.

Some ways in which Kirsty is distinctive from other young Catholics are:

- Like 15% of young Catholics, she does not believe in God or any higher spiritual power.
- She does not think it is important for Catholics to be baptised – disagreeing with 72% of others.
- Along with a minority of 41%, she would say that she has had no spiritual experience – even one described with non-religious language.
- She prioritises one of her personal ambitions in terms of 'helping others' (like 12% who agree).

Some things which may surprise you about Kirsty:

- She is among the 37% who agree that if you are a Catholic you should follow all the rules and is also among the 61% who think you can follow parts of different religions at the same time.
- She wouldn't describe her family as religious (44% would say they were), but she does talk to them about religion, like six out of ten.

Get to know Kirsty. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Kirsty? Where might you meet Kirsty? How does Kirsty view the world? What do you think matters to Kirsty?*

Kirsty

Age: 22

(but could be 15-25).

Does not self-identify as Catholic.

- *Seeing others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters is important to me.*
- *It's not important for me to see myself as a child of God.*
- *It's not important for me to see myself as being part of the practising Catholic community.*

"There's no point believing in God and Jesus and Mary and all that while you're sitting on your arse"



Hannah

Age: 21

(but could be 17-25).

May or may not self identify as Catholic.

- Seeing myself as a child of God is important to me.
- It's not important for me to see others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters.
- It's not important for me to see myself as being part of the practising Catholic community.

"I think belief is a really personal thing. At the end of the day, you're the only person who can decide what's right for you"



Hannah is from a fairly wealthy Catholic family and went to a Catholic school. She's not sure about the need for an organised religion, but she likes to know that God loves her. Whilst she does read the Bible and prays on her own, she feels she can experience God in lots of different ways. She subscribes to online prayer and reflection pod-casts, which she uses now and then. She is happy to pick and mix the bits of her Catholic upbringing which still make sense to her, and to blend with different cultural elements she has encountered. Hannah definitely still calls herself a Christian, although she believes Jesus was a very holy man. After doing A-Level Philosophy and Ethics, Hannah picked theology for her degree. She's very busy and likes shopping for clothes.

Young people like Hannah:

- apart from on special occasions, do not go to Mass, or have visible engagement with the Catholic Church
- have nothing against religion as such, but do not take part themselves
- would say their beliefs influence the big decisions in their lives
- could be a young man or young woman

"What really matters is that you're happy. Ultimately, you're the only one who can achieve that."

Some ways in which Hannah is similar to other young Catholics are:

- She is among the 61% who think you can follow parts of different religions at the same time.
- Given the opportunity, Hannah hadn't voted in an election in the past year (only 31% of eligible voters had done).
- Along with 55%, Hannah has been to church in the past year for a specific occasion.
- Hannah talks with her friends about religion, like around six in ten.

Some ways in which Hannah is distinctive from other young Catholics are:

- She thinks that if you're a Catholic, it's not important to help others, to believe in Catholic things or to go to Mass – unlike 72%, 70% and 54% of her peers.
- Hannah would describe one of her spiritual experiences as 'being part of something bigger' – like around a quarter.
- She is not concerned about UK poverty (unlike 62% of her peers), neither is she concerned about overseas poverty (unlike 61%).
- Hannah is among only around a third who agrees that you should keep your religious views to yourself.

Some things which may surprise you about Hannah:

- Like 21% of other young Catholics, Hannah sees her religion/beliefs as having an influence on important decisions, but not day-to-day ones.
- Hannah believes in an involved creator God (like 23%), but believes that Jesus was a very holy/wise man (like 32%).

Get to know Hannah. Ask yourself: Do you recognise Hannah? Where might you meet Hannah? How does Hannah view the world? What do you think matters to Hannah?

Daniel

Age: 15

(but could be 15-20).

Self identifies as Catholic.

- Being part of the practising Catholic community is important to me.
- It's not important for me to see myself as a child of God.
- It's not important for me to see others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters.

"I reckon the Church has some good things to say. I'll definitely go more when I've got my own family"



The Catholic culture of Daniel's family's home country is still a big part of their lives. Being a Catholic is important to them all. It is part of who they are. Daniel goes along with it all, and goes to Mass with the family often enough, and when they go for big occasions. The Catholic identity is the most important thing for Daniel, and it doesn't really affect much else in his life, except for giving things up for Lent. He is currently, somewhat passively, going to the Confirmation preparation sessions, but doesn't engage with the programme much.

