

Understanding the 21st Century Catholic

Presentation to Catholic Bishops Conference
Hinsley Hall, 17th November 2009
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Understanding the Catholic Community

- Through various community activities we are probably very good as a Church at talking to at least some of our community
- We are also *sometimes* good at listening to them, at least informally
- In the last year CAFOD has spent more time and money listening to them *formally* as well
- And also listening to those we are less likely to see
- We all benefit from a better understanding of who is engaged with the Church – and who might be – even if that picture is challenging

Sharing these insights

- CAFOD conducted this research to help with our own engagement strategies; but we have been pleased to share it with a variety of other groups who work with the Catholic community:
 - Staff at Eccleston Square
 - Seminarians at Wonersh and Oscott
 - Diocesan Financial Secretaries
 - Education Advisors (Primary, Secondary, Adult Formation, RCIA)
 - LiveSimply network
 - Pastoral teams from Portsmouth and A&B

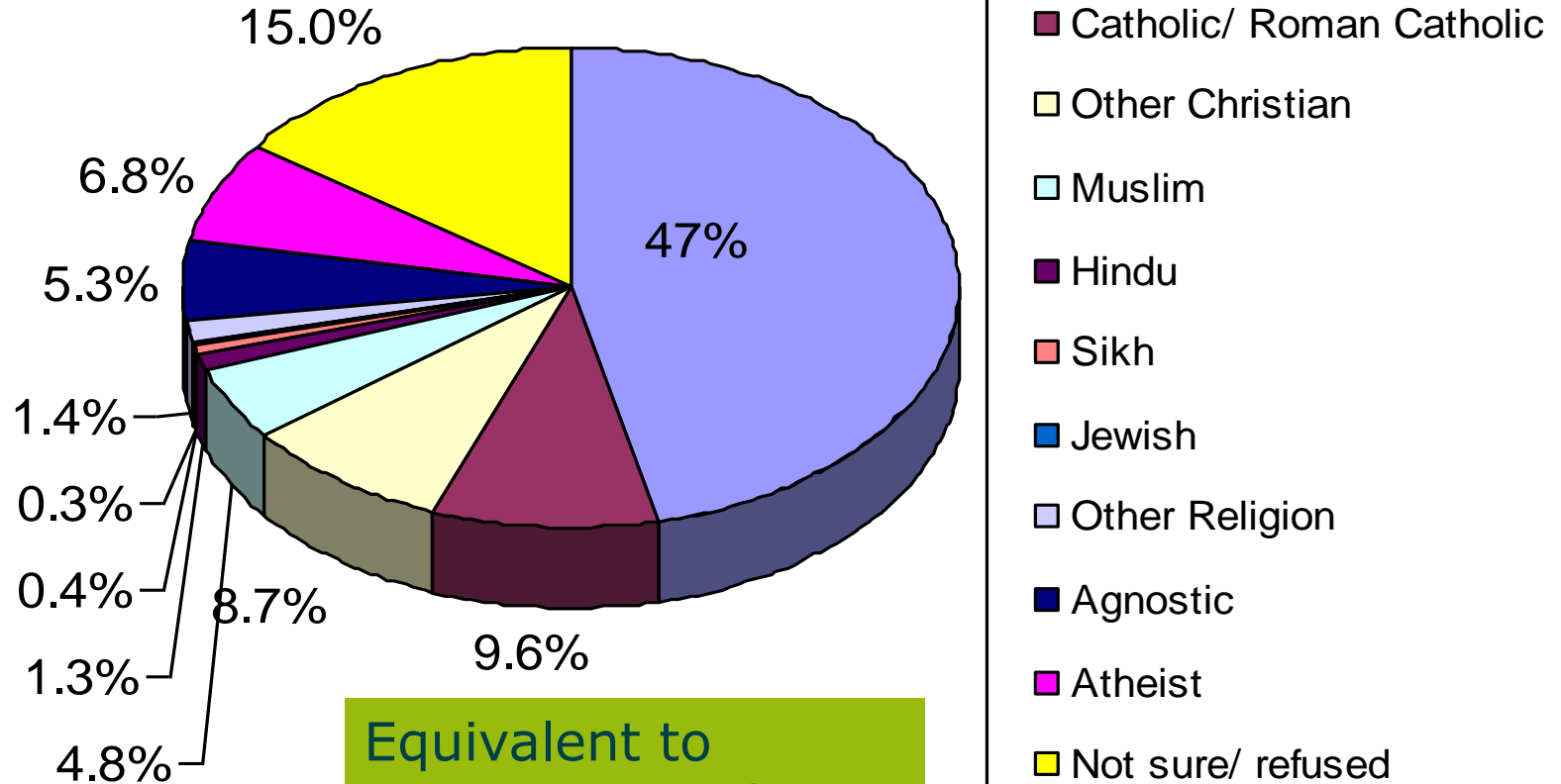
Surveys with Ipsos MORI and nfp Synergy

- Research commissioned by CAFOD to put some hard numbers on the Catholic Community
- Conducted in October/ November 2008
- Same technique/ agencies as used for political polls
- Scientifically robust samples:
 - face to face with 5,500 people aged (15+)
 - on-line survey of 1,000 Catholics (18+)
- Sampled to be representative of the population as a whole in terms of age, class, ethnicity, etc (though in England & Wales only)

How many Catholics are there?

- Church head count only captures those in Mass (c. 900,000)
- The Baptismal roll captures c. 4 M but would miss many immigrants
- The MORI survey
 - Someone who self-defines as Catholic
 - Instead of us deciding what makes them a Catholic, they decide for themselves
 - Same principle as applied in the 2001 census
 - But the census only asks for 'Christian'

“Do you consider yourself...?”

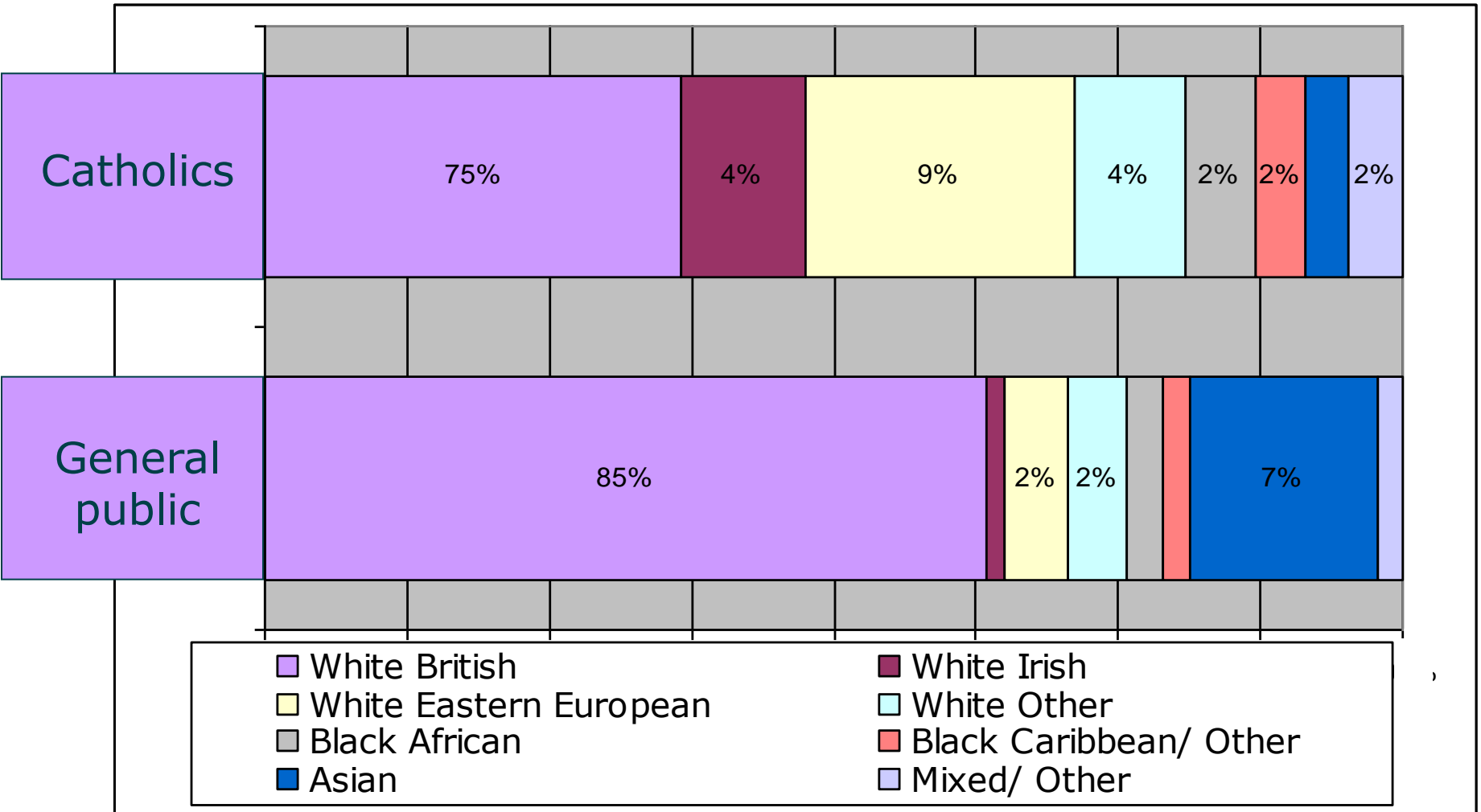


Equivalent to
5,180,000 Catholic
adults and children

How do Catholics compare to the wider population?

- One significant area of difference you would expect is in terms of ethnicity.
- The next table shows the ethnic make-up of the Catholic population compared to the population as a whole
 - These are self-defined categories so, for example, if someone's parents came from Ireland, we left it to them whether they define themselves as 'White British' or 'White Irish'
- Some differences are inevitable because of the match between ethnicity and religion
 - But some differences are more surprising

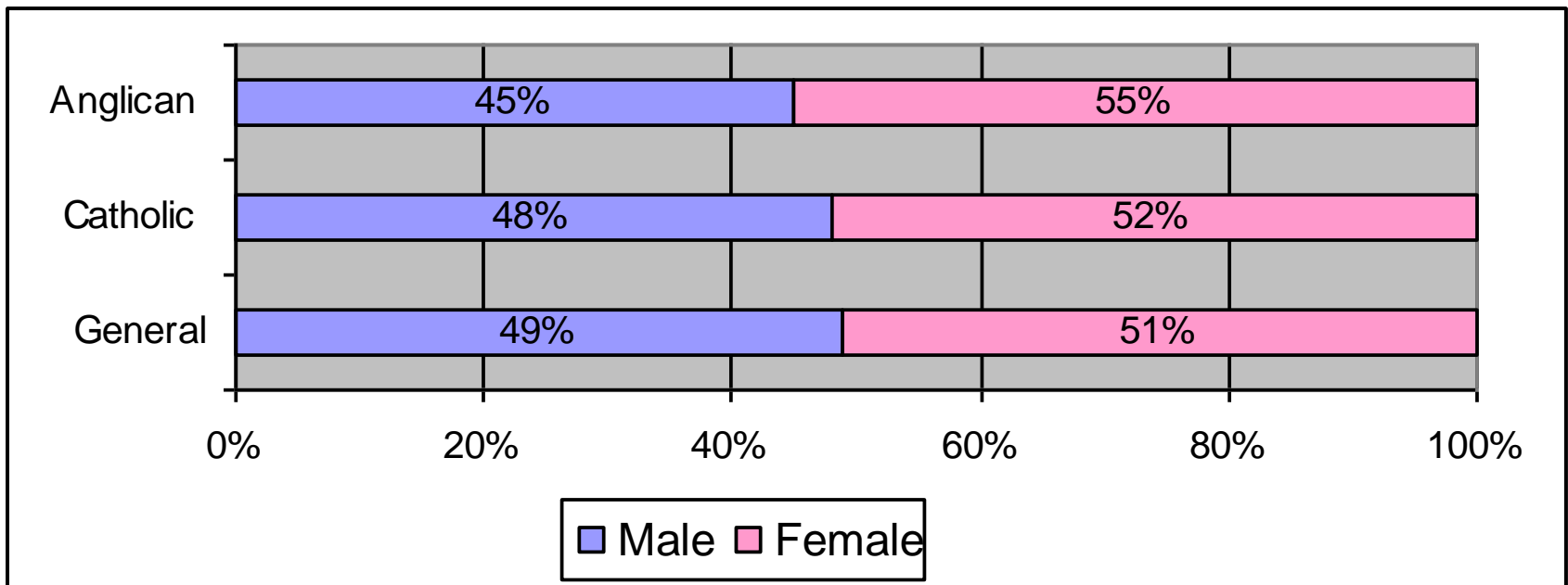
“Do you consider yourself...?”



