



Self-Assessment Report Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat

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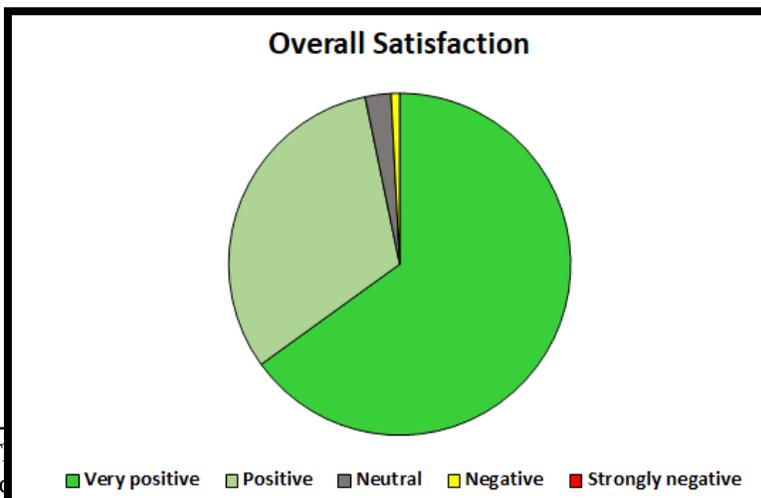
Executive Summary

“The energy, passion and spirit is so strong in this parish. The parish is alive and it is always such a blessing to be surrounded by such a strong faith community.”

- Anonymous Survey Response

All high performing organizations periodically take time to ask themselves “how are we doing.” Saint John the Apostle Parish did just that. At the request of our bishop and the direction of our pastor, the parish completed a self-assessment using the SWOT method. “SWOT stands for: Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat. A SWOT analysis guides you to identify your organization’s strengths and weaknesses (S-W), as well as broader opportunities and threats (O-T). Developing a fuller awareness of the situation helps with both strategic planning and decision-making. The SWOT method was originally developed for business and industry”,¹ but it is equally applicable to other organizations.

The self-assessment lasted a period of six months from initial planning until report completion. As part of the assessment, we conducted a series of ten focus groups from all segments of the parish community. These included youth, adults, and seniors; as well as, ministry leaders, the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, School Advisory Board, and parish staff. One-hundred and twenty-three parishioners participated by each completing a two-part survey. Part I of the survey contained fifteen questions allowing respondents to express their support or displeasure with various aspects of parish life including worship, fellowship, community service, and facilities. Many of the questions put to parishioners mirrored those asked in the *We Walk By Faith* parish self-assessment mandated and supported by the Diocese in the 2011.



Part II of the survey allowed participants to respond to seventeen short answer questions focused on ascertaining parishioner views on the Saint John community’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Well-advertised via email, parish bulletin,

¹ The SWOT analysis is a tool used in strategic management to identify and analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of an organization. It was developed by Albert A. SWOT analysis, <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/swot-analysis/main>

pulpit announcements, Facebook page, and My Parish App, these focus groups also provided for the exchange of ideas and opinions by means of small and large discussion groups.

Overall, the survey results are overwhelmingly positive. As the graph depicts, **96.5% percent of respondents rate their overall satisfaction with Saint John the Apostle Parish and School as either very positive or positive.** The areas of strongest performance on the survey deal with worship as summarized below:

When asked if:	Responded “strongly agree” or “agree”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Word of God is proclaimed in this parish in a way that helps me know and love Jesus. 	97.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The liturgies at the parish enhance my worship of God. 	94.3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The homilies are meaningful and effectively delivered. 	88.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parish supports vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life. 	88.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish bulletins, announcements, and other methods of communicating with parishioners are adequate. 	85.4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parish’s worship space is adequate and comfortable for liturgy. 	85.4%

The pastor received a full report on the SWOT analysis. Results from this parish self-assessment effort will inform the pastor and various parish councils as they establish short and long-term goals for the Saint John the Apostle Parish and School community.

The need for Christian witness in our world today is undisputable. By virtue of our baptism, we must witness to Christ and his Church in the places where we live and work. “All Christians are called to this witness and in this way they become real evangelizers” (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 21). We take this role very seriously at Saint John the Apostle. As the Diocese celebrates its bicentennial, Saint John the Apostle Parish begins its thirty-first year of service to the Catholics and the greater community of southeastern Virginia Beach. The incredible growth we have witnessed is staggering. Yet we have not lost sight of our unique place in the community. *You are a light to the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all* (Matt 5:14-15). The southeastern area of Virginia Beach is a rapidly growing and transient community with a large military population and a plethora of vacationers. This dynamic community is surely a blessing and we at Saint John the Apostle strive to make our parish and school community a place where all are welcome!