



# COMPLEX CATHOLICISM

Discovering the reality of young Catholics  
A Detailed Typology

Danny Curtin & Stephen Davies

'Discovering the reality of young Catholics: A Detailed Typology'  
Copyright © Danny Curtin / Stephen Davies 2018

This research project is a partnership between CYMFed and Camino House  
[www.cymfed.org.uk](http://www.cymfed.org.uk)  
[www.caminohouse.com](http://www.caminohouse.com)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the following supporters:  
Brentwood Catholic Youth Service, CAFOD, Columbans and Southwark Catholic Youth Service

Susie Mullen for additional data analysis and research support  
[www.impactmeasurementservices.com](http://www.impactmeasurementservices.com)

Tree Behrens for illustrations and design concept

Thanks to:

The youth ministers, chaplains and advisors who helped test the findings in a series of workshops; Interviewees and focus group interviewers; Jane Parkin for initial data analysis; Malik Saleh and Research Now; Teresa Carvalho and the Department for Evangelisation & Catechesis, CBCEW



# INTRODUCTION

**Whether you're a youth minister, catechist or parish priest; a teacher, chaplain or school governor, you come into contact with a broad range of young people, many of whom you – and maybe they – would consider 'Catholic'.**

It is almost a decade since 'Mapping the Terrain', the original research into this broad range of Catholic young people in England and Wales. 'Complex Catholicism' has repeated the research, this time focussing on 15-25 year old Catholics across England and Wales. 1,005 young people took part. The results are not wildly different from 2009. Young Catholics continue to be – on the whole – very similar to other young people in the UK. This means that it's a very diverse group, with a variety of aspirations, of attitudes to social justice, and of fears and anxieties. However, there are some changes, and new insights into the young people we encounter – or try to encounter.

## 'TYPES' OF CATHOLIC YOUNG PEOPLE

A helpful tool developed from the 2009 research was a set of 'typologies' – portraits of a number of characters who represent the breadth of those who could be called 'Catholic young people'. Many people have used these typologies to reflect on how they work with young people and where they might be reached. It influenced the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation's approach to the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the UK in 2010, as well as the design of the Flame events at Wembley Arena.



## ON THE PERIPHERIES & IN THE PEWS

In the decade since 'Mapping the Terrain', the Catholic Church has a new Pope. On the balcony moments after being elected, Pope Francis spoke about the Church having gone to the ends of the earth to find the successor of Peter. This theme of reaching out to the 'peripheries' has been a constant challenge by Pope Francis to us all.

The typologies can be seen to represent some of those people who are on the margins. When we think of Catholic young people, we tend to think about people like 'Lucy' – people who go to Mass and pray regularly, and stand up against injustice. They are the sort of young person who we probably see – or *think* we see – at church on a Sunday and who go to World Youth Day. However, very few people would actually fit in that group. Even those people whom we may see regularly at Mass – people like 'Anna' – don't necessarily say that they pray regularly. And even fewer of those like 'Benji' and 'Lauren', who actively stand up against injustice, are going to be found at Mass or regularly praying.

Do we really understand the full range of young people we come into contact with? And how often do we project onto them who we think they are or want them to be, both positively and negatively? Those young people can also be seen to be on the margins of our Church.

And then there are almost half of the people who took part in the research and do not fit into any of the central categories. They are people like 'Alice', 'Jakub' and 'Caitlin', who don't regularly pray or go to Mass and don't find it important to take social action. It does not make them less Catholic, but it does put them on the margins when we think of those we actively embrace within our community.

## WALKING ALONGSIDE

The first step in reaching out to those on the margins is by getting to know them. An image from Pope Francis which has resonated with many is how pastors should 'smell of their sheep', by getting alongside and being with people. The typologies cannot become an excuse to merely gain knowledge about different young people. 'Complex Catholicism' should challenge us to think about who the young people are with whom we actively engage. It should help us to try to begin to understand them. Hopefully, this will give us a bit more confidence to get out there and meet more of our fellow Catholics, in a whole variety of settings. It is a chance to be challenged by – and to challenge – them, to learn and grow together. And by doing so, it will develop and shape the 'Complex Catholicism' of England and Wales.

# OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

One thousand and five 15 to 25 year old Catholics participated in an online survey between 20 September and 18 October 2017. Eligible participants were taken from the general population of 15-25 year olds, and then asked various questions about their religious identity and background in order to qualify for participation. This means that the data is as inclusive and representative of the youth Catholic community as possible, as well as being robust and statistically reliable due to the number of respondents.

606 participants described themselves as Catholics. We have called these 'Self Identifying Catholics'. A minority of respondents didn't explicitly self-identify as Catholics, but identified as coming from a Catholic family (24% of the overall group) or having attended a Catholic school (16%), and often displayed characteristics, beliefs and behaviours of practicing Catholics. We have called these groups 'Non Identifying Catholics'. Mostly, they act and feel similarly, but when the two groups are distinct from one another, we have made this clear:

The key themes emerging from the research broadly fall into six categories:

## IDENTITY

- Young Catholics might not always choose to describe themselves as 'Roman Catholic / Catholic'; those who do so may well have quite a pick-and-mix approach to their Catholic identity
- The survey respondents consider 'being a good person', 'believing in God' and 'following Catholic guidelines about helping others' as the most important factors in somebody being Catholic
- Family has the potential to remain a strong influence on the faith and moral development of 15-25 year olds

## BELIEF

- Young Catholics in 2017 expressed lower levels of agnosticism and atheism and higher levels of belief than their counterparts did in 2009; this is particularly noticeable amongst Non Identifying Catholics
- A majority of Self Identifying Catholics say that they believe Jesus is/was the Son of God, whilst 40% choose human language to describe Jesus
- Around 1 in 10 Non Identifying Catholics say that they believe Jesus never existed



Q. Which of these is closest to who you believe Jesus is / was?

## PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE

- Young Catholics in 2017 say that they attend Mass more regularly than their counterparts in 2009; this is particularly striking amongst the Non Identifying Catholics
- Broadly, young Catholics tend to divide into four groups to describe spiritual experiences they've had: using theological language; using language of nature and togetherness; using supernatural or 'spooky' language; or using language of angels and the deceased
- Around 10% of young Catholics have a strongly positive view of the Catholic Church

## EVERYDAY LIFE

- Young Catholics, like all young people, are leading stressful lives – with young females feeling this even more acutely than their male counterparts
- Young Catholics in 2017 expressed stronger levels of concern about local and global issues than in 2009, particularly around terrorism. The vast majority of young Catholics feel supported by adults and peers; they will talk with parents and friends when considering important decisions

*Q: Thinking generally about times that you have had to make an important decision, which of these things would you do to help you make your choice?*

*(select all that apply)*



66% would talk with their parents; 15% with their grandparents



53% would find out more information online



51% would talk with a trusted friend; 37% with a group of friends



23% would try out different options they're exploring



16% would pray about it

## FAITH IN SOCIETY

- Young Catholics typically divide into three groups which can relate to their stance towards the interaction between faith and society: 'apologists', 'abstainers' and 'assimilators'
- Young Catholics say the main reasons they stop connecting with the practicing community are time pressures and life/family transitions
- Around a third of young Catholics are positive about the future of the Catholic religion in England and Wales

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- Young Catholics in 2017 are more likely than those in 2009 to view 'helping others' as a desirable aspiration, and more expect to help others in the future. We have called this trait 'aspirational altruism'
- Females say they have taken more action on social issues in the past year than their male counterparts, especially by donating money and sharing a campaign action on social media
- Around 6 in 10 young Catholics say that helping others who experience injustice or poverty is important to the way they live their lives. Those who attend Mass more frequently and/or believe in a personal God feel this more strongly than their peers

You can discover more about these insights and more in the companion booklet to this typology tool: **'Complex Catholicism: the life and Faith of young Catholics in England and Wales today'**

[cymfed.org.uk](http://cymfed.org.uk) [caminohouse.com](http://caminohouse.com)

# INTRODUCING THE TYPOLOGIES

Developing the 'typologies' is definitely an art, not a science. The experience of those who work with young people has been used to check what the research says, along with in-depth conversations with young people, and helps to form the characteristics of the sorts of young people you will meet in the following pages.