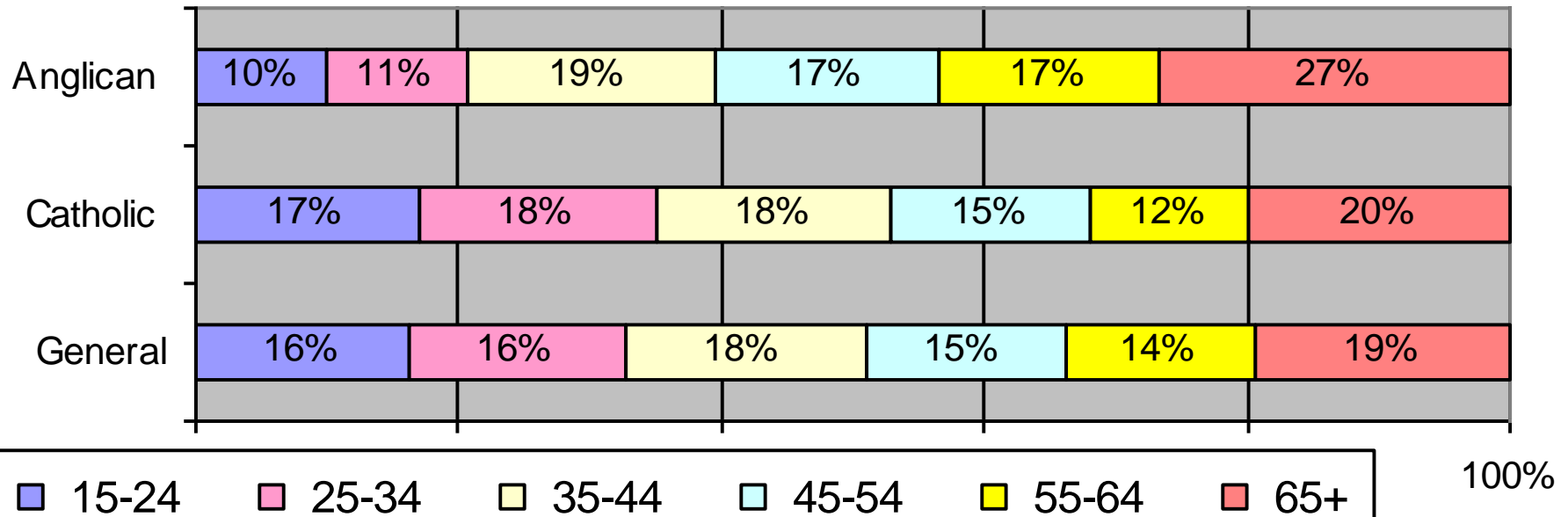
How normal are Catholics?

- In many respects, the Catholic population is very normalised – even more so than the Anglican population
- The next charts compare the Catholic and Anglican communities to the general population:
 - In terms of gender
 - In terms of age
 - In terms of working profile
 - In terms of number of children
 - In terms of class
 - In terms of location
 - In terms of marital status
 - In terms of media/ Internet usage

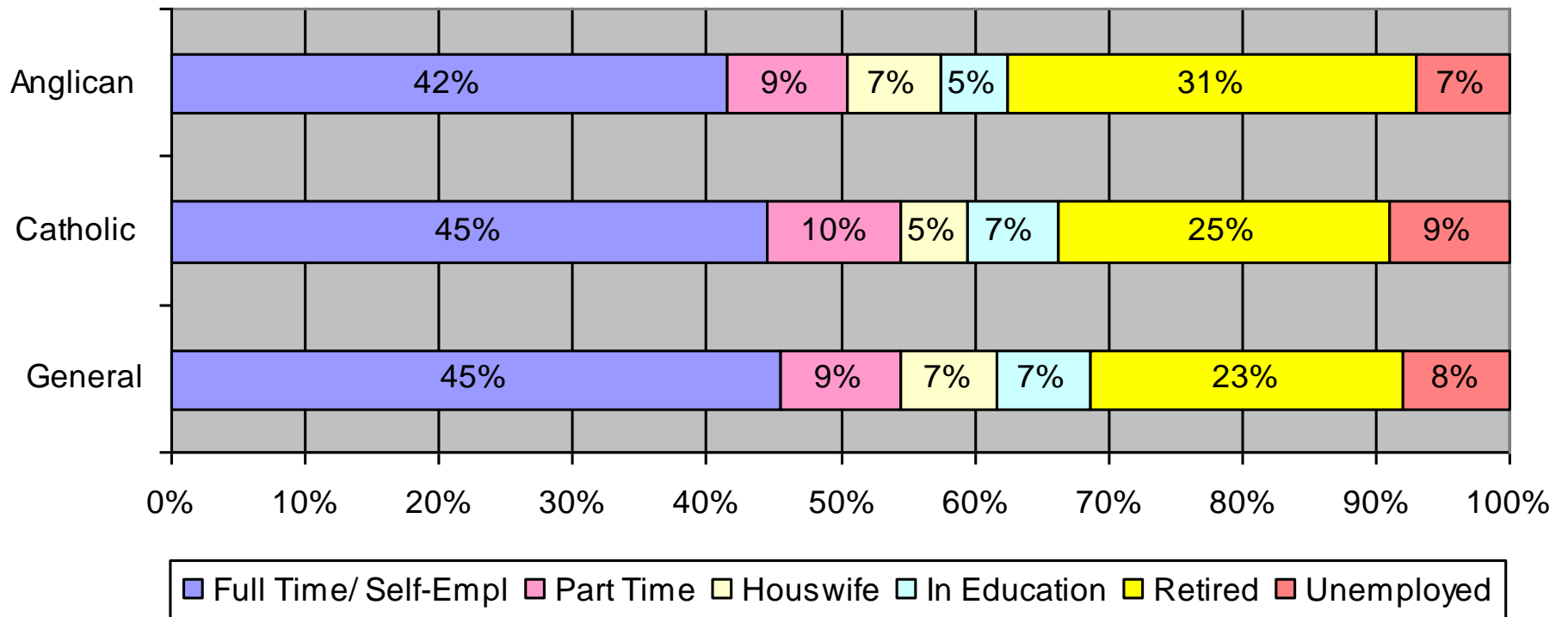
Catholics follow the gender profile of the general population



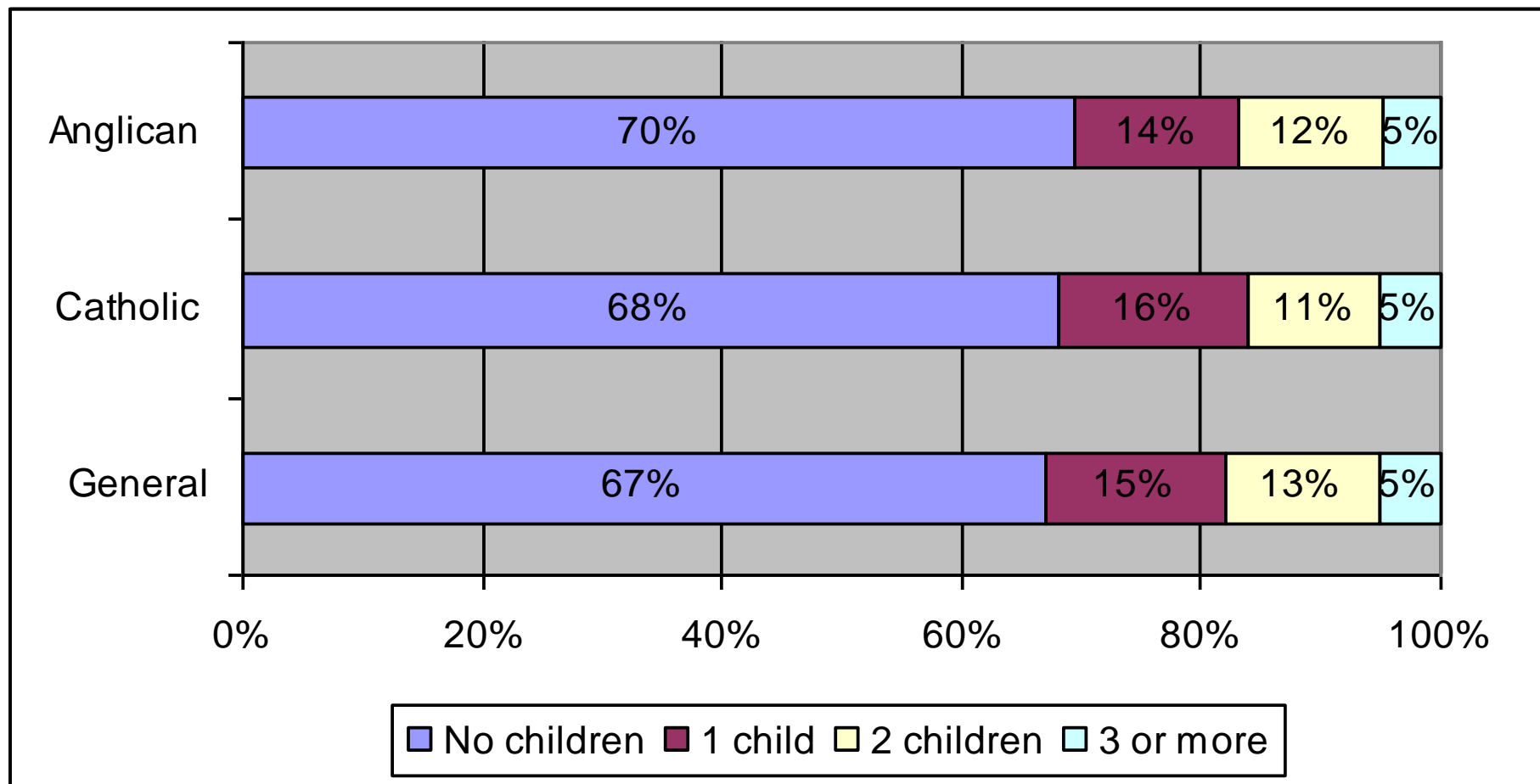
Catholics follow the age profile of the general population



