

Assessing The Catholic Small Groups Initiative

What are the needs of DePaul students who join Catholic Small Groups, and are their needs being met?

Methodology

- Data for this needs assessment was collected using paper surveys and focus groups.
- Students were recruited for the focus groups in person or through email.
- Focus groups were led by the department's psychology graduate assistant.
- Focus group questions explored areas related to spiritual growth, catholic identity exploration, peer relationship development, sense of belonging and leadership development which aligned with the intentional aspects of the small group program.

Demographics

- Out of 55 students serving as small group members or leaders, 15 students (27%) participated in the focus groups.
- Of the 7 group members who participated, 4 were male (57%), 6 were heterosexual (86%) and 5 were white (72%).
- 4 of the group members who participated in the focus group were first time members of a Catholic small group.
- Of the 8 group leaders who participated, 6 were female (75%), 7 were heterosexual (88%) and 5 were white (53%).

Key Findings

- Students sought safe spaces and reserved time to explore their faith.
- Students are seeking a faith community and sense of belonging at DePaul.
- Students want to become more confident in their ability to talk about scripture and their faith.
- Students desire opportunities to explore how the Catholic faith relates to their lives.

Plan of Action

- Focus on the theme of “radical hospitality” through the Catholic Small Groups Initiative
- Create a new Affinity Group Student Coordinator position that will coordinate the Catholic Small Groups Initiative and implement revisions
- Implement a monthly spiritual formation and leadership training for Catholic Small Group leaders
- Promote the Catholic Small Groups Initiative through consistent, widespread advertising

“My faith was a personal thing; I needed a safe place to explore it with others. I was already a religious person and faithful. It wasn't searching for [my faith] but feeling comfortable embracing it [publicly]” – Group Member