Young people like Daniel:

- could be second or third generation of a migrant family (West African, Polish, Italian, some Irish)
- would definitely describe themselves as a Catholic, rather than a Christian
- feel a protectiveness about being Catholic
- are possibly a part of a larger extended family, who are also Catholic

"I'd like to be successful. I don't think you should be ashamed of wanting nice things."

Some ways in which Daniel is similar to other young Catholics are:

- He does not reject God's existence, but neither does he affirm belief in a personal, creator God - 62% of other young Catholics are similarly in between the two.
- He is among nearly three in five who have had some kind of spiritual experience – although he wouldn't necessarily use religious language to describe his experience.
- Daniel feels that he has similar beliefs to his family (like 62%) and he talks to them about religion (like 61%). However, Daniel doesn't pray with his family (only around one in ten young Catholics do so).
- Daniel doesn't believe that you should keep your religious views to yourself (35% would say you should).

Some ways in which Daniel is distinctive from other young Catholics are:

- Like only around a quarter of his peers, he attends Mass at least once a month.
- However, he is also among the 29% who would definitely describe himself as being a Catholic, but that going to Mass regularly is not personally important for him.
- Unlike around six out of ten others, Daniel does not believe that a purpose of religion is to make people feel better.
- While he is unsure about God, Daniel does agree that Jesus is the Son of God, like 41%.

Some things which may surprise you about Daniel:

- Daniel is among the 14% who would seek information from a priest.
- He is also among the 19% who think it is OK to convert someone to your religion.

Get to know Daniel. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Daniel? Where might you meet Daniel? How does Daniel view the world? What do you think matters to Daniel?*

Ciaran

Age: 20

(but could be 15-25). Does not self-identify as Catholic.

It's not important for me to see:

- myself as a child of God.
- others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters.
- myself as being part of the practising Catholic community.

"The Church is just for superstitious people – it has nothing to say in the modern world"



Ciaran is not a practising Catholic. He is quite apathetic towards the Church, which is largely reflective of how he has found the Church behaving towards him, in that he hasn't ever sensed that the Church has made an effort towards him. Like a lot of young people his age, he doesn't think he can make a difference in the world, and is more at ease in looking after himself, his family and his friends. He will still be vaguely aware of some 'Catholic stuff' through his memories of going to Mass in school, and the occasional family 'do' in Church. Ciaran's current experience of the Church is largely through his friends, the media, and the general opinions he hears of Catholicism, which are mostly negative. As his family and friends are all in a similar position, he is unlikely to move from his familiar negative conversations about religion to anything deeper with regards to spirituality or faith.

Young people like Ciaran:

- are mostly found in the Catholic young people of British (or Irish/British) origin
- come from a family which is Catholic, probably at grandparent level, and it is unlikely that either of their parents are 'practising'
- may have gone to a Catholic school because it was a good school
- would have been baptised because it was expected by the grandparents
- have no clear sense of who God might be

"You've got one life, so live it. Just don't hurt anybody else's feelings along the way."

Some ways in which Ciaran is similar to other young Catholics are:

- Like nearly seven in ten, he believes that one purpose of religion is to tell right from wrong.
- Ciaran considers that religion/beliefs are irrelevant in making decisions – like 62% of others.
- In the past 12 months, he has sponsored somebody, like 54% of other young Catholics. However, this is the only way in which he has engaged with charity over the past year.

Some ways in which Ciaran is distinctive from other young Catholics are:

- Ciaran doesn't agree with the 61% who think you can follow parts of different religions at the same time.
- He is among the 19% who say that although they have been influenced by being Catholic, they would not describe themselves as religious.
- Along with a minority of 41%, he would say that he has had no spiritual experience – even one described with non-religious language.
- Like 18% of other young Catholics, Ciaran identifies one of his personal ambitions in terms of 'having lots of money'.

Some things which may surprise you about Ciaran:

- In the future he does not intend to give more often to charity, nor to do more volunteering (unlike 42% and 41% who respectively say they do).
- Ciaran believes that if you are Catholic, it's important (amongst other things) that you should go to Confession – 47% agree with him.

Get to know Ciaran. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Ciaran? Where might you meet Ciaran? How does Ciaran view the world? What do you think matters to Ciaran?*

Amy

Age: 25

(but could be 20-25). May or may not self-identify as Catholic.

It's not important for me to see:

- myself as a child of God.
- others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters.
- myself as being part of the practising Catholic community.