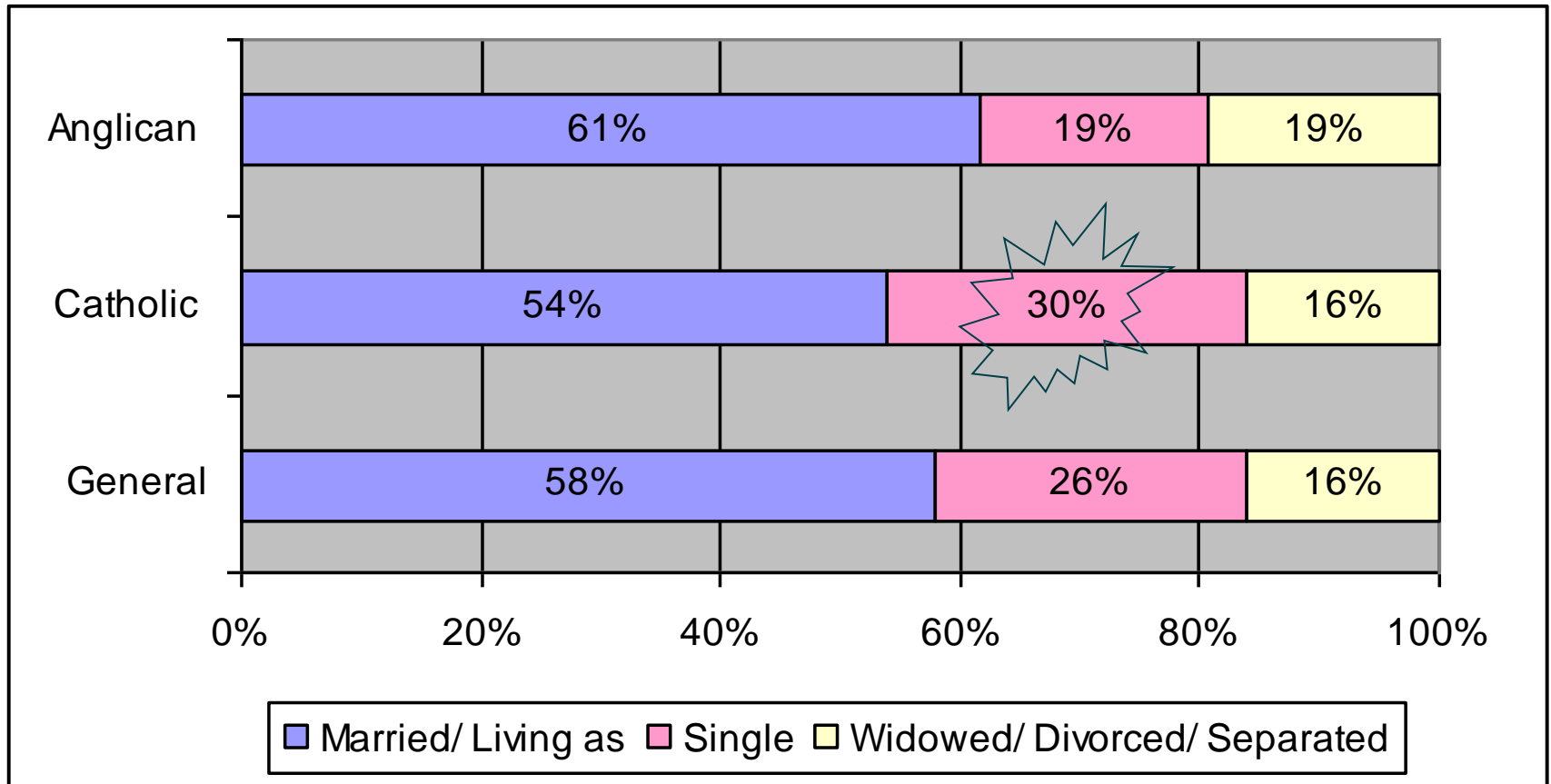
Catholics follow the working profile of the general population



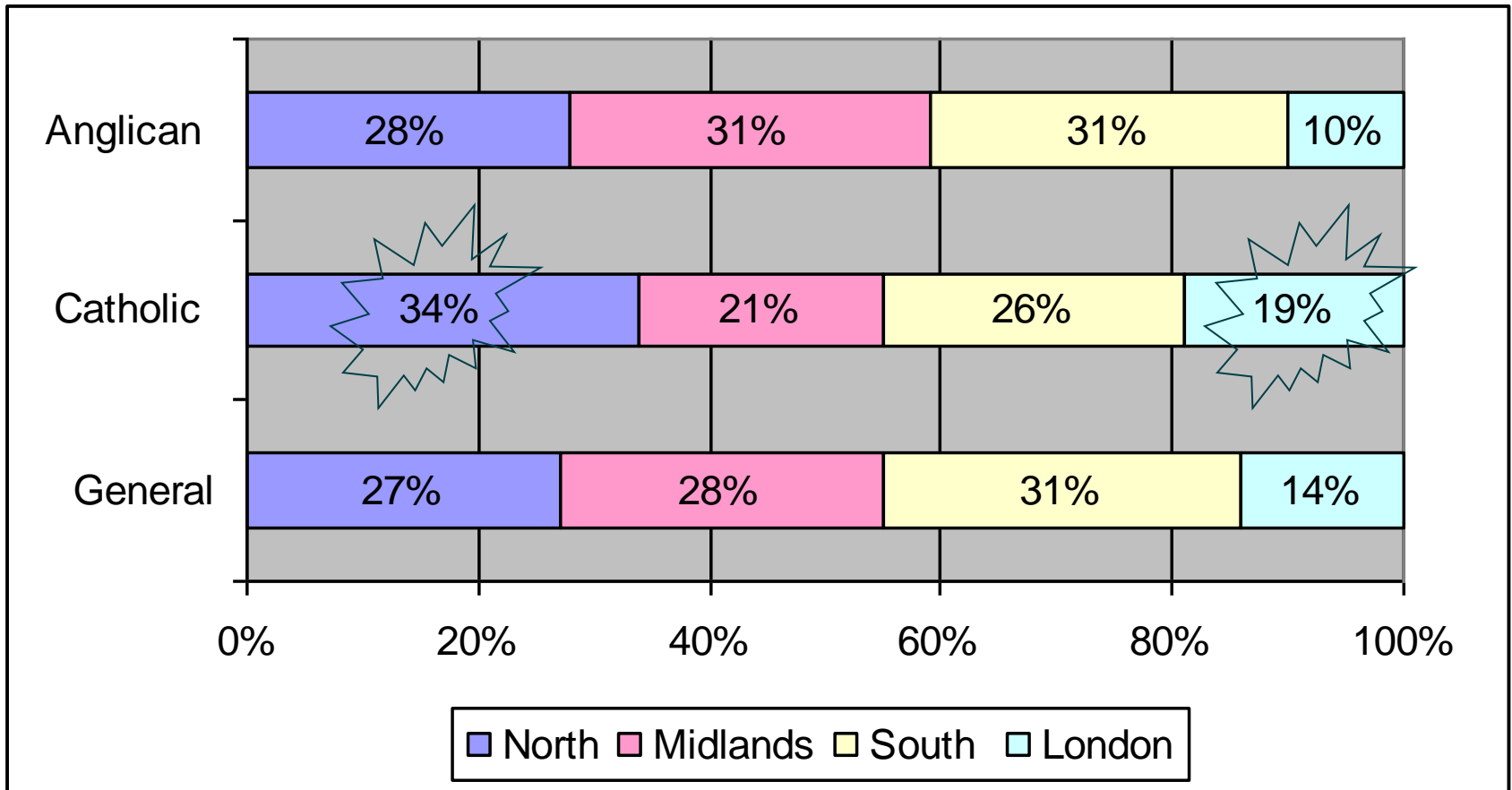
Catholics follow the child-bearing profile of the general population



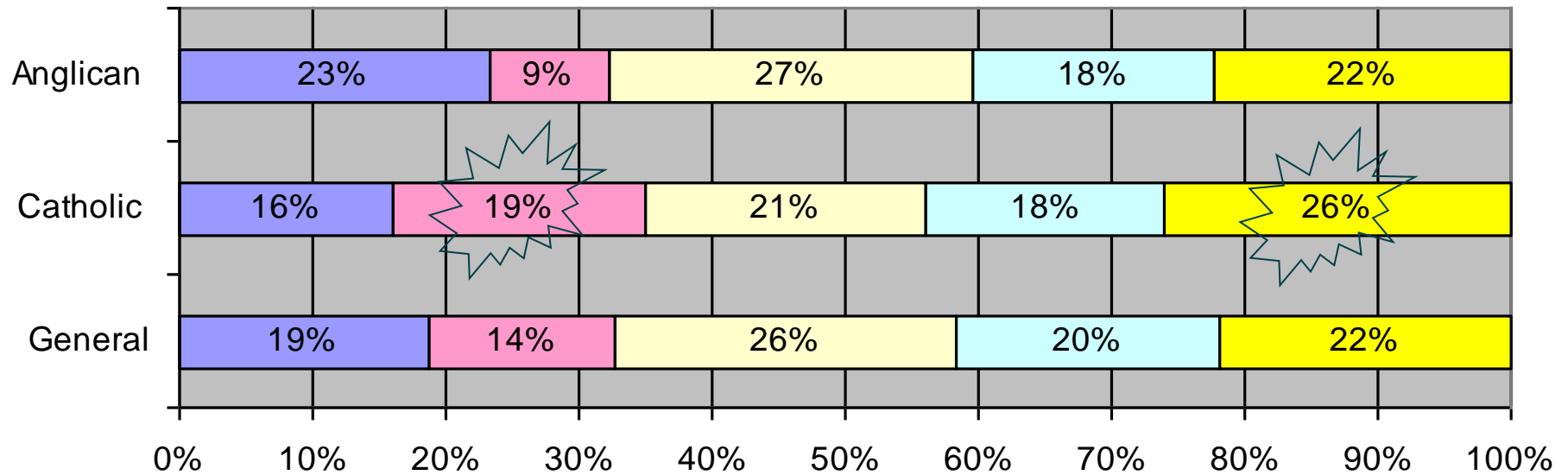
But: Catholics are much more likely to be single