**The typologies represent an informed view of the young Catholics in England and Wales, but they are not the only view.**

Some statistics have been given for each type to help you think about what makes them distinctive. The statistics are taken from the survey of 1,005 15-25 year old Catholics. They represent people who identify as Catholic and those who don't but have a Catholic heritage, giving the opportunity to compare each type right across the spectrum of belief and practice.

## TYPES – NOT STEREOTYPES

Experience has shown that it works well to see each type as a real person, so we have given them names and characteristics. You will probably recognise most of the types – from Lauren to Greg to Beth – very quickly. In some cases, these specific characteristics – including age and ethnicity – are absolutely typical of the type, and we make that clear. For some types a characteristic may be secondary, or may point to something broader. For example, 'Jakub' could also be a girl, or from Italy or Spain as much as he is from Poland. It is better not to talk about 'Lauren', but rather 'people like Lauren'. They are representatives of groups, and as with any group, there will be variations within them.

The Typology Diagram reflects the inter-relationship of young people's engagement with the Catholic community, their faith in a personal God, and how they live out their faith in the world. The overall diagram covers all those young Catholics who personally identify, or could be identified, as Catholic.

The outer circle reflects the statement 'You might see me as Catholic'. The overlapping circles reflect the three statements:

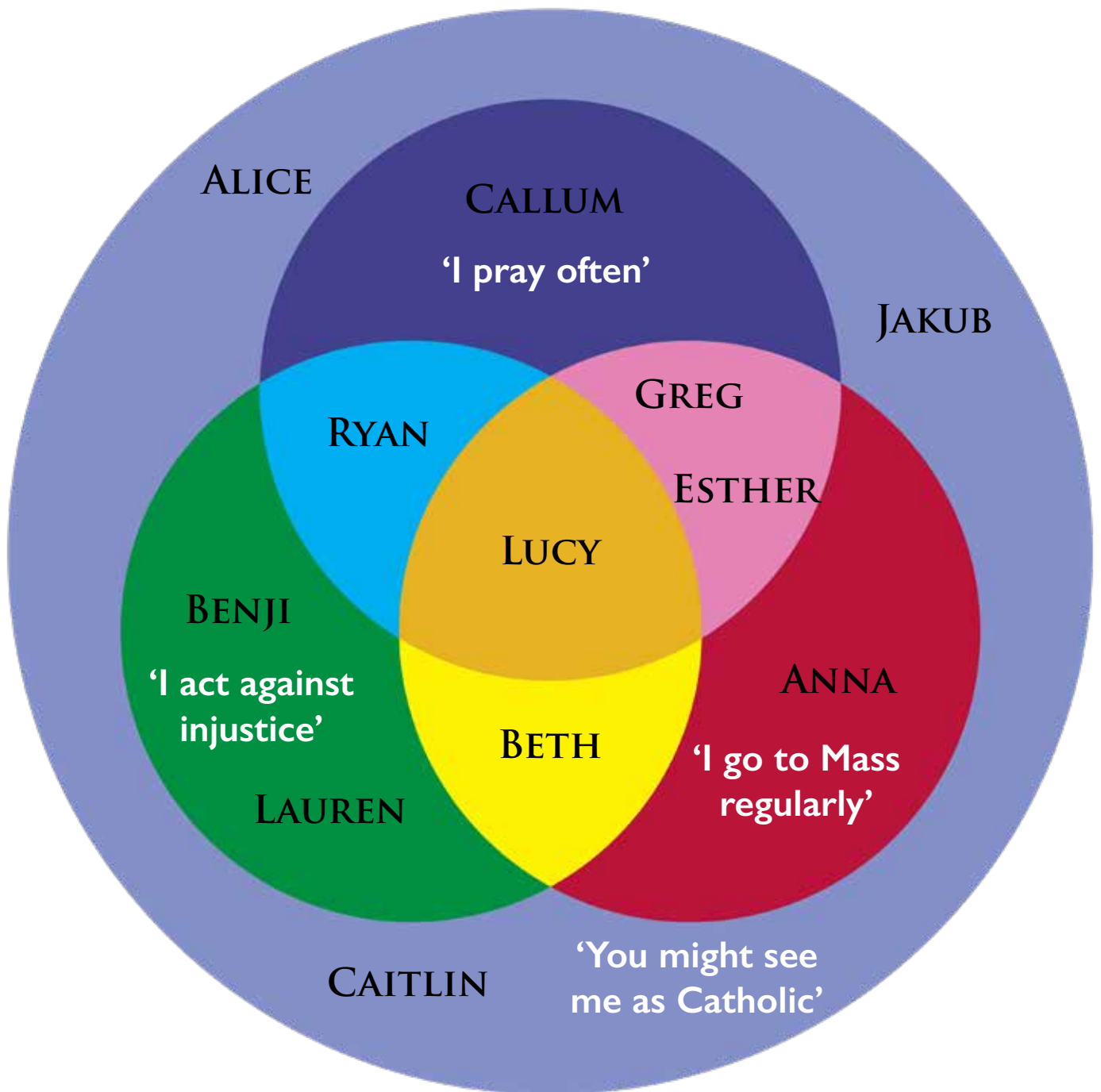
- 'I pray often'
- 'I act against injustice'
- 'I go to Mass regularly'

These are not necessarily phrases a young person would say, but they give a snapshot of the behaviour, attitude and belief of a young person in that part of the diagram. It is important to note that where a young person is placed in the diagram does not mean that they are rejecting any other statement, but that they may not place as great an importance on it.

The circles are intended to be a flexible tool to help us imagine where on the diagram a young Catholic may be found. There are twelve distinct types, with more than one type in some sections to see how even within a section, there can be very different characteristics and distinctions between the young people.



## THE YOUTH TYPOLOGY DIAGRAM



Young people will, of course, move around the diagram at different stages, and there is not an ideal young Catholic represented within the diagram. Lucy may look like the 'perfect Catholic' but she could also be driven by ambition, or we may be tempted to assume Jakub is far distanced from the Catholic community, but he is actually more likely to think the Church does good than Lucy!

As you start to explore the diagram, it might help you to think about where you think you might be on it!

So, sit back and meet the different young people as you take a journey around the diagram.

# A JOURNEY AROUND THE DIAGRAM

As we take a tour around our twelve types, bear in mind that you'll never actually meet any of these people. Rather you will meet people who remind you of them. So as you encounter the types, think about who you know who are like them and don't worry if they are different in some ways.

Remember, try not to consider one part of the diagram as the best place to be. Hold on to the notion of peripheries existing everywhere – of young people on the margins and of our need to find ways to engage them wherever they are. It's best not to assume that young people 'next' to each other are 'close' to one another. Esther is as likely to connect with Beth as she is to Callum. So even though Esther doesn't find it particularly important to stand up for justice and Beth isn't finding it important to have a prayerful relationship with God (note that they're not actively rejecting these), their social, political and cultural views might connect very closely.

## 'LUCY' AND 'CAITLIN, JAKUB & ALICE'

**Let's start with the middle of the diagram and the outside.**

Those who work with parish young people will probably see more of Lucy than anyone else. And yet where she stands represents only 8% of the young Catholics we surveyed. Whereas in the outside section, with Caitlin, Alice and Jakub, we see nearly half of the total group.

*Are we unintentionally focusing on a small number of young Catholics?*

In Lucy we meet someone who is happy, confident about her future and engaged with her faith. Caitlin is much less confident about her future (as are Jakub and Alice). However, Lucy is far more likely than Caitlin to say that no-one understands her right now. Perhaps her faith makes her feel different and misunderstood. Or perhaps her sense of being misunderstood means she seeks support in her faith.

