

## Summary

### Welcoming Family, Past

**7. Recall a time at St. Mary / St. Frances Cabrini Parish when you have felt most welcomed and experienced a real sense of family. What in particular did people say or do that made you feel welcomed and included?**

Many felt a sense of family from the parish when they experienced the loss of a loved one. They felt *“love and support from parishioners”* and *“priest’s help and support”* and *“pastor and staff helping even when their father wasn’t even catholic”* and *“the nuns helping get through it.”*

For some it was *“working with Sister Jean”* and *“Sister Jean drafting me and not letting up having me assist with dinners.”*

An overwhelming amount of people felt involvement from several organizations of the parish such as dinners, breakfasts, bringing up the gifts, being an usher, parish Mardi Gras, parish festival, Confirmation, First Holy Communion, C. C. D., Parish Life Committee, church choir, C.D. of A. mother/daughter banquet, school groups, school association, children attending school, Knights of Columbus, RCIA, altar server and the Youth Group. One person stated *“at the soup kitchen I was introduced to everyone and we hold hands and pray before we serve others,”* and another said, *“I felt welcome with activities I participated in with the youth group – there was a feeling of family in all that we did.”*

Several people felt welcome by becoming Catholic and *“being welcomed with open arms,”* *“being recognized for having been married for 50 years”* and *“priests greeting you at the door of the church and acknowledging you by name,”* *“visits to home when growing up by the priest.”* And a divorced, single Mom said she *“felt like an outsider, but wasn’t treated like that. It was just me, but they were so good to me.”*

And for some it was just showing an interest in someone’s life, a smile and a word of welcome, an atmosphere of caring people, feeling a sense of parishioners caring and being friendly.

### Welcoming Family, Future

**8. Let’s imagine our parish in the year 2015. If you could do three things that could create the best experience of welcome and family spirit, what would you do?**

An overwhelming amount of answers were in regards to *“the youth”* and involving them and young parents, family nights, ballgames, Children’s Liturgy of the Word, Christmas play, theater, movie nights, promote our preschool, recreational activities by utilizing Township Park, college representatives showcasing higher education, *“bring back youth group,”* *“having the youth be greeters after Mass – people like to see the youth and will put smiles on their faces!”*

Generally a feeling of needing to get the young people involved in church and making them feel welcome, needed and important.

Another popular choice was various parish activities, such as: parish picnics with white elephant sale, at Waldameer Park. People longed for “*a true parish festival*” as when we all were much younger and more people were involved for three and four days.

Several people suggested having a welcoming committee that would reach out and support new members, greeters at the door, “*bring a friend to church day,*” “*encourage parishioners to be more receptive to guests and after services, take the time to speak to each other and don’t rush off*” and “*have a positive attitude.*” One person suggested having a day of “*getting to know us for the whole community and have information about the Catholic Church with speakers.*” Another suggested “*making phone or house calls to find out the reason families have left the church: is it the church (us) or personal, maybe one on one and being able to tell it like it is without hurt feelings.*” Another person said “*have great music each Sunday*” and “*the parish would become the center of people’s lives meaning, parishioners would support and volunteer for all the various activities that are taking place.*” Another said “*Young families, middle-aged families and seniors would all come together to enjoy each other’s company and life.*”

Several people spoke of having a “*Family Bible Study,*” being more involved with the Conneaut Ministerial Association activities, Prayer Chain, enhancing religious education, “*do we need to improve on our CCD classes and what can we do to improve and gain more attendance,*” possibly “*enacting the Stations of the Cross*” and “*Missalettes that more completely follow the Mass and homily’s that follow the readings – instruction,*” “*ring the bells at consecration*” and “*being more attentive to the elderly of the church.*”