Catholics are more likely to live in London or the North

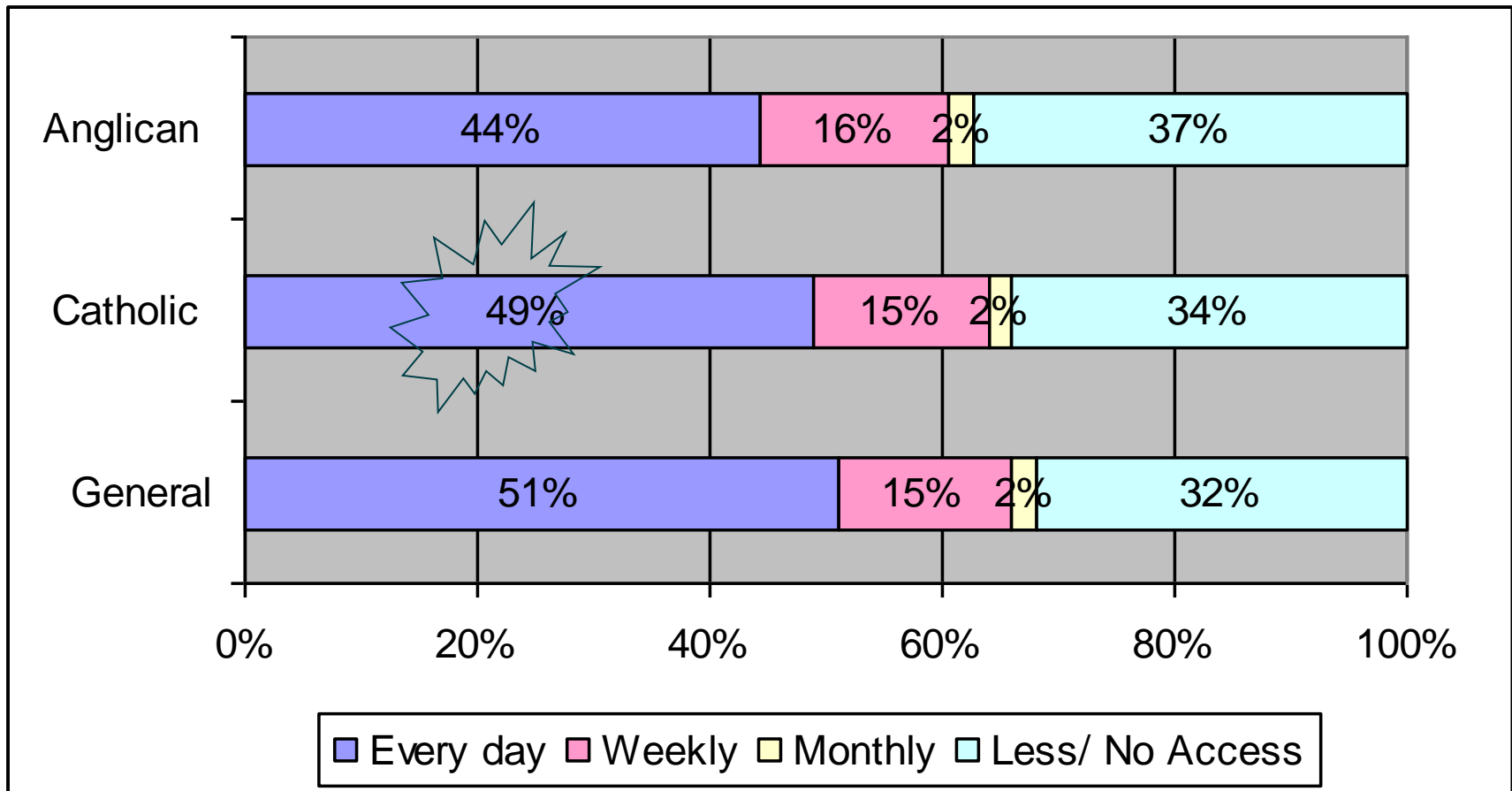


Catholics are more likely to be either rising class or under-class



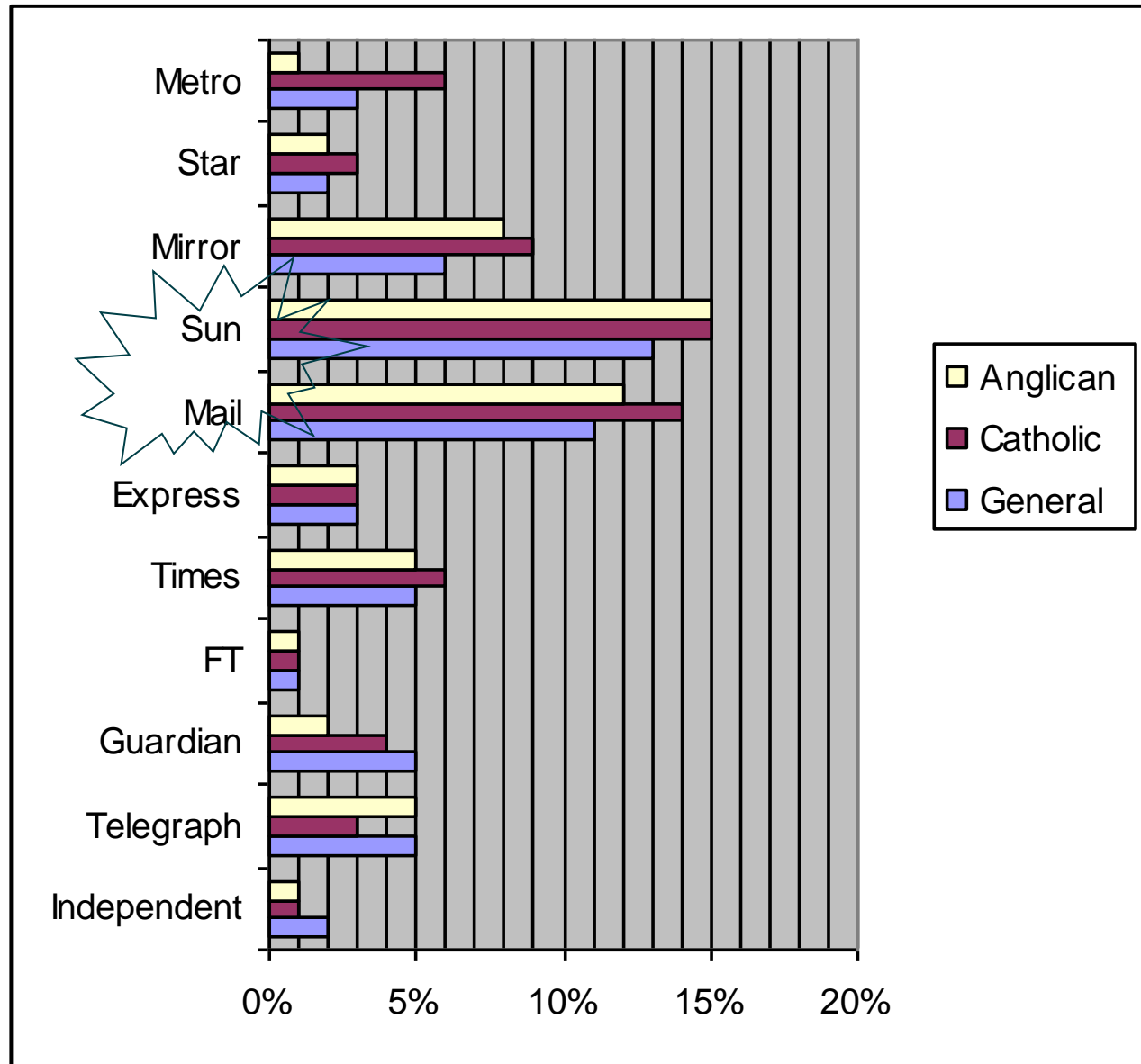
■ Wealthy achievers ■ Urban prosperity ■ Comfortably off ■ Moderate means ■ Hard pressed

But Catholics are more likely than Anglicans to use the Internet



And look at what Catholics read!

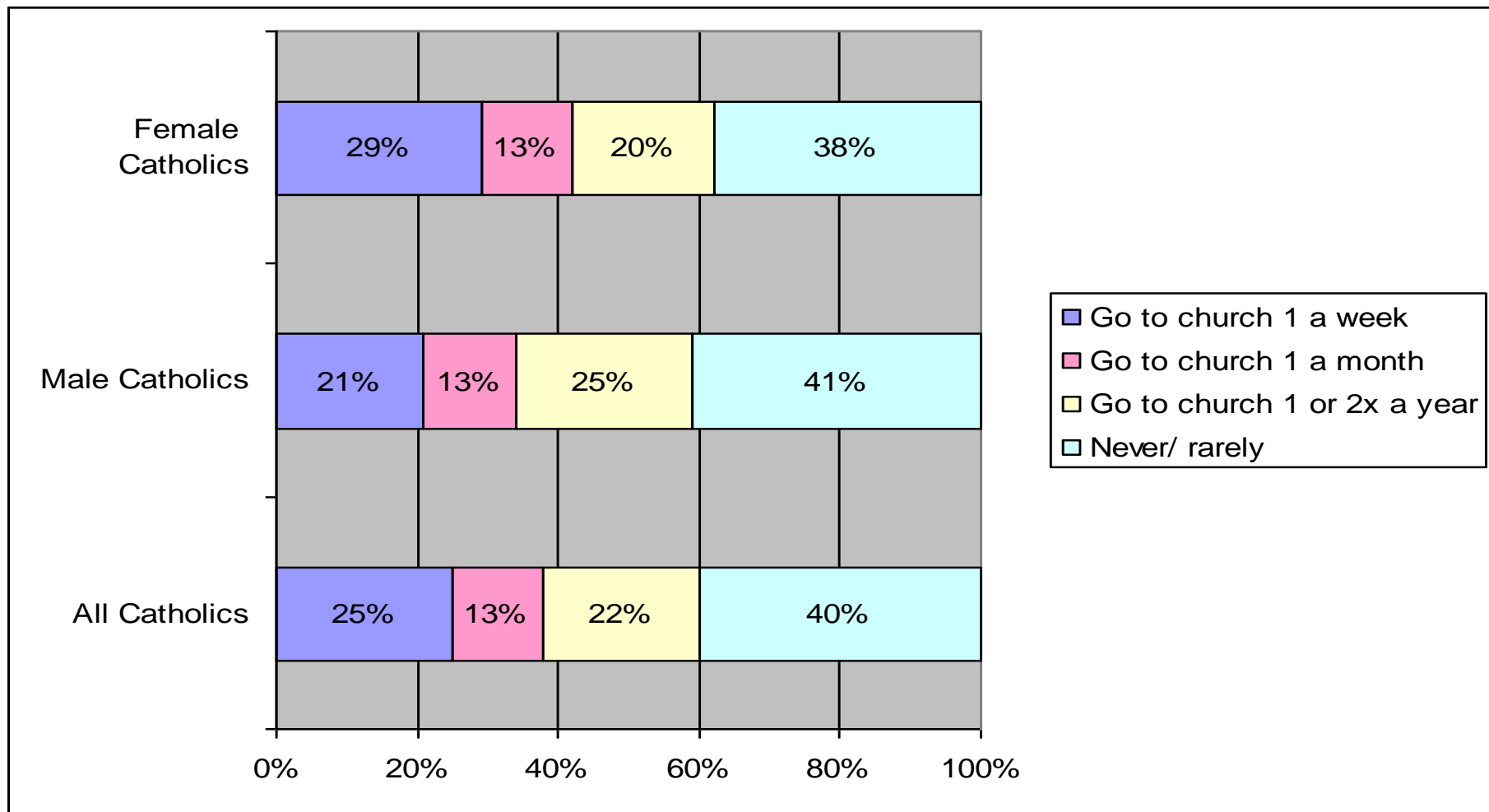
(Note that the claimed level of readership is much greater than the actual readership of newspapers. This reflects less what people read and more what they want to be seen to be reading.)