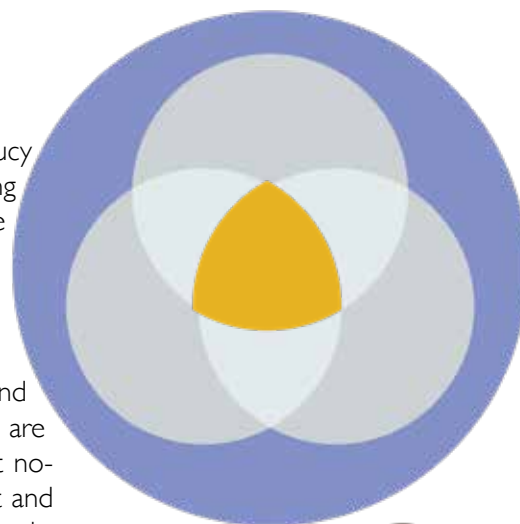
Lucy is from a supportive, practicing family, likely to be going to Mass at least weekly and is comfortable talking about her faith. She is the most likely of all young Catholics to get really engaged in social justice issues. However, her engagement is no guarantee that she'll stay connected. There are fewer people like Lucy as they get older. It is easy for any one of the three aspects of the typology diagram (Mass, prayer, justice) to slip. She might choose to fit in with others rather than maintain all of her faith and practice. In fact, she could just as easily move to stand with Caitlin, as she could end up anywhere else on the diagram.

There are many young people in Caitlin's section of the diagram who used to go to church. They stopped due to busyness, family moves, or simply feel they 'grew out of it' (there's little active rejection of the Church anywhere on the diagram). Her Catholicity is largely irrelevant now.

Anyone working in a school will immediately recognise this group. There are many varieties here – our Jakub is a Polish 'cultural Catholic' and Alice is 'spiritual but not religious' – and generally they are all just like their non-Catholic peers. The challenge for us is making and maintaining the connections. The other 'types' hold the key to making the links.

*How do you support them to invite in their peers from the outer peripheries?*

The innovation of youth workers and ministers is the key to maintaining the connections. We cannot go on repeating the same things that stopped working for this group years ago. How do we stay comfortable on this periphery, and remain there for as long as necessary, without feeling we have to move Caitlin and Jakub to another place?



### LUCY

- Age: Slightly more likely to be 15-19
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- 8% of the young Catholics surveyed sit in this section



**GOES TO MASS  
PRAYS REGULARLY  
STANDS UP FOR JUSTICE**

### CAITLIN

- Age: Could be 15-19
- More likely to be female
- May or may not self identify as Catholic
- 47% of the young Catholics surveyed sit in this section



**DOES NOT GO TO MASS  
DOES NOT PRAY REGULARLY  
DOES NOT STAND UP FOR JUSTICE**





## 'ANNA' AND 'GREG & ESTHER'

**Moving further into the 'mass going' section of the diagram we meet Anna and Greg and Esther.**

In many ways Anna is like Caitlin. She's quite laid back (she's the most relaxed of her peer group, with very few worries), but she happens to be going to church regularly. Her family is perhaps quite comfortable and there's been little exposure to pressures in life, so connection to social justice just isn't very relevant. She might give something up for Lent, and she might get confirmed – 'culturally Catholic' things – but there's not really a lot more to her Catholicism. She has never been supported to make the connections to a lived faith.

That said, she is still going to Mass, so there is an opportunity to engage Anna deeper.

*If we can offer her some responsibility, or bring her into some meaningful activity in the parish or a school trip to Lourdes, there is the opportunity to spark a deeper connection with faith.*

She won't respond to the 'hard line' social action stuff, but you might find a way in through, for example, supporting children overseas. Similarly, hours of Eucharistic Adoration probably won't work, but a midnight walk appreciating the gift of creation on a sixth form retreat could bear much fruit.

Otherwise, she is just like the rest of her friends – friends like Caitlin and Alice. Without deeper connections to her faith it is very likely that she'll move into the same space as them if she goes off to university. She may drift there sooner, especially if her family stop going to Mass regularly when there's a change in their circumstances. Anna won't be rejecting the Church, she'll just drift because of the lack of anything rooting her to it.


Greg and Esther, however, are very different in their religiosity to Anna. It's very much part of their life. They are confident in their faith and have an investment in the Church and a personal relationship with God. In themselves they differ in their practice of their faith. Esther, more 'charismatic', will talk about her faith with anyone. Greg, appearing more 'traditional', is more likely to talk about it with his Catholic friends.

Whilst neither of them are finding it important to engage in social justice they are both engaged in the issues of the world. Greg will happily write to his MP – complaining about local issues or campaigning against assisted suicide. Esther will be active online, sharing her thoughts about world issues and asking for prayer.

*Our role may be to help them to link these things to Catholic social teaching and lived Christian action.*

**ANNA**

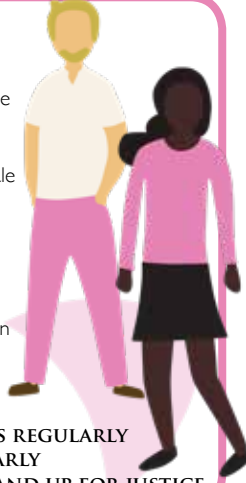
- Age: Slightly more likely to be 15-19
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- 11% of the young Catholics surveyed sit in this section



**GOES TO MASS REGULARLY  
DOES NOT PRAY REGULARLY  
DOES NOT STAND UP FOR JUSTICE**

**GREG & ESTHER**

- Age: Could be 15-25
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- 14% of the young Catholics surveyed sit in this section



**GOES TO MASS REGULARLY  
PRAYS REGULARLY  
DOES NOT STAND UP FOR JUSTICE**

## ‘CALLUM’ AND ‘RYAN’

**Moving out of the regular Mass attending circle, Callum and Ryan greet us – those for whom the ‘Church’ is not particularly important, but who maintain a regular prayer life.**

There is a vulnerability about Callum. He might be the type of young person who comes across as odd or withdrawn, and difficult to get to know. It would be easy to gloss over him. School is where we are most likely to meet him, but the chaplain might not even know that he prays. However, there will be something about him. The vulnerability could be a sign – and a gentle invitation to the chaplaincy might be well received. But you can’t rush it. Time is key, building up trust, ‘being with him’ in his periphery. It is there where you’ll discover that his apparent vulnerability comes with his own life story, and that he’s been sharing that story with God. If he can begin to share it with you, you might help him discover something of the pastoral role of the Church and the power of communal prayer.

***Don’t be too concerned about trying to move him out of this type. Trust in your accompaniment and his relationship with God. You don’t know where it might lead.***

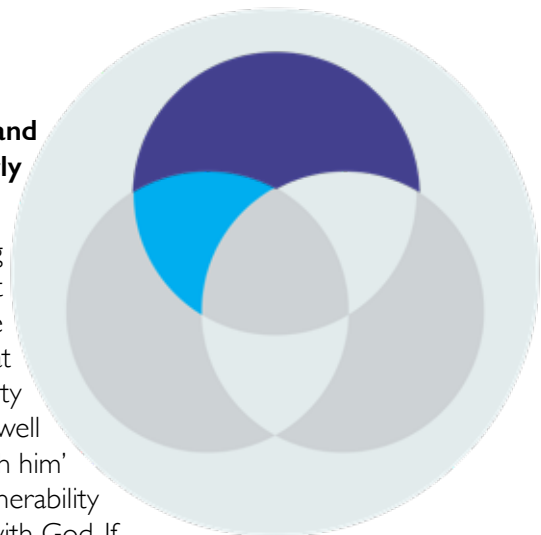
You could, as an example, invite him to a Christian event, where he’ll see there are lots of others who are ‘different’. It should appeal to his sense of being part of something bigger – so ensure it is not too ‘churchy’ and not all about Mass.

Ryan is more ‘robust’ than Callum. Whereas Callum is the most likely to often feel lonely, Ryan is one of the least likely of his peers. His family is religious, but no longer make him go to church (he probably used to stand alongside Lucy). He finds his community elsewhere – he might be engaged in music or sport – and is a people person, with a close circle of friends.