"I think that Catholics would benefit from hearing more about what other religions have to offer"



Amy's mum is a Catholic and Amy was baptised as a baby, but she does not have a sense of Catholic identity now. Although she is open to different religions and beliefs, she really rejects the prescriptive nature of Catholicism. Amy is, at least in part, a 'spiritual seeker', and describes herself as spiritual. She doesn't believe in a personal God, but believes in a higher power which binds living things together on Earth. She reads her horoscopes everyday, and is currently reading a book about the Celestine Prophecy. Recently, she has also started trying Buddhist prayer. Amy took a gap year after school and travelled in order to see the world.

Young people like Amy:

- may be male or female, but are more likely to be female
- are likely to be White Irish/White British, and from any social class
- they are not defined by their identity, and are happy to be fluid with their choices
- most likely they went to a Catholic school

"The older I get, the more I realise that I know so little. Life's a journey of discovery for each of us."

Some ways in which Amy is similar to other young Catholics are:

- Like 59% of others she considers the purpose of religion is to make people feel better.
- In the past 12 months she has given money to charity, like seven out of ten others.
- She disagrees with the 19% of young Catholics who think it is OK to convert someone to your religion.

Some ways in which Amy is distinctive to other young Catholics are:

- She doesn't have anything against religion, but says she doesn't take part herself – like a substantial minority of her peers (42%).
- She is among the 28% of young Catholics who have done no 'Catholic activities' in the last year.
- Amy says she has had a spiritual experience of 'being part of something bigger' – like around one in four.
- Like only 27% of other young Catholics, Amy believes that Jesus was an ordinary man, or didn't even exist.

Some things which may surprise you about Amy:

- Although she is not volunteering at present, she intends to do more volunteering in the future (like 41% of her peers).
- From a list of Catholic practices (including attending Mass and being baptised), Amy doesn't describe any as 'important' or 'very important' to being Catholic.

Get to know Amy. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Amy? Where might you meet Amy? How does Amy view the world? What do you think matters to Amy?*

Franco

Age: 17
(15-25).

Self-identifies as Catholic.

It's not important for me to see:

- myself as a child of God.
- others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters.
- myself as being part of the practising Catholic community."

"Of course I'm Catholic – I'm half Italian"



Franco was born in the UK. His father is British-Italian and hence the family is culturally Catholic, but any sense of being linked to the Church is quite distant; it was always through his paternal grandmother who died when he was a toddler. He always ticks 'Catholic' on a form asking about his religion, and his friends know he is Catholic from when he crosses himself before a football match. Franco was baptised in Church, with the family gathered around, and made his First Communion, but he hasn't been Confirmed. He thinks he knows what Catholics believe, from a 'popular view' of Catholicism, but would be surprised to discover how he is sometimes mistaken. Franco's position of being outside of the practising Catholic community is not a chosen position. Life has always been that way and he has never even considered changing.

Young people like Franco:

- may be male or female, and are usually 3rd generation Italian, Caribbean, or similar Catholic nationality
- it is possible that one British parent has married into the Catholic culture
- might wear a rosary as a fashion accessory
- occasionally attend church when it's a special occasion

"It's simple, just follow your gut. I don't think people should overcomplicate life."

Some ways in which Franco is similar to other young Catholics are:

- He is among the 61% who think you can follow parts of different religions at the same time, and like 67% thinks that the purpose of religion is to tell right from wrong.
- Franco doesn't count himself alongside the 35% who say that you should keep your beliefs to yourself.
- He thinks that if you are a Catholic, it is important or very important to help others, to be baptised and to believe in 'Catholic things' (like 72%, 72% and 70% respectively).

Some ways in which Franco is distinctive to other young Catholics are:

- He does not think that if you are a Catholic it is important to go to Mass (54% would say it was important).
- Unlike 55% of his peers, Franco has not been to church for a specific occasion in the past year.
- Franco is not concerned about the environment (unlike 65%), human rights (unlike 67%), UK poverty (unlike 62%), or overseas poverty (unlike 61%).
- Franco is among the 41% who say they have had no spiritual experience – even if it is not defined in religious language.

Some things which may surprise you about Franco:

- He does not often have doubts about religion (12% of young Catholics say they do).
- Franco doesn't see the role of religion as helping people feel better (unlike 59% of others).