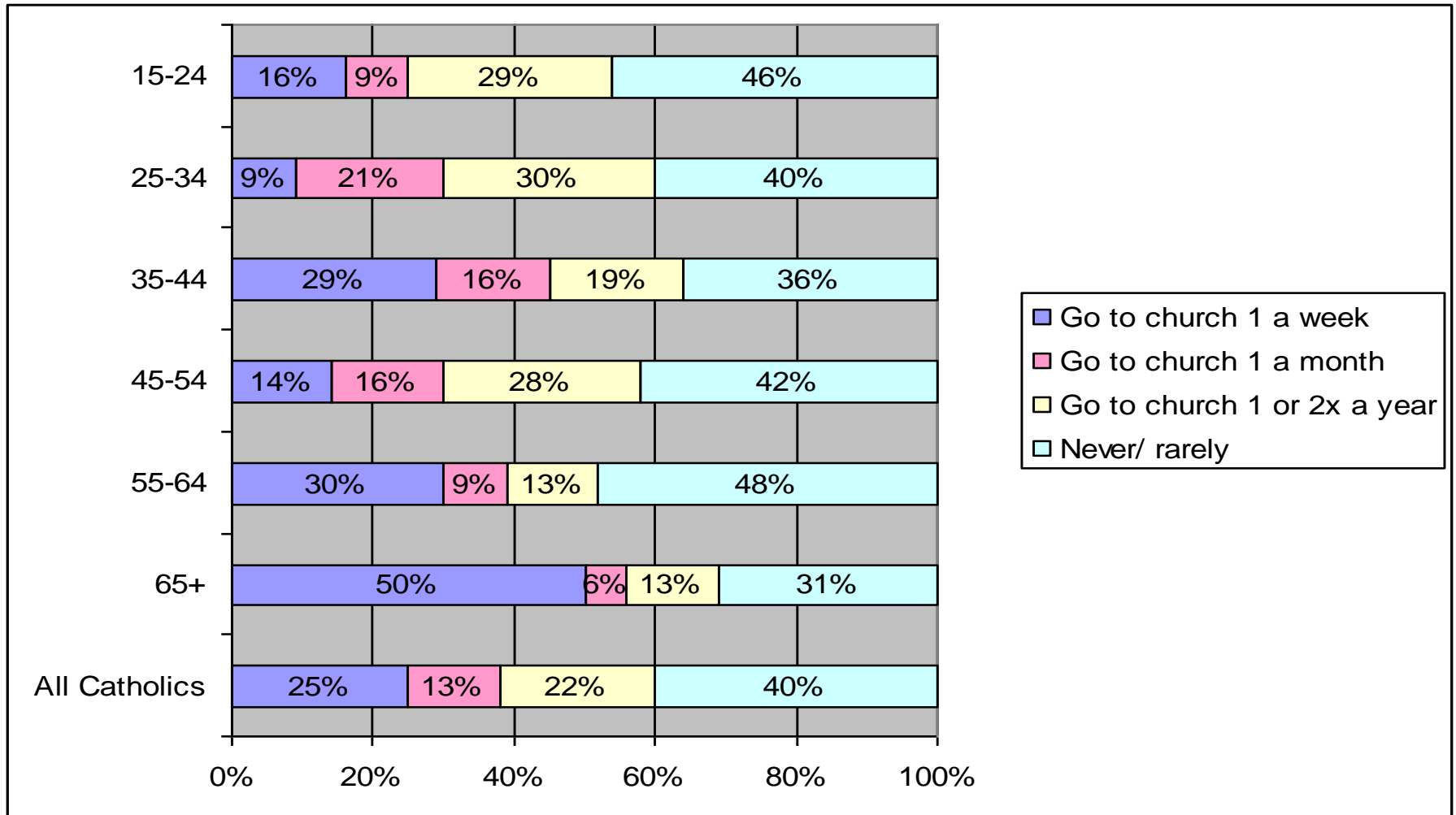
Do all people who call themselves Catholic go to Mass?

- As with all these questions, it is about what they claim rather than what is the truth
 - In surveys people generally over-claim when asked about a 'virtuous' behaviour
 - Cross-comparing figures with the number for 'bodies in church' would suggest a high degree of over-claiming
 - But useful broad indication about how important/unimportant Mass attendance is as a definer of Catholic identity
 - And broad consistency between 2 sets of data

Catholics no longer divide between 'Mass-goers' and 'lapsed'

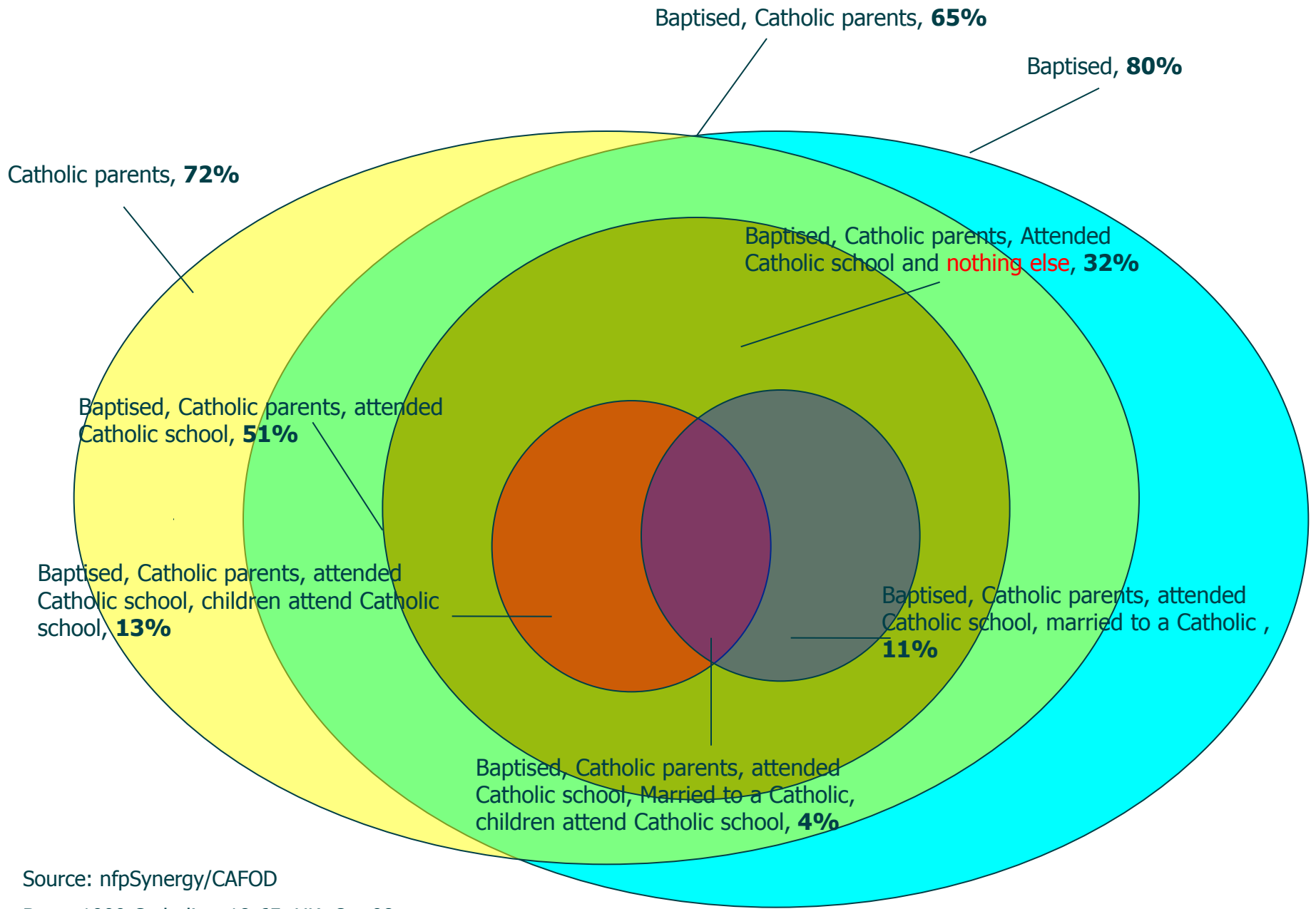


Frequency of Mass attendance varies significantly by age group



What is our image of the Typical Catholic?

- In many situations we might have an image in mind of the typical Catholic:
 - Female, married, retired, reading a broadsheet, middle class, White Irish
 - The Catholic community is much more diverse/normal than that
- Even traditional indicators of Catholic identity are misleading:
 - Baptised, Catholic parents, went to a Catholic school, is married to a Catholic, and whose children go to a Catholic school
 - But this applies only to a small minority of the community
- Instead we have a multi-layered Catholic identity