In part, at least, Ryan gets his sense of justice from his family situation, which isn’t always easy. They might struggle financially, or there may be complex issues at home. His response is compassion. He knows it’s important to help others, and gets involved personally. It’s not about putting money in a collection box – it’s about helping others. In this, his faith helps him. He says his prayers, even if it’s not formally. He just doesn’t need to go to Mass to do this. Perhaps it is best not to try and make him.

***Stay with him where he is and seek ways to affirm him in his prayer and action, showing him that the Church really does recognise and value him.***

Giving Ryan real responsibility in a school justice action and linking him to a diocesan project or Caritas office might demonstrate that. Or even a nomination for the Celebrating Young People Awards for how he is making a real difference in the lives of his family and peers.



### CALLUM

- Age: Could be 15-25
- Could be female or male
- Probably still self identifies as Catholic
- 7% of the young Catholics surveyed sit in this section



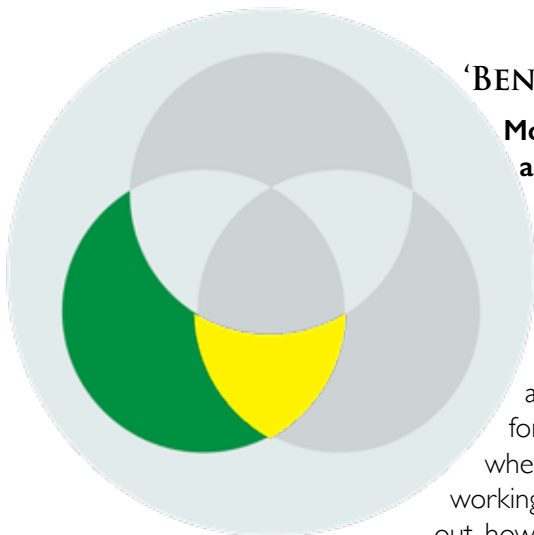
**PRAYS REGULARLY  
DOES NOT GO TO MASS REGULARLY  
DOES NOT STAND UP FOR JUSTICE**

### RYAN

- Age: Could be 15-25
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- 2% of the young Catholics surveyed sit in this section



**PRAYS REGULARLY  
STANDS UP FOR JUSTICE  
DOES NOT GO TO MASS REGULARLY**



## 'BENJI & LAUREN', AND 'BETH'

### Moving around the 'justice' circle we encounter Benji and Lauren and Beth.

Benji and Lauren probably used to go to Mass regularly, but a long time ago. Now they are similar to those in the outer section of the diagram in everything but their sense of justice. Benji has a drive to make the world one, to have peace, to live in harmony. He's not a campaigner or a political activist, but he will respond to injustice and may well go on a gap year with VSO. He loves meeting other people, and very happy for people to believe what they believe. He's just very comfortable with where he is. Lauren is different. She might already be at university, and is working out if she should carry on with her high-flying career plan, or work out how to use her life to make a difference. Unlike Benji, she does have a problem with the Church. She thinks it could do so much more, and put its wealth to better purpose and stop judging other's lifestyles.

Despite Benji and Lauren's strong commitment to standing against injustice they might not know how to achieve their desire to make a difference on their own (most young Catholics do want to help others, but it remains a future aspiration). Without the community setting of the Church and any particular importance on a relationship with God, we might not know how to help keep Benji's and Lauren's commitment alive. But don't fall into the trap of rushing to move them elsewhere.

*Support their commitment to justice first, and see if through that a sense of spirituality might develop.*


Beth is in a very different space to Benji and Lauren. She is a church-going Catholic almost by default. It is something that she just does. Although she may go less once she leaves home, she takes it as read as something she does with the family. Her faith probably hasn't developed since primary school, but she does have a sense of belonging to the community and has friends who go to church. With her simple faith comes a sense of service and making a difference in the world, but it's not as deep-rooted as with others in this circle.

She might actually be quite a modern, material-driven, young woman. There's no contradiction in this for her. She can easily have the new phone she doesn't really need and find ways to be nice to those living in poverty. She's much more likely to give money to charity than to get involved herself. But she sometimes likes to have a role. She might volunteer to help with the children's liturgy, and help the children 'be kind'. And in the future, when she has children of her own, she might help as a catechist, despite not really knowing much about her faith.

*Any opportunity to engage Beth with a deeper, more adult understanding of her faith will bear much fruit that will last.*

**BENJI & LAUREN**

- Age: Could be 15-25
- Could be female or male
- Does not self identify as Catholic
- 8% of the young Catholics surveyed sit in this section



**STANDS UP FOR JUSTICE**  
**DOES NOT PRAY REGULARLY**  
**DOES NOT GO TO MASS REGULARLY**

**BETH**

- Age: Slightly more likely to be 15-19
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- 3% of the young Catholics surveyed sit in this section



**GOES TO MASS REGULARLY**  
**STANDS UP FOR JUSTICE**  
**DOES NOT PRAY REGULARLY**

# MAKING USE OF THE TYPOLOGIES

Having met and possibly recognised Lucy and Callum, Lauren and Jakub, what do we do now?

If meeting them has made you think about the young people you come into contact with, then that's a good thing. If or how you take it forward is up to you. A few ideas which people found useful after the research in 2009 can be found below. Hopefully they will spark your own ideas.

## WHOM DO WE MEET?

Without trying to label the young people you come into contact with, draw the circles and place your young people in them. Where are most gathered? Are there gaps? Does it matter? We can't appeal to all types of young people at the same time.

You might also ask yourself who you would like to meet. Remember the challenge of Pope Francis – which young people are on the peripheries? Are we, even unconsciously, shying away from them? Could we reach out?

Could you and your team sit down and reflect honestly on where you might be in the circles? Are you happy there? What might this tell you personally?

## EXPERIENCES

Depending on where you meet young people, the chances are that they do not all fit within one segment. When we put on an event or an activity, it can be easy to get it to fit one type of person.

How can you plan a broader range of activities which might both appeal to different types of person and give others a new experience?

Could you offer reflection on Catholic social teaching and prayer as part of a service project? Or be inspired by Archbishop Romero who would encourage an hour's adoration followed by an hour's 'charitable work' every First Friday evening?

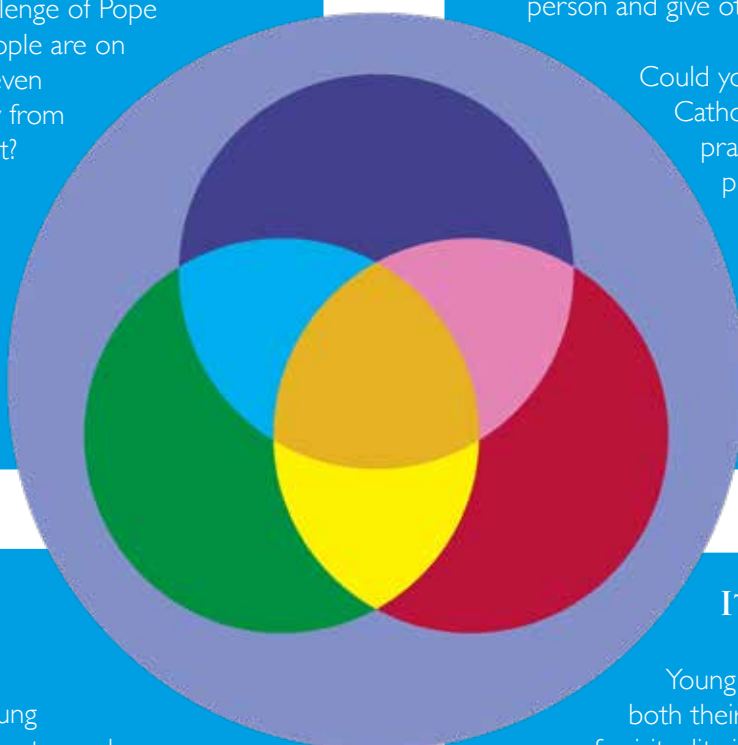
## FEARS AND ANXIETIES

Remember that like all young people, those surveyed are stressed. Thankfully, many feel they can turn to family and friends.