Get to know Franco. Ask yourself: *Do you recognise Franco? Where might you meet Franco? How does Franco view the world? What do you think matters to Franco?*

Reflecting on the Typologies

From their point of view not ours

The temptation is to look at the young people from our point of view, and to try to mould them to be what we want them to be or to do what we want them to do. But, to take just one example, as it is likely that 'Kirsty' never goes near a church, it does not help our ability to engage with her if our first reaction is to think how we can get her to start going to church! Start, therefore, by looking at them one by one imagining who they are. Get to know their world, their habits and their point of view before you start thinking about them in relation to the Church.

To begin with choose any four of the Typologies and ask yourself:

- Do I recognise these young people?
- Where might I meet young people like these? Who are their friends?
- What are their influences? E.g. music, media, fashion, peer group, literature.
- What is their 'world view'? What are their priorities in life?
- How well do they know their 'neighbours' within the Typology Diagram?
- Where on the diagram might they be moving to / coming from?

Over time, look at each of the Typologies in this way.

Check: Consider which young people you have been thinking about so far. If you've only been thinking about the young people you work with, or see at church every week, try and think again. Try to ensure you look at the broad range of young people in the wider community.

Further questions for your own reflection:

- How do they view the Catholic Church? What is their experience of the Catholic community? What are their points of engagement with the Church (if any)?
 - Why do they choose to get involved in the Church, if at all? If they choose not to engage, why don't they?
-
- How have they interacted/engaged with youth ministry in your community (if at all)?
 - If they were to engage, what challenges would they bring to your youth ministry? How would each of them bring blessings?
 - What might help each one encounter a positive experience of the Church? What aspects of the broad life of the Church might each of them enjoy? Why?
-
- Who might they know within the practising Catholic community?
 - How do we, as a Church community, currently communicate with them (if at all)?
 - How can they be reached? Are some adults better at communicating with them than others?
 - How can each one of the 'types' reach other 'types'? Are some young Catholics more or better suited to reach other particular types of young Catholics?

Group Reflection

Get together with others and meet to reflect upon these Typologies. (See page 6 for ideas of who to invite to come together). Remember that this process is designed to help you apply the research, which CYMFed has undertaken, in your own local youth ministry. Try and give it the time that it demands. We have supplied an outline session for you to use, but ideally you would decide to adapt this, reflecting on the Typologies over the course of several evening sessions, or during an afternoon.

Prior to the meeting:

- Ensure everyone has a copy of this booklet and ask them to complete the reflection on page 19 prior to meeting as a group. (This booklet is available for purchase from www.cymfed.org)
- Download the twelve Typology Posters from www.cymfed.org and stick them up around the room. There are also suggested prayers available online for your group to use.

Group Session

Begin with a prayer

Invite someone to read aloud the Introduction on Page 3

- What questions does this raise for you?

Getting to know them as young people

Look at the Typology Diagram page 5. To begin your reflections, invite a few members of the group to each introduce a different Typology, highlighting what struck them in their own reading prior to this meeting.

Give time for the group to move around the room and, using post-it notes, add to each of the Typology Posters their own answers to some of the following questions:

- Where might we meet them? Who are their friends?
- What are their influences? E.g. music, media, fashion, peer group, literature.
- What is their 'world view'? What are their priorities in life?

Note: If members of the group find this difficult for some of the Typologies, do not be concerned, but learn from one another's experience and reflection. If you struggle, as a whole group, with one or more of the Typologies ask yourself who might be able to help shed light on the character. In addition, if you discover that all your reflections are based solely on the young people you currently work with, or see at church every week, try and consider the broader range of young people.

Our own view of the different types of young Catholics

This way of presenting our Catholic young people has been described as ‘flattening the pyramid’. Rather than placing a particular type of young person at the top as the ideal to aim for, our Typology Diagram simply presents young people as they are, and shows the value of each young person. It recognises that people engage with the world, their faith, and the Church in different ways, and that for many of these young people, they are in positions that they have found themselves in, rather than actively chosen, such as ‘Franco’ and ‘Luis’.

- How do we currently view each of these types of young people?
- Do we sometimes think there is an ‘ideal young Catholic’? Why?
- Do our own attitudes towards any of these ‘types’ of young people need to change?
- How do we ensure that we don’t simply dismiss any of these young people as ‘off our radar’?

Recognised and valued as part of the Catholic family

This approach to Catholic youth ministry has also been described as an ‘opportunity for encounter’.