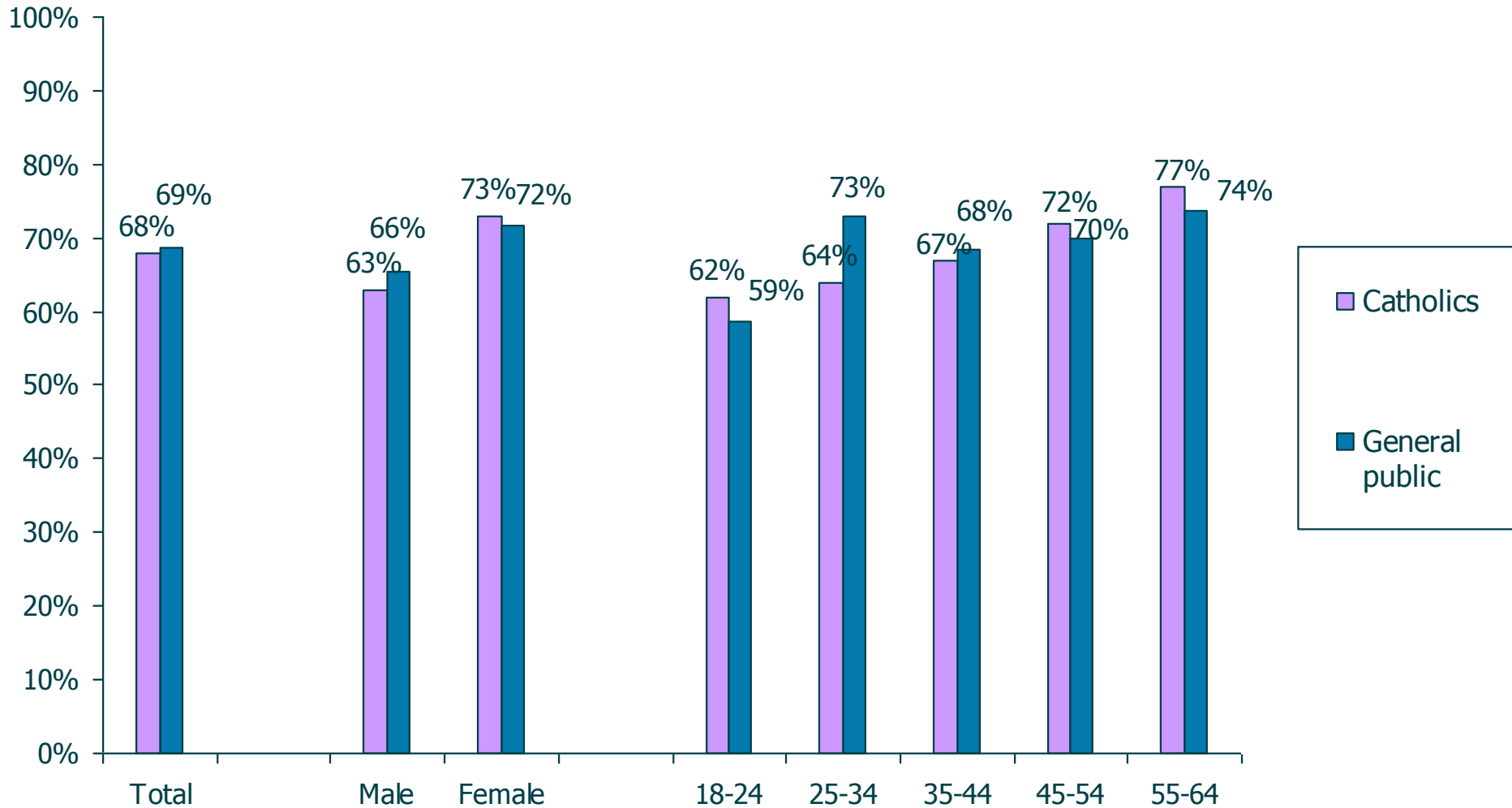
Source: nfpSynergy/CAFOD

Base: 1000 Catholics, 18-65, UK, Oct 08

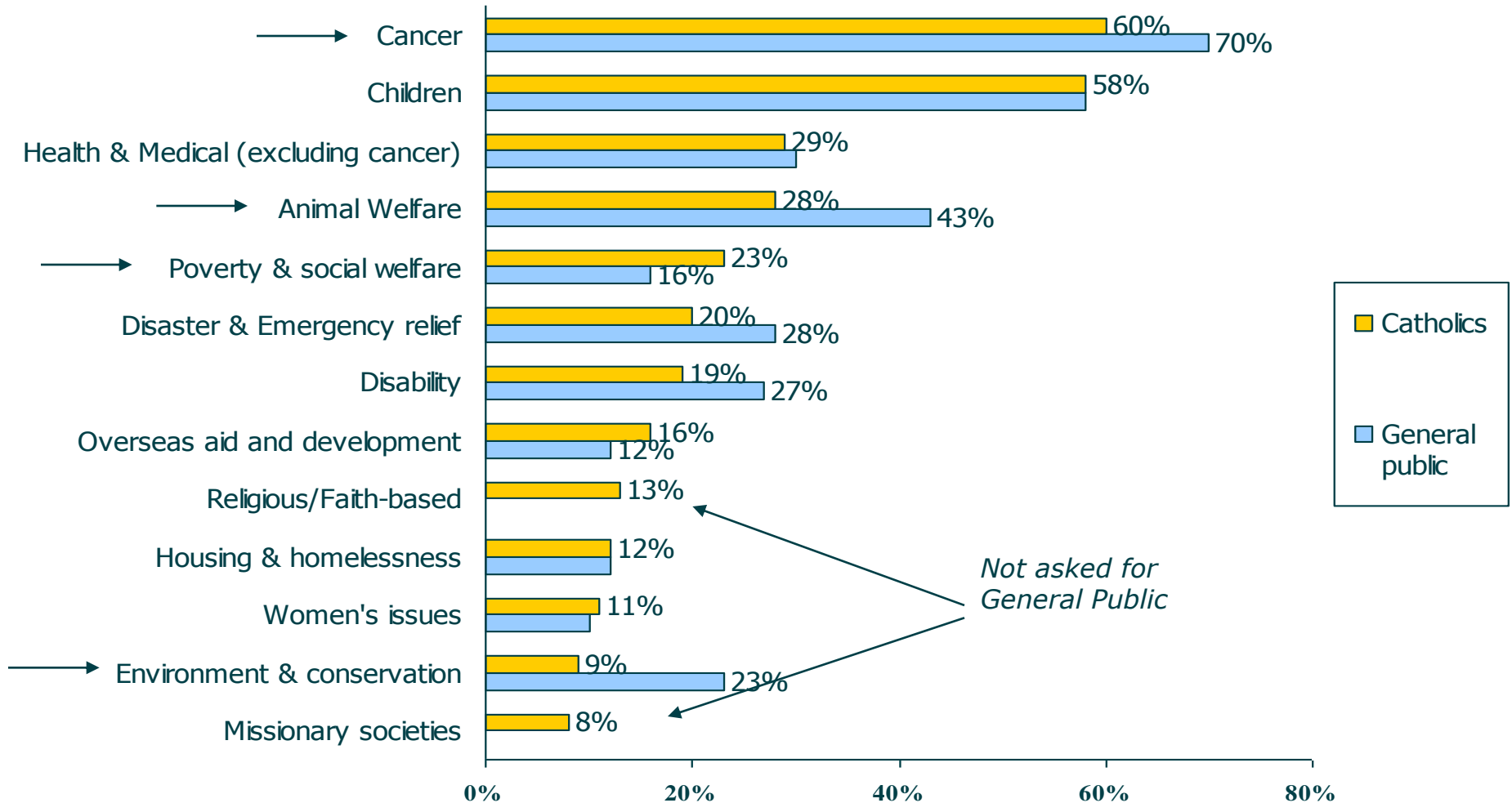
Can we engage with Catholics – if it's not just about going to Mass?

- Mass attendance is an important part of identity for many Catholics
 - But it is less important for others
 - And entirely missing for some
- So what is Catholic identity about?
- Is there a way of still reaching out to the wider Catholic community?
- Are there 'Catholic' ways of behaving?

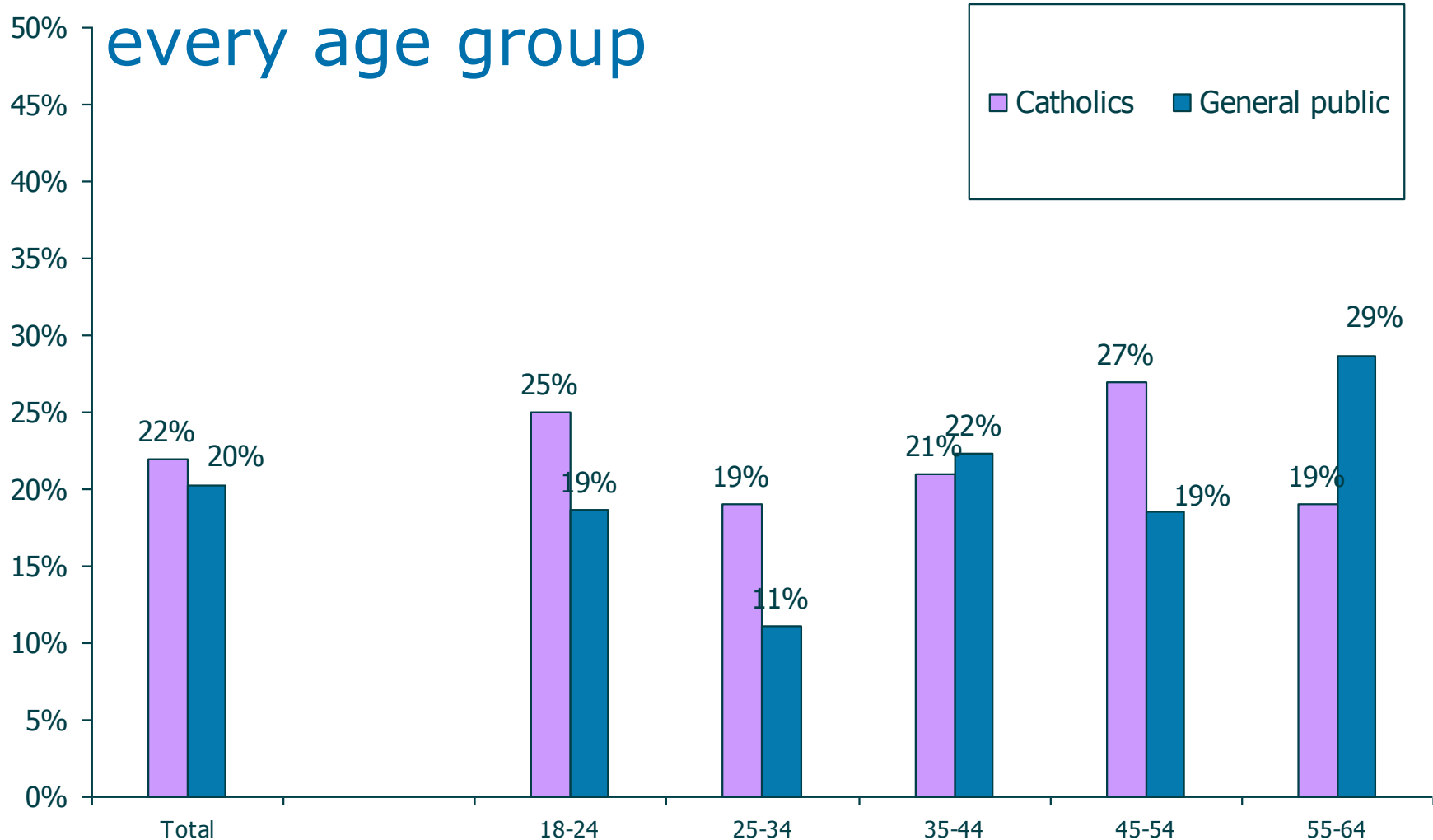
Catholics are no more or less likely to give to charities



But the charities Catholics support reflect the focus of Catholic Social Teaching