How do we create an environment where they know they can turn to their Church family?

## IT'S ALL IN A NAME

Young people often describe both their experiences of God and of spirituality in language different to that of the Church. The research shows that although they might not express ideas in Church language it does not mean that they have no appreciation of those experiences. How might you show the different types of young people you work with that you recognise this?



In the final pages of this booklet we go deeper into the typologies. There are some further examples of how you might try to engage with, and challenge, the young people we meet across the diagram.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Journeying with young people as they discover more about who they are and who God is calling them to be is a real privilege. It can bring huge joy to those of us who accompany people like 'Lucy' and 'Callum', as well as 'Caitlin' and 'Jakub'. But if we're honest, it can also be frustrating and hard going at times.

At those times, hold onto the fact that in the research, many young people expressed that they had people they looked up to, who they could turn to for support and advice. Often, you are that person. Whether it feels like it or not, you are making a positive difference.

And when we worry about how our church community comes across to young people, almost two thirds of Catholic young people have felt welcome in their Catholic parish. Let's build on that!

Having read the typologies, don't feel daunted by the variety of young people we may encounter, or the few we actually see on a regular basis. Trust that being aware of the range of young people helps us in our engagement with them.



## THREE TOP TIPS

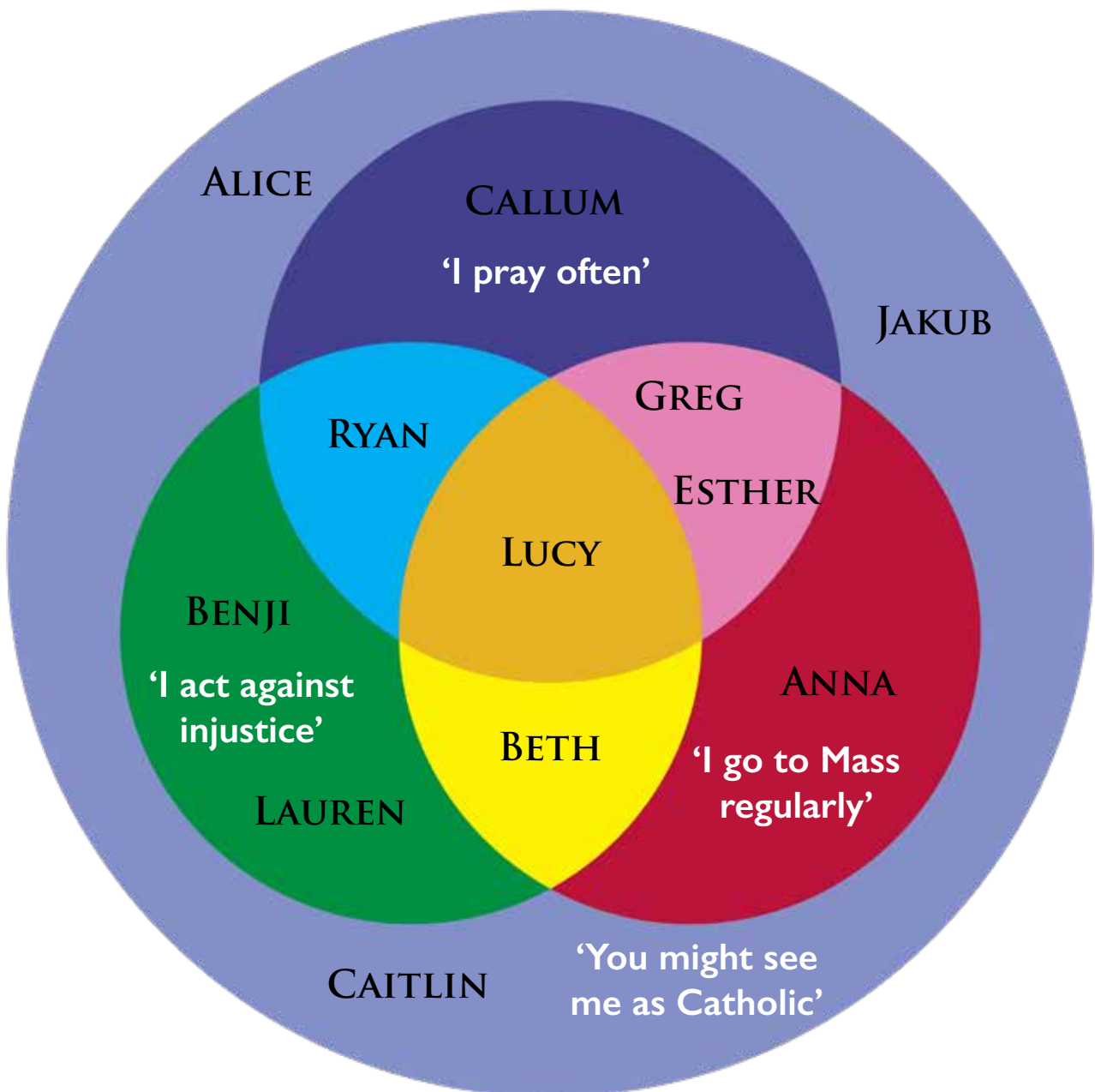
So, if nothing else...

1. Talk about the typologies over a cup of coffee with someone you work alongside, and/or your parish priest.
2. Next time you're planning a Confirmation class, a retreat day, or a Lourdes preparation meeting, have the typology diagram in front of you. Think about what styles will help engage and challenge at least a couple of different types within your group.
3. Finally, remember that we're not trying to move the young people to a seemingly ideal type. Be brave and visit them on the peripheries. Talk with them, learn from one another, challenge and be challenged by them. Journey together and you will both grow, and hopefully continue to become the person God calls you to be.

# TYOLOGIES IN DETAIL

These pages offer an easy overview of the diagram and all the typologies for you to print/copy and use in group discussion.

The Typology Diagram reflects the inter-relationship of young people's engagement with the Catholic community, their faith in a personal God, and how they live out their faith in the world. The whole diagram covers all those young Catholics who personally identify, or could be identified, as Catholic.



The outer circle reflects the statement 'You might see me as Catholic'.

The overlapping circles reflect the three statements:

- 'I pray often'
- 'I act against injustice'
- 'I go to Mass regularly'

# LUCY



- Age: Slightly more likely to be 15-19
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- 8% of the 1005 young Catholics we surveyed sit in this section of the diagram

## GOES TO MASS REGULARLY, PRAYS REGULARLY AND STANDS UP FOR JUSTICE

Lucy is very positive about life and her future, more so than any of her Catholic peers. She feels inspired each day, and knows that she has something to contribute to the world. She expects to be successful and to make a difference. Her faith is important to her and she has a supportive, religious family. Many of her friends share her beliefs. Lucy is happy to get involved in things at church and she anticipates her faith to be part of her future as she grows into the person that God wants her to be.

### Young people like Lucy

- Believe in God who created the world and is involved in it today.
- Talk to their friends and family about religion at least a few times a week.
- Are more likely than most of their Catholic peers to be very concerned about poverty in the UK and overseas.
- In the last year, 23% have taken part in a church youth group and 38% have attended a prayer group.

*“Being Catholic is part of my life – it’s not everything, but it is important”*

### Where you might find Lucy

- Catholic schools
- In a church youth group or helping at church
- In confirmation classes
- On retreat or at World Youth Day

### Engaging with Lucy

- Her strong sense of purpose could be channelled into meaningful roles in the church/youth ministry.
- Lucy responds well to going to World Youth Day or on pilgrimage. She can be central in bringing the group together.
- As Lucy is comfortable talking about faith, how can you encourage her to invite others into your activity?

### Some ways Lucy is similar to other young Catholics

- Like over 80% of her peers she feels valued by family and friends, and has people she can turn to for support.
- She expects to help others in the future, like 89% of her peers.
- She is concerned about gender inequality, like 66% of her peers.

### Some ways Lucy is distinctive

- Is more likely to attend a church service a few times a week (only 16% of young Catholics do).
- Is more likely to read a spiritual book or content online at least once a month (only 28% of others do).
- Less likely than others to talk to their boyfriend/girlfriend when making an important decision. But 38% would pray about it (compared to 18% of others).