Read the Gospel passage recounting the story of the Woman with the Haemorrhage (Mark 5:24-34)

- How might this Gospel passage help us to consider those young people in our midst who are hidden in the crowd?
- How do we, as youth ministers, reach out to all the Catholic young people in our communities, not just those who are visible and familiar to us?
- In what ways will our encounter of the different young people bring us opportunities for our own development?
- How do we enable other adults in our parish/community to understand that this broad range of young people exists? Would they be better able to reach out to these groups of young people?
- How do we resource different types of young people to make the personal one-to-one invitations to another? Are some of the young people likely to be more comfortable to invite any particular other ‘types’ of young people? Where might this lead?
- How do we, as youth ministers, work with this broad range of young people to ensure that they are genuinely friends, and, as it were, see themselves as part of the same Catholic family?

Getting Practical

In response to this research and the Typologies, we are invited to consider what the mission of our parish/community is towards our Catholic young people.

- Who do we see ‘our’ young people as including?
- Are there different entry points within our youth ministry for different young people? If not, should there be?
- Should we ensure that the young people we are working with are exposed to the different aspects of the overlapping circles (i.e. Social outreach, Church and Liturgy, Faith and Spirituality)? If so, how do we enable this? How might this youth ministry be adapted for different types of young people?
- Does our wider parish/community need to be prepared to change in order to respond to the range of young people we are called to serve? If so, in what ways and how can we encourage this?
- Are we able to meet everyone’s needs? What can we do with our current resources? What extra resources might we need?

Read the conclusion on the following page. What are your next steps?

Conclude with a prayer

Note: This resource has not been designed to use with a youth group. However, as suggested above, it may help your reflections to draw on the insights of young adults who you know to be mature enough to engage with this process.

Conclusion

Young people, like any generation, are very complex. These Typologies are not designed to put our young people into boxes, so that they conveniently fit a certain mould. We could try and force every young person we meet into one of the types, but this would, of course, be a mistake. We know from our own experience, as well as from this research, that our young Catholics are disparate and varied.

The Typologies help us to view the young people within our midst as a mixed group. They remind us that our young Catholics are not all the same or simply fall into the categories of 'practising' and 'lapsed', as perhaps we have often thought of them in the past. Rather than categorising young people in the way in which we like to understand the world, the Typologies remind us to look at the young people from their own point of view, to seek to comprehend their own real situations, concerns and pre-occupations, and to understand their own perceptions of the world, their faith and the Church.

As we continue to do this, remembering that we are called to always be alert to "the signs of the times"⁴, we will be more prepared as youth ministers to address some very practical questions. Take time to agree your vision and priorities in your own community and to identify your next steps in developing your work with young people.

- What developments do we need to make in our current work to help us understand our young people better?
 - Who do we need to get 'on board' to help this work develop?
 - What are our immediate priorities as we move forward?
 - How do we share them with the wider parish/community?
 - What is the first step? What are the following steps?
 - What do we need support with? Who can we call upon to seek support?
- If in doubt contact your diocesan youth service or CYMFed, who may be able to put you in touch with someone who can support you locally.*

What next from CYMFed?

Expected in Autumn 2010, alongside the more comprehensive version of the research, there will be a 'vision document' developed by representatives of the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. This document – having reflected on the research – will outline some of our responses, hopes and examples of best practice in responding to the challenges of ministering to and walking alongside young people in today's world. This Vision will help your parish or community further what you have begun in looking at these Typologies, assisting you in building on the youth ministry you already have, and the foundations which exist in your own commitment and vision.

As you seek to discover the broad spectrum of young Catholics in our communities, draw on the knowledge that others across the country are doing this alongside you, and that together we will be strengthened in our ability to best serve those who we are called to accompany in their faith and life.

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Endnotes

¹ Throughout the document the term 'young Catholics' means both those self-identifying as Catholic and those who didn't initially call themselves Catholic, but reflected a Catholic element in their family or school heritage, aged 15-25, unless otherwise stated.

² The remaining 114 were 11-14 year olds.

³ To assess the degree of overlap we chose one survey response for each circle. For Seeing myself as a child of God is important to me we used the percentage of respondents selecting 'God created the world and is involved in what happens to the world now' as their view of God. For Seeing others unknown to me as my brothers/sisters is important to me we took the percentage of respondents saying that they are very concerned about Human Rights. For Being part of a practising Catholic community is important to me we took the percentage of respondents who go to Catholic Mass or other religious services at least once a month.

⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, Second Vatican Council, 1965, #4



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