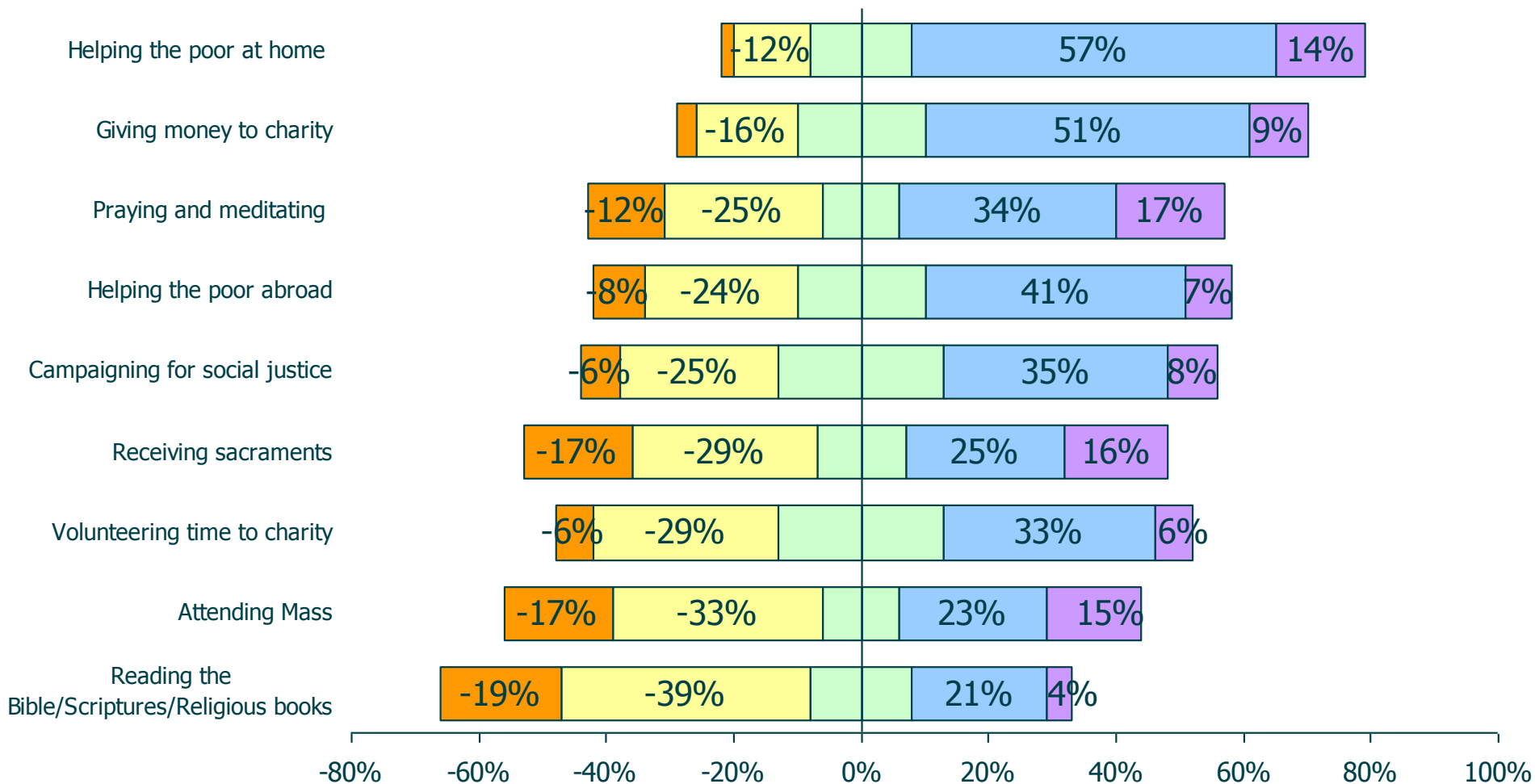


Catholics are more likely to volunteer than the general public in (almost) every age group

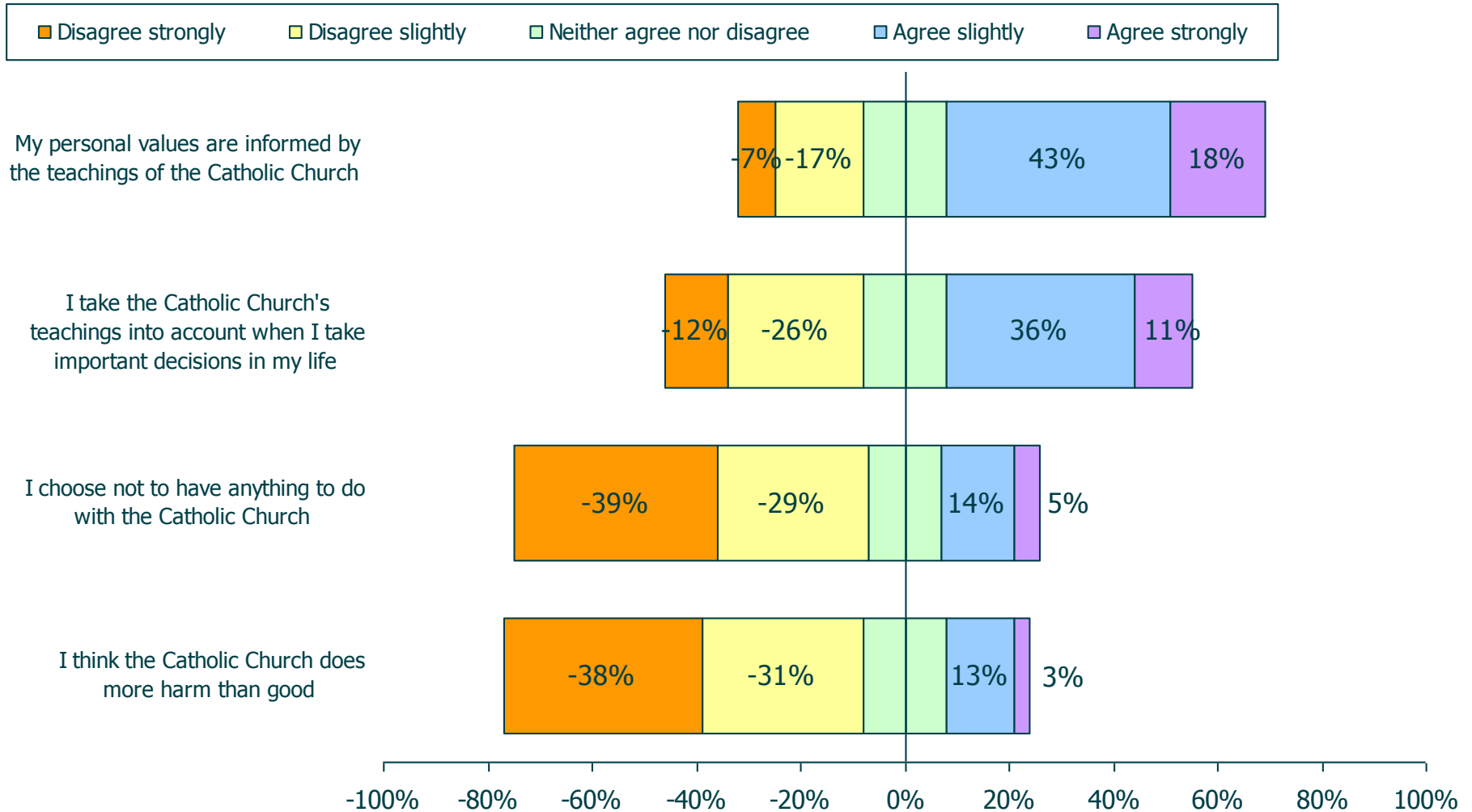


Catholics are engaged with 'missio' even if not always with 'communio'

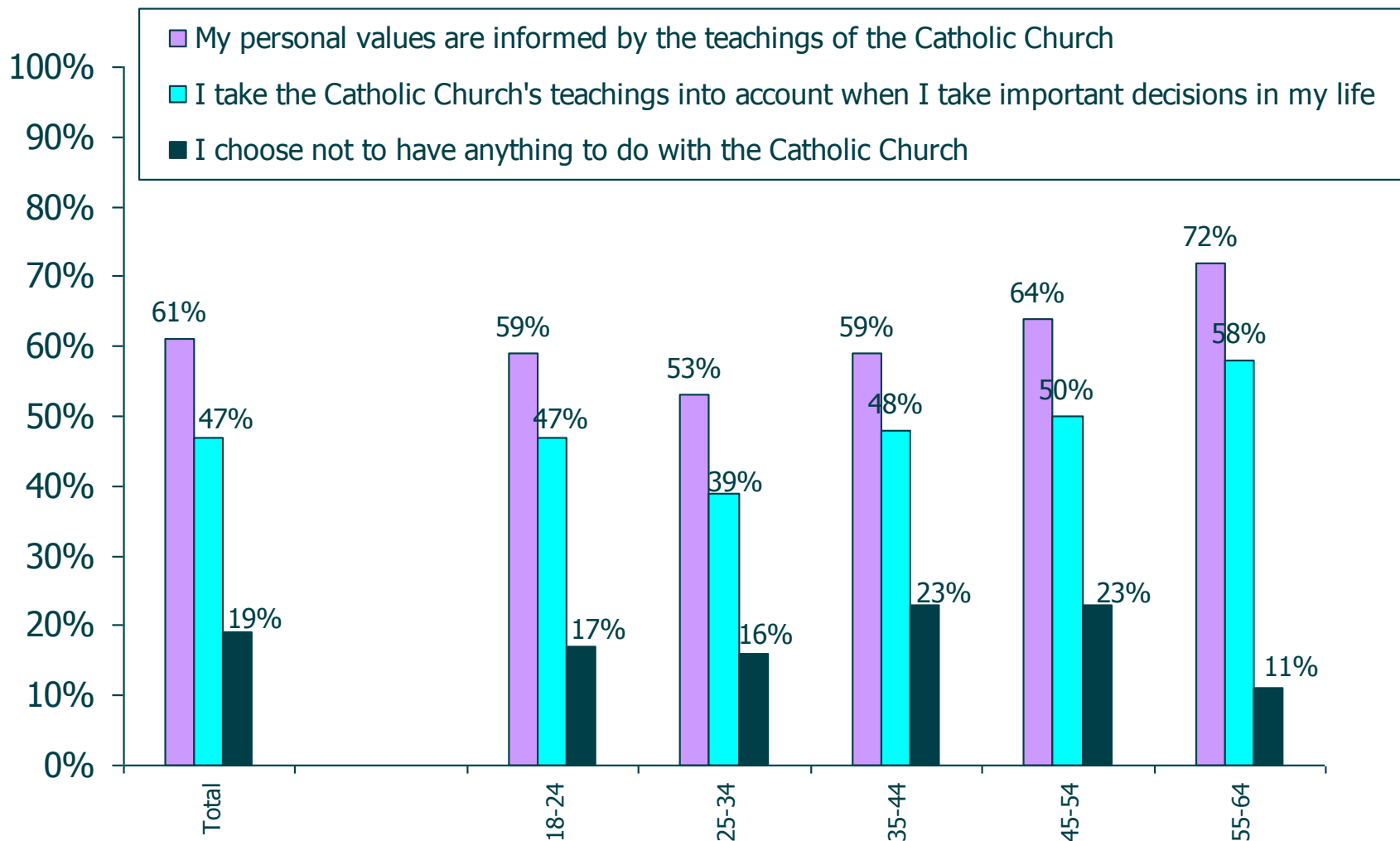
■ Not at all important
 ■ Not very important
 ■ Not sure
 ■ Somewhat important
 ■ Very important