### Views on the Church and Catholicism

- She views the Church as ‘approachable’, ‘caring/compassionate’, and ‘friendly/welcoming’.
- 86% of people like Lucy are hopeful about the future of Catholicism in this country (compared to 33% of others).
- She generally thinks that Catholics should follow the rules and teachings of the Church.
- Sometimes she might question aspects of the Church and be concerned that sharing her religious views might offend others. But you might also meet another ‘type’ of Lucy – who is very protective about the Church and thinks it’s ok for Catholics to share their religious views.



# RYAN



- Age: could be 15-25
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- Only 2% of the 1005 young Catholics surveyed sit in this section of the diagram

## PRAYS REGULARLY AND STANDS UP FOR JUSTICE (DOES NOT GO TO MASS REGULARLY)

Ryan is not as confident as some of his peers. He is concerned about what people think of him and he wants to please them. Despite being the most likely in the group to *aspire* to help others, he is one of the least likely to actually feel that he has something to contribute. It is important to Ryan to know that he is of value to God and he prays regularly – sometimes every day. But different 'Ryans' will have different beliefs of God. He's almost as likely to believe in a 'higher spiritual power' and not a *personal* God, as he is to believe in a God who is *active* in the world. Although he doesn't go to church regularly (he may go a few times a year), he's not negative towards it. It's just not something for him.

### Young people like Ryan

- Think Catholics should follow Church guidelines about helping others.
- 52% read a spiritual book/content online at least once a month.
- Feel they will 'definitely' help others in the future (much more so than those without a concern about injustice).
- In the last year, half have felt a sense of being part of something bigger or that they are 'at one' with nature and the universe.
- Half say that they have stopped going to church regularly.

### Some ways Ryan is similar to other young Catholics

- Like two thirds of his peers he is likely to talk to parents for advice when making an important decision.
- He feels he has people in his life who set a good example (like 87%).
- He holds beliefs similar to his friends (like 52%).
- Like 53% of young Catholics he still goes to Mass a few times a year.

### Some ways Ryan is distinctive

- He is very concerned about human rights and global political instability (only around a third of his peers share these levels of concern).
- He is the most likely to talk to others to raise awareness about issues that concern him.
- He is the most likely to have voted in an election.

### Where you might find Ryan

- Catholic schools
- Might be on a gap year – even in a Catholic setting
- Volunteering with HCPT in Lourdes
- An older Ryan might walk the Camino

### Engaging with Ryan

- Ryan's strong sense of justice could be engaged through social action activities. He's the most likely of all his Catholic peers to join a campaign group. The activity of the YCW might appeal to Ryan.
- He's likely to respond well to being introduced to the richness of Catholic social teaching, and could be supported to see the positive side of Church.
- He may search for projects overseas, to go travelling while helping others. Try pointing him towards some of the tailored Catholic volunteering activities.
- Ryan will find it hard to say no when asked to take on a responsibility. Why not ask him to do something behind the scenes (music/sound/design) for a prayer event (not Mass!). Or work with him to coordinate a prayer liturgy. It might help introduce him to communal prayer.

"I'm not bothered about Church. It's more important to try to make a difference."



### Views on the Church and Catholicism

- Likely to view the Church as 'traditional', but also 'caring/compassionate' and 'friendly/welcoming'.
- He feels it's okay for a Catholic to follow parts or teachings of different religions at the same time.



# BENJI



- Age: Could be 15-25
- Could be female or male
- Does not self identify as Catholic
- 8% of the 1005 young Catholics surveyed sit in this section of the diagram

## STANDS UP FOR JUSTICE (DOES NOT PRAY REGULARLY OR GO TO MASS REGULARLY)

Benji has an open, accepting view both of others and the world. He may have been involved with the Church in the past, but he's drifted away. He doesn't believe in a 'traditional' God and is very comfortable in learning from different religions and beliefs to find his own way in the world. But he's not negative about the Church. It's fine for people to have their beliefs, and he's happy for people to talk about them – just don't try to convert others! In fact he can be impressed by the Church at times, especially in relation to his passion to fight injustice. When he was at a Catholic school, he was encouraged with the school's commitment to make a difference.

### Young people like Benji

- Feel that Catholics should follow Church guidelines about helping others.
- 88% describe themselves as 'White'.
- Most likely to give money to charity/sponsor someone.
- 64% have signed/mailed a petition in the last year.
- Most likely among their young Catholic peers to turn to their girlfriend/boyfriend for support when making an important decision.
- More so than their peers, 28% have had a feeling that they are 'at one' with nature and the universe in the last year. A third say they have experienced something 'spooky' or supernatural in the last year.

### Some ways Benji is similar to other young Catholics

- Like others with a justice focus, he feels he will 'definitely' help others in the future (much more so than other young Catholics).
- He is part of the 63% of young Catholics who are concerned about gender inequality.
- Like most young Catholics, he's felt stressed or worried very recently about how he's doing with his studies or in work.

### Some ways Benji is distinctive

- More likely to be very concerned about poverty in the UK (52%) and poverty overseas (42%).
- Most likely to raise awareness via social media about an issue which concerns them. Yet the least likely to join a campaign group.
- Least likely to identify as 'straight' and is part of the 34% of young Catholics who are very concerned about people being treated differently because of their sexual orientation.

### You might also recognise Lauren

Standing in this part of the typology diagram you may also see Lauren. She:

- Is probably older (over 19) and at university
- Is intelligent, studying politics and trying to 'find her place', asking 'What can I do in the world?'
- Is not as 'spiritually' open as Benji and coming across as more challenging and dismissive of the Church.

*"The Church is too rigid. Wherever you find connection with the universe, that's great!"*

### Where you might find Benji

- Joining in with school charity projects
- Nominated for the 'Celebrating Young People Awards'
- CAFOD Young Leadership programme
- In the Confirmation group – asking lots of questions!

### Engaging with Benji

- Benji is challenged by the Church 'structures' and 'rules'. Engage in a conversation about this. You'll learn more about him.
- Youth ministry often tries to 'lead' Benji from social action into a relationship with the Church (through church groups/church campaigns). Consider instead how to invite him to explore spirituality. He might be more open to it.



### Views on the Church and Catholicism

- Likely to view the Church as 'traditional', 'authoritative' and 'conservative'.
- Strongly disagrees that Catholics should follow all of their rules and teachings.



# BETH



- Age: Slightly more likely to be 15-19
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- 3% of the 1005 young Catholics surveyed sit in this section of the diagram

## GOES TO MASS REGULARLY AND STANDS UP FOR JUSTICE (DOES NOT PRAY REGULARLY)

Beth is a happy, modern young woman. Being part of the Church is important to the whole family and 'getting involved' in her parish is something Beth just does as part of her family. She may not go to Mass if she goes to university, but she's likely to still go when she's home. Although she doesn't pray very often, she believes in God, and will occasionally do something more spiritually focused – but her participation is really about the church community, her family and friends. However, she does like what she hears about Pope Francis. His message translates into something practical and she thinks it's important to help others.

### Young people like Beth

- Beth, like Lucy, is much more likely to aspire to be the person God wants her to be than any of her other Catholic peers.
- They are the most likely to have heard of CAFOD and have probably supported them recently by raising or giving money.
- 1 in 5 describe themselves as 'Asian'.

### Some ways Beth is similar to other young Catholics

- Part of the 72% who feel that to be a Catholic you should follow the Catholic guidelines on helping others.

### Some ways Beth is distinctive

- She feels stressed daily about having enough money to buy the things she wants, but in the future she expects to have a lot of money.
- However, she's the least confident among her peers about having an important job in the future.



*"It's good to be nice."*

### Where you might find Beth

- In the parish youth group.
- Meeting friends in groups outside of church, as well as in the parish.
- Volunteering in youth ministry.
- CAFOD Young Leadership programme.
- Going to Lourdes, for the community element and to help others.

### Engaging with Beth

- Introduce Beth to accessible prayer experiences when she comes to other Church/youth ministry activities.
- Beth would enjoy Flame, including the coach trip there.
- Inviting Beth to Lourdes with the school may offer her a chance to experience a more personal relationship with God through prayer.
- Beth's involvement in practical parish projects could develop into other ministries within the parish and help to encounter more spiritual aspects of faith.

### Views on the Church and Catholicism

- Likely to view the Church as 'traditional', 'authoritative', but also 'caring/compassionate'. 61% have felt welcome in their Catholic parish.
- Although they go to Mass regularly, half of young people like Beth don't find it important personally to go.

# ANNA



- Age: Slightly more likely to be 15-19
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- 11% of the 1005 young Catholics surveyed sit in this section of the diagram

## GOES TO MASS REGULARLY

### (DOES NOT PRAY REGULARLY OR FIND IT IMPORTANT TO STAND UP FOR JUSTICE)

Anna is the most laid back amongst her Catholic peers. On a day-to-day level she has the least worries and stress and she's the least likely to feel lonely. Her friends are important to her and she puts her aspiration for getting married/having a partner and children above her financial security and career success. Anna goes to Mass regularly, possibly because it's what the family have done for years. Mass itself is not particularly important to her personally, and might become less so as she gets older. She feels that it's important for Catholics to 'follow the rules', but she doesn't really think that applies to her. In many ways, Anna is like the rest of her non-Catholic peers, including how she chooses to live her personal life.

#### Young people like Anna

- Don't pray very often, but they may pray sometimes.
- Only 30% believe in God who created the world and is involved in it today.
- Are the least concerned about 'social issues' amongst their Catholic peers, but still likely to donate to charity.

#### Some ways Anna is similar to other young Catholics

- She is part of the 52% of young Catholics who hold beliefs similar to their friends.
- She's part of the 82% of young Catholics who feel that they get the support they need.
- She's one of the six in ten young Catholics who feel it's okay to follow parts of different religions.

#### Some ways Anna is distinctive

- Least likely than others to feel worried about having enough to eat on a daily basis.
- Only one in three would volunteer to help when responding to something that concerns them (lower than any other group).
- Least likely to be concerned about the environment.
- 39% have had a feeling of peace during a church service in the last year (compared to 25% of others).

*"Yeah, I go to Church. It's nice. It makes me feel calm."*

#### Where you might find Anna

- Catholic schools
- At Mass on Sunday
- Participating in the school 'Faith in Action' Award Scheme because her friends are doing it
- In the parish Confirmation group

#### Engaging with Anna

- Anna may volunteer to help at church. She may enjoy Children's Liturgy or the First Communion Group, which could be used as a way to help her experience prayer, through praying with the children.
- The social side of pilgrimages and retreats would appeal to Anna. If done well, these could help her explore her own relationship with God.
- Challenge her 'laid back', stress free attitude by introducing her to projects that support people who don't experience life in the same way. YCW/IMPACT might appeal.
- Once Anna goes to university she might stop going to church. How can you ensure she feels particularly welcome if she comes back to Mass with the family during the holidays?

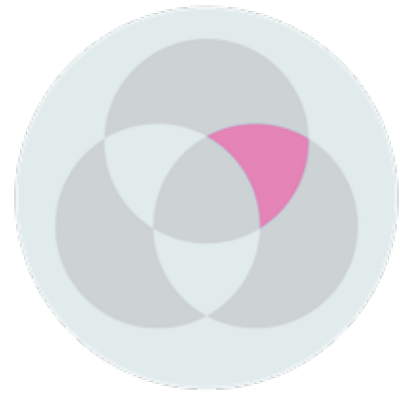


#### Views on the Church and Catholicism

- Likely to view the Church as 'traditional' but also 'friendly/welcoming' and 'caring/compassionate'. 61% have felt welcome in their Catholic parish.
- She thinks it's okay for Catholics to explain their religion to others, but is less sure that Catholics should try to convert people.

You might meet another type of 'Anna'. He could appear to be a little more traditional. He is actively taking part and might be an altar server or in the choir. He enjoys the 'church stuff' and pleasing the priest, but doesn't have a noticeable personal relationship with God. Church could easily fade away when something else comes along.

# GREG



- Age: Could be 15-25
- Could be female or male
- Self identifies as Catholic
- 14% of the 1005 young Catholics surveyed sit in this section of the diagram

## GOES TO MASS AND PRAYS REGULARLY (DOES NOT FIND IT IMPORTANT TO STAND UP FOR JUSTICE)

Greg has been to the last two Flame conferences and to World Youth Day. He's comfortable in 'Catholic' surroundings and it's important to him to belong to the Church and to practice his faith, including trying to follow the 'rules' in his own personal life. He'd like to marry a Catholic. He has been inspired by several people in his faith journey, including a priest whom he looks up to. His closest friends are religious, and they talk about their faith often, although he's not forthright in talking about it publicly. It's easy for an observer to say that Greg likes the boundaries his faith offers him, but he is more complex than this, and it would be wrong to judge him as being too black and white. He has his own struggles and doubts.

### Young people like Greg

- Are part of the 43% of young Catholics who believe Jesus is/was the Son of God.
- Think that Catholics should go to Mass and Confession.
- 48% talk to their family at least a few times a week about God/religion.
- Are the most likely to email/write to their MP, but the least likely to give money to charity.
- 29% have attended a prayer group in the last year.

### Some ways Greg is similar to other young Catholics

- He is part of the 86% of young Catholics who feel valued by their family.
- He is part of the 71% of young Catholics who expect to have a university degree in the future.

### Some ways Greg is distinctive

- In the future he expects to be the person God wants him to be (like 4 in 10 young Catholics).
- More likely than most of his peers to pray about an important decision (only 16% of others would).
- Greg is part of the 23% of young Catholics who read the Bible at least monthly.
- He is the least likely to say he feels happy every day.

### You might also recognise Esther

Standing in this part of the typology diagram you may also see Esther. She:

- Is more vocal than Greg in sharing her faith and happy to speak publically
- May be attending praise and worship events in the diocese or at youth festivals
- May well also go to the Pentecostal church with her mates
- Has many non-Catholic, Christian friends. She is very comfortable in being in a mix of different people with different ways of living out her faith. She's more fluid than Greg is.



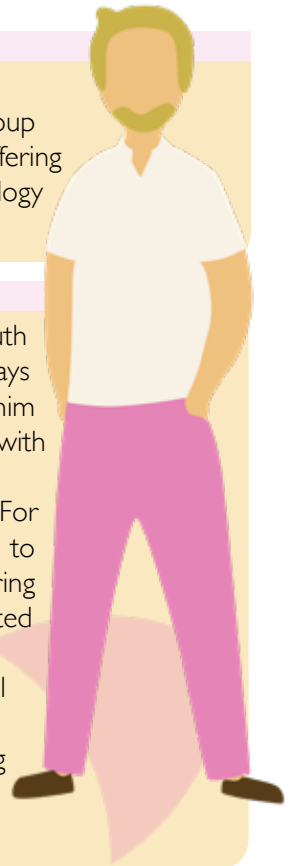
*"The Church is a great guide for life. My friends and family know how important being a Catholic is to me."*

### Where you might find Greg

- Actively involved in his parish
- In a church youth or prayer group
- Going to young adult events offering on-going catechesis e.g. Theology on Tap, Youth 2000, Lent talks.

### Engaging with Greg

- When Greg goes to World Youth Day, make the most of the 'Days in the Diocese' by helping him link the days of social action with Catholic social teaching.
- Some issues will engage Greg. For example, try to introduce him to a sense of solidarity by exploring how other Christians are treated around the world, or how the Church can proclaim the gospel through making a difference.
- Stretch his leadership by giving him opportunities as part of the Liturgy planning group



### Views on the Church and Catholicism

- Likely to view the Church as 'caring/compassionate', 'traditional' and 'conservative'. 70% have felt welcome in their Catholic parish.
- 56% are hopeful about the future of the Catholic Church in this country.