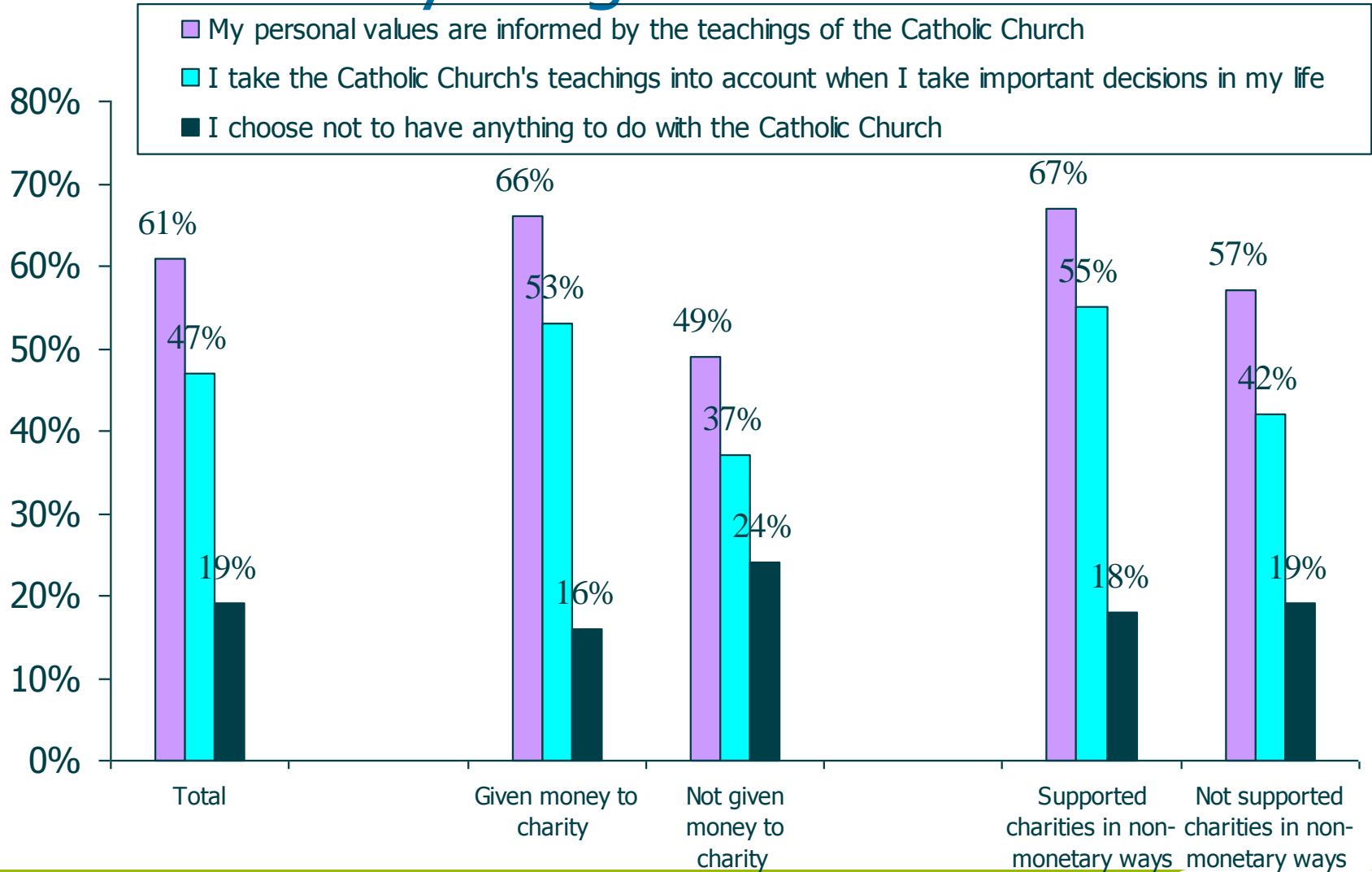
More people are open to the Church than are weekly Mass goers



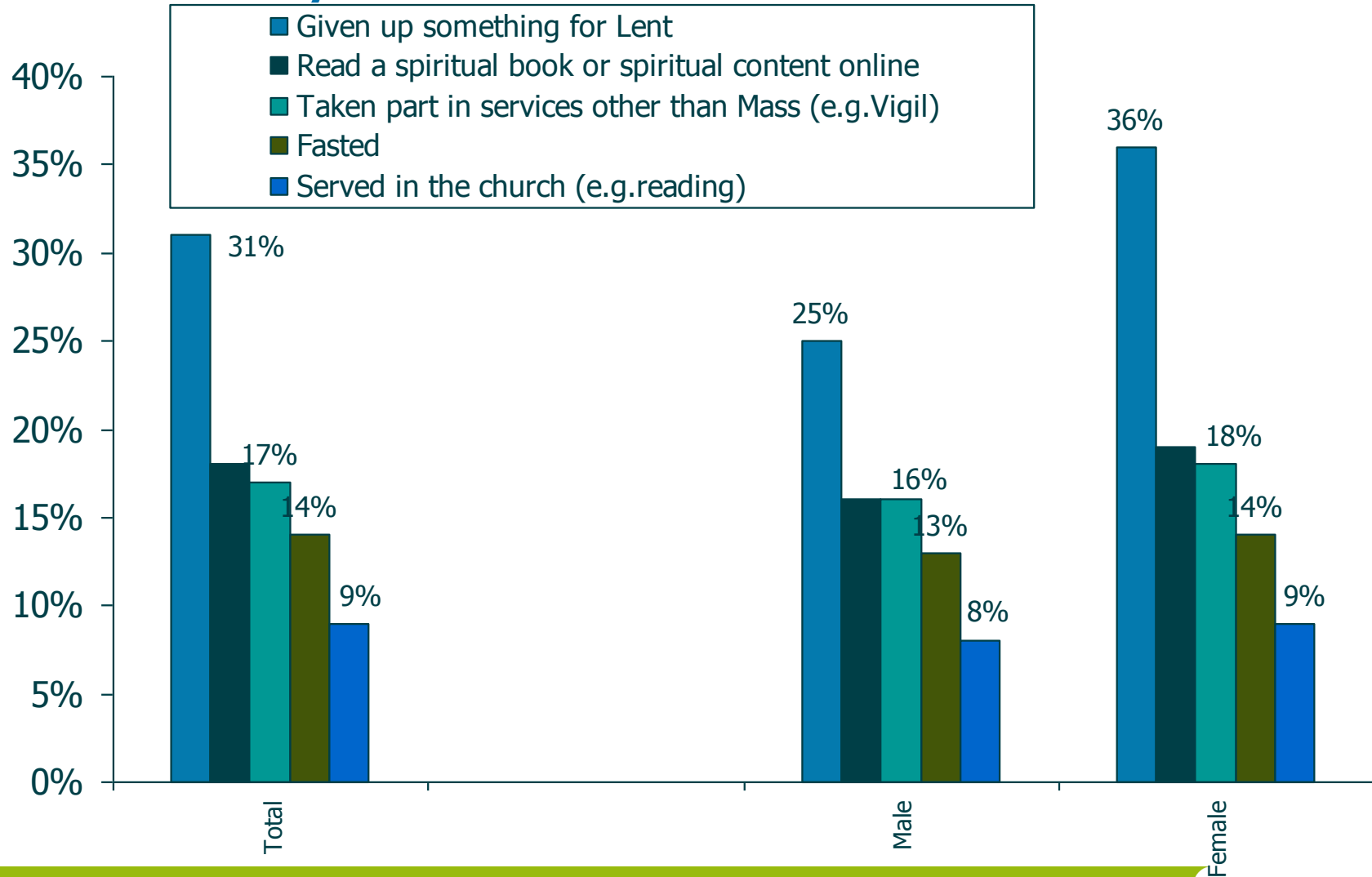
Surprisingly high among young adults – the 'hockey stick effect'



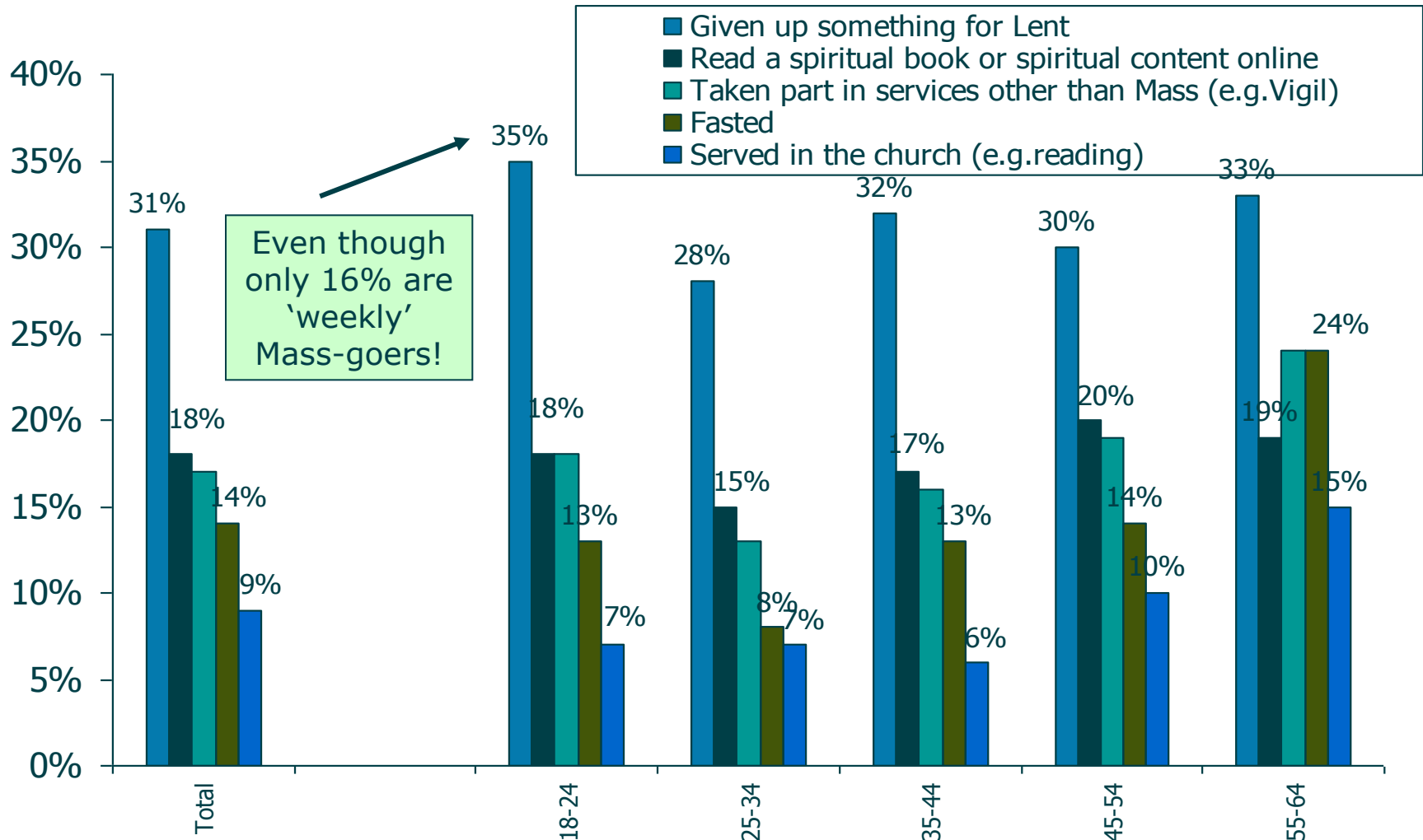
Those who are open to teaching are more likely to give and to volunteer



Lent is still a key part of Catholic identity



Young adults are more engaged than we might expect



Questions for reflection

- *Do we have a fixed image of the Catholic community out of step with the 21st century reality?*
- *How do we work with a much more multi-layered identity – being Catholic is not everything but it is not insignificant*
- *How do we nurture a community that is already generous, engaged and committed to Catholic Social Teaching (even if they don't know it)?*
- *How do we link that community back to the sacramental and spiritual practices of the faith?*
- *Are we able to speak to them in the medium and the language they will hear?*