*There are also others standing with Greg and Esther who are going to Church with their family – or out of habit – but don't have a very deep sense of prayer, even though they are praying a few times a week. They could have quite a childlike faith and have simply always said their prayers.*

# CALLUM



- Age: Could be 15-25
- Could be female or male
- Probably still self identifies as Catholic
- 7% of the 1005 young Catholics surveyed sit in this section of the diagram

## PRAYS REGULARLY

### (DOES NOT GO TO MASS REGULARLY OR FIND IT IMPORTANT TO STAND UP FOR JUSTICE)

Callum feels very valued by his family, but he still feels quite lonely, with little that gives him reason for excitement or to look forward to. Perhaps that's why he is 'seeking' something else and gets comfort from having a sense of being part of something bigger. Although they sometimes go at Christmas, his family stopped going to church after they moved house. It's a shame that Callum didn't go to the Confirmation classes. He would have enjoyed discussing his questions about God and faith and his own place in the world. Now he feels quite alone in being interested in exploring these ideas.

#### Young people like Callum

- 46% believe in God who created the world and is involved in it today. 30% believe in another concept of God, or a higher spiritual power.
- Most likely to aspire to be married/have a partner and have children.
- Although they are praying regularly themselves, over half of this group never pray with their family.
- A third would pray about an important decision, but only one in five read the Bible at least monthly.

#### Some ways Callum is similar to other young Catholics

- Like half of all their young Catholic peers, he has signed/ emailed a petition in the last year.
- He is one of the 89% who expects to help others in the future.
- He is one of the two thirds of young Catholics who are concerned about people being treated differently because of their sexual orientation.

#### Some ways Callum is distinctive

- He is part of the 38% of young Catholics for whom believing that they are of value to God is important to the way they live their life.
- He is twice as likely than his young Catholic peers to have had the sense of an angel in the last year.

#### Where you might find Callum

- In Catholic schools
- In the school chapel/prayer room or nipped into a church on his lunch break to pray/recollect alone

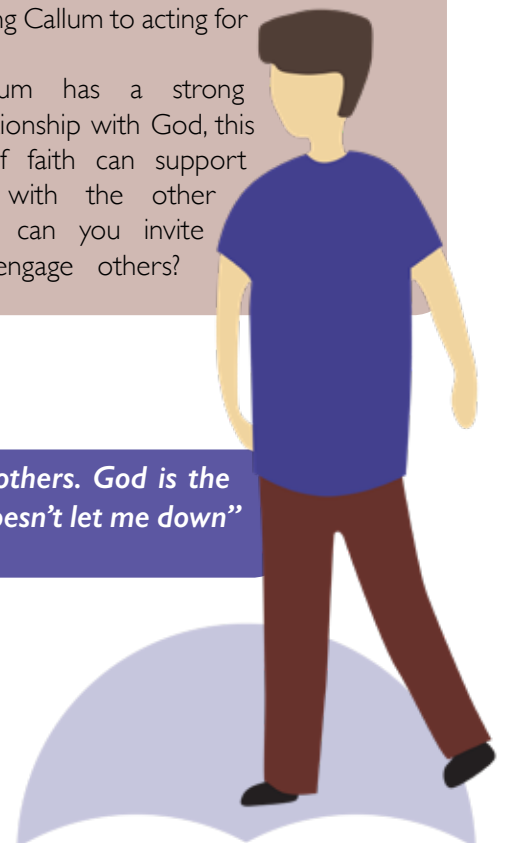
#### Engaging with Callum

- Engaging with Callum needs time. Personal accompaniment is key so as to develop a trusted, consistent presence. School chaplains are well placed to do this.
- Callum may enjoy organised one-off prayer events, or retreat weekends. This could help introduce the community aspect of prayer.
- Social media and online content may also be a means to engage with Callum, for example asking for prayer for people in difficult situations and social issues, exposing Callum to acting for justice.
- Where Callum has a strong personal relationship with God, this foundation of faith can support engagement with the other 'types'. How can you invite Callum to engage others?

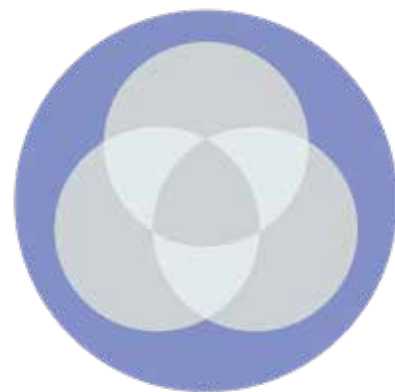
*"I don't need others. God is the one thing that doesn't let me down"*

#### Views on the Church and Catholicism

- Likely to view the Church as 'traditional' and 'conservative', but also 'caring/ compassionate'. 46% have felt welcome in their Catholic parish.
- He is one of the 81% who think it's ok for a Catholic to explain their religion to others.



# CAITLIN



- Age: Could be 15-19
- More likely to be female
- May or may not self identify as Catholic
- 47% of the 1005 young Catholics surveyed sit in this section of the diagram

## DOES NOT GO TO MASS, DOES NOT PRAY REGULARLY, DOES NOT FIND IT IMPORTANT TO STAND UP FOR JUSTICE

Caitlin is very similar to any other young person. She wouldn't describe her family as religious. Her mum used to go to church but since 'life got too busy' (and the priest changed) she stopped going, so Caitlin never really had an opportunity to get involved with things in the parish. Her gran still goes though, and Caitlin knows she's from a Catholic background. Since her granddad died she'll occasionally pop into a church to light a candle, although she's not sure why. The rest of the Church stuff just seems boring to her. She doesn't call herself Catholic anymore, even though she knows her gran would quite like her to.

*"The Church isn't relevant to me. I need to be my own person."*

### Young people like Caitlin

- 38% are not sure whether they believe in God or not (only 11% believe in God who created the world and is involved in it today).
- 21% believe Jesus was an ordinary person.
- 17% say they gave something up for Lent last year.
- 89% describe themselves as 'White'.
- 22% say they go to Mass a few times a year.

### Some ways Caitlin is similar to other young Catholics

- She is among the 59% of young Catholics who feel comfortable talking about religion with their friends.
- 55% have signed a petition/email in the last year.
- Like 7 in 10 young Catholics she says that she prays/meditates at least a few times a year.

### Some ways Caitlin is distinctive

- Least likely to feel unsafe in her neighbourhood.
- More likely than most of their peers to talk to their girlfriend/boyfriend, or a trusted friend, when making an important decision.
- She's among the 46% of young Catholics who do not think it's okay for a Catholic to try to convert someone.

### Views on the Church and Catholicism

- Likely to view the Church as 'traditional', 'established' and 'conservative'.
- 31% have felt welcome in their Catholic parish.

### Where you might find Caitlin

- In Catholic schools
- Anywhere you'll find any other young person!

### Engaging with Caitlin

- It is a challenge to find a language or style that speaks to Caitlin in youth ministry and youth work. Variety is essential, as there are so many people standing where Caitlin stands. No one approach will work.
- She is likely to ask 'what can faith or the Church offer me that I can't find elsewhere?'. Try to foster an open mind in Caitlin by painting a broader picture of what the Church does and focus on presenting where the Church creates joy and makes an impact.
- Peer-to-peer is likely to be effective. Who else on the typology diagram can engage Caitlin?



### You might also recognise Jakub

Standing in this part of the typology diagram you may also see Jakub. He:

- Is still close to his Polish routes and 'culturally Catholic'
- Is at a Catholic school – because his parents wanted him to go to a good school, with 'our type of people'
- May still wear a crucifix/have a rosary
- Might say he is a Catholic, but not a Christian



### You might also recognise Alice

Standing in this part of the typology diagram you may also see Alice. She:

- Is more of a 'spiritual seeker', but not connecting to spirituality using prayer
- May be happy to go with friends on a school retreat with the chaplaincy
- An older 'Alice' may go with friends to a Christian festival
- May feel the Church doesn't agree with her lifestyle



**“The Church is called to  
come out of herself and to  
go to the peripheries”**

*Pope Francis*

